

Date: January 10, 2018  
Title: "The Heavy Weight Title Fight" - Round Three [the third cycle of sevens]  
Text:  
Theme:

### Introduction:

There is something in boxing that appeals to the human condition. Many people have heard the likes of Joe Louis, Roberto Duran, Jack Dempsey, Floyd Mayweather Jr., Muhammad Ali, Mike Tyson, and Sugar Ray Robinson. When they fought, people took note. The biblical *Story* line and the Book of Revelation is very much like two Titans entering a ring and fighting it out with only one leaving victorious.

Throughout the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of seven you have two Titans battling it out; the seed of the Serpent versus the seed of the Woman. Fortunately, regardless of what it might look like in and between rounds; God wins!

Although it can be redundant, let us remember what we are dealing with. Before us lies the puzzle of a "million" pieces. Many of the pieces are very detailed with various shades of the same color. The task of understanding how all of the pieces fit together seems daunting. Yet once we look at the picture on the cover, the ability to put the pieces together becomes feasible.

Such is the Scripture with its sixty-six books, written by forty different authors covering a time span of 1,500 years. Unless and until we understand the larger *Story* and the centerpiece of this *Story*, fitting the pieces will be forced and damaging. This is not only true for understanding the whole, but also the various pieces. The Book [or rather Letter] of Revelation is a piece in the puzzle. Not only does the Letter fit the entire biblical narrative, but all the pieces inside of Revelation have a cohesive whole that governs and guides the reader in its parts.

**THEME:** God comforts His people by reclaiming what is rightfully His as Creator and Redeemer. As He pushes His **Vision** for creating forward, He is reconstituting the Garden for the joy of His people. God is throwing the squatters out and destroying the invasive species.

For many years, I looked at Revelation as a time of doom and gloom where God was going to unleash His wrath against the unbelieving inhabitants of planet Earth. I always saw it as future. Something I would never experience or encounter. It never crossed my mind that it was a Letter written to encourage the suffering people of God. That is wasn't just about the future, but the past, and the present. Listen to how author Michael Horton describes this same tension.

"Some Christians are waiting for destruction. Whenever they see news reports on yet another rogue nation achieving the capacity for making nuclear bombs, they sigh, "Well, Armageddon is pretty near at hand. Good thing we won't be here when the earth is blown up." In their view, there will be a secret rapture of believers, followed by a seven-year tribulation under the cruel scepter of the antichrist. After this, Satan will be bound for a golden age of a thousand years. Then he will be released to wreak havoc again one last time, followed by yet another fall

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(a rebellion of human beings and angels). Only after the earth is completely destroyed will we live and reign forever with Christ in heaven. **But is this what Scripture says?** On the Mount of Olives, Jesus teaches us to expect a long period of wars, earthquakes, and other calamities (Matt 24). “All these are the beginning of birth pains,” he says (v. 8). **This period began as his followers were persecuted and cast out of the synagogues, and the temple was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70.** On the one hand, it will be a period of intense persecution of the church (v. 9). On the other hand, even through persecution the gospel will spread to the ends of the earth. But the end will not come, Jesus says, until the gospel has been proclaimed to all people. **Do you see the paradox?** We are living in this period that is simultaneously an age of prosperity where the salvation of God is reaching the ends of the earth, yet also an age of tribulation and suffering. The church will thrive in growing and spreading even as the world will become more corrupt and hostile to Christ’s kingdom. After this lengthy period, Jesus explains, he will return with his angels to gather his elect from the whole earth and judge the nations.”<sup>1</sup>

Listen to how F.F. Bruce describes the intent of the Book of Revelation.

“The author, John by name, was at the time exiled on the island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea, and reports a series of visions which symbolically portray the triumph of Christ both in His own passion and in the sufferings of His people at the hand of His enemies and theirs. The book was written in the days of the Flavian emperors (AD 69-96) **to encourage hard-pressed Christians with the assurance that, notwithstanding the apparent odds against which they had to contend, their victory was not in doubt; Jesus, not Caesar, had been invested by the Almighty with the Sovereignty of the world.**”<sup>2</sup>

### **THE BIG PICTURE:**

1. This is a revelation of God and His work to reclaim what is His by Creation and Redemption.
2. The “Tribulation” is God reclaiming what is His and reconstituting the Garden for the joy of His people.
3. The cycles of “7” are the telling and retelling of this *Story*.
4. Each cycle speaks to what has been, is, and will be culminating in the final and fullest action of God is setting things straight at His coming [i.e. Armageddon].
5. Instead of reading it all consecutively, we should read it concurrently.
6. There is sequence, but there are pauses that expand on individual elements within the sequence.
7. The Church is in Tribulation.
8. God’s redemptive *Story* is always being retold.
9. God will make good on His promises and fully reclaim all that is His as Creator and Redeemer by reconstituting His Garden for the joy of His people.

