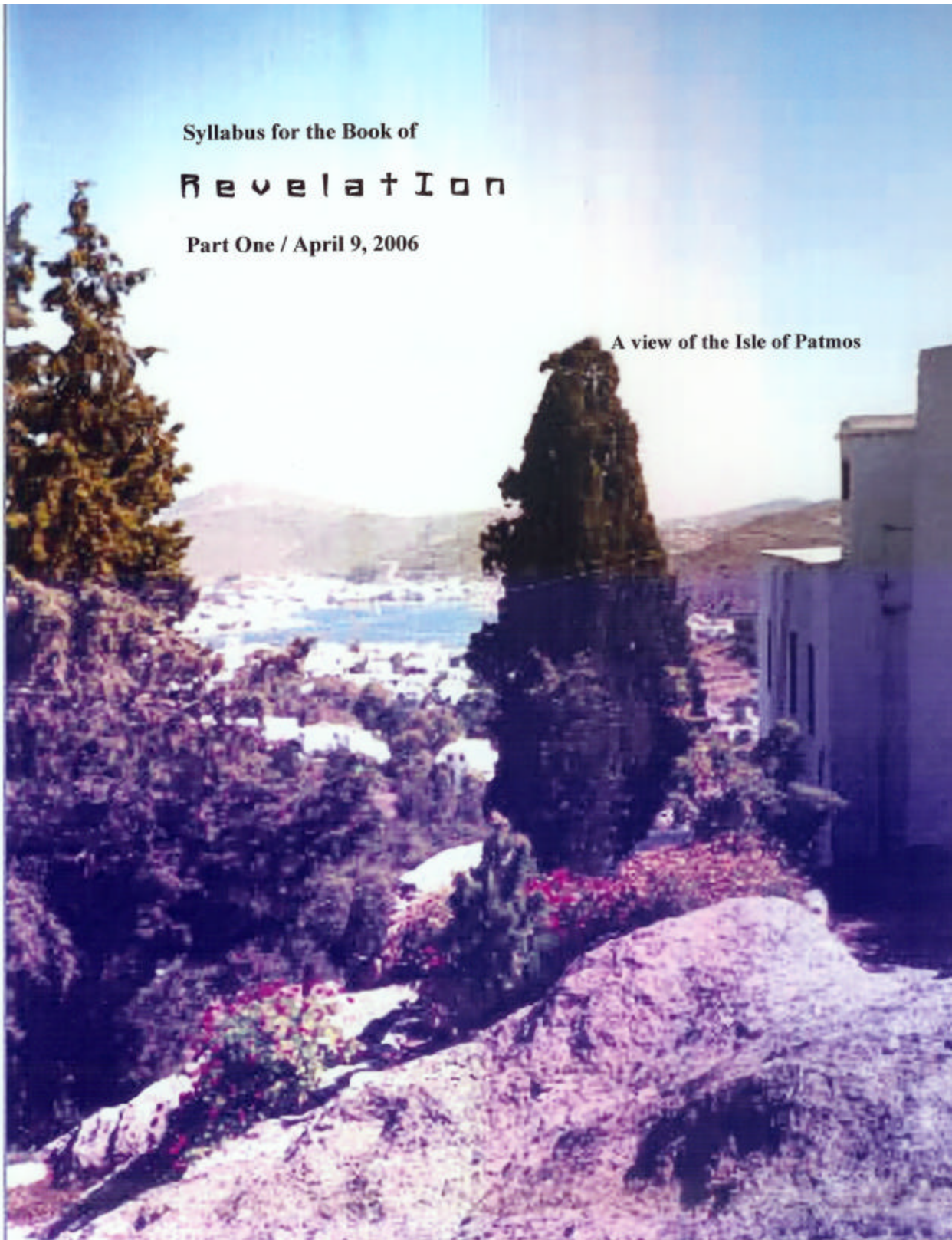


Syllabus for the Book of

Revelation

Part One / April 9, 2006

A view of the Isle of Patmos



THE BOOK OF

Revelation

Sunday Evening / April 9, 2006

“On a barren, rock-strewn island in the Aegean Sea 2000 years ago, another old man put his ear to the ground and heard the earth rumble ominously. Unlike Harry Truman at Spirit Lake near Mt. Saint Helens, John the apostle on the Isle of Patmos heard the thunder of distant hoofbeats and sounded the alarm. And that alarm, John’s words of warning, are as clear and as urgent today as they were twenty centuries past.

