

The Tribulation – part 2

We're seeing 3 sets of judgments come on the earth during this tribulation time. These are directly being poured out by Jesus, He's opening these seals from heaven and they're having a direct correlation on the earth.

These 3 sets of judgments are of 7 judgments each. The number 7 is a key number biblically and especially in the book of Revelation.

In all, the number seven is mentioned some 54 times in the book of Revelation. Some examples: Seven Churches (1:4,11,20; 2; 3), Seven Seals (5-6), Seven Trumpets (8-9), Seven Bowls (15; 16; 17:1; 21:9), Seven Heads (12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7; 9), Seven Crowns (12:3), Seven Plagues (15:1, 6, 8; 21:9), Seven Mountains (17:9), Seven Kings (17:10,11).

Seven is the number of completion. God created the Heavens and the earth in six days then rested on the seventh day because His work was completed. It is appropriate that sevens are prominent in the book of Revelation because it is the book that gives us the completion of God's plan for the human race.

Everything that began in Genesis consummates in Revelation.

- Speaking of sevens... Some scholars point out that we are getting close to the end of six-thousand years of recorded human history. By their calculations it would have been about 4004BC on the calendar when Adam was created. Add the two-thousand or so years from the birth of Jesus to now and you're at 6000 years. We know that the kingdom Jesus is coming to establish will last one-thousand years.

We've been on earth for six-thousand years... The kingdom will last another one-thousand years... That's a total of seven-thousand years! If seven is indeed the number of completion we would expect eternity to begin after seven-thousand years of human history.

Are we nearing the heptadic end? Maybe, maybe not. Either way, Jesus' coming to Rapture His church is always imminent.

So the first two sets of judgments take place in the first half of the tribulation. The second half has been known as the Great Tribulation where things really heat up. We'll see the reference to this division of the 7 year tribulation in two 3 ½ year periods in a couple of passages coming up.

And after these sets of judgments, we have a longer parenthetical break, an interval in the judgments, to reveal a number of things happening during the Tribulation.

We talked last week about the temple in Jerusalem being rebuilt during this time. Notice the reference to 42 months in Rev 11:2.

And then we read...

- **Revelation 11:3–6**, *"And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."*⁴ *These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.*⁵ *And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.*⁶ *These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire."*

Biblical prophecy is based on the Old Testament calendar of 360 day years. That's how we get 1260 days. It would seem these two witnesses appear around the beginning of the Tribulation and minister throughout the first half of the Tribulation prophesying against the work of the Antichrist and warning the world that what they're encountering is the judgment of God.

Now why two witnesses? Because the Word of God says in **Deuteronomy 19:15**, *"...by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established."*

Who are the two witnesses? The front-runners are Moses and Elijah, representatives of the law and the prophets. The signs they perform are similar, plus, these two appeared with Jesus on the Mt. of Transfiguration. Some say it could be Elijah and Enoch as they are the only two people who didn't experience death. It could be them, we just don't know.

Now these two witnesses are eventually killed by the beast (11:7). This is the first of 37 references to ***the beast*** in the book of Revelation. He is the Antichrist. He is more fully introduced in Revelation 13:1 and we'll take some time then to discuss in more detail who he is and his role.

Notice the beast can't do anything to them until they're finished their testimony. In other words - the Lord is in control. And so He is with you!

The 7th trumpet judgment is now sounding:

Revelation 11:15, *"Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!'"*

Chapter 12 gives us this age old cosmic battle that's been fought since the beginning of time. It's a battle where Satan has tried to thwart God's plans. So we see this woman who was about to give birth.

I believe this woman pictures the nation of Israel (Genesis 37:9) and the child was the Messiah that would come through the Jewish people. Satan knew that this Child would deliver the death blow (Genesis 3:15) and so he's been at work to try and stop this from happening.

And Satan continues on through the Tribulation to try and take out Israel and prevent God's plans from unfolding.

We're introduced to this dragon in 12:3 who is none other than Satan. He has been on the attack of Israel. Now between 12:5 and 12:6 we have an interval of some 2000 years. 12:6 fast forwards us to the middle of the Tribulation period when Israel will realize who this Antichrist really is, that he is not for them or on their side.

- Jesus Himself said in **Matthew 24:15–21**, *"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶ "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. ¹⁸ And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁹ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰ And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be."*

God has established a place to be a safe dwelling for the Israelites. Many believe it will be the place known as Petra.

Now until that time, Satan has access to heaven. He's not in hell, he's roaming the earth seeking whom he may devour. And he has access to heaven. But a war will break out in the heavens and Satan and his angels will be cast down to earth without access to heaven any longer.

Revelation 12:13–14, *"Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. ¹⁴ But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent."*

'Time and times and half a time'. Again, a reference to these last 3 ½ years of the tribulation.

Chapter 13 reveals Satan's agent to carry out his deception and devious plot on a human level.

Revelation 13:1–2, *"Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. ² Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority."*

This is speaking of the Antichrist. The man who's going to emerge on the scene and be this world leader. It's interesting how much talk is going into this need for a one world government. It's all setting the stage for this person to emerge and carry out the work of the enemy. Now the antichrist was introduced in Revelation 6:2. But he gets described more fully now as it's in the mid-way point of the tribulation that he really begins to reveal his true colors.

