

A STUDY OF REVELATION

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PART XIV

“OPENING THE SEVENTH SEAL”

Revelation 8:1-13

Introduction: A brief restatement of the position taken relative to the time of the seals is in order. The seals are opened and their effects continue to the end of the age. Furthermore, the events of the seals are not some strange punishment dished out as a result of man's sinful nature. They are the product of man's determination to be lord and master of his own fate apart from God.

Consequently, the first five seals are viewed as opened and their effect at work in the world. The first four seals are significant as stating the powers given for man's use, misuse, abuse. Four is the number of creation and man as a part of it. The fifth seal is viewed as open and spanning the entire church age. Five is the number of grace. This is the age of grace. The fifth seal souls were told to be patient, wait until their brethren should join them. This process will be completed when the rapture and first resurrection occurs.

Moreover, the sixth seal signifies the rapture and first resurrection. Its effects continue to the return of Christ. Six is specifically the number of man. It designates the time when man on earth will fully receive the fruit of his age-long struggle, a world without God.

Finally, the opening of the seventh seal is the beginning of great tribulation on earth. The covenant people of God and/or the tribes of Israel sealed to prevent physical death.

I. THE SEVENTH SEAL OPENED, V. 1-5

- A. Silence for about one-half hour.
- B. Seven angels appear before God.
 - 1. A result of the seventh seal opened.
 - 2. These were given each a trumpet to blow.
- C. Appearance of another angel.
 - 1. He had a golden censer.
 - 2. He was given much incense.
 - 3. He offered it with the prayers of saints upon the golden altar.
 - 4. The smoke of this mixture ascended up before God.
 - 5. The angel refilled the censer with fire from the golden altar and cast it to the earth.
 - 6. There were voices, thunderings, lightnings, and earthquake.
- D. General comments.
 - 1. Silence indicates the state of awe of heaven's inhabitants as they contemplate the horrors to visit earth.
 - 2. The seven angels with trumpets, a direct result of the opening of the seventh seal, are to sound at appropriate times signifying events of great tribulation.
 - 3. The other angel indicates the work of Christ.
 - a. Incense is indicative of righteous work.
 - b. "prayers" are self explanatory.
 - c. This is presented before God as perfect and full and a signification of the time of God's judgment on a wicked world.
 - d. Fire indicates judgment as do the voices, thunderings, lightnings, etc.

II. THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS, V. 6-13.

- A. Effects of the first trumpet.
 - 1. Hail and fire with blood on earth.
 - 2. One-third of trees and grass consumed.

- B. Effects of the second trumpet.
 - 1. Something like a mountain of fire is cast into the sea.
 - 2. One-third of the sea becomes blood.
 - 3. One-third of the sea creatures died.
 - 4. One-third of the ships were destroyed.
- C. Effects of the third trumpet.
 - 1. A burning star falls from heaven.
 - 2. Its name is Wormwood (bitter poison)
 - 3. One third of rivers and fountains of water were poisoned.
 - 4. Many died because of poisoned water.
- D. Effects of the fourth trumpet.
 - 1. A third part of the sun, moon, and stars were smitten.
 - 2. Day and night, light and darkness were confused.
- E. The pronouncement of woe, woe, woe, to earth dwellers because of three trumpets yet to sound. V. 13.
- F. General comments.
 - 1. There are seven trumpets to sound, but like the seals, the first group presented is four.
 - 2. Four is the number of man as part of creation which the trumpets affect.
 - 3. It is also suggested that like the seals, the first four trumpets are the result of man's own doing in seeking to be his own lord and master.
 - 4. These plagues may, however, be sent directly from God, but evidence is strong that it is all a result of man's actions.