“Picture it. Tradition tells us that John’s face is wrinkled, burned almost black by the sun. His arms are gnarled, his knees knobby. His feet and hands are rough and callused. He is a political prisoner of Rome in exile off the coast of Turkey. John carries granite chipped from cliffs above the sea to a dock beneath the Roman citadel. The gravel will be used to build foundations for the temples and palaces of the Emperor Domitian or to pave his roads across the empire.

“We can image that John, stumbling under the loaded straw basket strapped to his forehead, uses both hands to grasp his staff and pick his way painfully down the treacherous trail. Even the Roman guards must wonder at the determination of this gray-bearded Jewish Christian who works alongside the other prisoners by day, then spends his evenings writing stories they cannot understand.

“On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit,” John wrote, “and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said, ‘Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.’” (Rev. 1:10, 11)

“And so, in his cave-like prison cell, John, the seer, spent every free moment recording the seismographic warnings of a work bulging and buckling just beneath the surface.”

----- Billy Graham

“Approaching Hoofbeats” / Word Publishers / pages 17 and 18



DOMITIAN BUST IN THE LOUVRE

The Apostle John was arrested and exiled to the Island of Patmos under the brutal and bizarre administration of Emperor Domitian. His own life was a mess as he was a womanizer and playboy. Toward the end of his reign, he developed a cruel personality. Jews and Christians alike were hounded. Domitian developed a paranoid fear of persecution that led him to kill or execute those he felt stood in his way. This included the Apostle/Pastor John who was ministering in Ephesus. John was banished to Patmos. In A.D. 96, Domitian was murdered in a plot organized by his enemies in the Senate. He was succeeded by Nerva, a relatively good man under whom John was released. Previous emperors had not insisted upon “emperor worship.” When insane Caligula

was murdered, he was followed by Claudius who complete reversed the religious policies of his predecessors. Claudius was followed by Nero who did not really believe he was divine, although he persecuted Christians, primarily to make them scapegoats for the great fire of Rome. On the death of Nero, three emperors came along in quick fashion - 18 months to be exact: Galba, Otto and Vitellius. They were followed by two Emperors, Vespasian and Titus (who destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D.) who made no insistence upon Caesar worship.

But the coming of Domitian (A.D. 81-96) was a new ballgame, so to speak.

“Domitian was a devil. He was the worst of all things – a cold-blooded persecutor. With the exception of Caligula, he was the first Emperor to take his divinity seriously and to *demand* Caesar worship. The difference was that Caligula was an insane devil; Domitian was a sane devil, which is much more terrifying. He began a campaign of bitter persecution against all who would not worship the ancient gods – ‘the atheists’ as he called them. In particular he launched his hatred against the Jews and the Christians. He informed all provincial governors that government announcements and proclamations must begin: ‘Our Lord and God Domitian commands....’ Everyone who addressed him in speech or in writing must begin, ‘Lord and God.’”

—William Barclay / The Revelation of John / p 19 / Westminster Press

Chapter One

1. This marvelous, incredible, anointed Book from the heart and mind of God tells us very simply that THE WORLD IS GOING TO END. However, it also gives us glorious details about ETERNITY and the part we who are the Redeemed of God will play in that eternal Kingdom.

2. The scene finds us on the Isle of Patmos where John is visited by Christ Himself:

Rev. 1:10-19 The Living Bible

It was the Lord's Day and I was worshipping, when suddenly I heard a loud voice behind me, a voice that sounded like a trumpet blast, [11] saying, "I am A and Z, the First and Last!" And then I heard him say, "Write down everything you see, and send your letter to the seven churches in Turkey: to the church in Ephesus, the one in Smyrna, and those in Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea."

