

Session Three

Revelation



The 6 Seals:

- **Seal 1: Conquering and conquest, i.e. a spirit of war and changing fortunes of who is in control;**
- **Seal 2: Earth in constant state of war and rumour of war;**
- **Seal 3: The constant state of war and conflict has an effect on global economy;**
- **Seal 4: There is constant and massive loss of life as a result of the warfare, forced migration, land degradation and disease and malnutrition.**
- **Seal 5: The prophet hears the voice of martyrs (presumably killed during the first 4 seals?) who plead for the Return of Christ in judgement and deliverance. They are told that the time is not yet; more Christians will yet lose their lives.**
- **Seal 6: there is an earthquake and shakings of solar system.**

When does all this occur?

A precondition of all of the harmful activity of the six seals is that those who have “washed their robes and made them white in the Lamb” will be preserved.

Chapter 6 is the millennia of difficult times; Chapter 7 is the flashback reminder that all of God’s people are sealed against eternal loss, though not, perhaps, human suffering.

Another Way of Seeing Things:

- The beasts and abyssees and dragons are all expressions of evil in opposition to God;
- The redeemed of God are absolutely, unfailingly safe in His salvation;
- Earthquakes and cosmic destruction are symbols of God's spoken judgements;
- Evil is manifested in this world through human beings;
- The layering of events is best comprehended as a pile of pancakes, all of one piece, not each one following the other;
- Although the world sometimes appears madly out order, yet the Church of Jesus Christ is ultimately safe and Jesus, the Lamb of God, is the ultimate Victor.



The Six Seals:

- The First Seal (6:2) a time of conquering and conquest;
- The Second Seal (6:4) a constant state of war and rumour of war;
- The Third Seal (6:5-6) constant negative effects on the economy, both local and global;
- The Fourth Seal (6:8) constant and massive loss of life;
- The Fifth Seal (6:9-11) the anguish of those already killed for the sake of their witness to the Lord Jesus Christ, as they call for justice;
- The Sixth Seal (6:12-17) an earthquake and various shakings of the solar system.

4“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. **5**And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. **6**And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands I am giving you today. **8**Tie them to your hands as a reminder, and wear them on your forehead. **9**Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.



¹⁶God gave the promise to Abraham and his child. And notice that it doesn't say the promise was to his children, as if it meant many descendants. But the promise was to his child - and that, of course, means Christ. ... ²³Until faith in Christ was shown to us as the way of becoming right with God, we were guarded by the law. We were kept in protective custody, so to speak, until we could put our faith in the coming Saviour.

²⁴Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian and teacher to lead us until Christ came. So now, through faith in Christ, we are made right with God. ²⁵But now that faith in Christ has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian. ²⁶So you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have been made like him. ²⁸There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. For you are all Christians—you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and now all the promises God gave to him belong to you. Galatians 3: 16-29

¹“These are all the commands, laws, and regulations that the LORD your God told me to teach you so you may obey them in the land you are about to enter and occupy, ²and so you and your children and grandchildren might fear the LORD your God as long as you live.

If you obey all his laws and commands, you will enjoy a long life. ³Listen closely, Israel, to everything I say. Be careful to obey. Then all will go well with you, and you will have many children in the land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

⁴“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. ⁵And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. ⁶And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands I am giving you today. ⁷Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away on a journey, when you are lying down and when you are getting up again. ⁸Tie them to your hands as a reminder, and wear them on your forehead. ⁹Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 6: 1-9

⁹After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰And they cried out in a loud voice:

**“Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb.”**

¹¹All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²saying:

**“Amen!
Praise and glory
and wisdom and thanks and honour
and power and strength
be to our God for ever and ever.
Amen!”**

Comparison of the two groups:

¹⁵Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?” 6:15-17

“These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.

¹⁶ Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat.

