

The People of the Apocalypse
“The Chronology of the Revelation of Jesus Christ”

While lightning is spectacular and draws us to wonder at the great power of God in the heavenlies, it is the ground-shaking, ear-rattling effect of thunder that is the real attention-getter as the power of a fierce and furious thunderstorm passes by, when the majestic might of God Himself seems to fill the landscape.

So it was, as indicated in the book of Job 36:26-37:5 the first [in time] book written in the Bible, and will be again when God unveils His time of the end program for the earth and it's inhabitants in the last book written, the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ chapter four opens a door into heaven for the Apostle John to experience the thundering throne room of God as all of heaven's glory is brought before him:

“And immediately I was in the Spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices.” (Revelation 4:2-5a)

The Scripture continues for the remainder of the chapter describing the rest of the heavenly throne room scene including those who are present worshipping God in this grand and glorious opening chapter of *“the things which must be hereafter.”* (Revelation 1:19)

However, the focus of this message is the underlined phrase above which is found three other times in the course of the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. This heavenly sequence serves to indicate the progressive and chronological nature of this final book of Scripture.

These occurrences will also show the increasing activity of God and His Day of the Lord wrath/judgment upon the entire world in order that He might purify His people, the Jews, and punish the rest of those who have openly rebelled against Him and continually refuse to repent.

In chapters five, six and seven much takes place in the unfolding drama of end time events. Chapter five is coupled to chapter four continuing the throne room scene, emphasizing the heavenly coronation of the Lord Jesus Christ and His worthiness as the Lamb of God, to take the book which contains God's Day of the Lord wrath/judgment, and to open the seals which are on the outside of the book [scroll].

The seven seals are opened sequentially conditioning the earth for God's wrath. The first four center upon the Antichrist's actions during the first half of Daniel's 70th Week with the last three seals focusing upon the Day of the Lord's wrath:

- 1.The martyrs in the fifth seal are inquiring of God, wanting to know when His wrath/judgment is going to come.
- 2.The sign given in the sixth seal indicates His wrath/judgment is impending, or just about to occur.
- 3.The seventh seal initiates His wrath/judgment after silence overwhelms heaven for thirty minutes. Then, the Day of the Lord begins with the first trumpet judgment.

But, right before the Day of the Lord begins, “The Passing of the Torch” (Revelation 7:1-8) takes place when the 144 Thousand Jews are sealed and the saints are raptured (Revelation 7:9-17) between the opening of the sixth and seventh seal.

However, the key point in all of that has transpired in Revelation 4-7 to this point in time is what is ALLOWED by God vs. what is AUTHORED by God! The great tribulation has just ended indicated by the heavenly wonders (Matthew 24:29; Revelation 6:12,13) which occur just before the Day of the Lord (Joel 2:30,31) which is now about to begin.

The wrath of God has just been given a hefty introduction through the fifth and sixth seal with this statement, *“For the great day of His wrath is come”* (Revelation 6:17) showing that we are on the threshold of the most prophesied event, the Day of the Lord.

Therefore, after the “Passing of the Torch” from the church saints to the 144 Thousand Sons of Israel, the time has come for God to bring about His strange work of judgment. The wrath of God which proceeds from the throne of God which is also the source of the lightnings and thunderings and voices. And, at this point in time, nothing has been authored by God to effectively bring His wrath/judgment upon the earth.

But with the next occurrence of these heavenly events in Revelation 8:5, there is a significant change. The preceding verses in chapter eight show that we are still in the throne room of God and at this point He is about to intervene with His Day of the Lord wrath/judgment upon the earth through the agency of His angel:

“And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth; And there were voices and thunderings, and lightnings, AND AN EARTHQUAKE.”

At this point in God’s program of end time events His wrath/judgment has begun. Not only do these events originate in heaven but now the earth experiences God’s direct judgment through the addition of this earthquake. This throne room sequence marks the beginning of the seven trumpet judgments, which is the initiation of God’s wrath/judgment on earth.

