Understanding the *Parenthetical periods* of the book of Revelation

**Read Revelation 7**

The seventh chapter of Revelation is the *first parenthetical passage* of the book. This first parenthetical passage is inserted here, between the sixth and seventh seal, and contains explanatory matter about things, that will transpire during this time which the six seals will take place. This is information that was not contained in the giving of the six seals.

The seventh chapter of Revelation is parenthetical. Instead of the natural order of events, the seventh seal does not follow the sixth seal immediately, instead, an explanation of two companies of redeemed people are given...breaking into the thought of the seals... explaining certain things that are transpiring in, and between, the main order of events.

To understand the book of Revelation, one must be aware of seven "parenthesis" throughout the book of Revelation. Chapter seven is the first of these parenthesis, coming between the sixth and the seventh seals and reveals other things that are happening during this period of time. They are:

1. The ministry of the 144,000 (Revelation 7:1-8)
2. A multitude, saved during the Tribulation Period (Revelation 7:9-17).

Looking ahead, the second parenthesis, coming between the sixth and the seventh trumpet judgments, reveals what else is happening during the period of time of these trumpet judgments.

1. The "small scroll" (Revelation 10:1-11)
2. The Two Witnesses (Revelation 11:1-14)

The third parenthesis, coming between the seventh trumpet and the vial judgments, reveals seven personages:

1. The Sun Clothed Woman (Revelation 12:1-2)
2. The Dragon (Revelation 12:3-4)
3. The Man Child (Revelation 12:5-6)
4. The Archangel (Revelation 12:7-12)
5. The Jewish Remnant (Revelation 12:13-17)
6. The Beast out of the Sea (Revelation 13:1-10)
7. The Beast out of the earth (Rev. 13:11-19-18)

The fourth parenthesis, also, coming between the seventh trumpet and the seven vial judgments, reveals certain events, that take place during this period of time that, are not included in the telling of the "trumpet-judgments."

1. The Lamb on Mt. Zion (Revelation 14:1-5)
2. The Three Angels (Revelation 14:6-12)
3. The Blessed Dead (Revelation 14:13)
4. The Harvest and Vintage (Revelation 14:14-20)
The fifth parenthesis, coming between the sixth and seventh vial judgments, reveals what else is happening during the period of time that these judgments are being poured out.

Three unclean spirits (Revelation 16:13-16)

The sixth parenthesis, coming between the 2nd and the 3rd doom.

The seventh parenthesis, coming between the 4th and the 5th doom reveals:

(1) Satan bound (Revelation 20:1-7)
(2) The First Resurrection (Revelation 20:4-5)
(3) The Millennium (Revelation 20:6)
(4) Satan loosed for a little while (Revelation 20:7)

These parenthetical passages, simply, contain explanatory matters about things that will transpire, but were not contained in the revealing of the seal, trumpet and vial judgments. However, understanding the reason for these parenthesis-interruptions is necessary in order to bring the reader up to date on what else is taking place during the revealing of these judgments in the Revelation.

Let's review up to this point of our study. After the introduction of Christ...as He is today...in chapter 1, and the messages to the seven churches in chapters 2 and 3, we see the saints and the scene that they behold in Heaven (chapter 4). In chapter 5 there is a diligent search made to find One who is worthy to break the seals of the scroll containing the record of redemption. Chapter 6 shows the breaking of the first six seals, and their consequences upon the earth. Chapter 7 is a parenthesis, before the breaking of the 7th seal, revealing other events that are taking place during this same period of time.

These four angels of Revelation 7:1 are given power to hurt the earth and the sea and the trees. (A comparison of these four angels with the first trumpet angels in Revelation 8:7-12, will reveal that they may well be the same.) However, before these judgments are fulfilled, there is the "sealing of the 144,000 Jews."

Revelation 7:4-8, states that during the Tribulation Period God will remember His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and Solomon, and all the promises of Israel's restoration in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and all the other prophets, and, before the Antichrist can destroy the nation of Israel, God
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is going to save a remnant of twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of the sons of Jacob and seal them for Himself - seal them to escape destruction of the Antichrist and seal them to become His witnesses...His missionaries ...during the Tribulation whereby a great multitude will be saved because of the testimony of this redeemed remnant from the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel.