One of the difficulties we have with the Revelation is seeking answers to questions not being asked. We read Revelation and ask “when?” The question is appropriate as can be seen by its repetition in the New Testament.

- <sup>9</sup> “When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; <sup>10</sup> and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘**How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?**’ <sup>11</sup> And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also” (rev. 6:9-11).
- <sup>3</sup> “As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘**Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?**’ <sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘See to it that no one misleads you’” (Matt. 24:3, 4).
- <sup>6</sup> “So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, ‘**Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?**’ <sup>7</sup> He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; <sup>8</sup> but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth’” (Acts 1:6-8).

But as we approach the Revelation we must ask, “Is this the intent of the writing?” My short answer is no. The question is not “when” but “what?” What is this text talking about? Why is it here? What is the response it is looking for in the ears of the hearer?

I am of the opinion that we have fixated on the “when” and lost sight of the “what is it and why is it happening.”

**Outline:**

I would like to do is give a “fly over” concerning our next cycle of seven. Let us begin.

**“There are several parallels between the series of seven seals (Rev. 6:1-8:1) and the series of seven trumpets (8:2-11:19).** In each series the first four belong together. In each series the first six do not deal so much with the church as with the unrepentant, unbelieving enemies of Christ and of His Church. And in each case there is a special section about the church between the sixth and the seventh in the series. Rev. 10:1 to 11:14 corresponds to Rev. 7. Both sections cover the entire New Testament age in point of time and must not be thought of as picturing something that slips in somehow and takes place just before the end.”<sup>3</sup>

Seven Trumpets	Seven Bowls
1. earth (8:7)	1. earth (16:2)
2 sea (8:8-9)	2. sea (16:3)
3. rivers, springs (8:10-11)	3. rivers, springs (16:4-5)
4. sun, moon, stars (8:12)	4. sun (16:8)
5. pit of the Abyss (9:1)	5. throne of the beast (16:10)
6. river Euphrates (9:13-14)	6. river Euphrates (16:12)
7: lightning, hail (11:15, 19)	7. lightning, hail (16:17, 21)

Kistemaker, New Testament Commentary, page 272

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“The trumpets herald great plagues, the worldwide version of the plagues of Egypt at the time when God was making ready to rescue his people from slavery.”<sup>4</sup>

### I. The First Four Trumpets ([Creation] 8:1-13)

There is silence in heaven. A realm where worship is unceasing, there is silence. It is the silence of awe.

This is the TRIBULATION. This has been, is, and will be until Jesus returns.

- A. vv. 1-5 Introduction
- B. vv. 6, 7 first trumpet - 1/3 of greenery targeted
- C. vv. 8, 9 second trumpet - 1/3 of sea based life killed
- D. vv. 10, 11 third trumpet - 1/3 of fresh water based life killed
- E. vv. 12, 13 fourth trumpet - 1/3 celestial bodies targeted

Order in Exodus	Plague in Exodus	Exodus Scripture Reference	In Revelation	Revelation Scripture Reference
1	Water turned to blood	7:14-24	A third of the sea turned to blood	8:8
			The two witnesses have the power to turn water to blood	11:6
			Sea, rivers, springs turn to blood	16:3-4
2	Frogs	7:25-8:11	Three unclean spirits like frogs	16:13
3	Gnats	8:12-15	<i>No mention of a plague of gnats in Revelation</i>	
4	Flies	8:15-28	<i>No mention of a plague of flies in Revelation</i>	
5	Pestilence (livestock disease)	9:1-7	<i>No mention of a plague of pestilence in Revelation; But livestock may die off if crops ruined (Rev. 6:8 famine) and food too expensive (Rev. 6:6)</i>	
6	Boils	9:8-12	Festering, ugly sores	16:2, 11
7	Hail and Lightning	9:13-35	Lightning hurled to earth	8:5
			Hail and fire mixed with blood	8:7
			Hailstones like huge weights	16:21
8	Locusts	10:1-20	Locusts	9:3-11
9	Darkness	10:21-29	Darkness (one-third)	8:12
			Kingdom of the beast plunged into darkness	16:10
10	Death of the first-born by the Destroying Angel	11:1-10, 12:29-30	Death of one-third of the human race by the four angels of death	9:13-19

<https://www.slideshare.net/ElizabethCole/the-plagues-of-egypt-echoes-in-the-book-of-revelation>

Why a third? The idea occurs in Revelation 8:7-12; 9:15-18; 12:4.

