



A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE END TIMES

Week 46: The Seal Judgements, Part 14

April 23, 2023

Instructor: Steve Schmutzer

Review:

- A. We are presently studying the Seal Judgements of **Revelation Chapters 6-8**
- B. We've proceeded through the 6th Seal Judgment, but before we go into studying the 7th one, we're going to pause to glance back and to reinforce some important information.
- C. Last week, I emphasized that these Seal Judgements follow the Rapture of the church. In fact, as far as I am able to understand the Scriptures, there is not much delay in this respect.
- D. In fact, Paul tells us in **2 Thessalonians 2:7-8** that the antichrist, the man of lawlessness - will be revealed AFTER the Rapture.
- E. We are also told in that same chapter that the forces of lawlessness are already at work, but they are being held back from having full debut and full effect by the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the church.
- F. We can think here in terms of a dam that is holding back a lot of water. When the dam breaks, all the water rushes out and causes devastation.
- G. In this analogy, the Rapture of the church is the dam breaking. All the forces of evil and lawlessness will rush out and the events of the Seal Judgements will then rapidly unfold.
- H. This is indeed what the Bible appears to lay out from a chronological standpoint:
 1. The First Seal Judgment is the arrival on the world stage of the antichrist who will then begin his political ascent.
 2. Yes, globalist leaders are calling for one man to rule the world. Yes, they are promoting chaos and the erosion of societies in order to achieve their goals.
 3. Yes, they are being fraudulent and deceptive at many levels to gain what they want. Yes, they are preparing all their systems and resources for this ambition.
 4. But again, this can all only happen after believers have been taken out of this world. The Bible makes this clear. That is the moment the dam breaks.
 5. That is why it is SO important to see the early indications of each of the Seal Judgment (through #5) even in our time.
 6. The Seal Judgements cannot happen until after The Rapture. However, we do see this depraved world TRYING hard to bring the events and dynamics of the Seal Judgments to fruition.

NOTE: Last week we discussed what the role of the church is in our time, and we noted there are generally two disparate passions within the church:

- I. One passion finds those who spend many hours writing to their Congressmen, picketing abortion clinics, campaigning for nationalist candidates, trying to change school and city boards, demonstrating against changes to alcohol laws, and boycotting certain movies.

1. This crowd believes in using all means to try to influence and improve our culture and leadership to align it more with a Christian worldview.
 2. An extreme expression of this group is seen in Dominion Theology, these are the folks who feel the church will eventually SO positively impact the world. They will SO utterly bring about widespread Christian values and culture, that then, and only then, will Jesus Christ elect to come back to it.
 3. I would remind you that the Bible does not support the premise of Dominion Theology. It is a heresy.
- J. On the other side are those with a very different passion. They refuse to vote, they refuse to get involved, and they generally disdain all efforts to positively impact today's culture.
1. This crowd defends their stance to essentially check out of society due to Jesus' words, "*My kingdom is not of this world*" (**Cf. John 18:36**).
 2. As far as this crowd is concerned, they have no desire to get involved. They are total separatists, and they look with disdain on anyone who tries to do anything productive or proper to make a difference.
 3. Again, I would remind you that the Bible does not support this posture either.
- K. As we learned last week, there is a balance between these two points, and it is that balance that finds God's Word calling us 'salt and light.'
1. Salt preserves and flavors, as we are called to preserve and flavor the world in which we live. The world does not appreciate our role here, but that does not mean we should not do what we are called to do.
 2. Light exposes darkness, and Christians, by their choices and their values, do the same. Again, the world does not like this, but we serve Jesus Christ.
 3. Again, there is a balance here. We'll never succeed in fully tidying up a sinful world, but we should not fully check out and refuse all efforts to make a difference.

NOTE: This is why 2 Thessalonians Ch. 2 is so important in what it is trying to tell us:

1. When the Church is supernaturally removed in the Rapture, what is also removed with it, is the influence of the Holy Spirit in a corporate body of believers.
2. The salt is gone, and so is the light.
3. We are no longer around to preserve society, season the culture, shed light on darkness, etc.
4. It is at THIS juncture that Seal Judgement #1 takes place and the antichrist is now able to debut on the world stage.
5. For that matter, now deception can also run unfettered, and reach new heights of fraud and lies.
6. Wars and conflicts can also surge, intentional diseases and pandemics can go into overdrive and wreak much more havoc, economies and food shortages

can be much more disruptive, population control agendas can be forced more easily on a deceived world, false belief systems can now thrive as never before, and persecution of anyone who speaks the truth will be endorsed.

