

THE HEAVENLY CALLING

consider . . . Jesus

Heb. 3:1

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The Time of the End

Part X

Seals, Trumpets, Vials

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts [‘living creatures’] saying, Come and see.

And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer (Rev. 6:1, 2).

The seven-sealed scroll which Christ took from His Father’s right hand in Revelation chapter five, which He began to open in chapter six, contained *God’s redemptive terms for the forfeited inheritance, the domain which Christ and His co-heirs were about to rule* (cf. Psa. 2:6-9; Rev. 2:26-28). And this scroll contained *the entirety* of these redemptive terms, for this scroll was *the only thing* which the Father held in His hand. God required *nothing* in addition to that contained in this scroll. But, conversely, God required *everything* which the breaking of the seals would reveal.

These redemptive terms, different judgments, are seen being brought to pass in a triad of sevens:

- 1) The opening of the seven-sealed scroll (6:1-17; 8:1).
- 2) The sounding of seven trumpets (8:2-10:11; 11:15-19).
- 3) The pouring out of seven vials (15:1-16:21).

Revelation chapter six reveals that which occurs when the first six seals have been broken. Then, following an aside in chapter seven — providing informa-

tion about 144,000 Jews being sealed (vv. 1-8; cf. Rev. 14:1-5), along with information concerning saved individuals who had been slain during the Tribulation (vv. 9-17) — the seventh seal is broken (8:1). And judgments being brought to pass when this final seal is broken *must complete all which God requires for the redemption of the inheritance.*

The breaking of this seventh and final seal produces “silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.” The reason for this silence is not given in the text, though seemingly evident. This is the final seal on the scroll, judgments under this seal will bring the whole of the matter to a conclusion, and these judgments are shown to be of a severity unparalleled in man’s 6,000-year history (cf. Jer. 30:6, 7; Matt. 24:21, 22).

Following the silence after the seventh seal has been broken, John sees seven angels standing before God. Each angel is given a trumpet, and these seven angels then sound the trumpets in a successive manner, with judgments occurring in connection with each (8:2-10:11; 11:15-19).

And it is evident that the sounding of the seven trumpets forms the judgments revealed when the seventh seal on the scroll is broken. These are the judgments under the seventh seal, and the sounding of these seven trumpets brings to pass *all of the judgments* seen when this final seal is broken.

Then, it is plain from comparing certain things in chapters ten, eleven, and sixteen that the judgments enacted when the seventh trumpet sounds are referred to later in the book as “the seven last plagues” or “the vials of the wrath of God” (15:1; 16:1 [also apparently referred

to by the “seven thunders” in 10:3, 4, with v. 11 being fulfilled in chs. 15, 16]).

Seven angels are each given a vial, and these angels pour out their vials in successive order (16:2-17). The pouring out of these vials forms the judgments brought to pass after the seventh trumpet has sounded. These vials comprise the judgments of this final trumpet, and they complete *all which God requires for the redemption of the inheritance.*

Through the manner in which all of this is structured in the Book of Revelation, *completeness* is shown by the breaking of the seven seals on the scroll, *completeness* is again shown by the sounding of the seven trumpets, and *completeness* is again shown by the pouring out of the seven vials.

Completeness would have to be shown by the breaking of the seals on the scroll, for this scroll is *all that the Father held in His right hand* in chapter five. Then, *completeness* would again have to be shown by the sounding of the trumpets, for these trumpets comprise *all of the judgments* under the seventh seal. And *completeness* would again have to be shown by the pouring out of the vials, for these vials comprise *all of the judgments* of the seventh trumpet.

(God has an affinity for the use of numbers in His Word, with numbers carrying specific meanings and used to depict spiritual truths. “Three” is a number showing *Divine perfection*, and “seven” is *God’s number*, a number which He uses to show *the completeness of that which is in view*. This triad of sevens [seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials], used relative to a future redemptive work, shows *Divine perfection in God’s complete work [a triad of sevens] relating to the redemption of the inheritance.*)

Relative to *completeness* seen in the

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seven trumpets and again in the seven vials, note that stated in chapters ten and eleven in connection with the sounding of the seventh trumpet and that stated in chapter sixteen in connection with the pouring out of the seventh vial:

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets” (10:7).

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms [lit. ‘The kingdom of this world is become that’] of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever” (11:15).

“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done” (16:17).

