

The Book Of Revelation

Week 6

Chapters 7 to 11

Chapters 7 and 14. The 144,000 Servants Of God.

Chapter 7. The Great Multitude Before The Throne.

Chapter 8. The Seventh Seal.

Chapters 8 and 9. Six Trumpets.

Chapter 10. The Mighty Angel With A Little Scroll.

Chapter 11. The Third Jewish Temple.

Chapter 11. The Two Witnesses.

Chapter 11. The Seventh Trumpet.

After the seal judgements are unleashed, the tribulation period will enter a new phase, the trumpet events.

The trumpet judgement events will add to the suffering and persecution of the seal events. Two new dimensions will be added to the tribulation events.

Firstly, whereas the seal events are mainly a result of the tyranny of the antichrist, the trumpet events are mainly what you would call "acts of God".

They are described in chapter 8, and presented as catastrophic events, cosmic in nature, bringing worldwide destruction to our planet.

So there will be no doubt in peoples' minds. God is judging us. Events that normally take place only once every millennia, will all take place within a matter of months.

Secondly, whereas the seal events kill up to a quarter of the earth, the fabric of the environment appears to survive. The plant kingdom, our fresh water supply and the light from the sun all appear to continue during the seal judgements, although the sun is darkened in the sixth seal.

But the trumpet judgements not only kill people, they render our planet unable to sustain life. In chapter 7 verse 2, there are four angels that have the power to harm the earth and the sea. It is only after the 144,000 are sealed that they are allowed to proceed.

Plant life, fresh water and sunlight are all affected, the result being that people will understand that their very home, planet earth, is being destroyed. Not to minimize the huge loss of life in the seal events, the first four trumpet events will signal a far more permanent end to civilisation.

The remaining three trumpets are also known as the three woes, so severe is the suffering they cause to mankind.

The 144,000 of revelation chapter 7.

The four angels who have the power to harm the earth and the sea are told to wait until the 144,000 were sealed on their foreheads with the seal of the living God. We know from chapter 14 that the seal is the Father's name. We also know from chapter 9, that the locusts released by the fifth trumpet cannot harm those who are sealed with God's seal.

As for the 144,000, there are 12,000 from each tribe of Israel. Chapter 14 also tells us that these servants of God are virgins, who are totally devoted to serve God and follow the lamb wherever he goes.

It could also be that instead of being 144,000 literal virgins, it may mean they are pure and holy, set apart for God and believers in Jesus.

Twelve is the number of Jesus's disciples, and twelve is the number of the sons of Jacob, who became the twelve tribes of Israel.

So we see that the number twelve is associated with people of God, and followers of God. We can only surmise, but a common theory is that the 144,000 are Jewish evangelists whose calling is to preach the kingdom of God, and we know that they are protected at least up until the fifth trumpet, to carry out this task.

As you read about the character of this group, it is easy to wonder if they are angels. But in verse 3 we read that they have been redeemed from the earth. They do present an enigma to us, and people wonder why this group of believers is mentioned separately to any others.

But it is good for us to accept that our task is not to understand every single verse of this book and know exactly who the 144,000 are, but rather we need to understand how our hearts need to change so that we are able to stand for our faith in the end days.

It is also clear from the bible that the 144,000 are not the only people who are saved out of tribulation.

The great multitude before the throne.

Chapter 7 Verse 9. "After this I, (John), looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands."

These are people who have come out of the great tribulation.

Paul says that the church will be raptured at the sound of the last trumpet, so most likely these are not raptured saints, but instead martyred saints who have been killed during the tribulation period, and those followers of Jesus who have died during the pale horse seal judgement in which over 2 billion people will lose their lives.

The Seventh seal of Revelation chapter 8.

The lamb of God opens the seventh seal, and there is silence in heaven for half an hour. Seven angels are given seven trumpets. Another angel is given a golden censer, which is a vessel used for burning incense or perfume in a religious ceremony.

The angel is given incense to be mixed with the prayers of the saints and offered on the golden altar before God's throne. These praying saints could refer to those who are now in Heaven, or those who are still on earth, it matters not where they are.

Then the angel fills the censer with fire from the altar and flings it to earth. This causes thunder, lightning and an earthquake.

This is described in with no superlatives. As storms and earthquakes are commonplace, this storm and earthquake will probably overshadow all previous, and cause people to reflect again that these events are unusual departures from the normal course of nature.

The Trumpets of Chapter 8 and 9.

