

Newsletter August 2018

At this point in our study of the text of the Revelation, we have just reached the end of a secondary parallel timeline that had begun in Chapter 11:15 immediately after the seventh trumpet had sounded. Considerable details have been filled in for us that were not recorded earlier in the primary narrative. This divine methodology of the Holy Spirit is quite similar to that found in other parts of Scripture beginning with the Genesis account of creation, in which the basic chronological account of all creation is given in chapter 1, and then Chapter two goes back to fill in additional information regarding the creation of man. Likewise, Deuteronomy can be seen as filling in details concerning the application of the Law, which was given to Moses and recorded in Exodus. Moreover, 1st and 2nd Chronicles covers a similar historical period as does 1st and 2nd Kings, but Chronicles gives God's viewpoint of that period rather than that of man. In the New Testament, we find four Gospels recording the person and work of Jesus Christ, each recorded from a different perspective that provides us with additional details. Furthermore, the accounts recorded in the book of Acts are supplemented by appreciable additional information found in the numerous epistles that follow.

Chronology of the Revelation		
	<u>Primary Narrative</u>	<u>Secondary Narrative</u>
Re. 1	The Glorified Christ Revealed. Jesus rules in the midst of his churches.	
Re. 2, 3	Jesus' Messages to the Seven Churches of Asia.	
Re. 4, 5	John Taken in the spirit to Heaven. God's Throne, 4 Beasts and 24 Elders Revealed. The Lamb Arrives to claim the Scroll.	Re. 12 Satan's Evil Intent Revealed to John. Satan's Rebellion and expulsion from Heaven to Earth.
Re. 6	Jesus breaks open first six Seals in Heaven. Four Horsemen go forth on Earth. Tribulation begins and is cut short by Jesus Christ.	Re. 13: 1-6 Satan calls forth the Antichrist, as a global dictator to establish his own kingdom on earth in opposition to God and Christ.
Re. 7	144,000 of Israel Sealed. The Rapture of the Church	Re. 13: 7-18 Satan Calls Forth the False Prophet. The abomination of desolation. Seal of the Beast.
Re. 8	Seventh seal of the scroll in Heaven opened and trumpets 1-4 sound.	Re. 14:1-5 Christ reveals Himself to sealed of Israel who witness of Him during the trumpet judgments.
Re. 9	Trumpets 5 and 6, sound and the first two of three woes are experienced upon earth.	Re. 12:6-11 Three flying Angels Witness of the Gospel and judgment of those having the mark of the beast.
Re 10	John "eats" a little sweet/bitter scroll offered to him by a Mighty Angel.	Re. 14:12,13 The patience of the saints whom the idol of the Antichrist has marked for certain death.
Re. 11	Two Witnesses arrive on earth and are Killed and ascend just before the Seventh Trumpet.	Re. 14: 14-20 The last Harvest of saints from the Earth. [End of Secondary Narrative]
Re. 12-14	[See Secondary Narrative]	
Re. 15	Seven Angels with seven Plagues come out of the Heavenly Temple.	
Re. 16	Seventh Trumpet, The last Woe: Seven plagues poured out as seven bowls of God's Wrath.	
Re. 17,18	Religious Babylon Destroyed. Commercial Babylon Destroyed.	
Re. 19	Joy in Heaven. Marriage supper of the Lamb. Christ Returns to judge the Earth. Armageddon	
Re. 20	Millennial Age. Satan defeated and cast into the lake of Fire. Great White Throne judgment of all the reprobate dead.	
Re. 21,22	New Heaven and New Earth formed. New Jerusalem. River of Life. The Eternal Ages begin.	

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Considerable information has been revealed to us in our study of this secondary narrative within the Revelation, such that it behooves us to conduct a review of those events here before we move on into Chapter 15, which marks the end of this narrative and resumes the primary narrative.

This secondary narrative approximately parallels Chapters 4 through 11 of the primary narrative as is shown in a chart presented here at the left.