[12] When I turned to see who was speaking, there behind me were seven candlesticks of gold. [13] And standing among them was one who looked like Jesus, who called himself the Son of Man, wearing a long robe circled with a golden band across his chest. [14] His hair was white as wool or snow, and his eyes penetrated like flames of fire. [15] His feet gleamed like burnished bronze, and his voice

thundered like the waves against the shore. [16] He held seven stars in his right hand and a sharp, double-bladed sword in his mouth, and his face shone like the power of the sun in unclouded brilliance.

[17] When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead; but he laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid! [18] Though I am the First and Last, the Living One who died, who is now alive forevermore, who has the keys of hell and death--don't be afraid! [19] Write down what you have just seen and what will soon be shown to you.

3. While I love the pictures of Jesus showing Him in all His compassion and tenderness, I would love to see a good painting of Jesus as He is verbally portrayed in this passage.

4. Of note in this chapter:

- ! John is “in the spirit” (worshiping) on the death island of Rome.
- ! Jesus appeared to him in this hellish place - not in some glitzy hotel in Rome
- ! Jesus made it clear that He was in charge, not governments or societies

CHAPTERS TWO AND THREE

CHRIST'S MESSAGES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA MINOR (TURKEY)

1. By the time John wrote the book of Revelation, he was in his 90's, returned to Ephesus from imprisonment on Patmos, and a number of Christian churches had sprung up through the country. The seven churches involved in chapters 2 and 3 were all located within a couple hundred miles of each other in western Turkey.

To each of these congregations, Jesus had important messages to be delivered by John. **THESE MESSAGES ARE IMPORTANT TO US BECAUSE ALTHOUGH THE CHURCHES NAMED EXISTED 2,000 YEARS AGO, WE HAVE GONE THROUGH A SERIES OF TIME PERIODS THAT PARALLEL EACH OF THESE CHURCHES.** For example: we are now in the Laodicean age.

The Churches

1. **EPHESIAN church (The Apostolic Church) A.D. 30-100 Rev. 2:1-7**
Rev. 2:1-7 "He says to you: [2] I know how many good things you are doing. I have watched your hard work and your patience; I know you don't tolerate sin among your members, and you have carefully examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but aren't. You have found out how they lie. [3] You have patiently suffered for me without quitting.

[4] "Yet there is one thing wrong; you don't love me as at first! [5] Think about those times of your first love (how different now!) and turn back to me again and

work as you did before; or else I will come and remove your candlestick from its place among the churches.

[6] "But there is this about you that is good: You hate the deeds of the licentious Nicolaitans, just as I do.

[7] "Let this message sink into the ears of anyone who listens to what the Spirit is saying to the churches: To everyone who is victorious, I will give fruit from the Tree of Life in the Paradise of God.

2. SMYRNA (The Persecuted Church) Rev. 2:8-11 A.D. 100-606 No words of condemnation were directed to this church which had endured the worst man could do to it.

3. PERGAMUM (The Indulged Church) A.D. 312-606 (The Indulged Church) Rev. 12-17

Rev. 2:14-16

"And yet I have a few things against you. You tolerate some among you who do as Balaam did when he taught Balak how to ruin the people of Israel by involving them in sexual sin and encouraging them to go to idol feasts. [15] Yes, you have some of these very same followers of Balaam among you!

[16] "Change your mind and attitude, or else I will come to you suddenly and fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

No persecution (Since Emperor Constantine declared the whole Roman world Christian) but now the church had everything material and not much spiritual. As a result it tolerated false doctrines. Today's church has much the same situation as weird and idolatrous doctrines are often introduced - especially in the media.

4. THYATIRA (The Pagan Church) Rev. 2:18-29 A.D. 606 to Middle Ages and the Reformation

Rev. 2:20-24

"Yet I have this against you: You are permitting that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach my servants that sex sin is not a serious matter; she urges them to practice immorality and to eat meat that has been sacrificed to idols. [21] I gave her time to change her mind and attitude, but she refused. [22] Pay attention now to what I am saying: I will lay her upon a sickbed of intense affliction, along with all her immoral followers, unless they turn again to me, repenting of their sin with her; [23] and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches shall know that I am he who searches deep within men's hearts, and minds; I will give to each of you whatever you deserve.

