

Newsletter December 2019

The Revelation document is a very orderly text, which as we have discovered is presented in a precise chronological order. Nevertheless, that order has within it various deviations from a straight-forward narrative that must be noted in order to avoid chronological confusion. In this Newsletter, we shall undertake an analysis of the Book of the Revelation that closely considers those chronological deviations.

We must begin our analysis by first considering the three major divisions of the book, which are designated in the text as past, present, and future. Those three major divisions of the Revelation document are found recorded in the text of Revelation in verse 19 of Chapter 1, which reads as follows: “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.”

Here John was told to write down:

1. the things that he “has seen” (i.e. past) about the glorified Christ, which he recorded in Chapter 1.
2. the “things which are” (i.e. concerning the present) that John saw:
 - a) on earth during the Church period, which he recorded in Chapters 2,3.
 - b) in Heaven during that same period, which he recorded in Chapters 4,5.
3. the things “which shall be hereafter” (i.e. yet future), which John recorded in Chapters 6-22.

While John’s vision of the glorified Christ is a revelation of that which John’s saw in the past tense, it sets the theme for the rest of the book in which Christ prepares the earth for the ultimate establishment of his Kingdom Age (cf. He.13:8). We are presently living near the end of the Church age, which was portrayed by the seven churches of Asia Minor in John’s day. Although these churches are in our past, they have a future chronological aspect to them that extends forward well into our day (cf. Newsletter August 2017). Finally, in Chapters 6 through 22, we find ourselves involved in a very complex detailed study of the “doctrines of the last days” (i.e. Eschatology), concerning things which are yet to come to pass in a future period of time.

The number “seven” represents seven things leading to the perfection or completeness of a greater thing. Because the Revelation is a culmination of all things, the number seven looms large in its text, beginning with seven golden candlesticks representing the seven churches of Asia Minor (cf. Re 1:4, 11); seven lamp-stands (cf. Re.1:12); seven spirits of God (cf. Re.1:4; 4:5); seven thunders (cf. Re.10:3); but more particularly, a scroll of seven seals (cf. Re.5:1) followed by seven angels with seven trumpets (cf. Re. 8:6) and seven angels with seven bowls of God’s wrath (cf. Re.15:7). Concerning the latter, there is an orderly arrangement consisting of three series of sevens that begins in Chapter 6 and runs through Chapter 16 as is represented in Illustration 1, below.

The first series of seven represents the seven seals of the scroll in Heaven, as Jesus breaks open each in turn. The seventh and last of these seals begins a second series of seven which represents seven trumpet judgments. The seventh and last, completing the fullness of these trumpets, begins the third and final series of seven. This final series represents seven bowls of God’s wrath that are poured out upon the earth (cf. Re.16:1). The last of these seven bowls leads to the return of Jesus Christ to judge the nations and establish his Kingdom age on earth.

All Scripture is inspired by God (cf. 2Ti.3:16) and was given to men through the indwelling Holy Spirit (cf. 2Pe.1:21). The Holy Spirit commonly employs a repetitious textual method in which a secondary text follows to fill in and amplifies a primary text. For instance, the chronological sequence of all creation is given in Chapter 1 of the Genesis account, and then Chapter two goes back to fill in additional information regarding the creation of man. The Book of 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. Chronicles gives God’s viewpoint of that period while Kings provides man’s perspective of that same period. In Like manner, the New Testament, contains four Gospels recording the person and work of Jesus Christ; each of which is recorded from a different perspective thus providing 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.

Not surprisingly, this reiterative method continues in the text of the Revelation, wherein considerable information is revealed to us within a secondary narrative that runs in parallel with a primary narrative. The primary narrative begins in Chapter 1 of the Revelation and continues throughout the document until finally coming to an end in Chapter 22. However, inserted within that primary narrative, we find a shorter narrative that begins in Chapter 12 and continues on through Chapter 14. This secondary narrative creates a “gap” in the

primary narrative that starts at the end of Chapter 11, and concludes as the primary narrative resumes in Chapter 15. While the primary narrative gives us a broad overview of the doctrines of the last days, the secondary narrative, fills in many details that are not recorded within the primary narrative. This secondary narrative can be seen to parallel Chapters 4 through Chapter 11 of the primary narrative as is shown below in in Illustration 2. We shall now describe portions of that secondary narrative as they parallel specific chapters contained in the primary narrative.

In Chapters 4 and 5 of the left column of the chart below, God's sovereign Kingdom stands firm in clear opposition to all efforts to spoil it. The secondary narrative begins in the right column, showing Chapter 12 in parallel with Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 12 exposes Satan's long and determined effort to usurp God's divine sovereignty and Kingdom for himself.

In Chapter 6 of the primary narrative, Jesus breaks open the first seal of the document in Heaven which will grant Him exclusive ownership of the earth and all within it (cf. 6:1-17). The four horsemen of the apocalypse go forth on earth as Jesus breaks open the next four seals. Revelation 13:1-6 parallels Revelation Chapter 6, wherein, we observe Satan as he puts forth his political Antichrist in an attempt to thwart and displace Jesus Christ as the rightful heir of the earth. This occurs during a 3 ½ year time-frame ending in a brief but severe period of great intense tribulation that will be rapidly cut short by Christ (cf. Mt. 24:22). This 3 ½ year period parallels the first half of a final seven-year period on earth, as it was revealed to Daniel the prophet (c.f. Newsletter, December 2016).

In Chapter 7 we find that 144,000 Jews are sealed by God to continue his work on earth just before the Church is removed from earth in the Rapture. In the secondary narrative of Chapter 13:7-18, Satan calls forth his false prophet to replace the departed Church. Then, the false prophet sets up the abomination of desolation (cf. Mt. 24:15) in the third Temple of the Jews, and demands that all on earth receive the seal of the political Antichrist. This will result in a mass exodus of Jews from Jerusalem (cf. Mt.24:16-22).

