

God Judges the Great City

Scene 2: Seven Seals & Seven Trumpets

Revelation 6-11



Figure 1 Albrecht Durer, The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (1498)

The Seven Seals

Revelation 6: ¹I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!" ²I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

³When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" ⁴Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword.

⁵When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "A quart^[a] of wheat for a day's wages,^[b] and three quarts of barley for a day's wages,^[c] and do not damage the oil and the wine!"

⁷When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" ⁸I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

⁹When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained.

¹⁰They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" ¹¹Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

¹²I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red,¹³ and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs

drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. ¹⁴The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

¹⁵Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!" ¹⁷For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

The Sevenfold Pattern (See Appendix)

The First Four Seals: The Four Horsemen¹

- White Horse
 - Crowned, Conquer, Bow
- Parthians (Persians/Iranians)
Mounted Archers of the 1st Century
- Is it Christ? (see 19:11-16)
 - Divine Passive
- Red Horse – Pax Romana replaced by internal Anarchy
- Black Horse –Food Rationing
- Pale Horse – Death²

The Fifth Seal: The Cry of the Martyrs

- Testimony—Martyr (1:2, 9; 19:10; 20:4)
- “Slain” used of Lamb 5:6
- Romans 12:1
- “How Long?”³

The Sixth Seal: The Cosmos Shakes at God’s Approach⁴

- Cosmic groaning (Rom. 8:22)
- Who can Stand?
- The Wrath of the Lamb

¹ See Zech. 1:7-15, 6:1-8

² Jer. 14:12; 15:2; 21:7; 24:10; 29:17-18; 42:17; 43:11; Ezek. 14:21

³ Ps. 74, 79:5-10; Luke 18:1-8

⁴ Mark 13:5-36

144,000 Sealed

Revelation 7: ¹After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. ²Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: ³"Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." ⁴Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.

⁵From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben 12,000, from the tribe of Gad 12,000, ⁶from the tribe of Asher 12,000, from the tribe of Naphtali 12,000, from the tribe of Manasseh 12,000, ⁷from the tribe of Simeon 12,000, from the tribe of Levi 12,000, from the tribe of Issachar 12,000, ⁸from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000, from the tribe of Joseph 12,000, from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000.

⁹After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰And they cried out in a loud voice:

*"Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,*

and to the Lamb." ¹¹All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²saying:

"Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

¹³Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" ¹⁴I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who

have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵Therefore, *"they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.*

¹⁶Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst.

*The sun will not beat upon them,
nor any scorching heat.*

¹⁷For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Interlude: The Church

The Church Militant

- Looked for the end... and what came was the Church
- 4 Angels (cf. Ezek. 9)
- Protective Seal
 - In Baptism⁵
 - Contra the Beast⁶ and his Mark⁷
- Who are the 144,000?
 - On Earth
 - 12 X 12: Old and New Israel⁸
 - 10,000 Multiplier
 - Military Precision
 - A Complete Number

The Church Triumphant

- In Heaven
- 4 Greats: Multitude, Salvation, Tribulation, Hope

⁵ 1 Cor. 12:13; 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30

⁶ Rev. 11:7; 13:1-8; 14:9-11; 17:3-17; 19:19-20; 20:4, 10

⁷ Rev. 13:16-17; 14:9

⁸ Rev. 1:6; 5:10 Rom. 9-11; Gal. 3:29; 6:16; Eph. 2:11-22; 1 Pet. 2:9

The Seventh Seal and the Golden Censer Revelation

8: ¹When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

²And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.

³Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. ⁴The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand. ⁵Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

The Trumpets

⁶Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them.

⁷The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

⁸The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, ⁹a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

¹⁰The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water— ¹¹the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.

¹²The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.

¹³As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!"

The Seventh Seal: Silence

- Halleluiah Chorus
- Holy Silence: Zephaniah 1:7, Habakkuk 2:20

The Heavenly Worship⁹: Sounding the Seven Trumpets

- Distressed Christian Prayer (5:8; 8:3-4) always within the context of Heavenly Worship
- "Through its worship and prayer, the church is intimately linked with the real world, the world of God" – E. Boring
- The Effect of Prayer "Your Kingdom Come, Your Will be Done...On Earth as in Heaven." (Matt. 6:10, Luke 11:2) –And it does...Rev. 11:15-19