[24] "As for the rest of you in Thyatira who have not followed this false teaching ('deeper truths,' as they call them--depths of Satan, really), I will ask nothing

further of you; only hold tightly to what you have until I come.

It was this immoral church that spawned the Reformation with such heroes of the faith as Calvin, Zwingli, Luther and so many others who brought back the reality that THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.

5. SARDIS (The Dead Church) Rev. 3:1-6 A.D. 1520 to now

Christ was explicit about His condemnation of this church.

Rev. 3:1-2

"To the leader of the church in Sardis write this letter:

"This message is sent to you by the one who has the seven-fold Spirit of God and the seven stars.

"I know your reputation as a live and active church, but you are dead. [2] Now wake up! Strengthen what little remains--for even what is left is at the point of death. Your deeds are far from right in the sight of God.

6. PHILADELPHIA (The Church Christ Loved) A.D. 1750 - to the rapture

The works of this church involved MISSIONS. It kept Christ's commandments. To this church Jesus had no words of condemnation.

7. LAODICEA (The Lukewarm Church) Today's church all-too-often

Rev. 3:16-20

But since you are merely lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth!

[17] "You say, 'I am rich, with everything I want; I don't need a thing!' And you don't realize that spiritually you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

[18] "My advice to you is to buy pure gold from me, gold purified by fire--only then will you truly be rich. And to purchase from me white garments, clean and pure, so you won't be naked and ashamed; and to get medicine from me to heal your eyes and give you back your sight. [19] I continually discipline and punish everyone I love; so I must punish you unless you turn from your indifference and become enthusiastic about the things of God.

[20] "Look! I have been standing at the door, and I am constantly knocking. If anyone hears me calling him and opens the door, I will come in and fellowship with him and he with me.

You have perhaps seen the painting of Jesus knocking at the door. We often take that to mean if the lost will open their hearts to God, He will save them. That's not what the painting is about: It's Christ knocking on the door of the Christian, of the Church, saying, "Let me in!"

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Here we see the saints around the throne of God just after the Rapture. This is one of the great verbally-painted scenes of what is coming to the believer. Here we will see Jesus face-to-face. The descriptions of the throne, of the light that comes from God, of the seraphim, of the sea of crystal and the song of the saints and angels are enough to set our hearts on fire! Believer, **YOU WILL SEE THIS IN PERSON!**

CHAPTER FIVE

1. In this chapter, God holds out the book of coming divine judgment and it is opened by Christ Himself.

Rev. 5:5-7

But one of the twenty-four Elders said to me, "Stop crying, for look! The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, and proved himself worthy to open the scroll and to break its seven seals."

[6] I looked and saw a Lamb standing there before the twenty-four Elders, in front of the throne and the Living Beings, and on the Lamb were wounds that once had caused his death. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which represent the seven-fold Spirit of God, sent out into every part of the world. [7] He stepped forward and took the scroll from the right hand of the one sitting upon the throne.

It is important to note that the coming judgments, now announced from the scroll (book) in Jesus' hand will be divine judgments – not man's inhumanity to man. Yes, the church could (and probably will) go through intense persecution before the end comes, but that is not God's judgment. He will rescue His people before He pours out His wrath on the earth.

CHAPTER SIX

THE TRIBULATION PERIOD FOLLOWING THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

1. There are going to be three sets or series of divine judgments: 1) (the seal judgments); 2) the trumpets; and 3) the vials (like test-tubes or beakers in a laboratory).

In this chapter (6) we are introduced to six of those seals. (Everytime Jesus peels off a seal from that scroll, God pours out a judgment on earth.)