¹⁷ For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” 7:14-17

The Opening of the 7th Seal



Silence in Heaven (8:1-6):

- ¹When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.**
- ²And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.**
- ³Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. ⁴The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand.**
- ⁵Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.**
- ⁶Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them.**



**He hears our prayers
and he will restore the
world to righteousness
and justice. The smoke
of our prayers is ever
before him and he
hears them. His
coming back to this
world will restore all
justice, all
righteousness, all
goodness.**

This is happening in the Church Age:

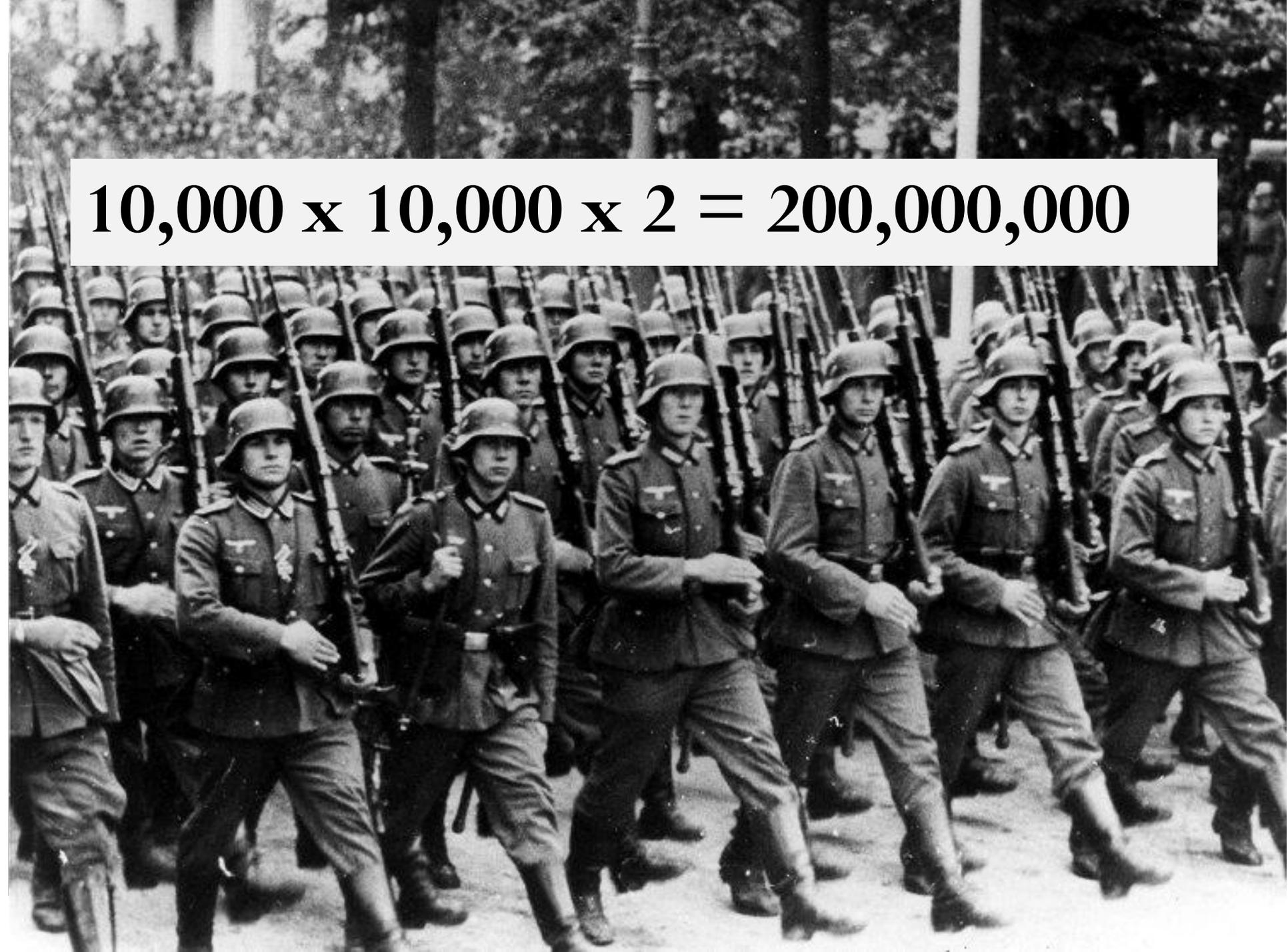
- The prayers of the saints are still relevant and operative;
- The instruction to harm only the people without the seal of God on their foreheads (9:4) echoes the previous section and places it in a similar time frame;
- The prophet is told to go and measure the temple, which was apparently tantamount to, or equivalent to the task of counting the Christians (11:1);
- It concludes with the 7th trumpet (the last trump of 1 Corinthians 15:52) which appears to indicate or announce the completion of the kingdom.
- The hymn at 11:17-18 announces clearly the end of the old and the ushering in of the new kingdom. The Age of the Church ends and judgement takes place and the kingdom is ushered in, in all its fullness.

