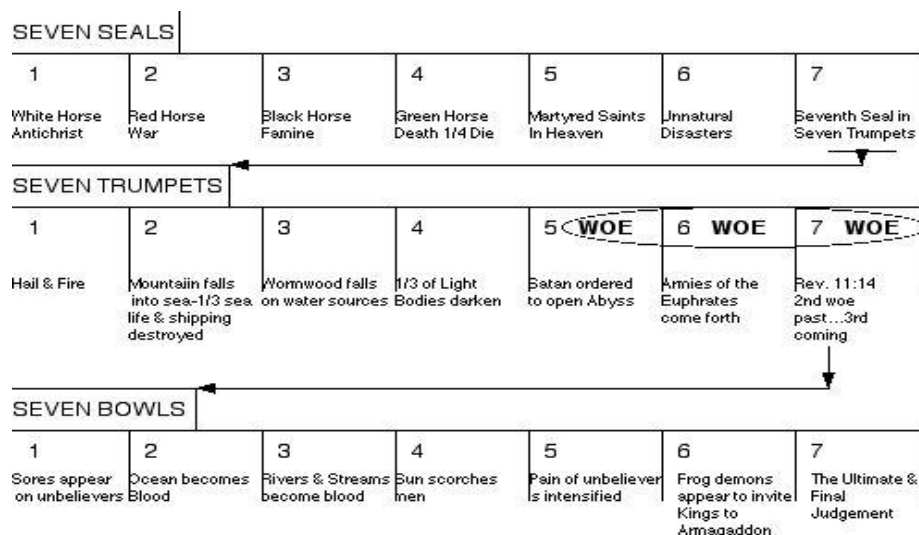


1. Last week I taught in part Rev 7:1-3 where God's mercy is revealed even as judgment descends on planet earth.
2. Before continuing, I want to provide "1Jo 1:9 time" as may be necessary.
3. I want to review some of that learned last week and then begin new material on page four.
4. The four horsemen clearly describe a summary of the events of the seven-year Tribulation when the Antichrist rises to power and asserts his influence over planet earth. They describe a series of battles occurring just before the Second Advent.
5. It would be difficult to paint any scene more moving or terrible than that described at the opening of the sixth seal.
6. All the elements of a great catastrophic judgment of God are here present, namely, a great earthquake, the sun becoming black, the moon becoming as blood, the stars of heaven falling like ripe figs, the heaven departing like the unrolling of a scroll, and every mountain and island moving. Men like Chafer, Thieme, Pentecost, Ryre and Walvord have urged an interpretation of Revelation in its plain sense unless good reasons indicate otherwise.
7. There are reasons for preferring a literal meaning. While this is not the final breakup of the world as described later, it does seem to indicate that beginning with the sixth seal, God is undertaking a direct intervention into human affairs. Let's review our summary chart and then we will continue our study of the first three verses of Revelation chapter three.



8. The judgments of war, famine, and death, and the martyrdom of the saints have largely originated in human decision and in the evil heart of man. The judgments described here, however, originate with God; seemingly His very own divine punishment inflicted upon a blasphemous world.

9. After due consideration of the great writings of past expositors from both camps and from comparisons of related Scriptures in both the Old and New Testament, there is no doubt in my mind a "literal meaning is required."

10. The resulting impression upon the unbelieving world is that the time of the judgment of God has come. They themselves say "let the mountains and rocks" ... Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" It is apparent that the creatures of earth have had some foreboding that their blasphemous unbelief and defiance of the true God have resulted in the unnatural disasters being experienced.

11. Now let's see what we can learn from Revelation Chapter seven.

Introduction

1. In contrast to chapter six which seems in the main to give a chronological sequence of major events of the Tribulation, chapter seven does not advance the narrative of events but directs attention to two major believing remnants active in the Tribulation. The opening portion of the chapter pictures the 144,000 Jewish evangelist; they are representative of a godly remnant of Israel on earth during the Tribulation.

2. The question has often been asked, will anyone be saved after the rapture? The Scriptures clearly indicate that a great multitude of both Jew and Gentile will trust in the Lord after The Church is caught up to glory.

3. Walvoord has written: "The Holy Spirit will continue to be working in the world, but in some particulars in a different way. There is good reason to believe, however, that the Holy Spirit will lead people to Christ, and many will be saved during the tribulation. A description of this is given in the seventh chapter of the Revelation, which is so plain that no one should question whether people will be saved after the rapture."

4. Let's now look at an expanded translation of verses one through three of chapter seven.

Rev 7:1 After the vision of the six seals evincing a summary of God's judgment of planet earth during the Tribulation, the scene returns to the beginning of the Tribulation; here I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth; the winds were symbolic of the wrath of God just summarized by the six seals; the four were there to prevent certain destructive powers.