Some Christians have the erroneous idea that the Rapture of the Church will occur at the end of the Tribulation. There is no Scripture to support this view. One of the reasons we know Christ is coming BEFORE the Tribulation to rapture His Church is because the Rapture is a secret thing. The Second Coming (the glorious appearing) will not be secret but well known, for exactly seven years will elapse from the signing of the covenant (rapture) to the glorious appearing of Christ on this earth. – Tim
Lehaye/Revelation/Zondervan/page 96

- ! Seal # 1 Antichrist is revealed Rev. 6:2 The white horse
 - ! Seal # 2 War (I believe the attack on Israel from Ezekiel 38 and 39) The red horse Rev. 6:2, 3
 - ! Seal # 3 Famine Rev. 6:5,6 The black horse
 - ! Seal # 4 Death Rev. 6:7, 8 The pale horse One/fourth die
- THESE FOUR RIDERS ARE OFTEN CALLED “THE RIDERS OF THE APOCALYPSE” APOCALYPSE MEANS “DIRE PREDICTION THAT DESCRIBES THE UNDESCRIBABLE AND SAYS THE UNSAYABLE.
- ! Seal # 5 Death of Christian martyrs in Tribulation Rev. 6:9-11
 - ! Seal # 6 Deadly signs in Heaven **Rev. 6:12-17**

I watched as he broke the sixth seal, and there was a vast earthquake; and the sun became dark like black cloth, and the moon was blood-red. [13] Then the stars of heaven appeared to be falling to earth --like green fruit from fig trees buffeted by mighty winds. [14] And the starry heavens disappeared as though rolled up like a scroll and taken away; and every mountain and island shook and shifted. [15] The kings of the earth, and world leaders, and rich men, and high-ranking military officers, and all men great and small, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and rocks of the mountains, [16] and cried to the mountains to crush them. "Fall on us," they pleaded, "and hide us from the face of the one sitting on the throne, and from the anger of the Lamb, [17] because the great day of their anger has come, and who can survive it?"

Between the 6 seals and the 7th seal comes a PARENTHETICAL chapter - chapter 7.

Before we get into that, I want to quote again Tim LaHaye from his helpful book "Revelation." At this point we are about one-third through the awful 7-year tribulation period.

"The first 21 months of the Tribulation Period consist of horrifying events. After the Antichrist assumes world-wide control, world war, famine, inflation, and the death of 25 percent of the world's population will follow. Then will follow a great persecution of God's people, followed by the catastrophic judgment of God. If this passage of Scripture teaches anything, it instructs us that the Tribulation is a period no man should enter. The wonderful thing is - you don't have to! If you have received the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, you will never have to enter the Tribulation Period.

(Page 108)

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. The greatest harvest of souls will take place following the rapture. It is my opinion that God's intervention in Seal Judgment # 2, there will come a major spiritual move in Israel, resulting in multitudes being saved. From that harvest will come 144,000 Jewish evangelists - modern-day Apostle Paul's - who will cover the earth. There will be 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel.

2. Protected from what? Not martyrdom or physical death, certainly, but from God's wrath.

3. The impact of their preaching is unprecedented:

Rev. 7:9-12

After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from all nations and provinces and languages, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white, with palm branches in their hands. [10] And they were shouting with a mighty shout, "Salvation comes from our God upon the throne, and from the Lamb."

[11] And now all the angels were crowding around the throne and around the Elders and the four Living Beings, and falling face down before the throne and worshiping God. [12] "Amen!" they said. "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be to our God forever and forever. Amen!"

CHAPTER EIGHT

! Seal # 7 Silence in heaven – Rev. 8:1-6. Here we read of the intercessory prayers of believers. Although God may not answer all our prayers immediately, He does not throw them aside, but keeps them for the proper time of fulfillment.

NOW WE COME TO THE TRUMPET JUDGMENTS

1. The 7th seal brought a half hour of silence in heaven. Why? I believe all the heavenly host have learned what is about to hit Planet Earth and they are silenced by its terrible implications.

! First Trumpet: Rev. 8:7

The first angel blew his trumpet, and hail and fire mixed with blood were thrown down upon the earth. One-third of the earth was set on fire so that one-third of the trees were burned, and all the green grass.

These are literal judgments on the earth that are devastating.