“John enumerates the three plagues that destroy a third of the human race (v. 15); they are *fire, smoke, and sulfur* discharging from the mouths of devilish monsters. These three natural elements are symbols that represent war, desolation, and destruction.

First, the Old Testament teaches that fire refers to war, for “burning a city with fire was a basic principle of ancient total warfare” (Harold Van Broekhoven Jr. ISBE, 2:305).

Next, the fire of warfare includes the smoke that obscures the light of the sun, pollutes the air, and suffocates every being that has breath. In the Old Testament, smoke is a manifestation of God’s fierce wrath directed against his enemies (Judg. 20:40; 2 Sam. 22:9; Ps. 18:8; Isa. 30:27).

Last, sulfur, also known as brimstone, in Scripture represents God’s punishment of the wicked, as is clearly seen in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24). When deposits of sulfur begin to burn, toxic gasses are released, especially in volcanic eruptions. A combination of hot lava and burning sulfur results in painful agony and death for all those in its destructive path.”<sup>5</sup>

David Stern, in the *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, offers this balanced approach to the judgments in Revelation: “If these verses in Revelation are to be understood literally, then, since God uses nature to accomplish his purposes, one can imagine asteroids plunging into the earth, other materials from outer space darkening the skies and infecting the water, and heat flashes setting fire to the vegetation; and one can seek scientific explanations for such phenomena. **But if these are graphic but figurative ways of describing God’s judgment and the terror it will evoke, such speculations and researches are irrelevant. There are intelligent, well-informed God-fearing New Testament scholars taking each approach**” (p. 815).<sup>6</sup>

I see it as “graphic but figurative.”

## II. The Fifth Trumpet / 1<sup>st</sup> woe ([Creatures] 9:1-12 [the bottomless pit])

- “And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into **the deep**” (Luke 8:31).
- “Or, Who shall descend into **the deep**? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)” (Rom. 10:7).
- “And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of **the bottomless pit**” (Rev. 9:1).
- “And he opened **the bottomless pit**; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit” (Rev. 9:2).
- “And they had a king over them, which is the angel of **the bottomless pit**, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon” (Rev. 9:11).
- “And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of **the bottomless pit** shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them” (Rev. 11:7).
- “The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of **the bottomless pit**, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is” (Rev. 17:8).
- “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of **the bottomless pit** and a great chain in his hand” (Rev. 20:1).

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- “And cast him into **the bottomless pit**, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season” (Rev. 20:3).

“‘Bottomless pit’ is one word in the Greek of the New Testament and is literally the ‘**abyss**,’ which means ‘bottomless, unbounded, the pit, or the immeasurable depth.’ Roman mythology featured a similar place called Orcus, a very deep gulf or chasm in the lowest parts of the earth used as the common receptacle of the dead and, especially, as the abode of demons. The bottomless pit of Revelation 9:1-12 holds a unique type of demon. It is also the home of the beast who makes war against the two witnesses (Revelation 11:7-8). At the beginning of the millennial kingdom, the bottomless pit is the place where Satan is bound (Revelation 20:1-3). At the end of the thousand years, Satan is released and promptly leads an unsuccessful revolt against God (Revelation 20:7-10).

The bottomless pit may be associated with a place called **Tartarus**. This Greek word is translated as ‘hell’ and is used only once in Scripture, in 2 Peter 2:4 [**hypox legomenon**]. It refers to the place where ‘angels who sinned’ are reserved in chains of darkness for judgment. The NIV says these angels in Tartarus are held in ‘gloomy dungeons.’ These same angels are also mentioned in Jude 6 as the angels who “abandoned their own home” (cf. Genesis 6:2).

If **Tartarus** is the same as the **Abyss**, then the inhabitants of the bottomless pit are the same angels who sinned and left their first habitation. God uses the bottomless pit as a holding place for the most evil of angels, including Satan himself and those who tried and failed before the Flood to thwart God’s plan to bring the Seed of the woman into the world (Genesis 3:15). These prisoners of the bottomless pit hate humanity and seek to destroy them, but God controls their terror and limits their power.”<sup>7</sup>

OT - Sheol / NT - Hades	
Place of Torment	Abraham’s Bosom
Abyss / Tartarus	Paradise

“As the Hebrew word ‘Sheol’ spoke of the state, condition, or place of the dead in the Old Testament, the same is true in the New Testament with the Greek word “Hades.”