7. These are all the things which Seal Judgements #1-#5 are basically trying to show us. There will be a gross exacerbation, or a dramatic increase, of all the trends and dynamics that we are seeing today.
8. That's why I have called these Seal Judgements "man's wrath against man."
9. It is after The Rapture that the world's globalist leaders fully turn against humanity. There is no longer anything to stop or slow them.
10. Once again, I believe there is a gap of time between The Rapture and the start of The Tribulation. We don't know how long that gap of time will be, but I believe it is in that gap that these Seal Judgements (most of them) take place.
11. If I had to tender a guess about that gap of time, I'd suggest it is a few years. I don't KNOW that because the Bible is silent on this issue. I'll explain shortly why I feel as I do.

NOTE: So, let's take this information and background and quickly hammer through a review, and some new thoughts concerning the Seal Judgements.

- I. Here are reasons why I feel the Seal Judgements are not within the Seven-Year Tribulation.

NOTE: At least the first five of them....

- A. All the subsequent judgements (The Seven Trumpet Judgments and the Seven Bowl Judgements) are directly administered by angels under God's command (***Cf. Revelation 8:2; 15:1.***)
 1. Conversely, all of the Seal Judgements are the result of the Lamb of God opening each seal on the scroll (***Cf. 6:1; 6:3; 6:5; Et al.***)
 2. This administrative element may not be much of an argument on it's own, but it clearly sets the Seal Judgements uniquely apart from the rest of the judgements.
- B. The "condition required" for the Seal Judgments to take place is The Rapture of the Church.
 1. This is self-evident in the chronology of the text.
 2. There is the church age in ***Revelation chapters 2 and 3.***
 3. John then sees a door open in heaven and he is told to "come up here" in ***Revelation 4:1.*** This is a type (picture) of The Rapture.
 4. John sees the church in heaven, and it is at this point that the Seal Judgements then take place on earth.
- C. Conversely, the "condition required" for the Trumpet and Bowl Judgements to take place appears, by the various texts, to be the start of the Seven-Year Tribulation.

1. They occur AFTER the depraved earth-dwellers are given a supernatural glimpse of God on His throne and they understand the wrath of the Lamb (**Cf. Revelation 6:14,16**). They also occur AFTER that same population declares “*the great day of their wrath has come*” (**Cf. Revelation 6:17**).
 2. This language of “*the day of wrath*” is very similar to language used elsewhere in Scripture to define the Seven-Year Tribulation period.
 3. This is why I have said I believe the Tribulation begins somewhere around the 6th Seal Judgment, either at that point or right after, as we will later discuss with the 7th Seal Judgement.
- D. There is a distinct difference in “feel” between the Seal Judgements on one side, and the Trumpet and Bowl judgements on the other side.
1. For example, the Seal Judgments are about globalism rising, intentional pandemics and food shortages increasing, wars and conflicts surging, etc.
 - a. These are all things we already see early signs of in our own time. Again, to repeat myself, they are “man’s wrath against man.” They are a clear sign of mankind’s sinful condition.
 - b. And once again, all it takes for these things to quickly reach unprecedented levels is for the church to be taken out of here in the Rapture.
 2. It’s very different with the Trumpet and Bowl Judgments. For example...
 - a. A third of the sea turning to blood (**Cf. Revelation 8:8**), the emergence of the demonic locust-scorpion-type creatures from the Abyss (**Cf. Revelation Ch. 9**), the sun becoming so hot that it sears people with fire (**Cf. Revelation 16:8**), supernatural darkness (like the plague in Egypt, **Cf. Revelation 16:10**), and more.
 - b. These are a portion of the Trumpet and Bowl Judgments, and they are clearly a supernatural intervention on mankind.
- E. Jesus Himself appears to place the events of the Seal Judgments as being PRIOR to the onset of The Tribulation.
1. **Cf. Matthew 24:4-9**; – NOTE: “deception, wars and rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, persecution and death, etc.”
 - a. These are all the dynamics of the Seal Judgments, and they are generally presented in the same order as the Seal Judgment events
 - b. However, Jesus says about this timeframe: “*the end is still to come*” (**vs. 6b**), and “*these are the beginning of birth pains*” (**vs. 8**).
 2. **Cf. Mark 13:5-8** – it reads the same way and makes the same points
 3. **Cf. Luke 21:8-13+** - Luke adds “*the end will not come right away*” (**vs. 9b**)
 4. The point being made in each of these Olivet Discourse accounts is the events of the Seal Judgments do not appear to be part of the END, but they are BEFORE it.
 5. In **Daniel 12:9**, the angel describes the events that take place within the Tribulation and he calls this timeframe “*the time of the end.*”