Through the sounding of the seventh trumpet (10:7; 11:15), the revelation of God, which began in a progressive manner in Gen. 1:1, is seen to be fully opened up and made known. And this will have been accomplished through the revelation, the unveiling, of God’s Son, the subject matter of the Book of Revelation (Rev. 1:1). The inseparable nature of the Father and the Son (John 1:1, 2, 14) necessitates that a complete revelation of One would, as well, be a complete revelation of the Other.

Then, through the blowing of this seventh trumpet, matters as they relate to the redemption of the inheritance are also seen to be *complete*, with the kingdom of this world (one world kingdom which had heretofore been under Satan’s rule) becoming that “of our Lord, and of his Christ” (11:15).

The sceptre being removed from Satan’s hand and placed in Christ’s hand though is something which can’t occur until the seven vials of wrath have been poured out. But when the seventh trumpet sounds, Scripture views the matter in the sense that these seven vials have already been poured out, for they comprise the judgments of this trumpet. This is why attention can be called to the Father being fully revealed in the

person of His Son and why the transfer of power in the kingdom can be viewed as occurring at the time an angel sounds the seventh trumpet (10:7; 11:15).

This same thing is also seen immediately after the seventh vial has been poured out, shown by the words “It is done” (16:17). Matters at this point are brought to exactly the same final state as previously seen at the time an angel sounds the seventh trumpet in 10:7; 11:15.

The words “It is done” in 16:17 are revealed to come directly from God’s throne. These words — one word in the Greek text, in the perfect tense — form a climactic statement, proclaimed in a loud voice. And, through the perfect tense used, this statement refers to a work (a redemptive work) completed in past time, with the results of this work existing during present time in a finished state. A more literal rendering would be, “It has been completed,” or “It has come to pass.”

(Note, for example, how the perfect tense is used relative to Christ’s redemptive work when He cried out from the Cross, “It is finished” [also one word in the Gk. text, proclaimed in a loud voice (cf. Matt. 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 19:30)]. A more literal rendering would be “It has been finished [‘completed’].” Everything relating to Christ’s work at Calvary had been finished at this point in time, and this work would exist forever in this finished state. Nothing could be added or taken from that which Christ had done. Thus, He could now willingly relinquish His life, committing His spirit to the Father, which is what occurred.

And exactly this same type completed work is seen in connection with God’s work surrounding the redemption of the inheritance after the seventh vial has been poured out. This act completes all work in connection with the redemption of the inheritance, all of this work will have occurred in past time, and this work will then exist in a finished state. And this work will exist forever in this finished state.)

Viewing the complete scope of the matter, the seven-sealed scroll contains *all which God requires for the redemption of the inheritance*. Judgments seen through the sounding of the seven trumpets come to pass when the seventh seal is

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broken. Then the seven vials of wrath are judgments which come to pass when the seventh trumpet sounds. Thus, this places both the judgments shown through the sounding of the seven trumpets and the judgments shown through the pouring out of the seven vials all under the seventh seal. *All of these judgments are inseparably tied together in this manner.*

In this respect, once the seventh seal has been broken (8:1), identical conditions would have to exist as later seen when the seventh trumpet sounds (10:7; 11:15) or when the seventh vial is poured out (16:17). Matters can be viewed as having reached *the same final state* from any one of these three vantage points.

A Chronology of Events

The opening of the seven seals, the sounding of the seven trumpets, and the pouring out of the seven vials occur in the Book of Revelation in a chronological sequence. However, judgments in connection with one (*e.g.*, the second seal) do not necessarily have to be completed before judgments in connection with another (*e.g.*, the third seal) can begin. Many of these judgments will undoubtedly overlap succeeding judgments (*e.g.*, judgments seen when the second seal is broken may continue throughout judgments seen during the breaking of the remaining seals [and if continuing through the breaking of the seventh seal, they would, of necessity, continue through judgments brought to pass by the sounding of the seven trumpets and the pouring out of the seven vials]).

Many of these judgments, because of the very nature of the judgments,

would have to overlap one another (e.g., note the judgments coming to pass when the second, third, and fourth seals are broken [6:3-8]), with many of the judgments seen in connection with the seals, the trumpets, and first six vials undoubtedly still in the process of being completed when the last vial is poured out. And this, of course, would shed light on Christ's words to His disciples about conditions on earth during that future time:

“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor even shall be.

And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake [Israel's sake] those days shall be shortened” (Matt. 24:21, 22).