Rev 7:2 Then I saw a fifth angel coming up from the east, this angel had a special protective seal. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the earth.

Rev 7:3 "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put our protective seal on the foreheads of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists."

1. The awful judgments described in chapter six give rise to the desperate question of man, "Who is able to stand?" (Rev 6:17).

Rev 6:17 For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

2. Revelation chapter seven answers that question. It also shows once more that "even in judgment, God demonstrates mercy." God will provide an opportunity for the whole world to hear the gospel of Christ during this awful time of tribulation (Mat 24:14-15).

3. So far six seals of judgment upon the earth have been opened. Revelation chapter seven gives us a parenthetical panorama of the evangelistic activity of the Tribulation. The chapter flashes back to the very beginning of the Tribulation when the Antichrist on the white horse is first revealed, i.e., right after the Rapture.

4. It is here we see God sending out 144,000 evangelists with the gospel message before any judgments fall upon the earth. These are Jews who have been "witnessed-to" by Christians prior to the Rapture; when they discover believers are gone, they turn in faith to Christ as their Messiah.

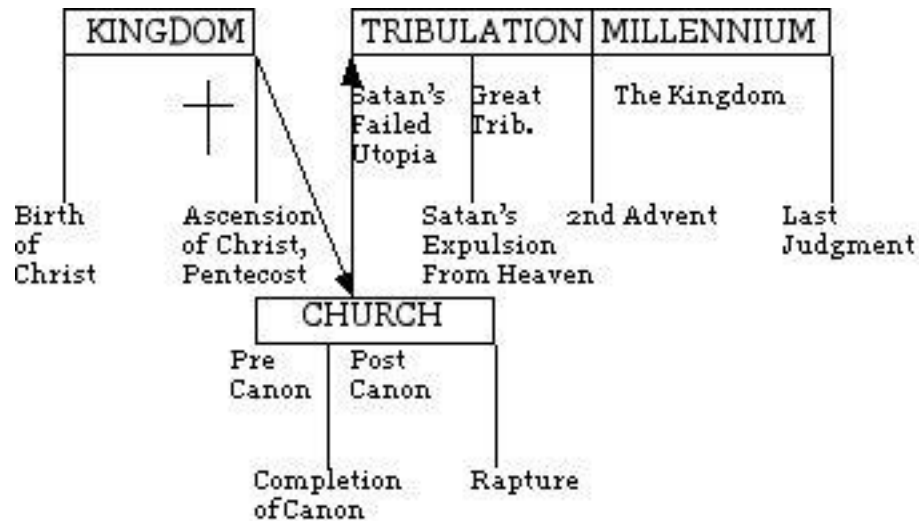
5. The latter part of chapter seven shows the great success of the Jewish evangelistic efforts. Their converts are shown at rest before the throne of God. Because angels have superior power and intelligence, the four mentioned in verse one have apparently been given authority over the weather conditions of the earth.

6. I say weather conditions because if the world's wind patterns are changed, radical effects will occur in all the rest of nature because of its delicate ecological balance.

7. Many of the prophecies relating to the Tribulation indicate freak weather conditions and storms of unprecedented intensity. The courage of many people will falter because of the fearful fate they see coming upon the earth, for the stability of the very heavens will be broken up." (Luk 21:25-26)

8. In the order of the vision as given to John, he sees in the opening verses of chapter seven four angels controlling the four winds of the earth and then we find another angel mentioned. Another angel is described as ascending from the east possessing the seal of the living God. This angel commands the four angels not to hurt the earth and the sea until the servants of God are sealed. The implication is that the judgment of God is impending and that prior to its infliction on the earth, God wants to set apart and protect these special servants.

8.1 In the verses which follow, 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel are protected by the angelic seal. It is implied that those sealed were saved very soon after the Rapture. Perhaps in response to the gospel presented during the Age of the Church and by this means are set apart as a special divine remnant and testimony to God's grace and mercy.



9. This angel coming up out of the east is said to have the "seal of the living God" with which he seals the special servants of God who will be His witness during the Tribulation period.

10. God has never allowed Himself to be without witnesses on earth to proclaim His way of forgiveness - faith alone in Christ alone. The spiritual vacuum that will be left by the removal of all Christians at the Rapture will be quickly filled with the 144,000 Jewish evangelist.

11. Several very interesting things should be noted about the "seal of the living God." The verb "to seal" (**Sphragizo**) means to make an imprint in wax with a signet ring. This was done in ancient business transactions of all kinds, and signified that whatever was thus sealed belonged to the one whose mark was on it.