6. The general takeaway here is these passage in the Gospel accounts, as well as those in books like **Daniel** and others, all appear to suggest that the “end” or the “time of the end” is one and the same with the Seven-Year Tribulation.
 7. It is only AFTER the Tribulation begins that anyone alive and on earth at that point, can calculate out the precise number of days till the very end of human history, and the physical Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
- F. In addition, three of the Seal Judgments strongly suggest, within the texts that describe them, that they precede the start of The Tribulation. In order:
1. The Fourth Seal Judgment (**Cf. Revelation 6:7-8**); NOTE: We spent several weeks on this Fourth Seal Judgment, starting with Lesson #37.
 - a. This Seal Judgment is marked by two riders on a horse instead of just one, those riders are Death and Hades and they are “*given power over a fourth of the earth to kill.*”
 - As we previously learned, this is not saying ¼ of the earth’s inhabitants are killed, but rather one quarter of the earth’s population is commissioned to go out and to kill.
 - In other words, this Seal Judgement marks a time when 25% of the earth’s population will serve a specific agenda.
 - This population will be so invested into this agenda, that they will kill anyone opposing it. They will engage in deliberate genocide.
 - b. To properly understand what is happening with Seal Judgment #4, we have to also consider the text of **Isaiah 28:14-19** which provides valuable commentary on this same series of events. This text in **Isaiah** reveals the following:
 - Death and Hades (Hebrew, “Sheol”) have a specific mission > to force everyone into compliance with an agenda.
 - We also know from **Revelation Ch. 17**, that this agenda is one of forcing people to believe in and to follow a false one-world religious system that has taken over the globe after the Rapture. It’s a mass deception that is forced upon the population.
 - This results in a worldwide genocidal campaign as **Revelation 6:7-8** make very clear, and **Isaiah 28:15 and 18** calls this genocidal campaign an “*overflowing scourge.*”
 - **IMPORTANT:** (Here is where we need to connect the dots): Israel will want no part of this false one-world religion; she will want her own temple and her own sacrificial system.
 - NOTE: That’s why language about the temple and the architecture and building of the temple show up in this same passage in **Isaiah Ch. 28**
 - This “overflowing scourge,” this global genocidal campaign, is what concerns Israel here in **Isaiah Ch. 28**.

- This causes Israel to become a signatory of the false covenant which **Daniel 9:27** confirms is the start of the Tribulation.
- **Isaiah 28:15** reads: (I'll insert some emphases) *"Because you (Israel) have said, "We have made a (false) covenant with death, And with Sheol we are in agreement. When the overflowing scourge passes through, It will not come to us, For we have made lies our refuge, And under falsehood we have hidden ourselves."*
- But according to **Isaiah 28:18**, this covenant: *"...will be annulled."* It says in the same verse that this agreement *"...will not stand."* **Daniel 9:27** says the very same thing.
- Therefore, this covenant is one and the same with the covenant that the antichrist confirms with Israel in **Daniel 9:27**, and it is this covenant that marks as the start of the Tribulation.
- But, and it's a big "but," that means that the genocidal campaign, the "overflowing scourge" of Death and Hades must be well underway BEFORE Israel is alarmed by it and is motivated to confirm this covenant.
- In turn, this means the events of Seal Judgement #4 must PRECEDE the starting point of The Tribulation. In fact, it is the events of Seal Judgement #4 which prompt Israel's apostasy and her agreement with the antichrist, and begin those seven years.
- Therefore, the events of Seal Judgment #4 take place within that gap of time between The Rapture and the start of The Tribulation.