1st Trumpet. Hail and fire and blood.

The outcome of this hail is that a third of trees are burned, and all the grass is burned. As there is no common phenomena as burning hail, it is possible that the ice will come from comets breaking up in the atmosphere, which may also contain a substance that combusts spontaneously on contact with oxygen.

If all grass is burned up, this would most likely include all crops, so compounding the food scarcity of the third seal.

A huge solar flare could heat up the outer atmosphere, causing it to expand, and thereby drag satellites down until they fall to earth. This may also be a cause of fire raining down.

2nd Trumpet. Something like a great mountain burning with fire is thrown into the sea.

This affects a third of the sea. A third of fishes die, a third of ships are destroyed and third of sea water turns to blood. Where should we expect this great mountain to come from?

The text is not clear, but it does not say that this mountain shaped object fell from heaven.

More likely, it could be a super volcano which explodes and is thrown into the sea. For example, super volcanos like Campi Flegrei in Italy have been building up since mid 20 century, which could cause a magnitude 8 eruption on the VEI index.

Whatever is thrown into the sea, it would cause massive tidal waves. Jesus said about the tribulation period in Luke 21 verse 25, there will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. This is only mentioned in Luke, but it is noteworthy.

3rd Trumpet. A star falls to earth.

A great star burning like a torch falling from heaven is most likely John's description of an asteroid collision with earth.

For example , according to NASA, the Apophis meteorite whose diameter is 350 metres, is scheduled to pass by earth in 2029 at a distance of only 30,000 kilometres.

Are their calculations correct? What is the outcome if instead there is a collision? Chapter 8 verse 10 says "A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died". There is also a real possibility that the impact could cause a 6 kilometre crater and wipe out an entire city the size of New York.

4th Trumpet. Darkness.

A third of the sun, moon and stars are turned dark. This judgement event is no surprise if a large asteroid collision happens which will throw up enough dust in the air to darken the sun and moon.

Fire is mentioned in all three previous trumpets, so we can expect a lot of smoke in the atmosphere by this point, to add to the dust . This could possibly cause world wide crop failure.

5th Trumpet. The first Woe. The demonic locusts.

After the angel blows the fifth trumpet a star falls from heaven to earth. To the star was given the key to the bottomless pit. This points toward the star being an angel. Then the event unfolds in this way.

The angel opens the bottomless pit, and smoke billows out like smoke from a great furnace. The sun and air are darkened due to the smoke.

Out of the smoke come locusts.

These locusts have a powerful scorpion-like sting.

Either each sting hurts for five months, or, the locusts are prevalent on the earth for five months.

The sting cannot kill a man, but instead causes torment.

The torment is so extreme that in this period, people will want to die.

The locusts are under the authority of the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name is Abaddon (in Hebrew), or Apollyon (in Greek). This angel is described as king over the locusts, and is most likely a demonic angel.

The Bible presents in these trumpet events a very demonic time in history, so the exact application of these trumpet judgments can only be speculated about, but we must know God the entire time is calling people to him. Some will turn to him and some will not.

Joel 2 talks about an army which has the appearance of horses, making a noise like chariots, leaping over mountain tops. They run along walls, and leap into houses. Maybe this represents the locusts of the fifth trumpet. Equally it could describe the large army of the sixth trumpet. But we do know that Joel is describing the end times, for he says, the day of the Lord is great, it is dreadful, who can endure it?

6th Trumpet. The Second Woe. A third of the remaining population are by this trumpet.

The four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates are released.

These angels release an army of two hundred million on horses.

Out of the horses' mouths come fire, smoke and brimstone.

By the fire, smoke and brimstone, a **third** of mankind is killed. If six billion people are left after the pale horse judgement, then this army will kill two billion. Combined with the fourth seal, the grand total of people killed in this period is 4 billion, or half the earth's population.

The power to harm is in the mouths and tails of the horses.

Their tails are like serpents with heads.

The rest of mankind who were not killed by this army, did not repent.

To summarize, it is not clear who the army represents. Remember this is not the kings of the east, they cross the river Euphrates in the sixth bowl. On the other hand, the sixth trumpet army could be a human army, a demonic army, or even an army of robots.

Given the proliferation of AI, we should not rule out the last option. It would certainly be logistically simpler to resource two hundred million robot soldiers than the same number of human soldiers.

The angel and the scroll of Chapter 10.

Some teach that the mighty angel is actually the Son of God because the description of the angel is similar to the description of Jesus in chapter 1. The angel is also holding the scroll, which Jesus himself releases in heaven.

