

The Tribulation and the Seven Seal Judgments (Revelation 6:1-17)

I. Introduction

A. *This Week in Clear Living*

1. The Alpha and Omega Revealed on the Isle of Patmos (Revelation 1:9-20)
2. The Seven Seals of Judgment (Revelation 6:1-17)
3. The 144,000 witnesses (Revelation 7:1-17 and Revelation 14:6-13)
4. The Time Reference of the Seal Judgments (Revelation 8:1-5)
5. The Two Witnesses (Revelation 11:1-13)
6. The Mysterious Woman (Revelation 12:1-17)
7. The Final Victory (Revelation 19:11-21)

Question: Why did Jesus come to John on the isle of Patmos? How would you describe the earthly relationship between Jesus and John? What question did John and Peter ask in Mark 13:3-4?

B. In Revelation 1:9-11, ***Jesus manifested Himself to the Apostle John.***

1. In verses 12-16, Jesus showed John His glory.
 - a. Jesus was in the midst of seven candlesticks, which represented the seven churches of verse 11.
 - b. He was fully clothed with a golden girdle.
 - c. He had white hair and fiery eyes.
 - d. He had feet like brass and His voice was like the sound of many waters (overpowering).
 - e. He had seven stars in His right hand (pastors or angels (verse 20), out of His mouth was a two-edged sword, and His countenance was bright like the sun.
2. John was able to see Jesus in His glory.

C. In Revelation 1:19, ***Jesus told John what to do.***

1. Revelation 1:19 says, "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."
2. John obeyed.

D. Jesus came to John because John was His best earthly friend.

1. John had become too humble to say that in any of His biblical writings, but he left several clues that clearly point to him.
2. John was the only apostle to die a normal death.
3. Jesus came to John because by that time he was the only apostle left.
 - a. The others had already been martyred.
 - b. Even John had been exiled to the isle of Patmos.

E. Jesus came to John to answer the question that had been asked of Him in Mark 13:3-4.

1. Mark 13:3-4 says, "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us,

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- when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?"
2. Mark 13:32 says, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, ***neither the Son***, but the Father."
 3. Because of the ***kenosis***, Jesus voluntarily gave up the right to know everything while incarnated.
 4. Philippians 2:5-7 says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: ***But made himself of no reputation***, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:"
 - a. Of no reputation (***kenoo***) - to empty, make empty, of Christ, ***he laid aside equality with or the form of God***, to make void, deprive of force, render vain, useless, of no effect, to make void, or to cause a thing to be seen to be empty, hollow, or false.
 - b. **KENOSIS** - The kenosis suggests that Jesus: (1) veiled His divine glory, (2) subjected Himself to human limitations, and (3) voluntarily gave up the independent use of His comparative attributes.
 - 1) Omnipotence
 - 2) Omnipresence
 - 3) Omniscience
 5. After Jesus ascended into heaven, He was no longer limited in the use of His comparative attributes.

Question: How would a normal conservative Christian interpret the Book of Revelation? What are some of the other ways to interpret the Book?

II. Interpreting the Book of Revelation

- A. The Book of Revelation is difficult to interpret.
 1. Some passages should be interpreted literally, and some passages should be interpreted figuratively or symbolically.
 2. The book is talking about future events, which is much more difficult than understanding events that already have occurred.
- B. Four different views of the Book of Revelation.
 1. ***The futuristic viewpoint says that the entire Book of Revelation is in the future.***
 2. The non-literal (preterist which means "past") viewpoint says that the entire book is past and that John was simply telling the story. Today's lesson will show why this viewpoint is wrong.
 3. The historical (non-literal) viewpoint says that all of church history is taught in the Book of Revelation. This is considered non-literal because of some of

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the different judgments that are discussed that have been spiritualized to try to make them fit the events of history.

4. The allegorical viewpoint (symbolic and also non-literal) is just generally
 - a. This view says that there is a battle between good and evil and that God will eventually win.
 - b. Some people believe that the account of Adam and Eve is allegorical rather than literal.
- C. The best approach: When common sense makes good sense, seek no other sense. Do not try to make the book say more or less than what was intended.
- D. Views of the Millennium kingdom.
 1. Pre-millennial - the rapture will occur (pre-Tribulation), then the tribulation, then Jesus returns, and then the millennium.
 - a. This viewpoint is literal and futuristic.
 - b. This viewpoint keeps Israel and the church separate. Literally, God dealt differently with Israel and the church, so the distinction needs to be maintained.
 - c. A dispensationalist would say that God has not finished working with Israel yet.
 2. Postmillennial - the millennium has been occurring on earth since Christ went away because things are getting better and better.
 - a. This viewpoint is non-literal.
 - b. This viewpoint was very popular until World War I, much less popular after the war..
 3. Amillennial - the millennium is purely spiritual, and there will not be a literal earthly kingdom.
 - a. The entire church age has been discussed in the Book of Revelation, and Jesus is ruling from heaven.
 - b. This viewpoint comes under the allegorical.
 - c. With this viewpoint, the promises to Israel in the Old Testament are passed onto the church.
 - d. In covenant theology, God has made a covenant with mankind, not with Israel and the church.
- E. Views of the Tribulation.
 1. Pre-Tribulation
 - a. I Thessalonians 5:9 says, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,"
 - b. Revelation 3:10 says, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."
 - c. Jeremiah 30:7 says, "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."
 2. Mid-Tribulation

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3. Post-Tribulation

Question: How do the seal judgments relate to other things that are described in the Book?