These 144,000, all Israelites...the physical descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob...will become God's missionaries during the Tribulation Period. As a result of their preaching and testimony there will be a great number saved, as Revelation 7:9 states, "of all nations, and kindred's, and people, and tongues."

Great masses in the world will hear the message during the Tribulation Period from the lips of these 144,000 Israelites, and, as a result, a great number will be saved, many of whom will be martyred, and will be raised at the close of the Tribulation Period, as the final gleanings of the First Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:23--24a). There is no question regarding their identity, verse 14.

Here is the picture! After the sixth seal, and before the seventh, God, who knows what lies ahead, seals and saves 144,000 missionaries from Israel who preach the Gospel during the remaining of the Tribulation Period. As a result, a great multitude is saved, who are martyred for their faith and will be added to the glorious company of the Church when Jesus returns, which we read about in Rev. 19:11.

These martyred, Tribulation, saints, are safe in Heaven from the awful day of the Lord and awaiting the coming of Christ in power...(their bodies awaiting the end-time" resurrection) ...In the meantime they are before the throne of God in perfect bliss...the "gleanings" of the Gospel harvest. How marvelous in the final description of their bliss in verses 15-17 of chapter 7.

What a picture of peace, joy and quietness! Contrast this with the chapter, which follows when the judgments of the seven trumpets begin as the seventh seal is opened. Here we have the resumptions of the awful judgments of the Tribulation, but, far removed from them are God's redeemed saints who because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are in the place of eternal bliss and peace.

The seventh seal includes all that happens during the sounding of the seven trumpet judgments.

To understand how the trumpet judgments come out of the seal judgments ...and, the vial judgments come out of the trumpet judgments, imagine, a fire works; a rocket is fired into the air and bursts into seven stars, (seals) then, the 7th seal bursts into seven other stars (trumpets), finally, the 7th star, (trumpet) of the second group of stars, (trumpets) bursts into a third group of seven stars (vials).
Out of the 7th seals come the 7 trumpet judgments; and out of the 7th trumpet come the 7 vial judgments.

After the sixth seal there is "silence in Heaven" for half an hour. Heaven is known for its celestial sounds and continual shouts of praise and adoration. Heaven is a scene where Heavenly hosts pay homage and bring glory to Jesus Christ our Lord.

However, now all the redeemed saints, represented by the 24 elders, and the angels all hush their voices. All Heaven is silent! The silence is mentioned because it is unusual for Heaven to be silent! It is the silence of an awesome expectation, like the nerve-breaking tension of wondering what will happen next, the calm before the storm, an awful hush before the battle.

The occasion for this silence is the opening of the last seal. As the seals were opened, one-by-one, increasingly terrible judgments fell upon the earth until six had been opened. War, famine, pestilence, death, earthquakes, hailstones and fire had taken a toll of fatalities that swept a fourth of the people of the earth into judgment and death.

One more seal remained to be opened and the hosts of Heaven realizing it was the last and the most terrible, stood in awe and expectation. They knew something of what lay ahead, though they may not have known all, but this they knew: they knew that there had been a gradual rise of intensity of each succeeding seal judgment, and, that now, God's wrath was about to break loose, and they were about to witness the
greatest time of sorrow that the world had ever seen. This expectation accounts for the silence in Heaven for half an hour.

It is as if Heaven "held it's breath" as they awaited the sounding of the first of the seven trumpets which followed the breaking of the seventh, and the last, seal of the scroll. Expectation and suspense can be so intense that one dares not breathe. We often describe such a situation thus: "It was so quiet you could hear a pin drop."

Imagine the suspense you would feel of hearing a story of a mad villain pursuing an innocent young girl. He has escaped from a prison for the criminally insane and, with a knife between his teeth and a gun in each hand, sneering and cursing, he pursues the innocent victim of his rage. He is gaining on her, inch-by-inch, foot-by-foot. the path leads to the edge of a great precipice, which drops hundreds of feet to jagged rocks below. Closer and closer the slayer comes to his victim. His hands reach out to seize her as she reaches the end of the cliff. She hesitates, she wavers for a moment, and then, just as the villain lunges at her . . .