In Chapter 8 we observe that Jesus breaks open the seventh seal of the scroll in Heaven, thus giving Him all authority in Heaven and upon earth. In the secondary narrative of Chapter 14:1-5, Jesus reveals Himself to a sealed remnant of Israel as their true Messiah, and He prepares them to witness of Him during the interval of the seven trumpet judgments even as the first four trumpet judgment impact the earth.

In Chapter 9 trumpets 5 and 6 sound. These are the first two of three great woes that will be experienced upon the earth. In the Secondary narrative of Chapter 14:6-11, three flying angels witness of the truth of the Gospel and the pending judgment upon those who have the mark of the beast, the political Antichrist.

In Chapter 10, John digests the contents of a bitter-sweet scroll offered to him by a mighty angel that reveals God's intent and purpose in his tumultuous judgments. In the secondary narrative of Chapter 14:12,13 we see the patience of the saints on earth whom the idol of the Antichrist has marked for certain death.

In Chapter 11, God sends down two powerful witness of Him to earth, but they are ultimately killed by demon-possessed men. God resurrects them from the dead and recalls them just before the seventh trumpet sounds. In the secondary narrative of Chapter 14:14-20, we see the last harvest of saints from the earth just as the seventh trumpet sounds bringing God's wrath down upon an unrepentant earth in seven bowl judgments.

At this juncture the secondary narrative comes to an end, while the primary narrative continues on in Chapter 15 as at the sound of the seventh trumpet, seven angels come forth from the Temple in Heaven carrying seven bowls of God's wrath to finally cleanse the earth of all evil and iniquity.

In addition to the aforementioned parallel narrative just noted, Revelation Chapters 17 and 18 provides considerable detail that expands on the second half of an earlier verse found in Chapter 16: "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" (Re. 16:19). In this one verse we find that Jerusalem is to be divided into three parts; and that all of the great Gentile cities of the earth will fall into rubble, as the consequence of a massive global earthquake. Lastly, ancient Babylon is remembered by God, even as this future Babylon of the Antichrist is likewise about to receive the "cup of the wine of the fierceness of God's wrath." This destruction comes about as the final bowl of God's fierce wrath is poured out upon the earth. Revelation 17 describes the destruction of the false religion of Babylon, and Chapter 18 describes the destruction of Babylon's great global commercial enterprise. © Arthur J. Smith, December 2019

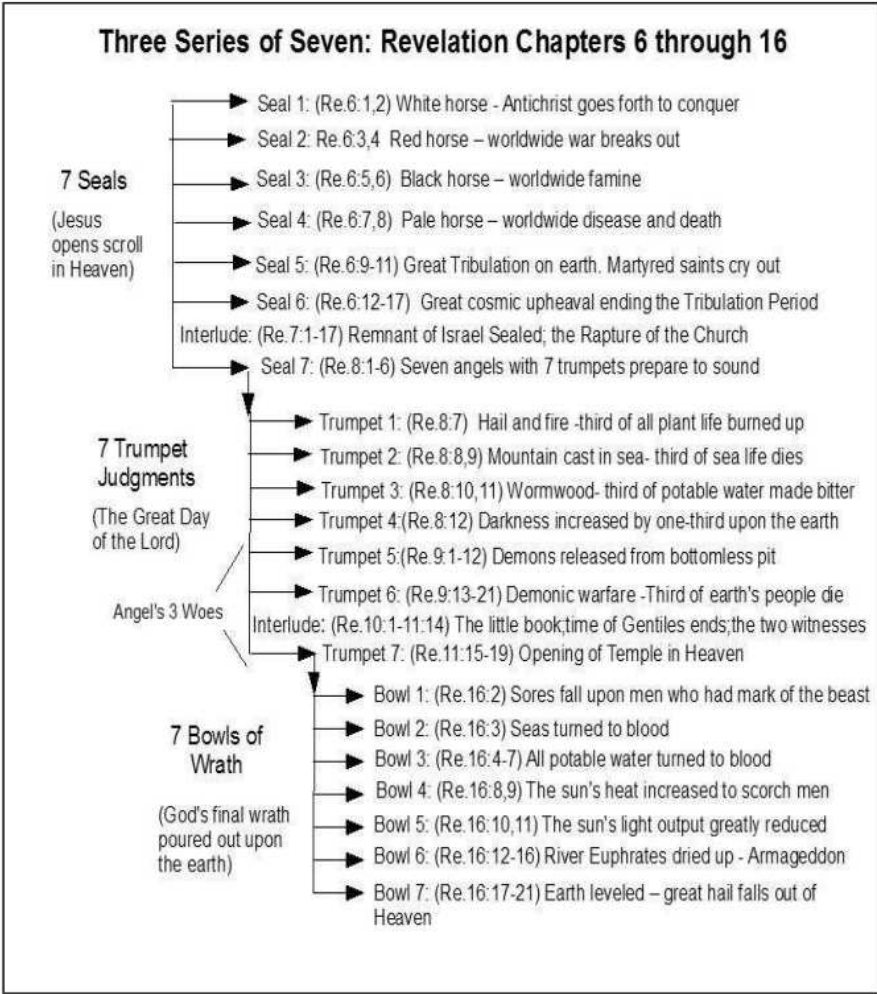


Illustration 1: Three Cascading Series of Sevens

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. 14:6-11 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, 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]
Primary Gap [See Secondary Narrative]		
Re. 15	Seven Angels with seven Plagues come out of the Heavenly Temple.	
Re. 16	Seventh Trumpet, Last Woe: Seven plagues poured out as seven bowls of God's Wrath. Babylon remembered by God:	
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 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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