

OBSERVATION STUDY SERIES

REVELATION

RECAP

CHAPTERS 1-12

REVELATION OBSERVATION STUDY SERIES

Revelation Recap (Chapters 1-12)

We have observed over one-half of the book of Revelation and I think it's time for a recap!

Seven-sealed Scroll

All sorts of things have been happening in Revelation, mostly the breaking of the seven-sealed scroll by the Lamb (Jesus Christ). The scroll holds God's judgments on the earth—no one is found worthy to break the seals in order to unleash those judgments... except the Lamb. He takes the scroll from the right hand of God (Who is on His throne) and begins to break the seals... and then God's judgments begin...

(Seals) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 = (Trumpets) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 = (Bowls) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

At this point in our observation six seal judgments have been released (Revelation 6) followed by an interlude (Revelation 7). The seventh seal was then broken and the trumpet judgments began (the seventh seal = the seven trumpet judgments). Next, we observed the first six of those seven terrible trumpet judgments (Revelation 8-9).

Right now, we are in the middle of an interlude, which could technically include Revelation 10-15. (We are sitting between chapters 12 and 13.) During this interlude, we are told that the seventh trumpet is being sounded, even though the bowl judgments have not yet been unleashed. The interlude continues to give us an overview of the events which will begin to take place in Revelation 16.

The anticipation is great for us, but think of John, who actually hears the trumpet sounding and he expects the judgments to begin, but, instead the interlude continues. He knows that even greater cataclysmic events are on their way but he is forced to sit patiently through trailers which broadcast excerpts and details which build anticipation for the destruction that is already on its way! And all the while that seventh trumpet continues to sound in his ears... Does he feel excitement? Or anxiety? Perhaps both. Either way, talk about overload!

Earlier, I used the idea of a set of Matryoshka dolls to explain how the trumpet judgments connect to the seventh seal (and how the bowl judgments relate to the seventh trumpet judgment). Let me try another illustration just in case the Matryoshka dolls missed the mark.

We all know how drop-down menus work on our computers so let's think of being on a website which we will fictitiously call "Revelation". The home page menu has several buttons. On the left, there is a button called "Vision of Jesus" (Revelation 1) and next to

it is a button which says “Seven Churches” (Revelation 2 and 3). The next button to the right is called “Throne Room Scenes” (Revelation 4 and 5) and then the button we are interested in right now says “Seven-sealed Scroll” (Revelation 6-18). (Just in case you are wondering, there would also be another button labeled “After These Things” which would include the events from Revelation 19-22.)

Anyway, if you clicked the Seven-sealed Scroll button a drop-down menu would appear. It would reveal seven more buttons which list what is “inside” of the Seven-sealed Scroll button—Seal One, Seal Two, Seal Three, Seal Four, Seal Five, Seal Six, and Seal Seven.

If you then clicked the button which was labeled “Seal Seven” another drop-down menu would appear which held seven more buttons—Trumpet One, Trumpet Two, Trumpet Three, Trumpet Four, Trumpet Five, Trumpet Six, and Trumpet Seven. And if you clicked the “Trumpet Seven” button one final drop-down menu would appear which would list seven final buttons—Bowl One, Bowl Two, Bowl Three, Bowl Four, Bowl Five, Bowl Six, and Bowl Seven.

Think with me for a moment... the “Seal Seven” button cannot be accessed from the menu bar; you must enter the “Seven-sealed Scroll” button in order to view it. The same goes for the “Trumpet Seven” button—you must follow the correct path in order to gain access to it—first through the “Seven-sealed Scroll” button and consequently through the “Seal Seven”. In order to reach the “Bowl Seven” button you must once again follow the correct path—choosing the “Seven-sealed Scroll” first, then “Seal Seven”, then “Trumpet Seven”. In reality, all of the seal, trumpet, and bowl buttons emanate from one single button—the button labeled “Seven-sealed Scroll”.

Does that illustration help you to understand the correlation between the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments? I hope so. If it does, let me add to it. As you click on the buttons and go down further and further, the judgments intensify. Things will get worse and worse (for the earth-dwellers) as the seals progress.