The next time this sequence appears is in Revelation 11:19 at the end of the seven trumpet judgments but there is an additional effect upon the earth as the progressive nature of God’s increasing judgment is seen:

“And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament: And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, AND GREAT HAIL.”

At this time multiple major events have taken place as described in verses fifteen through eighteen. While this is a point in God’s program with many ramifications the emphasis here is to show the repetition of this sequence in the throne room and how it underlines the progressive nature of God’s wrath/judgment and also how it indicates the beginning and the ending of His wrath/judgment upon mankind by punctuating the beginning and the ending of the trumpet judgments.

And, in the next sequence, the beginning and ending of the vial judgments are also highlighted, for out of the seventh trumpet judgment proceeds the first vial judgment. Therefore, the above sequence not only marks the end of one series of judgments but it also punctuates the beginning of the next.

In Revelation 16 the Bible says:

“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings; and there was A GREAT EARTHQUAKE, SUCH AS WAS NOT SINCE MEN WERE UPON THE EARTH, SO MIGHTY AND EARTHQUAKE, AND SO GREAT...AND THERE FELL UPON MEN A GREAT HAIL OUT OF HEAVEN, EVERY STONE ABOUT THE WEIGHT OF A TALENT” (Revelation 16:17,18,21)

And so, the wrath/judgment of God upon mankind is done and the grand finale, as it were, is this amazing progressive and punctuating sequence of events authored by God, executed by His angels, and experienced by all mankind, with all of it proceeding from the thundering throne room of God!

In addition to this progressive chronological sequence of events sent from the throne room in heaven, there are also textual indicators which divide the book of the Revelation according to the unfolding of time indicating the beginning and ending of other major series of events.

The brief but definitive time indicating phrase “*After these things*” is found in the prophetic section of the Revelation, (Revelation 4:1-22:21) six times. The first and second occurrences are in the very first verse:

“After these things I looked, and, behold, a door standing open in heaven; and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me; said, Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.” (Revelation 4:1) NASV

John is given the first sequence of the prophetic vision in (Revelation 4:1-7:8) where a similar phrase “After this” appears (Revelation 7:1) which is used to divide the events in heaven (Revelation 4:1-6:17) from the events occurring on earth (Revelation 7:1-8) within the first section.

“*The things which shall be hereafter*” (Revelation 1:19c), indicates this large prophetic section (Revelation 4:1-22:21). It is divided into five major divisions by this key time indicating phrase: “*After these things*” developing the following outline:

“*After these things...*” (Revelation 4:1)

I. The Earth’s Preparation for The Day of the Lord’s Wrath

(Revelation 4:1-7:8)

- A. The Throne Room Scene (Chapter 4,5)
- B. The Six Seals Opened (Chapter 6) [Beginning 70th Week of Daniel]

“*After this...*” (7:1)

C. The Preservation of True Religion/The 144 Thousand Sealed (7:1-8)

“*After these things*” (Revelation 7:9)

II. The Events of the Day of the Lord’s Wrath *to the end* of the 70th

Week of Daniel (Revelation 7:9-15:4)

- A. The Saints of the Ages in Heaven (Chapter 7:9-17)
- B. The Seventh Seal Opened/The Beginning of the Day of the Lord (8:1-5)
- C. The Six Trumpet Judgments/The Little Book/The Two Witnesses (8:6-11:14)
- D. The Seventh Trumpet Judgment/The World Kingdoms become the Lord’s/End 70th Week (11:15-19)
- E. The Interlude/Events of the Last 3-1/2 Years of the 70th Week of Daniel (Revelation 11,12,13,14)
 - 1. The Witnesses Testimony (11:3-14)
 - 2. The Woman [Faithful Israel] Protected (12:1-6)
 - 3. The War in Heaven (12:7-12)
 - 4. The War on Earth[Great Tribulation](12:13-12:17)
 - 5. The Wild Beast [Antichrist] (13:1-10)
 - 6. The Worship Leader [False Prophet] for the Wild Beast (13:11-18)
 - 7. The Worship Leaders of God [End of 70th Week](14:1-5)
 - a. The 144 Thousand Sons of Israel
 - b. The Harpers in Heaven
 - c. The Four Beasts
 - d. The Twenty-Four Elders
 - 8. The Three Angels of Announcement (14:6-13)
 - 9. The Son of Man [The Lord Jesus Christ] (14:14)
 - 10. The Three Angels of Judgment (14:15-20)
- F. The Heavenly Prelude before The End of the Day of the Lord (15:1-4)

