

## **Eschatology: Revelation 6-11**

In Revelation 6-11, we have the seven seals and the seven trumpets, followed by the seven bowls in chapter 16. Because there are seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls, many argue that these seals, trumpets, and bowls are basically describing the same events, just using different language. This approach to Revelation known as "recapitulation."

There are a lot of parallels between the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls. Some of these descriptions overlap, but some are also unique. We should be careful not to try to make the seven seals "match" the seven trumpets or the seven bowls. The seven seals open the scroll. The seven trumpets are a proclamation of the scroll. The bowls are the application of the scroll.

### **What is the scroll that contain the seven seals?**

The scroll that Jesus takes hold of in Revelation 5 is the scroll that Daniel sealed up (Daniel 12:4). The scroll was to be sealed until the time of the end, that is the end of the Old Covenant era, and the establishment of the New Covenant era and the kingdom. The breaking of the seals is re-opening of Daniel's book and the unleashing of the Kingdom of God.

## **The Seven Seals**

### **The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse**

In Revelation 6:1-8, the first four seals release four horses and their four riders, popularly referred to as the four horsemen of the apocalypse. This imagery is taken directly from Zechariah 6:1-5, where he is prophesying about the appearance of the Messiah and the restoration of Israel. In Zechariah, the horses are the exact same colors that we will see mentioned in Revelation 6: red, black, white, and "dappled" ("gray" = "pale"). An angel tells Zechariah that these four horsemen are symbols for the four spirits ("winds") of heaven: north, east, south, and west (cf. Zechariah 2:6).

When God sends his Messiah and restores Israel, he will send his Spirit to cover the entire earth, symbolized by four horsemen scattering in four directions. In Revelation, the four horsemen represent the spread of the gospel and the conditions that the early church will face.

### **The First Seal**

*Revelation 6:1-2*

The first seal reveals a white horse with a conquering rider who has a bow and a crown. The rider is Jesus Christ (cf. 19:11-16). After Pentecost, the gospel of King Jesus goes forth and conquers the nations.

### **The Second Seal**

*Revelation 6:3-4*

The second seal reveals a fiery red horse, instigating war. Some of the church will face persecution, even from their own families (cf. Matthew 10:34ff).

### **The Third Seal**

*Revelation 6:5-6*

The third seal reveals a black horse and a famine. The scarce materials are all sacramental. Bread (wheat and barley) and wine for the elements in the Lord's Supper. Oil is for healing (James 5:14). Many of the Jews in the land will reject the gospel. Spiritual famine will lead to actual famine.

### **The Fourth Seal**

*Revelation 6:7-8*

The fourth seal reveals a pale horse, which is ridden by death. Some of the church will be persecuted even to death.

### **The Fifth Seal**

*Revelation 6:9-11*

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The fifth seal reveals those who are martyred. They are asking for God to take vengeance for their deaths, and they are told to wait a bit longer. There are more to be martyred.

### **The Sixth Seal**

The sixth seal contains three visions.

#### The First Vision of the Sixth Seal

*Revelation 6:12-17*

The sixth seal is a summary of the judgment to come, revealing the death of the Old Covenant. Everything is overturned. The land quakes. The sun, the moon, the stars, and the skies are affected. Remember, these descriptions of massive upheaval are depicting the death of a world (cf. Isaiah 13:10-14; 34:4-5; Ezekiel 32:7; Amos 8:9). The Old Covenant is being overthrown. At the same time, the Lamb will pour out his wrath in judgment. This sixth seal is a general description of judgment which will be described more fully as the book of Revelation progresses.

#### The Second Vision of the Sixth Seal

*Revelation 7:1-3*

The four angels will hold back these judgments of the sixth seal until a massive number of Jews are converted.

*Revelation 7:4-8*

God planned to convert 144,000 Jews, twelve thousand from each tribe. Some think this fulfills the promise that "all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:26).

#### The Third Vision of the Sixth Seal

*Revelation 7:9-12*

John returns to the scene of heavenly worship. John now sees a multitude of Gentiles standing before God's throne and worshipping the Lamb. John asks about all these Gentiles.

*Revelation 7:13-17*

This multitude of Gentiles are all martyrs who gave their lives in the great tribulation.

### **The Seventh Seal**

*Revelation 8:1*

The opening of the seventh seal stops the heavenly worship.

#### The Prayers of the Martyrs

*Revelation 8:2-6*

The martyred saints had been praying for vengeance, and their prayer will finally be answered when the angel releases the judgments promised in the sixth seal, which will also be described further in the seven trumpets as well as the seven bowls.