### Definition

The word Hades has a number of different meanings in the New Testament.

1. The Grave - The Place Of Bodily Decay
2. The Place Of The Punishment For The Wicked
3. Possibly As A General Term For The Unseen Realm Of The Dead

Hades is always connected with death, never with life. The context will determine its meaning. It does not refer specifically, or exclusively, to the place of punishment. Like Sheol, it is an intermediate place - it never refers to the place of final punishment.”<sup>8</sup>

There is a pit from which evil comes. It is a dark place filled with demonic personalities. There is a “king” over this pit named Apollyon. This “king,” however, is under rule. There is another

king who rules over this malignant king. He is the “King of kings and Lord of lords.” This king has the keys and opens the pit to allow His purposes to be carried forward.

The one who holds the keys determines, if, when, and how long the inhabitants can leave this pit. Although there is one who rules within the pit, another rules over the pit!

The bottomless pit is presently active. This is the biblical *Story*. The serpent’s seed is always assaulting the seed of the woman and that is what we will see retold in the coming chapters.

Compare 9:4 w/ 8:6, 7

Compare 9:6 w/ 8:11; 9:15

9:4 **They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree**, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man.

8:6 And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them. 7 The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

9:6 And **in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.**

8:11 The name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and **many men died from the waters**, because they were made bitter.

9:15 And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, **so that they would kill a third of mankind.**

The sealing in 9:4 is expanded on in 7:1ff.

### III. Sixth trumpet / 2<sup>nd</sup> woe (9:13-11:14)

Two events are described in the sixth trumpet. Notice the use of “five months” in verse 5. What is the significance of five? Probably nothing. Just as he uses “two hundred million” to express the thought of overwhelming numbers so also with many of the numbers in the Revelation. The number “five” [pente] occurs three times in Revelation (9:5, 10; 17:10).

Notice the phrase “who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year” (9:15). It was in the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4) Jesus came the first time and it will be in the fullness of time He comes the second time.

Compare 9:5, 6, 20, 21 w/ 6:12-17 – the unbelieving persist in their unbelief. They refuse to become slaves of God. The judgment of God against the unbelieving is just. **They will receive what they deserve.** Currently, we are in the wheat and tares stage (Matt. 13:24-30; 36-40 [Read]), but a day of separation is coming (Matt. 24, 25) when God will bring His people into His presence and the “non-people” will be separated from His presence and thus joy forever.

“Verses 10:1 – 11:14: These verses serve as an interlude between the sixth trumpet and seventh trumpet (11:15). The seals and the bowls also have a brief interlude between their sixth and seventh judgments (7:1-17; 16:15). **God’s intention is to encourage and comfort His people in**

**the midst of the fury and to remind them that He is still sovereign, that He remembers His people, and that they will ultimately be victorious.**"<sup>9</sup>

“Why does God allow human suffering and death? Why does He allow evil to go unpunished? When will He break the silence and punish the wicked? Have you ever been asked such questions? Have you personally asked any of these questions? This may be the most difficult biblical question to answer this side of eternity. It is the one question that no Christian wants to be asked. After all, many people say they can’t accept a God who stands by and lets evil continue in the world. Even Christians have fallen away from Christ because they couldn’t harmonize the reality of evil and suffering with a God of love [**p.s. as a reminder, remember the two words, “reclaiming and reconstituting. This is the answer to the dilemma of evil**]. Yet, for those that are interested, the Bible provides an answer to this dilemma in Revelation 10:1-11. Before we delve into our passage, let’s get our bearings. Revelation 10:1-11:14 is a parenthetical vision. The opening of the seventh seal was preceded by two visions (7:1-8; 11-17), so here, the sounding of the seventh trumpet is preceded by two visions (10:1-11; 11:1-14). **The emphasis shifts temporarily from the outpouring of God’s wrath on unbelievers to the consolation and encouragement of believers.**”<sup>10</sup>

A. The angel and the little book (10)

Emphasis sits on the Word of/from God. This word brings news of judgment. Hearing from heaven is sweet. The content of judgment is not. Judgment for the believing is sweet; for the unbeliever it is bitter.

1. The Mystery of God is finished (v. 1-[7])

What is the mystery that is finished? Could the answer be as simple as what is stated in verses 8-11? God is faithful to fulfill His word to the believer and the unbelieving.