- Now it's interesting that his description closely matches that of the dragon in Rev. 12:3. They are in cahoots and it's the dragon giving authority to the beast.
- **Revelation 13:4**, *"So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?""*

This beast is the final empire - the antichrist's empire. The last world empire before Jesus comes back. John describes the beast as having the characteristics of all the previous empires - a leopard, bear, and lion (13:2).

Now how do you know these animals are representing kingdoms or empires? Well, we can go to Daniel 7 and see these same animals mentioned, which was speaking of kingdoms.

Daniel first mentioned the *lion* which pictured Babylon, then the *bear* which pictured Medo-Persia which overthrew Babylon, then the *leopard* picturing Greece, who came in swiftly and overthrew the Persians, conquering the world.

- Interestingly, when John records these kingdoms he reverses them. Why? Daniel was looking ahead to the coming kingdoms, whereas John is looking back on those that have past.

Satan adds one more member to complete this unholy Trinity - the beast coming out of the earth (13:11).

This is the false prophet who works alongside the antichrist to carry out the worship of the antichrist. Religion and economics will all be closely linked together in this time of great apostasy and totalitarianism.

Revelation 13:16–18, *"He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷ and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. ¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666."*

Never before have we seen the way that this system can be implemented and take effect like we do today. Now let me make it clear because many have been asking, *'Are these vaccinations the mark of the beast?'* And sorry to say, they are. Kidding!

I do believe that the mark of the beast is going to be linked to the worship and allegiance to the beast. In other words, you can't take the mark unless you know what you're doing. Don't fret over technology and label everything as the mark of the beast when it's not. You'll know when it is. And hopefully you won't even be here when it's introduced.

- But what we are seeing is the preconditioning for such types of social compliance and various rights being taken away unless you receive what leaders mandate. There is a willing acceptance of these things which paves the way for what will one day be this beast system and mark as seen in Revelation.
- Recently Premier of Victoria, Daniel Andrews, vowed to "lock out" the unvaccinated when it comes to medical care and conducting commerce. "There is going to be a vaccinated economy, and you get to participate in that if you are vaccinated," Andrews stated. "We're going to move to a situation where, to protect the health system, we are going to lock out people who are not vaccinated and can be."
- And technology is paving the way for us to be conditioned to using biometric databases for buying and social activities. [ie. Amazon One].

A number of angelic announcements are highlighted in Revelation 14. It's an incredible display of God's available salvation, grace and mercy.

Revelation 14:6–7, *"Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—⁷ saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.""*

In Revelation 16 we see the last series of judgments coming: the bowl judgments.

It's interesting that the first judgment was loathsome soars of those that had the mark of the beast.

Again, the waters were hit. The sea became blood again but this time all the creatures in the sea died (16:3)

Revelation 16:5–7, *"And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. ⁶ For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due."⁷ And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.""*

I love that we read often in Revelation that's God's ways are just and true (15:3). He does all things with justice and in righteousness. It's what people are calling out for today, but they can't have it apart from God. He alone comes and righteously carries out just judgment.

The sixth bowl reveals the Euphrates river being dried up by which this massive army is conspiring together and being led by these spirits of demons. These kings from the east put themselves into position for this great battle known as the Battle of Armageddon.

The seventh bowl judgment is kind of the culmination of all these judgments. It meant the wrath was complete. As Jesus took the wrath of sin upon Him on the cross, and completed the work, He too said, *"It is finished"* (John 19:30).

Revelation 16:17–18, *"Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"¹⁸ And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a*

great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.”

Incredible signs accompanied this finished work, as it did at Calvary.

- **Matthew 27:51**, *“Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,”*

Revelation 16:19, *“Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.”*

The city of Babylon, Satan’s capital city and the centre of the false religious system and the oppressive economical system, had led people down a deceptive path of spiritual fornication (Revelation 14:8). But now she will get her due.

Babylon was a real city, but throughout Scripture it became synonymous with the world system - the system that opposed God.

So Chapters 17-18 detail the fall of Religious Babylon and Economic Babylon.

Revelation 17:1–5, *“Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.” ³ So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. ⁵ And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH”*

This false religious system was rightly called the mother of harlots because it led people away from God and into unfaithfulness.

Next up is the judgment of this false economic system that lured people into prosperity and profiting off of the people.

This is the system of the antichrist that is being judged. These are the systems of the world that operate in opposition to God. God will judge them in their finality at this time.

Revelation 18:4–11, *"And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. ⁵ For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. ⁶ Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. ⁷ In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' ⁸ Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her. ⁹ The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, ¹⁰ standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.' ¹¹ "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore:"*

Revelation 18:17, *"For in one hour such great riches came to nothing..."*

What a reminder for us to be careful what you're living for.

It all comes to nothing!!! Only what we have invested into God's kingdom has any lasting value. Where are you storing your riches today?

- **Matthew 6:19–21**, *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

With the destruction of Babylon we're led into what we're all waiting for - the return of Jesus Christ!