12. The idea of a visible mark of ownership and guarantee of protection is inherent in the Word of God. In the New Testament, the seal of God is said to be the Holy Spirit Himself. In fact, in Eph 1:13 and 14 the same word (**Sphragizo**) used here for "seal", is used to describe the Holy Spirit. Think of this sealing as the constructive notice of a classified newspaper ad in probate matters or the recording of a realty transfer as notice to all the world.

Eph 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were **sealed (Sphragizo)** with that holy Spirit of promise,

Eph 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

12.1 This is also borne out in Eph 4:30 and 2Co 1:22.

Eph 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are **sealed** unto the day of redemption.

2Co 1:21 Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God;
2Co 1:22 Who hath also **sealed** us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

12.2 Jesus had this same seal of God, the Holy Spirit, upon Him (Joh 6:27).

Joh 6:27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father **sealed**.

Joh 6:28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

Joh 6:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

13. The seal of God - the Spirit - gives a special empowering to these servants to perform their awesome mission.

14. Revelation 7:3 also speaks of a visible mark on the forehead of the servants. Whether it is visible to everyone or just other believers is up in the air. It seems to me to be visible, but only to other believers.

15. You can be sure this mark will be in vivid contrast to the mark which the followers of Antichrist will receive when they swear allegiance to him. A seal also guarantees the protection of the person bearing it. Since these are marked men, they will be under constant attack by the followers of Antichrist as well as demonic forces.

16. But God will supernaturally protect them against all attacks. They will apparently suffer from hunger, exposure, ridicule, torture, and imprisonment at times, but all of these special servants will be preserved to continue their witness through the whole Tribulation period.

17. There are many precedents in Scripture for such a protection of God's own. For example, when God sent the flood upon the earth, He separated Noah and his family from the rest of the human race and the flood did not hurt them.

18. When God destroyed Jericho, He protected Rahab and her household. Though a former prostitute she had put her trust in God, and God protected her from the judgment that fell upon Jericho.

19. In a similar way God will provide protection to this group of 144,000 Israelites. The matter is so significant to God that the names of the tribes and their number are given in detail.

KJV

Rev 7:4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

Rev 7:5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

Rev 7:6 Of the tribe of Asher were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nepthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

Rev 7:7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

Rev 7:8 Of the tribe of Zebulun were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

NIV

Rev 7:4 Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.

Rev 7:5 From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben 12,000, from the tribe of Gad 12,000,

Rev 7:6 from the tribe of Asher 12,000, from the tribe of Naphtali 12,000, from the tribe of Manasseh 12,000,

Rev 7:7 from the tribe of Simeon 12,000, from the tribe of Levi 12,000, from the tribe of Issachar 12,000,

Rev 7:8 from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000, from the tribe of Joseph 12,000, from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000.

1. A number of significant details are mentioned in connection with the sealing of the 144,000 in Israel. This Scripture makes plain that there are twelve tribes in Israel still in existence, as the names of the different tribes are given.

2. There are, however, some omissions. In some lists of the twelve tribes both of the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, are numbered as separate tribes. In this list Manasseh is mentioned but Ephraim is not, and in place of Ephraim the name of Joseph his father is given in verse 8.

3. No explanation is made concerning this substitution. There is also no mention of the tribe of Dan, and the Bible does not tell us why Dan should be omitted.

4. As Alford points out, ancient interpreters accounted for this on the theory that the Antichrist or False Prophet would come from the tribe of Dan (compare Gen. 49:17).

Gen 49:17 Dan will be a serpent by the roadside, a viper along the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider tumbles backward.

4.1 A more common explanation is that the tribe of Dan was one of the first to go into idolatry, was small in number, and probably was thereafter classified with the tribe of Naphtali, another son of Jacob born to the same mother as Dan (Bilhah).

5. In commenting on the twelve tribes, Walter Scott writes:

“In the enumeration of the tribes throughout Scripture, of which there are about eighteen, the full representative number twelve is always given; but as Jacob has thirteen sons, one or other is always omitted. Levi is more generally omitted than any other. In the apocalyptic enumeration, Dan and Ephraim are omitted. Both these tribes were remarkable as being connected with idolatry in Israel ...”

6. In the end grace triumphs, and Dan is named first in the millennial distribution of the land among the tribes (Eze 48:2), but while first named, it is the farthest removed from Christ's Temple, being situated in the extreme north.

7. J. B. Smith observes,

“There are no fewer than 29 lists of the tribes of Israel throughout the Scriptures, thus showing the prominence accorded them in the sacred page.”