2. The Word of God is fulfilled (vv. 8-11)

These two statements are one and the same. The revealing from chapters 4 and following is the mystery being fulfilled. **What Daniel seals, Jesus reveals.**

B. The two witnesses (11:1-14)

Two Witnesses	Second Beast
1. Prophets (11:10)	1. False prophet (16:13; 19:20; 20:10)
2. Perform signs (11:6)	2. Performs signs (13:13, 14; 19:20)
3. Receive authority from God (11:3)	3. Receives authority from the first beast (13:12)
4. Torment the inhabitants of the earth (11:10)	4. Deceives the inhabitants of the earth (13:14)
5. Two olive trees; lamps (11:4)	5. Two horns (13:11)
6. Breath of life from God (11:11)	6. Breathes into the image of the first beast (13:15)

Kistemaker, New Testament Commentary, page 336



This scene is descriptive of God's path since the garden and the serpent's assault against Him.

The two witnesses testify to the truth of God to His people and against the unbelieving. The "two" refer to the two great personages Moses and Elijah. Why these two? This symbolism speaks of the "two or three witnesses" who testify as to the righteousness of the sentence pronounced against the guilty and the word of hope to His people. God's judgment is just.

- "And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs" (2 Kings 9:32).
- "But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established" (Matt. 18:16).
- "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).
- "This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (2 Cor. 13:1).
- "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses" (1 Tim. 5:19). {before: or, under}
- "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses" (Heb. 10:28).

Notice verse 4. If they are people why are they described as two olive trees and two lampstands standing before the Lord of the earth?

**What is the intent of this reference to 3 ½ or 7 years? The intent is to draw us back to the 70 weeks of Daniel. Just as earlier in chapter 1 the reader was to think, "This is that," so also here. Those who read chapters 12-15 should think, "This is that." What Daniel spoke of is coming to pass right now.**

What about Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week? Why seventy?

"Seventy is often connected with God's administration of the world. After the Flood the world was repopulated through 70 descendants of Noah (Gn. 10); 70 persons went down to Egypt (Gn. 46:27); 70 elders were appointed to help Moses administer Israel in the wilderness (Nu. 11:16); the people of Judah spent 70 years of exile in Babylon (Je. 5:11; 29:10); 70 weeks, 'sevens', were decreed by God as the period in which Messianic redemption was to be accomplished (Dn. 9:24); Jesus sent forth the Seventy (Lk. 10:1); he enjoined forgiveness 'until seventy times seven' (Mt. 18:22)."<sup>11</sup>

**The Sabbath**

- Once every 7 days = Sabbath Day
- 7 Nationwide feasts a year
- Every 7 years = Sabbath Year
- Every 7 Sabbath Years (49 years) -JUBILEE

"The subject of the sentence is ambiguous. Theod. makes it to be "one week." LXX. "the covenant;" others take it to be the Antichristian prince spoken of in the last verse, an opinion which derives some support from Daniel 7:25. According to this interpretation, the covenant refers to the agreement which the prince makes with the large number of persons who become

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apostates. But (1) the word “covenant” does not apply to any such agreement, but rather to a covenant with God, and (2) in Daniel 9:26 it is the people of the prince, and not the prince, which is the subject of the sentence. It is therefore more appropriate to take Messiah as the subject. During the last closing week of the long period mentioned, Messiah, though cut off, shall confirm God’s covenant (comp. Daniel 11:22; Daniel 11:28; Daniel 11:30; Daniel 11:32) with many, that is, with those who receive Him.”<sup>12</sup>

“John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, and Isaac Newton all connect the 70th week with the Messiah. When Christ cried “It is finished,” the priests were officiating in the temple. It was the hour of the evening sacrifice, and as the Passover lamb representing Christ was about to be slain, ‘the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake and the rocks rent’ (Matthew 27:51).”<sup>13</sup>

Thus, the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel was fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus.

<http://jewsforjudaism.org/knowledge/articles/daniel-9-a-true-biblical-interpretation/> for a thorough treatment of Daniel 9 from a Jewish perspective the preceding article is a good read. It does not support a Christian reading of Daniel 9.