III. The Seven Seal Judgments

- A. In Revelation 5:1, John saw a scroll that was held together by seven seals.
1. Normal documents would probably contain a single seal.
 2. In this case, each seal, when pulled from the scroll, would cause a different tragic event to occur.
 3. In Revelation 5:4-5, only Jesus can remove the seals from the scroll.
 4. In Revelation 5:8-10, John saw New Testament saints, evidenced by their being kings and priests before God. This supports a pre-Millennial view.
 - a. Revelation 1:6 says, "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
 - b. Hebrews 13:15-16 says, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."
- B. Three types of judgment occur during the seven-year Tribulation.
1. Six seal judgments occur (Revelation 6:1-17).
 2. The seventh seal judgment begins six trumpet judgments (Revelation 8:1-2).
 3. Six trumpet judgments occur (Revelation 8:7-9:21).
 4. The seventh trumpet judgment begins the seven vial judgments (Revelation 15:7).
 5. The seven vial judgments occur (Revelation 16:1-21).
 6. They are not concurrent. They are consecutive.
 7. The chapters that are not involved with the seal, trumpet, and vial judgments are called parenthetical because they tell what else is going on during the judgments.
 8. *These judgments disprove the Preterist viewpoint of the Book of Revelation.*
 - a. The persecutions in the early centuries of the church were caused by humanity.
 - b. The Revelation judgments are caused by the Lord. They come from above, not from earthly inhabitants.
- C. The Seven Seal Judgments
1. Seal 1 (a white horse) – not Christ but the antichrist. He is white because he comes in peace and actually makes a covenant with Israel.
 2. Seal 2 (a red horse) – symbolic of the bloody slaughter that will occur with those that do not submit to the antichrist. He will come in peace, but he will destroy his enemies.

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3. Seal 3 (a black horse) – probably symbolic of a severe financial depression or a famine (Revelation 6:6 says, "And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.").
4. Seal 4 (a pale horse) – representative of those that died from the first three horses.
5. Seal 5 (past martyrs about the throne) – this seal is imprecatory because martyred saints are asking for judgment to come to God's enemies.
6. Seal 6 (a great earthquake) – probably a literal earthquake that appears to be very severe.
7. Seal 7 (silence for ½ hour, followed by seven trumpet judgments)

Question: How does Jesus return to earth to do battle with the Antichrist? Why are the 144,000 witnesses described with different tribe names than the original twelve? Who are the 144,000 witnesses in Revelation 7:1-17 and Revelation 14:6-13? Who are the two witnesses in Revelation 11:3-8? Who is the woman in Revelation 12:1-17?

V. Closing Remarks

- A. Jesus returns in glory and very quickly destroys the Antichrist (Revelation 19:19-21).
- B. The Tribe of Dan is omitted from the 144,000.
 1. Dan might have gone into idolatry before the other tribes (Judges 18:1-31).
 2. I Chronicles 5:1-2 shows that Joseph got the double portion of Israel's inheritance.
 3. Normally, the Levites were left out.
- C. The 144,000 are Jews that get saved after the Rapture. They will preach Christ throughout the world and will be martyred.
 1. They are sealed, which is a sign of ownership (Revelation 7:4).
 2. Christians are also sealed or owned by God until the day of redemption.
 3. Ephesians 4:30 says, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."
- D. Theologians do not totally agree about the two witnesses in Revelation 11:3-8.
 1. Some say Moses.
 2. Some say Elijah.
 3. Some say Enoch.
- E. The woman in Revelation 12:1-17 is Israel. This is more evidence that the Tribulation is about Israel and not the church.

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Next week's lesson: "The Tribulation and the Seven Trumpet Judgments" (Revelation 8:1-13 and Revelation 9:1-21)

Five Day Recommended Reading:

Monday:	Isaiah 14:12-17 and Ezekiel 28:11-19
Tuesday:	Daniel 9:20-27
Wednesday:	Revelation 8:1-13 and Revelation 9:1-21
Thursday:	Revelation 11:1-19 and Revelation 16:12-17
Friday:	Revelation 19:11-21 and Revelation 20:1-10

Study questions:

1. Why do Bible scholars say that Isaiah 14:12-17 and Ezekiel 28:11-19 are about the devil?
2. What do Isaiah 14:12-17 and Ezekiel 28:11-19 say about the devil?
3. In Daniel 9:20-27, how do theologians explain the seventy weeks prophecy in conjunction with the church age?
4. What happened with the seventh seal judgment?
5. What happens during the seven trumpet judgments?
6. Who are the two witnesses in Revelation 16:1-19, and what do we know about them?
7. How does Jesus overthrow the Antichrist?
8. What happens after the Antichrist is overthrown?
9. How long will Satan be bound?
10. What is the second death?