Titling and memorizing the seals, trumpets, and bowls will help you to keep on track with the outlay of Revelation—a very helpful thing if you plan on continuing to study God’s Word, which I most certainly hope is your plan!

Let’s look at some possible titles. The first seal could be called “Conqueror”. The second seal “World War”, the third “Rations”, and the fourth “Sword, Famine, Pestilence, Beasts”. The fifth seal might be titled “Martyrs”, which represent the souls underneath the altar who are crying out for God to judge and avenge their blood. And the sixth seal could be titled “Great Earthquake”. (I would suggest going back to your Bible right now and reading each of these seals. They are found in Revelation 6. It would only take a few moments and would be extremely helpful to nail down in your memory what each one entailed.)

Here are some possibilities of titles for the trumpet judgments. The first trumpet might be titled “1/3 earth-burned”. The second “1/3 sea-blood” and the third “1/3 waters-bitter”. The fourth could be called “1/3 sun, moon, stars darkened”. The fifth trumpet (identified as the first woe) might be called “Locusts-5 months” and the sixth trumpet (the second woe) called “Army-1/3 mankind killed”.

Now for the bowl judgments (I know we haven’t observed them yet, but I thought you might like to have them listed here with the rest of the judgments for reference), the first bowl might be called “Malignant sore on those with mark”. The second could be called “Sea to blood”, the third “Rivers, Spring to Blood”, and the fourth “Men scorched by sun”. The fifth could be called “Beast’s kingdom darkened” and the sixth “Euphrates dry/ Gather Har-Magedon”. The final bowl, the seventh, might be called “Earthquake/ Babylon/Hailstones”.

Interludes inserted into the seals, trumpets, and bowls

I feel confident that you are, at least somewhat, understanding the correlation between the seals, trumpets, and bowls. But we also need to try and understand the connection of the interludes which are inserted into John’s recording of the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments. They are seen at times just before the intensity of judgment is upped—between the sixth and seventh seal (Revelation 7) which will move us into the seven trumpet judgments, and again between the sixth and seventh trumpet (Revelation 10-15) which will move us into the seven bowl judgments. Both the first and the second interlude give us a summary of what is about to take place in the next set of judgments—details and excerpts of the things to come.

The record of the judgment and fall of Babylon (Revelation 17-18) can be seen as a third interlude. It is inserted right before the second coming of the Lord and the great battle over Jerusalem at which time the intensity of judgment is upped once again. Judgment continues to intensify until it consummates at the great white throne judgment. There, God will pronounce His final judgment—the unbelieving dead, along with death and Hades, will be eternally sentenced to personalized addresses in the lake of fire—the second death.

Great Big Intersection of Events

After the first interlude, which follows the sixth seal, the seventh seal will be broken. Remember, the seventh seal does more than introduce the seven trumpet judgments—it *is* the seven trumpets. After the second interlude, which follows the sixth trumpet, there is a plethora of activity that aligns right before the seven bowls begin. Again, remember that the seventh trumpet (third woe) does more than introduce the seven bowl judgments—it *is* the seven bowls. Therefore, the seventh seal *is* both the seven trumpets and the seven bowls. Or, to say it another way, the seven trumpets and the seven bowls together *are* the seventh seal.

This activity is the great big intersection of events I keep referring to. We began to observe it from the vantage point of Revelation 11:15. We looked back toward

Revelation 10:7 and forward to Revelation 12:10. They all speak about the same specific time in the future.

Two events will happen simultaneously at that juncture in time and is the most significant “given” we will see in the book of Revelation.

The first event (from Revelation 12:10) is a loud voice in heaven saying, *“Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night”*. This event is the same event as *“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign for ever and ever”* (from Revelation 11:15).

This is a defining moment in all of history, which is HIS story (God is sovereignly authoring the storyline of history). This is when the countdown to the end, which had been revving up, reaches the point of no return. The events that are decreed will take place—the judgments will continue, but God and His Christ will now march unswervingly toward their throne to actively rule over their creation.