### IV. Seventh trumpet / 3<sup>rd</sup> woe (11:15ff)

11:15-19 retells what is true (chaps. 4, 5). Heaven awaits; victory is sure; Jesus has won! It is a beautiful reminder of what has been, is, and will be. Stay the course. Be encouraged. **The following chapters (12-15) all say the same thing, “God is reclaiming what is His as Creator and Redeemer and is reconstituting His Garden for the joy of His people.”**

“Rev. 12:1-15:1ff speaks of three ‘signs’ or ‘wonders’ (12:1, 3; 15:10, which are presented in seven visions. These seven visions, like the visions of the seven seals (5:1ff.) and the seven trumpets (8:2ff), portray the New Testament times to the end of the world and into eternity. Prominent in this series of pictures is the raging of Satan against Christ and against His Church.”<sup>14</sup>

#### A. The Woman and the Dragon (12)

1. The Woman, the Dragon, the Child (vv. 1-6)
2. War in Heaven (vv. 7-12)
3. Hell on Earth (vv. 13-17)

“This fascinating book is primarily written in a chronological style with occasional breaks for overviews of specific subjects. **Revelation 12 is one of these overviews, providing a history stretching from the time before humans existed until the time just before Christ’s return as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.**”<sup>15</sup>

“Although (chapter 11:15), records the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the effects it produces are not described until chapters 15 through 18. Chapters 12 to 14 restates or summarizes that same period, but describing events from Satan's vantage point. Including taking the readers back to the original rebellion as Satan is cast to the earth along with one third of the angels (demons).”<sup>16</sup>

**“Chapter 12 of Revelation portrays the whole sweep of the drama from its origin in heaven, to Satan’s attack on Jesus, through the persecutions of the Dark Ages, until the final conflict at the time of the end.”**<sup>17</sup>

### **The first of seven signs in the Book of Revelation.**

- “And there appeared **a great wonder** in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars” (Rev. 12:1).
- “And there appeared another **wonder** in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads” (Rev. 12:3).
- “And he doeth **great wonders**, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men” (Rev. 13:13).
- “And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those **miracles** which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live” (Rev. 13:14).
- “And **I saw another sign** in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God” (Rev. 15:1).
- “For they are the spirits of devils, **working miracles**, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Rev. 16:14).
- “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet **that wrought miracles** before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev. 19:20).

### B. The Beast from the Sea (13)

“Rev. 13 deals with the same things as Rev. 12:13-17, but at greater length. In point of time Rev. 13 covers the entire New Testament age, beginning with the exaltation of Christ.”<sup>18</sup>

“Revelation 13 is composed of two major sections, each of which describes a beast. Verses 1-10 depict the Beast from “out of the sea.” This Beast represents civil and military power. Verses 11-18 describe the Beast from “out of the earth.” The second Beast represents religious and media power in service of the first Beast. Both Beasts are instruments of the Dragon to persecute the church and to deceive the unbelieving world. In these two sections, God gives us two precautions that hold true not only for tribulation believers but also for believers of all ages, including ours.”<sup>19</sup>

## Revelation 8-15 Overview

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1. The Beast out of the Sea (vv. 1-10)
2. The Beast Out of the Earth (vv. 11-18)

“Several points in the scene are worth noticing. **First**, a family resemblance between the dragon and the beast is evident. The dragon in chapter 12 had "seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads" (12:3), while the beast from the sea in chapter 13 has *ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns*. Only the number and placement of the crowns vary. **Second**, although it is not stated in so many words that the beast is the dragon's 'offspring,' this is suggested by a setting in which the dragon seems to call the beast out of the sea and gives it *his power and his throne and great authority* (v. 2). **Finally**, the beast's fatally wounded head (v. 3; compare vv. 12, 14) recalls a significant detail in the ancient prophecy from Genesis about the serpent and the woman: 'And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; *he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel*' (Gen 3:15, italics mine). Clearly the beast from the sea bears the battle scars of the combat prophesied in that ancient text."<sup>20</sup>

“The 'mark' is also called the name of the beast and the number of his name. The devil does not want to be outdone. God seals His servants, the 144,000 saints, in their foreheads (Rev. 7:9, 4). The devil marks those that are his 'in the forehead by way of profession; in the hand with respect to work and service.' The 'mark' is that by which it may be known to whom an individual belongs (John 8:44). Every human being has either the seal of Christ or the mark of the beast. The mark of the beast can be removed and replaced with the seal of Christ, but those who are sealed by the Lord can never be lost."<sup>21</sup>

### C. The Lamb and the 144,000 (14)

“The first of these three visions supplements Rev. 7. The second supplements Rev. 13 and prepares for Rev. 18. The third brings the second 'sign' or 'wonder,' begun in Rev. 12:3, to a close."<sup>22</sup>

1. The Lamb and His First-fruits (vv. 1-5)
2. Three Angelic Announcements (vv. 6-13)

“There are three parts to the angel's eternal Gospel in Rev. 14:7."<sup>23</sup>

- a. First, 'Fear God, and give glory to Him.'
- b. Second, "The second part of the angel's message gives the reason why we should fear God and give Him glory: 'For the hour of His judgment is come' (Rev. 14:7).
- c. Third, "The last part of this angel's message is an echo of Matt. 4:10: "Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God."