! Second Trumpet: Rev. 8:8-9

Then the second angel blew his trumpet, and what appeared to be a huge burning mountain was thrown into the sea, [9] destroying a third of all the ships; and a third of the sea turned red as blood; and a third of the fish were killed.

The sea is probably the Mediterranean Sea. The burning mountain could be virtually anything God decided to use, including a meteor.

! Third Trumpet: Rev. 8:10-11

The third angel blew, and a great flaming star fell from heaven upon a third of the rivers and springs. [11] The star was called "Bitterness" because it poisoned a third of all the water on the earth and many people died.

! Fourth Trumpet: Rev. 8:12

The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and immediately a third of the sun was blighted and darkened, and a third of the moon and the stars so that the daylight was dimmed by a third, and the nighttime darkness deepened.

Jesus prophesied this horrible time in **Luke 21:25-26**

"Then there will be strange events in the skies--warnings, evil omens and portents in the sun, moon and stars; and down here on earth the nations will be in turmoil, perplexed by the roaring seas and strange tides. [26] The courage of many people will falter because of the fearful fate they see coming upon the earth, for the stability of the very heavens will be broken up.

Now we come to another of those “parentheses.” **Rev. 8:13**

As I watched, I saw a solitary eagle flying through the heavens crying loudly, "Woe, woe, woe to the people of the earth because of the terrible things that will soon happen when the three remaining angels blow their trumpets." We are now warned that as awful as the first four trumpets were, they will be surpassed by that which will now follow. These three “woes” will actually be the fifth, sixth and 7th trumpet judgments. The 7th trumpet will introduce the last half of the Tribulation - or the vials of judgment.

CHAPTER NINE

! Fifth Trumpet: Rev. 9:2-3

And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. [3] And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

These “locusts” represent an increased number of demons and demonic activity on the earth. They have the power to cause pain and misery. Their assault will be directed against the non-believers and will not be permitted to torment the tribulation saints.

! Sixth Trumpet: The release of the four major demon leaders Rev. 9:15-16

And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. [16] And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

The sixth angel releases four fallen angels who are let loose to terminate one-third of the remaining population of the world.

CHAPTER TEN and ELEVEN 1-14

The first nine chapters of Revelation brought us to the middle of the 7-year Tribulation Period after the Rapture of the church. Now chapters ten and eleven (through verse 14) give us another of those parenthetical sections. Here we will see more of the powerful work of angels during this time.

1. In this chapter when John is told to “eat the little scroll (10:9-11) it meant that the apostle was to “digest” in his mind and heart those things that had transpired already for more was on its way. And, in this case, “the worse was yet to come.”

2. In Chapter 11 we read about THE TWO WITNESSES. **Rev. 11:3**

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

God will send two powerful witnesses to the earth to preach the gospel and prophesy

about the future. They will perform their ministry with signs and wonders and great power. They will be a huge threat to Antichrist and the entire wicked world for 3 ½ years. Verses 7-11 teach us they will be killed and: **Rev. 11:8-12**

And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. [9] And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. [10] And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. [11] And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. [12] And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

CHAPTER 11:15-19

! Trumpet # 7 - does not initiate anything on the earth but introduces the next series of judgments - the seven vials or bowls.

We will now have a lengthy parenthetical section from Rev. 12:1 - 15:4. We receive fabulous information both background and prophetic as we approach the last half of the tribulation period..

CHAPTER 12

1. We learn immediately why Israel and the Jews have been so hounded throughout history. Again LaHaye: “It should not come as a surprise that so much space is given in the book of Revelation to the nation of Israel. She dominates the pages of the Old Testament because she is God’s nation of destiny. That He is NOT THROUGH WITH HER is seen in the prophetic time of Jacob’s trouble (the tribulation).”

- A. The “woman” is Israel.
- B. The “child” giving her travail is Christ, the coming Messiah.

2. The red dragon is Satan who we learn in verse 4 took one-third of the former angels of heaven with him in his abortive effort to usurp God on the throne.

WE WILL CONTINUE THIS STUDY ON WEDNESDAY EVENING.