8. Though a full answer does not present itself for the omissions, it is most important that Israel is here divided into the twelve tribes. Though Israelites today do not normally know to what tribe they belong, in the mind of God there is no question.

9. Here representatives for each of the twelve tribes are selected for the signal honor of being sealed by the angel.

10. The prevalent idea that The Church is the true Israel is not sustained by any explicit reference in the Bible, and the word Israel is never used of Gentiles and refers only to those who are ethnic or racial Jews.

11. William Kelly, in defense of the literal interpretation of the tribes of Israel, states:

“On the other hand, I conceive that the specification of the tribe is inconsistent with any sense but the literal. Then again the contradistinction is as plain and positive as words can make it, between the sealed number out of Israel and the innumerable multitude from all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues.”

12. Let's look at a few of these listings.

12.1 You will see from this most partial listing that God inexplicably changed his listings:

Gen 35:22 . . . Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:

Gen 35:23 The sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun:

Gen 35:24 The sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin:

Gen 35:25 And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali:

Gen 35:26 And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid: Gad, and Asher: these are the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padanaram.

Gen 46:8 And these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons: Reuben...

Gen 46:10 And the sons of Simeon;..

Gen 46:11 And the sons of Levi...

Gen 46:12 And the sons of Judah...

Gen 46:13 And the sons of Issachar...

Gen 46:14 And the sons of Zebulun...

Gen 46:16 And the sons of Gad...

Gen 46:17 And the sons of Asher....

Gen 46:19 The sons of Rachel Jacob's wife; Joseph, and Benjamin...

Gen 46:20 And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim – *Asenath, an Egyptian?* ...

Gen 49:1 And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.

Gen 49:2 Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.

Gen 49:3 Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power:

Gen 49:4 Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defilest thou it: he went up to my couch. *Reuben lived under the cloud of his gross sin of lying with Bilhah, his father's concubine (Gen 35:22).*

Gen 49:5 Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations.

Gen 49:6 O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self will they digged down a wall.

Gen 49:7 Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

Gen 49:8 Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.

Gen 49:9 Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?

Gen 49:10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

Gen 49:11 Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:

Gen 49:12 His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

Gen 49:13 Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon.

Gen 49:14 Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens:

Gen 49:15 And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.

Gen 49:16 Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.

Gen 49:17 Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.

Gen 49:18 I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.

Gen 49:19 Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.

Gen 49:20 Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.

Gen 49:21 Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.

Gen 49:22 Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall:

Gen 49:23 The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him:

Gen 49:24 But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

Gen 49:25 Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:

Gen 49:26 The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

Gen 49:27 Benjamin shall hunt as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.

Gen 49:28 All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.

Exo 1:1 Now these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt; every man and his household came with Jacob.

Exo 1:2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah,

Exo 1:3 Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin,

Summary Points

1. We earlier studied several listings of the twelve tribes or "sons of Jacob" noting that often various combinations of the "14" sons (i.e. the 12 actual sons plus the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh) can be found in the Old Testament.

1.1 Further, we also observed that God more often than not, gave "no reason" for His selections.

1.2 You will recall I did give you what various expositors have conjectured concerning the absence of Dan and Ephraim from our verse.

2. Many have asked the question, "If all the Christians are snatched out of the world in the Rapture, how are these evangelists going to be saved?"

3. There are several ways:

3.1 Some Jews will have been "witnessed-to" by Christian friends and will surely have heard something about prophecy related to the disappearance of Christ's followers.

3.2 Though it may sound wild to our many Jewish friends now but when Christians from all around the world are suddenly missing, the Holy Spirit will convince His selected witnesses that the gospel message is indeed true, and they will believe.

3.3 Others will surely be perplexed by this strange phenomenon of missing people and will not accept the reasons given by a Satanically inspired world leader. They will seek out an answer, find Christian literature of years past which explains the prophetic scenario, and then believe.

3.4 To some, Jesus may even appear in person in much the same way that He did to Saul of Tarsus, who became the Apostle Paul. Such an appearance we call a Christophany.

4. It is important to remember that the Holy Spirit will still function in His role of drawing people to Jesus. As we have studied extensively He will relate to believers as He did during Old Testament times. The Holy Spirit will provide and regenerate the human spirits of those who accept the Messiah.

5. The Spirit will indwell and empower only those whom God has chosen for special service. This will surely include more than the 144,000, for never will believers be more in need of the Spirit's sustaining power!

6. Whatever the means, God will see that these Jews are quickly brought to true faith in Jesus as their Messiah and will send them out with His message of forgiveness and deliverance.

End Lesson Taught 12-21-16

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