3. Two Views of the Harvest (vv. 14-20)

“The 114,000: **In contrast to the distressing scenes of the last chapter, the triumph of those who gain the victory over the beast and its image is now brought to view.**”<sup>24</sup>

Chapter 13	Chapter 14
lamb (v. 11)	Lamb (vv. 1, 4)
out of the earth (v. 11)	Mount Zion (v. 1)
worship of the beast (v. 12)	song of the 144,000 (v. 3)
beast’s number 666 (v. 18)	saints’ number 144,000 (v. 1)
everyone is enslaved (v. 16)	saints are redeemed (v. 3)
mark of the beast (vv. 16, 17)	name of Father and Lamb (v. 1)
deception of the beast (v. 14)	no lie in their mouth (v. 5)

Kistemaker, New Testament Commentary, page 400

“This chapter forms the last section of the third interlude of the Book. Again we should note that this material is not chronological in that it does not take up the next events of the Tribulation. Rather it gives us a preview of some of the key events that lie ahead in that period of unprecedented trial. In fact, John now answers two vital questions: What will become of those who refuse to receive the mark of the beast and are killed (vss. 1-5)? And what will happen to the beast and his servants (vss. 6-20)? So chapter 14 prepares the way for the climatic events which will follow from chapter 15 on. This chapter gives us both a backward glance to the beginning of the Tribulation and a forward glance to its end and the glorious reign of the Lord Jesus Christ with His saints. **Revelation 13** revealed the darkest and most grotesque hours of human history with Satan’s conspiracy in seeming control of all humanity. But it closed with the declaration of man’s number, number 666; a number that falls short of God’s perfection. This was both a promise and a declaration that man would fail and God would prevail and so would also God’s people. **In the two previous chapters we see clearly that God’s people will be severely persecuted and sacrificed like sheep. But here we see their ultimate triumph via the triumph of the Lamb of God.**”<sup>25</sup>

Here, we encounter for the first time in Revelation, “Babylon.”

**Babylon (14:8)**

- “And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Rev. 14:8).
- “And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath” (Rev. 16:19).
- “And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Rev. 17:5). {harlots: or, fornications}

## Revelation 8-15 Overview

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- “And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird” (Rev. 18:2).
- “Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come” (Rev. 18:10).
- “And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all” (Rev. 18:21).

**Just as Babylon symbolizes humanity’s attempt to spread their glory, so also the Garden speaks of God’s design to spread His glory “globally.” Each are the opposite of the other. Babylon embodies the Serpent’s Seed and the Garden embodies God’s Seed.**

### D. A Scene of “Heaven” (15)

“Glory to God in the Highest and Peace to [People] of Good will” Luke 2:14			
Revelation 4; 5	3 <sup>rd</sup> Cycle of Seven		
	Revelation 11:15-19	Revelation 14:1-5	Revelation 15:1-8

“As we look at Revelation 15, we will be able to see the light at the end of the tunnel. However, in this case, it’s not a train; it’s our great and glorious God. Revelation 15 is the shortest chapter in the whole book, just eight verses long. It doesn’t give us any new information of events of the tribulation. Rather, it is a prelude to the last round of judgments that God is going to send upon the earth. It is as though the Lord is warning, “Brace yourself, I have not yet finished judging the wickedness of the earth, there is more to come.” Revelation 15 is an introduction to the beginning of the end! It reminds us that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. In these eight verses, we are encouraged to celebrate God’s work in two ways.”<sup>26</sup>

“Rev. 15 and 16 belong together, while at the same time Rev. 15 is a complete unit in itself and forms a smooth link and transition between the preceding and the following.”<sup>27</sup>

“Now in Chapters 15 and 16 we see the final outpouring of God's wrath before Christ's return. That wrath is expressed by the effects of the seventh trumpet which was opened in chapter (11:15), which is very short and begins the introduction to those last seven judgments.”<sup>28</sup>

- The seventh trumpet runs from 11:15 through 15:8.
- Chapter 16:1 begins the six bowls of wrath. Verses 13-16 speak of Armageddon.
- Chapters 17 and 18 are the fall of Babylon.
- Chapters 19 and 20 are the battle of Armageddon.
- All of these events speak of a single event from different perspectives. Much like the gospels speak of one story from four different vantage points, so also the final and climactic return of Jesus. Each chapter(s) tell the same story from different vantage points.
- From chapters 16-20 God is reclaiming what is His by right as Creator and Redeemer and is reconstituting the Garden for the joy of His people. This is what we will see in chapters 21 and 22.