#### Summary of the Seven Seals

1. The church conquers
2. The church faces persecuted
3. The church faces rejection
4. The church faces martyrdom
5. Prayer of the martyrs
6. Three visions of the sixth seal
  - a. Vengeance is promised
  - b. Delay of vengeance until full number of Jews are saved
  - c. Comforting the martyrs
7. Prayer leads to the pouring out of vengeance

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### **The Seven Trumpets**

The heavenly worship is stopped so that the trumpets can be heard. These trumpets are both a judgment and a warning. They are judgments in that people are punished and die. They are warnings in that they are partial judgments, one-third of the full judgment. At first, God sent a partial judgment as a warning that the people should repent and turn to Christ.

#### **The First Trumpet**

*Revelation 8:7*

The first trumpet is a warning to the earth, or land, which is referring to the land of Israel. These are judgments against Jews who had not converted.

#### **The Second Trumpet**

*Revelation 8:8-9*

The second trumpet is a warning against the sea, which is a symbol of the Gentiles. Rome will face losses in this battle as well. They need to repent and turn to Christ.

#### **The Third Trumpet**

*Revelation 8:10-11*

The third trumpet is a warning against the rivers and the springs of water, which are symbols of the Temple. In Revelation, Satan is called by seven different names. The first of these is Wormwood, which is a poisonous plant. Satan had taken over the temple and the priesthood because the Jews had rejected Jesus.

#### **The Fourth Trumpet**

*Revelation 8:12-13*

The fourth trumpet is a warning against the rulers and the inhabitants of Israel. If they do not bow the knee to Jesus, they will be struck down. This is their warning. Judgment will get worse in the next three trumpets, which are the three woes from verse 13.

#### **The Fifth Trumpet**

*Revelation 9:1-2*

The fifth trumpet unlocks the gates of hell. Demons are released upon Israel.

*Revelation 9:3-4*

These demons have the power to torment everyone except believers.

*Revelation 9:5-12*

Five months is how long Rome held Jerusalem under siege. Here we see two more names of Satan: Abaddon and Apollyon. The fifth trumpet is the first of three woes. The sixth and seventh trumpets will be the second and third woes, respectively.

#### **The Sixth Trumpet**

Like the sixth seal, the sixth trumpet also contains three visions.

##### **The First Vision of the Sixth Trumpet**

*Revelation 9:13-15*

The sixth trumpet releases the four arch-angels who were delayed at the sixth seal.

*Revelation 9:16-21*

Two hundred million angels ride out to battle the enemy.

##### **The Second Vision of the Sixth Trumpet**

*Revelation 10:1-7*

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The description of this "other" angel matches that of Jesus Christ. He prepares to read a book, which contains the seven thunders, but this is sealed up for later. There is to be no more delay of vengeance. The vengeance will be poured out after the seventh trumpet sounds.

*Revelation 10:8-11*

John eats the book and suffers the same reaction as Ezekiel when he did the same thing (Ezekiel 2:8-3:3). The book was a condemnation of Israel. John must continue to record the prophesy of judgment against Jerusalem.

### **The Third Vision of the Sixth Trumpet**

*Revelation 11:1-2*

John measures the temple, which is a sign that it will be destroyed. He is told that Rome will tread Jerusalem for forty-two months, which is 3½ years. This is the length of time that Rome will occupy outer court before destroying the temple.

*Revelation 11:3-7*

Israel has 3½ years to repent before their destruction. The law required two witness for capital punishment (Deuteronomy 17:6), so God raises up two witness to testify of Israel's sin for three years and 5½ months. They are called two olive trees and two lampstands (cf. Zechariah 4). They are like Moses and Elijah in their miraculous powers. After the allotted time, the two witness are martyred.

*Revelation 11:8*

Verse 8 is very important as a clue to the imagery in Revelation. The city where all of this is taking place is "where our Lord was crucified," which is obviously Jerusalem. Jerusalem is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt because both Sodom and Egypt received warnings of destruction but did not repent. So, Jerusalem will receive warnings of destruction but they will not repent.

*Revelation 11:9-10*

The martyrdom of these two prophets will be celebrated throughout Jerusalem and even in the land of Israel.

*Revelation 11:11-14*

After 3½ days, these two witnesses are resurrected, and they ascend to heaven, being seen by many. A tenth (tith) of the city falls, and seven thousand are killed. This leads many to repentance. The second woe is the sixth trumpet. The third woe is the seventh trumpet.

### **The Seventh Trumpet**

*Revelation 11:15-19*

The wrath of God is finally about to be poured out upon Jerusalem. The temple on earth will be destroyed. This is the long-awaited sign that Jesus has ascended as King. The Old Covenant era will officially be over. The New Covenant will have come in its fullness. Heaven rejoices at this.

### **Summary of the Seven Trumpets**

1. Judgment against Land (Israel)
2. Judgment against Sea (Gentiles)
3. Judgment against Waters (Temple)
4. Judgment against Heavens (Jewish Rulers)
5. Five months of siege (1st woe)
6. Three visions of sixth trumpet (2nd woe)
  - a. Release of four archangels and 200 million angels
  - b. The Book
  - c. Two witnesses
7. The Kingdom of Christ announced (3rd woe)