Both have a face like the shining sun. However there is no need to know the answer. The outcome of end times is not dependant on who this mighty angel is.

He shouted and the 7 thunders spoke, but John was not allowed to record what they said.

The angel shouts "There will be no more delay. In the days when the 7th trumpet is sounded, the mystery of God will be accomplished". This is the grand finale of the mystery of the gospel.

John was told to take and eat the scroll. In his mouth it was sweet as honey, but in his stomach it turned sour.

Finally John was told "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings".

Studying revelation is the same, it is bitter sweet. It is sweet because we know the end result is the return of Jesus, coming back to earth to rule.

But it is also sour because of the events that must first unfold. But we would suggest it is better to know, study and understand, to be prepared for the day of Jesus's return.

The third Temple of Chapter 11.

John was told to measure the temple of God, and the altar, with its worshippers.

He was told to exclude the outer court, because this has been given to gentiles.

The gentiles will trample on the holy city for 42 months, which is three and a half years.

Reasons to think that this is an earthly Jewish Temple.

If the temple in chapter 11 is a heavenly temple, how will the outer court be given to the gentiles?

Jesus said that the abomination of desolation will stand in the holy place in Judea. What holy place is this, if it is not a Jewish temple?

In Daniel chapter 9, there are two statements that make no sense unless there is a Jewish temple in the end times.

1. In the middle of the seven, the antichrist will put an end to sacrifice and offering.
2. At the temple, the antichrist will set up an abomination that causes desolation.

Ezekiel chapters 40 to 48 describe a detailed vision of a future Jewish temple.

In 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 Paul describes the man of lawlessness who takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.

Going by the above verses, it appears that a Jewish temple will be built in the end times. Later on in this chapter, there is mention of a temple in heaven. So rather than assume that all these verses point to the same temple, it is less confusing to come to the conclusion that there will be a Jewish temple in Jerusalem in the end days, and there is also a temple in Heaven.

It is interesting that in Israel, there is an organisation called the temple institute, who have already made preparation for the future third temple. Artifacts have been made, and they lobby the government to actualize plans for the third temple.

The Two Witnesses.

God will appoint two witnesses.

They will prophesy for 1260 days, which is 42 months, clothed in sackcloth.

They are the two olive trees and the two lampstands.

They stand before the Lord of all the earth.

If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes out of their mouth and devours them.

They have the power to shut up the heavens so that it will not rain during the 42 months.

They also have the power to turn the water into blood, and strike the earth with every kind of plague.

When they have finished prophesying, the antichrist will overpower and kill them.

Their bodies will lie in the public square in Jerusalem.

For three and a half days, their bodies will be left unburied.

People will celebrate their death, because they had tormented mankind.

After three and a half days, God will raise them up from death, to heaven, while their enemies watch.

At the same hour there is a severe earthquake which kills 7000. The survivors are terrified and give glory to God.

The Identity of the Two Witnesses.

Some common theories.

One theory is that the two witnesses are Enoch and Elijah, who did not die when they left earth for heaven, but rather were translated to Heaven.

Another theory is that the two witnesses are Moses and Elijah, who did similar miracles to the two witnesses, like withholding rain and turning water to blood, and striking the earth with all manner of plagues.

Yet another theory is that the two witnesses are Israel and the church. The olive tree represents Israel, and the lampstand represents the church.

Here is another mystery in the book of Revelation. Do we need to know exactly who the two witnesses are? No, but it is most likely that the two witnesses are two human beings, because the verses describe their mouths, bodies, death and resurrection.

The Timing of the Two Witnesses.

We understand from chapter 11 that after their 42 month ministry, the two witnesses are resurrected just before the seventh trumpet. If the seventh trumpet is near the end of the tribulation period, then it implies that the two witnesses were active in the second half of the 7 year period.

In support of this, the two witnesses are introduced at the point of describing the gentiles who trample on the holy city for 42 months. We know that this trampling of the holy city starts when the antichrist invades Jerusalem and ends the offerings.

The ministry of the two witnesses.

The mystery of the two witnesses unfolds. If they are mere mortals, how can they breath fire on their enemies? On the other hand, if they have glorified bodies, how can the antichrist overpower and kill them at the end of their ministry? We don't need to work it all out.

Of more benefit, is to understand how the two witnesses will contribute to the tribulation period. Firstly we know that their purpose is to prophesy for three and a half years. 1260 days translates to three and a half years when calculated using Hebrew months.