The second event at this juncture is Satan being thrown down (out of heaven) permanently. This is the point when God will give Satan a much longer leash to carry out his plans of destruction. He will empower a man who will be revealed to the world as the anti-christ. The anti-christ (the beast) will kill the two witnesses, who will have been prophesying for three and one-half years (1,260 days). The nations will have been trampling the court for 42 months before the antichrist is actually made manifest to the world.

Events stemming from the great big intersection of events

You have seen there are many events which stem off from the major intersection, but we need to consider them carefully for several reasons. One reason is because many events take place for the same length of time—1,260 days, 42 months, and 3 1/2 years. But that doesn't mean they all take place *at* the same time, because they don't. We need to know for sure whether the events happen for 3 1/2 years *before* the big intersection or happen for 3 1/2 years beginning with, but *after*, the big intersection.

Another thing we have to stay away from is making assumptions. For instance, we know that the big intersection happens between the sixth and seventh trumpet judgments. We can know how long it will be until they are finished (for now, I'll just tell you to stay tuned for further observations) but we cannot know how long it is since they began. In other words, if we start at the big intersection (between the sixth and seventh trumpets) we know we are at the middle of Daniel's 70th week; we are in the middle of a seven year covenant made by the beast. But we do not know when the first seal was broken and when the judgments actually begin (there is nothing to say they couldn't begin before the covenant is made). We simply do not know how much time will pass between the first seal and the sixth trumpet (where the big intersection is seen). It could be much longer than the 3 1/2 years that is often a default guess—so we simply must not guess!

The Bible does not tell us, so we can not know. But it's alright, because we can trust God to give us everything we *need* to know (not necessarily everything we *want* to know)!

What we do know is that the big intersection is a main and plain given which we can absolutely work with to gain understanding. It is crucial in comprehending the order of future time events. And it can help keep us from error as we continue to study what God has to say to us. If Revelation were a jigsaw puzzle (and sometimes it feels like one) the given of the great big intersection offers us as much help and direction as if we had found all four corners and all four sides in that jigsaw puzzle. Once the puzzle has its border, we can know exactly where the rest of the pieces will have to go—inside of that border. Now that we have identified the given of the big intersection, we can carefully attach events to it with confidence and accuracy—remember though, I said carefully...

The time when the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ come is the same time that Satan is permanently thrown down from heaven. (Revelation 12:10) When Satan is thrown down, he gives his power to a man who has been on the earth and suddenly that man is able to kill the two witnesses who have been prophesying for 1,260 days in Jerusalem.

For 3 1/2 years the world hates these two prophets because they prophesy *for* God and *against* men. People try and try to kill them but the prophets send fire out of their mouths and kill their attackers instead. The prophets keep rain from falling on the earth, and turn waters into blood, and strike the earth with all kinds of plagues—and as often as they wish. These two guys are on a world-wide wanted poster—not dead or alive—just dead! So when the beast makes war with them and overcomes them and kills them, he uses this golden opportunity to step into his position as the anti-christ. He is about to declare himself to be God...

When the beast kills the two witnesses, the whole world celebrates—they hated God's witnesses and now they just *love, love, love* this man. He begins to gather support for the idea of "I'm Mister Wonderful!", or let me put it another way, "I AM GOD!"

This man did not just come on the scene though, he already had the world's attention and respect. He had come up with (and convinced the world to agree to) an idea that would require a seven year covenant with Israel—this is biblically known as Daniel's 70th week. Daniel calls him the prince who is to come and tells us he will break that covenant in the middle of the week—at which time he will do abominable and horrifying things against the Jews.

So this man comes on the scene at some point in history (he is quite possibly living right now) and makes a seven year covenant with Israel. That covenant is made 3 1/2 years before the big intersection in which the salvation, power, and kingdom of God and His Christ come and in which Satan is permanently thrown down from heaven. The intersection, itself, is the middle of Daniel's 70th week. (By the way, I know I repeat some of this in various places, but I do so knowing that it will help you to grasp it more

fully.) Once the beast breaks his own seven year covenant, it will be 3 1/2 years before Christ comes to earth once more. (Hallelujah!!! Come quickly, Lord!) That 3 1/2 year waiting period will be the same 42 months that the beast has authority to act.