The seventh trumpet, which was sounded in Revelation Chapter 11, verse 15 signaled an abrupt change in narrative; however, the remainder of Chapter 11 describes the great praise in Heaven for God having taken this final decisive action. Therefore, as we observe in the chart the secondary narrative describing Satan's attempt to usurp God's sovereignty actually begins in Chapter 12. This chapter is placed in parallel with Chapters 4 and 5 in which God's Kingdom is in view.

In Chapter 12, we saw Satan fully revealed in his active role as the tenacious evil adversary of

God as he led a failed rebellion in Heaven to usurp God's sovereignty. His defeat resulted in his expulsion from Heaven down to earth (cf. Re.12:7-9) where he immediately mounted an attack on Israel and upon those who

held the doctrine of Jesus Christ. This chapter gave us an historical background leading into the remainder of the secondary timeline, which presents a more detailed record of the period on earth beginning with Jesus opening the first seal of the scroll in Heaven to the seventh trumpet that proclaimed that the wrath of God upon the reprobate of earth was about to be released in all its fury.

In Chapter 13, we saw Satan put forth his ultimate Antichrist in an attempt to thwart and displace Jesus Christ as the rightful heir of the earth – even as Jesus broke open the first seal of the document in Heaven giving Him that exclusive ownership (cf. Re.13:1; 6:1,2). This coincides with the beginning of Daniel’s seventieth week – a tumultuous seven-year period upon the earth ultimately leading to the return of Christ. The Antichrist was depicted as a wild beast whom Satan had risen up to take charge of a corrupt global political system. He had presented himself to the world as a deliverer having the ability to establish world peace in troublesome times of extreme turmoil and great political unrest. He was supported by ten nations that had surrendered their military power for his exclusive use. The Antichrist was an exceedingly charismatic man who had stealthily gained the admiration of the world to the extent that he was fully supported by the apostate temporal church, as well as Israel with whom he had made a pact early in his reign (cf. Da, 9:27). He had authorized the construction of an unsanctioned third Temple in Jerusalem, thus enabling Israel to reinstate the old sacrificial system. As a consequence, most of Israel became convinced that the Antichrist could actually be their long-awaited Messiah.

Nevertheless, as Jesus broke open the second seal of the scroll in Heaven, the forced peace on earth came to an abrupt end as a great global war broke out (cf. Re.6:3,4). Evidently this conflict was begun by a radical resistance group that had acquired a great powerful weapon (cf. Re. 6:4). This war was devastating because of the powerful weapons that were most likely used, and it was soon over. However, war was followed by a longer period of global starvation, pestilence, and death (cf. Re. 6:5-8). It was most likely during this global fighting that the Antichrist received a head injury by an assassin of the radical opposition, and he was believed to have died (cf. Re.13:3). When he suddenly appeared again, alive and well, the whole world wondered after the Antichrist, believing that he must have been miraculously resurrected from the dead and was therefore invincible. As that news spread, the world began to worship Satan through the purportedly resurrected Antichrist.

Angry at God because of his great losses in the war, the Antichrist began blaspheming God, his holy name, his dwelling place in Heaven as well as all that dwelt in Heaven with Him. The earlier pact made with Israel was abruptly broken, and a great period of tribulation (cf. Mt.24:21) began as the Antichrist began persecuting the saints on earth. This persecution included not only Jews, but Gentiles of every conceivable faith and from every kindred, tongue, and nation. This also included the remnant of the true Church yet remaining on earth. Men hated and insanely attacked and killed each other without reason as many sides were drawn and defended.

If this insane slaughter had continued any longer upon the earth all mankind would have perished, but Christ soon intervened for the elect’s sake (Mt.24:22). When Jesus broke open the sixth seal of the scroll, the great tribulation came to an abrupt end as great catastrophic signs appeared in heaven followed immediately by Jesus appearing in the clouds of Heaven (cf. Mt.24:29,30). As evil men of earth attempted to bury themselves in the rocks of the earth to avoid the face and wrath of the Lamb, 144,000 elect Jews were given the seal of God (cf. Re.7:3,4), and the true Church that remained was rapidly transported off the earth into Heaven to forever be with their Lord (cf. Re. 7:9,10). These two events take place near the middle of Daniel’s seventieth week.