Though the seven seals are broken, the seven trumpets sound, and the seven vials are poured out in a successive manner, other parts of the Book of Revelation covering this same period (chs. 6-19a) do not necessarily follow this same type sequence or chronology. That is to say, one can't sit down and read these chapters and expect to see, from chapter to chapter, a complete sequential or chronological order of events depicted.

For example, the first part of chapter seven provides information about the sealing of 144,000 Jews, 12,000 from each tribe (with the tribe of Manasseh, descendants of Joseph's firstborn, replacing the tribe of Dan). It is clear from related Scripture that this will occur near the middle of the Tribulation, and it is evident that at least some of the events seen in the previous chapter (the breaking of the first six seals) occur during the last half of the Tribulation (the breaking of the second seal would allow events undoubtedly occurring in the middle of the Tribulation to be shown, with the breaking of the remaining five seals allowing events occurring during the last half to be shown).

Or note the ministry of the two witnesses in chapter eleven. They, of necessity, will prophesy during the first part of the Tribulation. Thus, they will appear on the scene about the same time that the first seal on the scroll is broken in chapter six. And chapter eleven goes

on to relate events which will occur during the last half of the Tribulation as well, covering the complete seven years. Events in this chapter carry one forward to the same point in time seen in the previous chapter — to the time when an angel sounds the seventh trumpet (cf. 10:7; 11:15).

Then note events in chapter twelve. These events occur during time covering at least most of the Tribulation, particularly the last half. Events in chapter thirteen begin about the middle of the Tribulation and occur during the last half, and events in chapter fourteen appear to cover about the same time. Or note chapters seventeen and eighteen. These chapters sequentially or chronologically follow the pouring out of the seventh vial (16:17). But many of the events in these chapters, of necessity, will have to occur long before this seventh vial is poured out, during the same time that some of the events in previous chapters are seen occurring.

All of these chapters (chs. 7ff) cover different related subjects, with numerous events in these chapters occurring at the same time. These events may or may not begin at the same time, but they all move toward or end at the same time — the end of the Tribulation, the end of Man's Day, with the Lord's Day to follow.

Actually, Scripture as a whole, along with numerous parts of Scripture, is structured in this manner. Scripture will often go over a complete sequence, then drop back and go over either part or all of this sequence again, in a different manner, adding detail.

And the end or goal is always *the same*. It is always the same as seen in the way Genesis begins — moving beyond six days into the seventh day, moving beyond Man's Day into the Lord's Day — which is exactly the way matters are seen moving in the Book of Revelation.

As It Was, So Shall It Be

Slightly over thirteen of the twenty-two chapters in the book of Revelation (chs. 6-19a) have to do with events which will occur during the coming seven-year Tribulation. And chapter five could be added, for this entire chapter has to do with the seven-sealed scroll, which be-

gan to be opened in chapter six. Thus, things having to do with this seven-year period, the final seven years of Man's Day, form the subject matter making up about two-thirds of the content in the closing book of Scripture.

This future time is not only a major subject in the closing book of Scripture but also a major subject of Old Testament prophecy. And this could only be expected, for there is nothing in the New that does not have its roots in the Old. The New is simply the Old opened up and revealed, and a major subject of one could only be a major subject of the other as well (cf. Luke 17:26-30; 24:25-27, 44).

1) MOSES

The future Tribulation period is seen time after time in the types, particularly in the opening two books of Scripture.

This future time is dealt with twice in the first eleven chapters of Genesis, covering the first 2,000 years of human history. And matters which concern the last seven years of Man's Day occupy major sections of these eleven chapters.

The first is seen in events occurring during Noah's day (chs. 6-8), and the second in events occurring during Nimrod's day (chs. 10, 11).

Following a man being removed from the earth alive (Enoch in 5:21-24, typifying Christians), Noah and his family (typifying Israel) were protected in an ark during a time of worldwide destruction (chs. 6, 8). And a new beginning followed this destruction (ch. 9).

Noah's son, Shem, of the lineage through which Abraham would come, was the only son revealed to have a God (9:26, 27). Thus, in this new beginning, he was the designated son through whom spiritual blessings for the other two sons would flow, producing a foundational, unchangeable type.