Think about that covenant just for a moment. Daniel 9:27 tells us, *“And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”*

The prince who is to come (the beast, the anti-christ, the little horn, the man of lawlessness) will come up with a scheme that will portend to create peace in the Middle East—something everyone will finally agree on. It will probably include a lot of things that deal specifically with things we see happening daily in and around Israel: Gaza and the Palestinians, and a divided Jerusalem. Perhaps they will sell off some of the land of Israel to the Palestinians and make a large Palestinian state which will include part of Israel’s capital, Jerusalem.

Recent concerns include Iran and Hezbollah. And, of course, Syria, and even Russia and China will most likely be involved. And the United Nations will most definitely want to have their nose in it all. Actually it is not improbable for all the nations of the earth to take part in this deal because, as is happening already, the world will continue to hate Israel more and more and more...

The main point to the covenant will be to bring peace so there will have to be some sort of concession toward Israel (the many). There has to be a rebuilt temple at the time the anti-christ asserts himself (otherwise there will be no sacrifice and grain offerings to stop) so we can easily see the world letting the Jews build it somehow.

The prince who is to come will be clever—he will figure out a way to make everyone agree on the terms of the covenant. But the covenant, or treaty, will last seven years, most likely because it will take that long to implement its plans.

In the first 3 1/2 years of the covenant, there will be peace—at least in the sense of peace for the Jews in Israel. They will be able to build their temple as part of the peace plan. However, it does not look like it will be according to God’s biblical pattern because the nations will be trampling the court for 42 months.

This man, the beast, must be a spectacular diplomat, (perhaps even now) and continuing to the point when he makes the covenant with Israel, but note that he does not receive Satan’s power or throne until Satan is thrown down (the middle of the seven year covenant). He is not given Satan’s great authority until that time. It is not until Satan is thrown down to the earth and has great wrath because he knows he only has a short time that he gives his power and throne and authority to the beast. (Once again, Satan does not indwell the beast; rather, he gives him his power and authority.)

The antichrist then uses that power and authority to kill the two witnesses and at that point (the great big intersection of events point) this amazing diplomat breaks his own covenant and announces that he is none other than "God".

Three main events stem backward in time from the big intersection (the middle of Daniel's 70th week). First of all, God's judgment will have been coming on the earth in the form of cataclysmic events unleashed by the seals and trumpets, but it is a general judgment on the earth, nevertheless. Second, the nations will trample the court for 42 months prior to the big intersection. Third, the two witnesses will prophesy during the 3 1/2 years immediately preceding the big intersection.

There are also three main events that stem forward in time from the big intersection. First, God's judgment, once sent to the earth in a general sense, will now become a direct assault from the kingdom of heaven upon the kingdom of the beast. Second, the beast will have authority to act for 42 months. Third, the woman will flee to the wilderness for a time and times and half a time (the familiar 3 1/2 year time frame) when Satan is thrown down and empowers the beast, who will then make war with the saints. By the way, in context, the saints are not the church; they are the Jews. Context rules!

Each of the events subsequent to the big intersection (Daniel's 70th week midpoint) will end at exactly the same time—3 1/2 years after the big intersection when Christ, Himself, comes to the earth! By the way, Daniel's 70th week will also be put to an end at the appearance of the Lord! Actually, a lot of things will come to an end at His appearance... and a lot of new things will begin! Hallelujah!!! Come quickly, Lord!

There are many other biblical passages which should be studied in order to understand future events as accurately as possible. Remember, we are just observing the mountaintops of the book of Revelation. Revelation can, and should, be studied much further and deeper if you want to know more details. The books of Daniel, Zechariah, Ezekiel, and Matthew, just to name a few, must be studied and consulted as well in order to really nail down what God has told us. It all takes time and effort, but it is so worth it.

God gave us the book of Revelation to show His bond-servants (you and me) the things which must soon take place. We are blessed if we read, hear, and heed the things which are written in Revelation... because the time is near...