- G. The fifth Seal Judgement (**Cf. Revelation 6:9-11**) – NOTE: This one seems to be very clearly in that gap of time between the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation
1. Here, we see masses of martyred saints crying out to God in heaven.
 2. They've been martyred *"because of the Word of God and the testimony they had maintained."*
 3. This is a key group that was targeted by this false one-world religious system that Death and Hades are out to force on everyone.
 4. So, here's a group of people that missed the Rapture however, came to saving faith following that event.
 - a. They were killed, they are now in heaven, and they want an answer.
 - b. They want to know *"how long until God will judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge their blood?"*
 - c. They know the Day of the Lord (AKA The Tribulation) is coming, but it hasn't started yet, and they want to know *"why and when?"*
 - d. They clearly know the details of God's Word. That's why they were killed in the first place. They were proclaiming its truth.

- e. So, they obviously know that when The Tribulation starts, one can calculate out the number of days from that point until Jesus Christ physically returns.
 - f. They know the starting gun for the Tribulation is the confirming of the covenant we talked about a moment ago, however none of those things have happened yet, and so these martyred saints are asking God, “How much longer?”
5. It’s not difficult to connect the dots here and conclude that at least up through Seal Judgement #5, The Tribulation has not yet started.
 6. If it had, these martyred saints would already know the answer to their question, and they wouldn’t be asking it in the first place.
- H. Lastly, we have the sixth Seal Judgment (***Cf. Revelation 6:12-17***) It’s here in the sixth Seal Judgment that the depraved earth-dwellers (all of them, see ***vs. 15***) recognize the *“great day of God’s wrath has come.”*
1. How do they know this? Two reasons:
 - a. **First**, I would suggest the testimonies of the martyred saints they assisted in killing, is one key reason.
 - b. Those martyred saints understood the prophetic events that were forthcoming and they told everyone about those details.
 - c. So, the earth-dwellers know what’s happening when the events of the Sixth Seal Judgment unfold.
 - d. **Second**, the earth-dwellers can see God and can see the wrath of the Lamb for themselves.
 - e. They are permitted a supernatural glimpse as the heavens are ripped apart briefly.
 - f. “Seeing is believing” as the old adage goes, but in this case the earth-dwellers SEE and KNOW, BUT the text makes it clear that this does not result in their repentance and belief.
 - g. What they KNOW is what they admit: The *“great day of God’s wrath has come, and who can stand?”*
 - h. This is why I say it is somewhere right around this point that I believe The Tribulation begins. The text says as much.
 - i. It is somewhere right around this point that I think Israel confirms the covenant with the antichrist.

NOTE: And that leads me directly into the last issue of this lesson, and that is the seventh Seal Judgment. To find that one, we have to turn a couple pages to ***Revelation 8:1***

2. I won’t say much about the seventh Seal Judgment because there is not much to say.
 - a. It’s a period of silence, an interlude of sorts.

- b. We do not know exactly how long this “*half an hour*” period of time actually is. Some say it’s literal, others suggest it is figurative. Regardless, it’s a span of time.
- c. The implication of this Seventh Seal Judgment is God’s judgment, the same judgment that the martyred saints of Seal Judgment #5 were asking about is about to begin
- d. When the seventh seal is broken again, by Jesus Christ, and the scroll is unrolled to its fullest dimension, we see that both the redeemed and the angels in heaven are reduced to silence.
- e. This is clearly in anticipation of the grim reality of the destruction that is about to take place on the earth. God’s judgments will be fierce.
- f. So, this half an hour of silence is the proverbial calm before the storm. As one commentator puts it, “*It is the silence of foreboding, of intense expectation, of awe at what God is about to do.*”
- g. **Zephaniah 1:7** supports this perspective. It reads, “*Be silent before the Sovereign Lord, for the day of the Lord is near. The Lord has prepared a sacrifice; he has consecrated those he has invited.*”
 - This verse in **Zephaniah** suggests that a period of silence would attend, or precede, the Day of the Lord (AKA The Tribulation).
 - The reason is this is a solemn occasion where the Lord will prepare a sacrifice and invite His guests (**Cf. Zephaniah. 1:7**).
 - The sacrifice will consist of all of humanity that opposes God. They will be killed through the forthcoming events and judgments of The Tribulation, culminating in the grand slaughter at the Battle of Armageddon.
- h. Again – this all suggests that The Tribulation STARTS somewhere around this point. One could argue it begins after the seventh Seal Judgment, or just before.