These two men will preach the word of God continually for three and a half years. Their protection will prove to people that they are sent from God, and that they speak for God.

We don't know where they will be located, but a common theory is that they will be located in Jerusalem, since this is where their bodies lie when at last they are killed. Whether their words are heard throughout the world, or only locally, these two prophets will speak on God's behalf, so that the hearers will have no excuse for not repenting.

It is also very likely that the two witnesses will add to the nations' hatred of God's people. Imagine the scene. The whole earth is under siege from famine, economic collapse, war, fiery meteorites and volcanoes. What would help?

Some rain. What do the two witnesses do? Prevent rain. The people of the earth are in great perplexity and fear due to the onslaught of the judgement events. What do they need? Fit and healthy bodies to mobilize and deal with the situation. What do the two witnesses do?

Strike the earth with all manner of plagues. Suffice to say, they will be hated. The two witnesses will expose men's hearts. Are you going to accept the judgement of God and repent? Or will you still oppose God and harden your heart?

Finally, to add to the chaos, the two witnesses turn water to blood, at a time when the earth is already under the attack of hail mixed with blood, and the seas are also turned to blood at the second trumpet. People will be pulling their hair out. They may ask "Why don't you fix the problem instead of making it worse"?

But those who humble themselves will recognize that as Moses turned water into blood, so the two witnesses are simply tools of God's judgement. The story of Exodus will be ever present in people's minds as they watch the trumpet judgements unfold.

7th Trumpet. The Third Woe.

Loud voices in heaven say "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord". Verse 19. "Then the temple of God was opened in Heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple".

This throwaway phrase in verse 19 reveals a couple of things.

Firstly the location of the ark of the Covenant. For many years, archaeologists have debated the possible location of the Mosaic ark of the covenant. Is it under the foundations of the Jewish temple, on Mount Moriah? Was it carried off to a cave in the nation of Ethiopia? The Bible says that the ark of the covenant is in Heaven.

Secondly, there is both a heavenly and earthly temple. This verse describes a temple in Heaven in which the ark of the covenant is seen. We know from the same chapter that by this point in the end times story, there is also a temple in Jerusalem, whose outer court has been trampled by the heathen.

Verse 19 continues. "Then there was lightning, thunder, an earthquake and a severe hailstorm".

Here the language is muted. But it is more than likely that the lightning and thunder is unparalleled, and that the earthquake is the most severe known to man, greater than the earthquake of the sixth seal, and the earthquake at the ascension of the two witnesses.

To Summarise.

The outcome of these trumpet events leave you wondering if there is anyone left on earth who will turn to God. Chapter 9 verse 20 makes it clear that the survivors of the six trumpets did not repent of their idol worship, witchcraft, murder or sexual immorality.

And yet, after the trumpets, we will look at three angels who preach to the world while flying mid-air! They warn people to fear God in the light of the soon coming judgement day, and they also warn people not to take the mark of the beast. Surely there are still multitudes in the valley of decision?

After the three angels who preach to the world, there is one last episode of judgement. The bowls.

One thing is without doubt. We are now speeding towards the return of Jesus, and the final showdown with the antichrist and his armies.

There are many old testament chapters which begin with the words "In the day of the Lord", or, "In that day", and these all help to build the backdrop to the book of Revelation. Read Isaiah chapter 13, Joel chapter 2, Amos chapter 5 and Zechariah chapter 14. These all talk about the day of the Lord, and therefore we understand that the tribulation period is not a new idea, but it is a theme that has been developed by the prophets of the Old Testament.

God has a lot to say in the prophet Joel 2 and 3. These chapters are all about the future tribulation end time period, so we need to hold firm to God's word, as He keeps His promises and never breaks them.

In Joel 2 verse 21, "Do not be afraid, land of Judah; be glad and rejoice."

In Joel 2 verse 25, "I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten."

And in Joel 2 verse 28 and 29, "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days."

Read Joel 2 and 3 regarding this time in history. Go through them and let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart, as this will help us navigate through the tribulation times. Joel provides a great backdrop to this part of Revelation.

What do you think?

Do you think the Jews will manage to build a third temple?

Given that the Jesus was the final sacrifice, why is the third temple part of God's plan?

Does Jesus return at the 7th trumpet?

What about the sequence of events that record Jesus returning in Chapter 19 after the 7 bowl judgement?

What's the purpose of the trumpets and who are they targeting? Or is there a specific target?