That is suspense! If this were an account of an actual experience, you would be holding your breath when the maiden reached the cliff. There would be silence - the silence of suspense.

This illustration - weak though it is - helps us to understand the silence in Heaven. The Heavenly hosts have been following the rapid unsealing of the scroll and, no doubt, have witnessed the fast-moving events of war, famine, pestilence and death.

Men, hiding in caves and rocks, are crying for the mountains to fall on them, and, this is the result of the events that occurred during the opening of the first six seals. The seventh is coming, and it is the most terrible of all. Consequently, as the Lamb opens this seventh seal and before the first angel-trumpeter of judgment sounds his trumpet, all heaven is in suspense as they await the awful judgments of God. They are breathless... silent for half an hour.

The Seven Trumpets

The awful suspense is occasioned by the events, which were about to take place under the seven trumpets. You will recall that the entire Tribulation Periods consists of a trio of sevens: seven seals, seven trumpets and seven vials of wrath.

The seventh seal are the seven trumpets and the seventh trumpet reveal the seven vials of God's wrath.

Generally speaking, the first half of the Tribulation includes the seven seals and the first six trumpets. The last half of the Tribulation, called the Great Tribulation, is discussed in
chapters 15-19 under the seven vials. Between the first half of the Tribulation and the last half of the Tribulation are four chapters... (11, 12, 13 and 14)... which give a preview of the coming Great Tribulation and introduces to us the major characters of the last half of the Tribulation Period. The sounding of the first six trumpets concludes the first half of "the Day of the Lord," the Tribulation Period.

Before the first angels blows the trumpet we have the assurance from God that in spite of all the dire judgments which are about to fall, God has not forgotten His people, and their prayers... through long delayed... will be answered by Him. For nineteen hundred years the saints have been praying "Thy kingdom come Thy will be done," and yet it seems that the man of sin, the Antichrist, will yet prevail. Before the terrible time under the trumpets, God gives the vision in which Christ adds the efficacy of His own blood as the acceptable incense, together with the prayers of all saints, to assure them that, come what may, their prayers for the return of Christ, and the establishment of the kingdom, will be answered.
Following the seven angels and their reception of the seven trumpets "another" angel came to the golden altar to minister, as clearly stated, which, together with Hebrews 4:14-16; 6:20-7:28; and 13:15, seems to indicate that this angel is, none other than, Christ, in His present ministry as our High Priest. The "censer" is always mentioned in connection with the High Priest. (Leviticus 16:12; Hebrews 9:4; [See the results of intruding into this office, Leviticus 10:1; Numbers 16:1-19; 2 Chronicles 26:19 and Ezekiel 8:11]. This angel offers up prayers of the saints as do the living creatures and the 24 elders in Revelation 5:8-10.)

As the seventh seal is opened, seven angels with trumpets make their appearance: As each trumpet is blown certain judgments and events will transpire on the earth.

**THE FIRST TRUMPET** - The first angel sounds the trumpet and there falls upon the earth and its wicked inhabitants hail and fire mingled with blood...and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up (Revelation 8:7).

This judgment destroys a third of all growing vegetation on the earth! During this plague agricultural progress will be impossible.

**THE SECOND TRUMPET** - This mountain is evidently a large meteor ablaze with fire, which falls into the sea. John says, "as it were" a mountain.

Business on the sea will be crippled and men will begin to realize these judgments are of God!

**THE THIRD TRUMPET** - This judgment falls in the form of a star from heaven burning "as it were a lamp." This is no doubt another meteor whose gaseous vapors will be absorbed by one-third of the waters of the rivers and fountains. They will become bitter as wormwood, and cause many men to die. Wormwood is a perennial herb, very bitter, and is used in the manufacture of absinthe, also, formerly used as a vermifuge – [a substance used to expel worms or other animal parasites from the intestines, as a medicine].

**THE FOURTH TRUMPET** - This verse seems so plain as to what will happen under the fourth trumpet, that little more needs to be added.

The first four trumpet judgments have to do with plagues affecting vegetation, seas, rivers, and planets, as indicated in the message to the first four trumpet angels in Revelation 7:1-3. The last three affect, not the material, but, rather, the moral creation.