The First Four Trumpets¹⁰: The Final Troubles Intensify

- "the Last Trumpets"¹¹
- The Plagues of Exodus Revisited
 - Hail and Fire (Ex. 9:23-25)
 - Sea of Blood (Ex. 7:20)
 - Darkness (Ex. 10:21)
 - Locust (Ex. 10:12)
- All Oppressive Worldly Power is judged & Creation is Cursed due to Sin¹²

⁹ Heavenly Worship 4:1-5:14; 7:9-12; 6:9-11

¹⁰ 2 Chron. 5:12-13; Ex. 19:16; Num. 10:2-10; Josh. 6:4; Ezek. 33:3; Joel 2:1, 15; Amos 3:6

¹¹ Isa. 27:13; Matt. 24:31; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thes. 4:16

¹² Gen. 3:17-18; Isa. 24:4-6; Rom. 8:19-23

Revelation 9: ¹The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. ²When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. ³And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. ⁴They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵They were not given power to kill them, but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man. ⁶During those days men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.

⁷The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. ⁸Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. ⁹They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. ¹⁰They had tails and stings like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months. ¹¹They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon.

¹²The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come.

¹³The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the horns^[f] of the golden altar that is before God. ¹⁴It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." ¹⁵And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. ¹⁶The

number of the mounted troops was two hundred million. I heard their number.

¹⁷The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur. ¹⁸A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. ¹⁹The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury.

²⁰The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk. ²¹Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

The Fifth Trumpet: First Woe, The Demon Locusts

- The Fallen Star (Isa. 14:4-20 Day Star, Trans. Lucifer in KJV cf. Gen 6:1-4, 2 Pet. 2:4)
- Locust Army of Joel 1-2
 - Have a King 9:11 (cf. Prov. 30:27)
 - Apollyon—Name Emperor Domitian like to use of himself.
 - Locust is symbol of God Apollo
 - Rome as an instrument of Divine Judgment?
- Saints are preserved through it! v.4

The Sixth Trumpet: Second Woe— Demon Cavalry

- Parthian Threat—A Vast Army (200 Million!)
- Repentance—Rebellious Humanity does NOT repent! (cf. Pharaoh and the Egyptians)

The Angel and the Little Scroll

Revelation 10: ¹Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. ²He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, ³and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke. ⁴And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down."

⁵Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. ⁶And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, "There will be no more delay!" ⁷But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets."

⁸Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me once more: "Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land."

⁹So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, "Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey." ¹⁰I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour. ¹¹Then I was told, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings."

Interlude: The Church of Prophets and Martyrs

- Mighty Angel
 - Has all of the elements used of God
 - Rainbow, Face like Sun, Legs of Fire, Roaring Lion, Seven Thunders
 - God, Christ, Spirit/Angel
- Open Scroll (cf. 5:1 and Dan. 12:4, 9)
- Seven Thunders???
 - Limitations of Human Insight (1 Cor. 13:12; II Cor. 12:4; Deut. 29:29)
 - A Divine Contingency—"there will be no more delay" (Mark 13:20)
 - A God who Responds to the Actions of Creation (Jer. 9:5; 18:8; Jonah 3:9)
- Eating the Scroll (Ezek. 2:8-3:3)
 - God's Word is to be consumed by the prophet
 - It is satisfaction and upsetting at the same time!

The Two Witnesses

11: ¹I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshipers there. ²But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. ³And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." ⁴These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. ⁵If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. ⁶These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.

⁷Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. ⁸Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. ⁹For three and a half days men from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. ¹⁰The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth. ¹¹But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. ¹²Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on. ¹³At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

¹⁴The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.

¹⁵The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said:

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

¹⁶And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷saying:

"We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign."

¹⁸*The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great— and for destroying those who destroy the earth."*

¹⁹Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

The Prophet-hood of All Believers

- Old Testament envisioned all would be Prophets: Joel 2:28-29
- New Testament Fulfillment: John 14-16, Acts 2:17-18 quoting Joel
- Two Martyrs (Witnesses) Acts 1:8
 - Two Olive Trees, Two Lamp stands: Zech 4; Romans 11, Matt. 5:14, 1 Thes. 5:5, Phil. 2:15
 - Moses and Elijah
 - Jewish and Gentile Christian Church to the World
- Martyrdom followed by Resurrection
 - No Rapture Escapism!

The Seventh Trumpet: The Kingdom as Salvation and Woe

- The Reign of God
- The Wrath of the Nations

The Parthian Empire