Each numbered series [the seals, trumpets and bowls] moves us closer to the end; not so much because it follows the preceding series in sequence but because it heightens and intensifies the final climactic confrontation of God and the forces of evil.

Detailed outlines of Revelation sacrifice the existential heartbeat of the Apocalypse in an unfortunate attempt to intellectualise that which belongs primarily to the realm of experience.

Mounce p 205.

$10,000 \times 10,000 \times 2 = 200,000,000$



The Trumpets and the Seals show a constant cycle of the same things:

Human Greed and the Quest for Power creating:

- **Injustice,**
- **War,**
- **Famine,**
- **Racism,**
- **Economic ruin and**
- **Environmental damage.**

Chapters 10 and 11: An Interlude

- A re-appearance of the rainbow in 10:1
- An announcement that the mystery of God is about to be accomplished (10:7). (Romans 16:25; 1 Cor. 2:7; 1 Cor 15:51; Ephesians. 1:9 and 3:1-11; Col. 1:13-27; 2 Thess. 2:7...)

Four Difficult Inclusions:

- 1. The seven thunders;**
- 2. The angel and the little scroll which the prophet ate;**
- 3. The measuring of the temple of God;**
- 4. The two witnesses.**

The seven thunders (10:1-4):

- There is not much we can say – The record has been sealed!!!

The angel and the little scroll which the prophet ate (10:5-11):

- We are still on the spiral staircase of ever more revelation;
- Eating God's Word is a not uncommon concept (Psalm 119:103; Jeremiah 15:16; Ezekiel 2:8 – 3:3);
- Tasted sweet because it is the Word of God;
- Bitter taste??? Perhaps because the news was not good – there was still much more suffering to come????

The measuring of the temple of God (11:1-2):

- **The holy city throughout Revelation is the gathered church of God;**
- **The Church will live its life under the constant tension of attack by the ungodly.**

The Two Witnesses (11:3-12):

- No good reason to think of them as two actual people who will play a future role in end times;
- In the spirit of Moses and Elijah, rather than their actual re-appearance;
- The great city is not Jerusalem;
- The city is “every city and no city. It is civilised man in organised community”.

(Morris p 150)

Recap:

Although all of these episodes and trumpet blasts and seal-openings have taken a very long time to read, we should see all of these as happening more or less concurrently over 2000 years or more, and working towards a climax: the end of the age;

By the end of the sixth trumpet, although there is still one more to go, we are effectively at the return of Christ.

How can we confirm we are still in the Church Age?

- In 11:15, we hear the sounding of the Seventh trumpet, or the Last Trumpet as it is called elsewhere in scripture. Read 1 Cor. 15: 23-25 and 50-54. The time lag between v 12 and v 15 is probably a nanosecond.
- In 11:15, we are told that “the kingdom of the world **has become** the kingdom of our Lord”. The church is taken to heaven and the new reign of God’s kingdom has begun. Although the narrative will take another 6-7 chapters to tell more of the last days, the narrative has leapt ahead to tell us the ending of the story
- In 11:17, the hymn of praise specifically states that “You have taken your great power and have begun to reign”. This is clearly referring to an event that has happened.
- And finally, in 11:18, it is time “for judging the dead”, and “rewarding your servants”.