When the true Church was removed through the rapture, Satan saw it as an opportunity to replace its witness with a delusive organized religion of his own. He raised up a second wild beast, the False Prophet(cf.Re. 13:11), who attempted to fill the role of the ascended Church with a false gospel concerning the supposed deity of the Antichrist. He deceived a great number of Gentiles to voluntarily worship the Antichrist as he ordered them and all others on earth to receive the seal of the beast with his number on their forearms or on their foreheads. Without this identifying mark, none could work for wages or carry on any commerce anywhere in the world. This command was facilitated and enforced by an artificially-intelligent idol of the Antichrist (cf. Re.13:14-15), which the False Prophet had placed in the Holy of Holies within the third Temple. To resist the Antichrist meant certain death as all men and women were quickly identified and promptly located by this detestable image. Jews, seeing this abomination of desolation standing where it should not stand, were horrified by their great error in regarding the Antichrist as their Messiah, and they immediately began a mass exodus from Jerusalem under God’s

protection into the secret place of safety that He had prepared for them (cf. Re.12:6). Nevertheless, the 144,000 Jews having the seal of God in their foreheads remained in Jerusalem.

In Chapter 14, we saw these 144,000 Jews meeting together with Jesus on mount Zion (cf. Re.14:1). These Jews along with the two prophets sent by God openly witnessed of Jesus' coming kingdom throughout the world during the last half of Daniel's seventieth week, thus saving many from God's wrath that was soon to come. Three flying angels then appeared in rapid succession (cf. Re 14:6-11); the first gave out the everlasting Gospel as a final invitation, the second predicted the inevitable fall of Babylon, and the third warned of eternal judgment against all those who had the mark of the beast. We saw a great number of Jews and Gentiles that through the witness of the 144,000 had accepted Jesus as their savior. They patiently awaited their redemption in the face of intense persecution, deprivation, and inevitable death by the powerful Antichrist and his dreadful image (cf. Re.14:12). Finally, we saw Jesus as He harvested this last faithful remnant of Jews and believing Gentiles from the earth (cf. Re.14:14-16), In a brief warning of Armageddon to come, this harvest was seen to be followed by an angel that gathered up the reprobate (wild vines) that remained, and threw them and the "rotten fruits" of their rebellion into the "wine-press" of God's wrath to be crushed under the feet of Jesus Christ (cf. Is. 63:3). Thus ends this secondary narrative.

Having made our way through this review of the secondary parallel narrative, we now return to the main narrative and chronology of the text of the Revelation at the point where the seventh trumpet had just sounded. This seventh trumpet actually signaled the end of the Day of the Lord and the end of Daniel's seventieth week. It leads directly into a 30-day period that begins with the seventh trumpet (cf. Da. 12:11: 1290-1260=30 days) during which days God will unleash his fierce wrath upon the reprobate earth dwellers without restraint. Chapter 15, the shortest chapter in the book of the Revelation, provides an all-important preamble to the pouring out of those seven bowls of God's undiluted wrath, which we shall study in some detail next month in Chapter 16.

"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" (Re.15:1).

The previous "sign" that John had seen in Heaven referred to the sign of the woman, Israel, which we saw in Chapter 12:1, which he had described as a "wonder." He refers to this sign as "great and Marvelous." This sign consists of the appearance of seven magnificent angels in Heaven that together represented God. They are filled up with God's divine indignation, and have in their possession the seven final plagues of God. The word "plague" commonly implies a contagious epidemic disease with an extremely high death rate. However, plague as is found here is *plēgē* in the Greek, which has a primary meaning of "wound" or "calamity" of various kinds. The plagues here are not epidemics or biological diseases, but massive calamitous onslaughts that will impact all earth-dwellers with a death-dealing blow. The trumpet judgments, each of which were not total in the scope of their destruction, were also spaced over time allowing opportunity for man's repentance. The time allowed for mankind's repentance has now past. These seven final plagues, which are filled up with the undiluted wrath of God, are accumulative and will affect all of the inhabitants upon the surface of the earth in rapid-fire order one after another with only one brief interval between the pouring of the sixth and seventh bowl as the armies of the earth are being gathered together by Satan to make once last feeble stand against God and his Christ. By the end of this sequence of calamities there will be no survivors remaining who oppose God and Jesus Christ.