Then parts of the type are repeated from a different perspective, with details added. Nimrod was the first king of Babylon (10:8-10), as Antichrist will be the last king of Babylon (Isa. 14:4; Dan. 2:40-43; 7:17, 23-25). The Lord stepped in and put a stop to matters as they existed in Nimrod's kingdom, as He will do yet future during the days of

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Babylon's last king (Isa. 14:24-27; Dan. 2:44, 45; 8:9, 23-25).

A new beginning is then seen. Abraham, a descendant of Shem, is called to go into a land, realize an inheritance therein, and be the channel through whom God would bless the nations (descendants of Ham and Japheth, along with non-Hebrew descendants of Shem [*e.g.*, later in time, the Arabic nations]).

And the fulfillment of this in the antitype will be exactly the same. Following the Tribulation the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob will be removed from a worldwide dispersion to realize an inheritance in the same land to which Abraham was called, and in this land they will be the channel through which God will bless the nations (Gen. 12:1-3).

And there are other types in Genesis dealing with this coming time of trouble and that which follows (*e.g.*, the destruction of the cities of the plain, followed by Abraham's position on the mount [chs. 18, 19]; or there is the time of famine following a time of plenty during Joseph's day, followed by Joseph making himself known to his brothers [chs. 41-45], with his brothers then going forth with a dual message: "Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt" [45:26]).

Then Exodus begins with a type having to do with the coming Tribulation — the Israelites being persecuted in Egypt by an Assyrian Pharaoh, typifying Antichrist who is referred to as an Assyrian, for he will arise from within the borders of the ancient Assyrian kingdom (*cf.* Isa. 10:5; 14:25; Dan. 8:8, 9; Micah 5:5). And the Book of Exodus continues from that point, showing that which will occur when the Israelites are brought to the end of themselves and cry out to the God of their fathers.

All of these types, among many other types, present different parts of the same word picture, with the complete picture being seen only from all of its different parts (*e.g.*, almost the entire Book of Esther deals with this subject, depicting the actions of Haman as he sought to destroy the Jewish people). And, once an individual begins to clearly see this Old Testament word picture, as it is presented in many different parts, he will then be in a much better position to understand the New Testament counterpart in the Book of Revelation.

2) The Psalms

This future period is dealt with time after time in the Psalms as well, though usually within a broader scope of God's manifested wrath than just the final seven years. A structure seen in many of the Psalms is *deliverance by Israel's God following persecution at the hands of Israel's enemies*, with the final and worst of the persecutors typified by men such as the Assyrian Pharaoh in Exodus or Haman in Esther.

The second Psalm would be characteristic of the broad scope of Gentile persecution often in view, with the matter carried to the very end. The first three verses introduce a Messianic Psalm. Contextually, these verses would have to do with Gentile world power immediately prior to Christ's return, which would place the matter within the seven-year Tribulation. But these verses are used in Acts 4:25ff relative to Gentile powers at the time of Christ's first coming as well. And many of the Psalms would lend themselves to this type latitude when mention is made of Gentile powers, with the end of the matter always in view and often placed at the forefront, as in the second Psalm.

The eighty-third Psalm would be of particular interest in the preceding respect. This Psalm has to do with ten nations which have "consulted together with one consent." These nations are seen

to be "confederate against" Israel (vv. 5-8). And, together, they have said,

"Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance" (v. 4).

The nations mentioned in this Psalm are all Middle East nations. The Psalm has to do mainly with Antichrist's ten-kingdom federation of nations during the Tribulation, which, as in the Psalm, will be Middle East nations, not European as is often erroneously thought. But, though the Psalm has to do centrally with a future alliance of nations, a present-day application of the Psalm (similar to that seen in Psalm 2) is too obvious to miss.

Over the past half century, from Nasser, to Arafat, to Ahmadinejad the cry from certain leaders in nations surrounding Israel has been *the same* as in Psa. 83:4. But what will be the end of the matter? This same Psalm goes on to relate that which will occur. *God will take care of the matter in His Own time and way, as He always does* (vv. 13-18).

3) The Prophets

It would be pointless to even attempt to begin listing places in the prophets which deal with this future time, particularly the conclusion of God's plans and purposes when the Jewish people have been brought to the end of themselves, crying out to the God of their fathers. The main message of the prophets centers around *God's call to a disobedient people to repent, showing conditions both preceding and following repentance*.

The main purpose for God's wrath befalling His people, as seen in both the Old and New Testaments, is *to bring to pass His call through the prophets*. God desires to possess an obedient people through whom He can bless the Gentile nations of the earth.

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