Notice how the Book of Revelation speaks of something coming to an end. There is an end, a goal that all of God's purposes move toward.

### **Finished** [Teleo / Telos]

- “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” (Rev. 10:7).
- “I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; **for in them is filled up the wrath of God**” (Rev. 15:1).
- “For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, **until the words of God shall be fulfilled**” (Rev. 17:17).
- <sup>3</sup>“And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be **fulfilled**: and after that he must be loosed a little season. . . <sup>5</sup> But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were **finished**. This is the first resurrection. . . <sup>7</sup> And when the thousand years are **expired**, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison” (Rev. 20:3, 5, 7).
- “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the **ending**, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty” (Rev. 1:8).
- “And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the **end**. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (Rev. 21:6).
- “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the **end**, the first and the last” (Rev. 22:13).

Revelation speaks of God finishing what He began. If our reading of Revelation is correct, then what you and I are experiencing is God reclaiming what is His by right and is reconstituting His Garden for our joy and His glory!

Let us look at our lives and work to understand it in the light of this great Revelation.

### **Shepherding the Sheep:** (What is the NEXT STEP?)

## Revelation 8-15 Overview

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- <sup>1</sup> Michael Horton, *Core Christianity*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 155.
- <sup>2</sup> F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are they Reliable?* 5, 6.
- <sup>3</sup> Luther Poellot, *Revelation*, CCCS, p. 134.
- <sup>4</sup> Tom Wright, *Revelation for Everyone*, p. 78.
- <sup>5</sup> Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary*, p. 299.
- <sup>6</sup> <https://oncedelivered.net/2012/04/27/it-fell-on-a-third-revelation-810-11/>
- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/bottomless-pit.html>
- <sup>8</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don\\_stewart/don\\_stewart\\_114.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don_stewart/don_stewart_114.cfm)
- <sup>9</sup> <http://discoverrevelation.com/Revelation%20Chapter%2010.html>
- <sup>10</sup> <https://bible.org/seriespage/19-bittersweet-book-revelation-101-11>
- <sup>11</sup> <https://bible.org/question/what-significance-numbers-scripture>
- <sup>12</sup> Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers on Daniel 9:27.
- <sup>13</sup> [http://amazingdiscoveries.org/S-deception\\_Jesus\\_70-week\\_prophecy\\_Daniel](http://amazingdiscoveries.org/S-deception_Jesus_70-week_prophecy_Daniel)
- <sup>14</sup> Luther Poellot, *Revelation*, CCCS, p. 155.
- <sup>15</sup> <https://lifehopeandtruth.com/prophecy/revelation/revelation-12/>
- <sup>16</sup> <http://www.discoverrevelation.com/Revelation%20Chapter%2012.html>
- <sup>17</sup> <http://amazingdiscoveries.org/S-deception-woman-dragon-Revelation-12-commentary>
- <sup>18</sup> Luther Poellot, *Revelation*, CCCS, p. 166.
- <sup>19</sup> <https://bible.org/seriespage/22-here-comes-beast-revelation-131-18>
- <sup>20</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/Rev/Beast-Sea>
- <sup>21</sup> Luther Poellot, *Revelation*, CCCS, p. 177.
- <sup>22</sup> Luther Poellot, *Revelation*, CCCS, p. 180.
- <sup>23</sup> Luther Poellot, *Revelation*, CCCS, p. 186.
- <sup>24</sup> [http://amazingdiscoveries.org/S-deception-Three\\_Angels\\_Messages-Revelation-14-commentary](http://amazingdiscoveries.org/S-deception-Three_Angels_Messages-Revelation-14-commentary)
- <sup>25</sup> <https://bible.org/seriespage/20-special-announcements-rev-141-20>
- <sup>26</sup> <https://bible.org/seriespage/24-end-sight-revelation-151-8>
- <sup>27</sup> Luther Poellot, *Revelation*, CCCS, p. 198.
- <sup>28</sup> <http://discoverrevelation.com/Revelation%20Chapter%2015.html>