“After these things” (Revelation 15:5)

III. The Events of the Day of the Lord’s Wrath *after* The 70th Week of Daniel (Revelation 15:5-17:18)

- A. The Preparation for the Seven Vial Judgments (Revelation 15:5-8)
- B. The Seven Vial Judgments (Revelation 16:1-21)
- C. The Preparation for Judgment of Babylon the Great Whore (Revelation 17:1-18)

“After these things” (Revelation 18:1)

IV. The Punishment of False Religion (Revelation 18:1-24)

- A. The Destruction of Babylon the Great Whore Announced (Revelation 18:1-8)
- B. The Kings of the Earth Lament Her Destruction (Revelation 18:9, 10)
- C. The Merchants of the Earth Lament Her Destruction (Revelation 18:11-17a)
- D. The Merchants of the Sea Lament Her Destruction (Revelation 18:17b-19)
- E. The Destruction of Babylon the Great Whore (Revelation 18:20-24)

“After these things” (Revelation 19:1)

V. The **Concluding** Events of the Day of the Lord

- A. The Rejoicing in Heaven for the Destruction of Babylon (Revelation 19:1-6)
- B. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-10)
- C. The Great Retribution at Armageddon (Revelation 19:11-21)
- D. The Binding of Satan (Revelation 20:1-3)
- E. The First Resurrection and Millennium (Revelation 20:4-6)
- F. The Final Rebellion (Revelation 20:7-10)
- G. The Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15)
- H. The New Heaven, Earth & Jerusalem Described (Revelation 21:1, 21:9-27-22:1-5)
- J. The Heavenly Conclusion (Revelation 22:6-21)

Two major occurrences are singled out by time indicating phrases. The first appears at 7:1-8 which is called: The Preservation of True Religion with the second The Punishment of False Religion recorded in chapter 18. These notable end of the age events are the only two actions of the Lord in the book of the Revelation that are clearly set off by time indicating phrases thereby being underlined by the Word of God pointing to His time of the end priority to preserve His testimony through the sealing of the 144 Thousand Sons of Israel (Revelation 7:1-8) and His severe punishment of false religion (Revelation 18:1-24).

The Lord seals His servants just before the beginning of His Day of the Lord judgment and then after His judgment is almost complete the punishment of false religion occurs through His destruction of the Great Whore Babylon.

However, just before the sealing of the 144 Thousand, the text utilizes the singular *“After this” (7:1)* instead of *“After these things”* which is the plural form of this time indicating phrase. Here the Lord is underlining the sealing of the 144 Thousand which occurs right after the sign of the Day of the Lord (6:12,13).

This is the only place this time indicating phrase is found in the singular form within the book of the Revelation emphasizing a number of truths:

1. The great significance of the sealing of the 144 Thousand (7:1-8)
2. Their sealing immediately follows (7:1-8) the sign of the Day of the Lord (6:12,13)
3. Their sealing is the final step in God's preparation of Earth for the Day of the Lord (4:1-7:8)

This key group of "*servants of our God*" (*Revelation 7:3*) are protected by God from His judgment (*Revelation 9:4*) in order that they might continue to serve Him during the Day of the Lord when they will testify to those who will be redeemed when:

"The Redeemer [Lord Jesus Christ] shall come to Zion...And so all Israel shall be saved."
(*Isaiah 59:20; Romans 11:25,26*)