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God" (Re.15:2).

John had seen this "sea of glass" before, extending from the throne of God, earlier in Revelation 4:6, but there it was smooth and tranquil. Now, John sees this once tranquil crystal sea mixed with the fire of God's wrath against the persecutors of his people. Those standing upon the sea are the last faithful remnant of Jews and Gentiles, whom Jesus had harvested from the earth (cf. Re.14:14-16), These had gotten the victory over the beast and his image by rejecting the mark from the idol that would have identified them as property of the Antichrist and with his name. They had patiently waited for their redemption even as they had been systematically martyred by the Antichrist. Through their death, Christ had instantaneously "harvested" them directly into the heavenly "storehouse" of the redeemed. They now stand upon this flaming crystal sea before God's throne, and they have within them the joy of the Lord represented outwardly as the harps of God:

“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints” (Re.15:3).

They sang the song of Moses (cf. Ex.15:1-18), which identifies them as Jews, and they also sang the song of the Lamb (cf. Re.5:8-14) indicating that they had come to find their salvation in their Messiah, Jesus Christ – the King of all saints.

“Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou only art* holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest” (Re.15:4).

This verse speaks of the soon-coming millennial age on earth, during which every man and woman from every nation will have a reverential fear of the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and will flow into Jerusalem to worship Him and to learn of Him and to seek his Judgments that will be taught to them (cf. Ps.86:9).

“And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened” (Re. 15:5):

The phrase “temple of the tabernacle of the testimony” indicates the Holy of Holies containing the Ark of the covenant located within the tabernacle of God in Heaven. We read earlier in Revelation 11:19 that the Temple of God was opened in Heaven, and that the Ark of the Covenant was seen within the Holy of Holies. This came about just after the seventh trumpet had sounded in Re. 11:15. This heavenly Temple is, no doubt, that which the wilderness Tabernacle and later Solomon’s Temple on earth was patterned, which was given as a testimony to Israel of his presence, fellowship, and guidance.(cf. He.8:2-5;9:23,24).

“And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles” (Re. 15:6).

It is out of this same Temple that the seven angels walk, fully prepared to administer the seven plagues of God’s indignation. They are dressed in pure white linen (indicating their purity) and have their breasts wrapped with golden sashes. This manner of dress is a symbol of their extremely high rank, inasmuch as it is similar to that which Jesus Christ had worn when John had seen Him in his earlier vision as the glorified Christ (cf. Re.1:13).

This divine action had been signaled previously by an angel who had blown the seventh and last trumpet, instituting this third woe, back in Chapter 11, verse 15. This great event had been immediately acclaimed by worship in Heaven, because God had at last taken to Himself his great sovereign power to exercise his authority over the angry nations who had opposed him. His servants, prophets, and saints would soon receive their reward for their faithfulness, even as God would destroy those whose rebellion had led to the necessary destruction of the earth (cf. Re. 11:16-18). An earlier mass destruction had come about through the great flood; we are now about to see the final destruction take place through the agency of these seven angels.

“And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever” (Re.15:7).

One of the four living creatures seen earlier before God’s throne, (cf. Re.4:6-8) gave a vial to each of the seven angels. A vial suggests but a small bottle or ampule. The word, “vials,” found in this verse is *phiale* in the Greek text, which carries the meaning of a “broad shallow cup or bowl.” “Bowl” is therefore a more accurate translation than the English word “vial” as we find here in the *Authorized King James Version*. Large shallow brass bowls such as these were used in the service of the earthly Temple to collect the blood of the sacrifice; here they contain the wrath of God.

“And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled” (Re.15:8).

The cloud of God’s overwhelming presence (cf, Ex.40:34,35) had closed all access to the heavenly Temple until the seven angels have fulfilled their mission of the administration of God’s final judgment upon a reprobate mankind. At this point there is no turning back; God has now set into motion a course of action consisting of seven angels carrying his catastrophic death-dealing plagues in seven shallow bowls, which we shall see fully executed in terrifying detail next month in our study of Revelation 16.