

18

Silence in Heaven (III)

And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets...

The first angel sounded... (Rev. 8:1, 2, 7a).

(The previous chapter in this book, Chapter XVII, covered part of the judgments seen when the seventh seal of the scroll was broken [the first five trumpet and vial judgments]. This chapter will carry the matter to completion [covering the sixth and seventh trumpet and vial judgments].)

The sounding of the first five trumpets and the pouring out of the corresponding first five vials describe conditions which will exist in the kingdom of Antichrist near the end of Daniel's seventieth week, near the end of the Tribulation. And, as well, these conditions will extend over into the time of Christ's return immediately following. That revealed through these first five trumpet and vial judgments provide detail and commentary for that revealed when the preceding fifth and sixth seals were broken, particularly the sixth seal. And that revealed when the fifth and sixth seals were broken, in turn, provides detail and commentary for that revealed when the preceding first four seals were broken (having to do particularly with the end result of the breaking of these four seals).

Thus, in a respect, that revealed when the seventh seal is

broken — the trumpet judgments, then later the vial judgments — provide detail and commentary for that revealed when all of the previous six seals were broken.

The preceding is the integrally related manner in which the judgments of the seven-sealed scroll are structured (*ref.* Chapters XIII-XVII in this book).

At the point in the Book of Revelation following the sounding of the fifth trumpet and the pouring out of the fifth vial, the kingdom of Antichrist is seen *in complete disarray, awaiting destruction*. And this destruction, seen in the sounding of the final two trumpets and the pouring out of the final two vials, occurs *following* the Tribulation, *following* Christ's return. More specifically this destruction is seen in the sounding of the sixth trumpet and the pouring out of the sixth vial, with the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the pouring out of the seventh vial bringing matters to *a complete end, announcing the finality of that which will have been accomplished*.

Once all the judgments of the seven-sealed scroll have been brought to pass, matters will be *exactly* as described when the seventh trumpet sounds and the seventh vial is poured out:

“And the angel [the angel with the seventh trumpet] which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand [*lit.*, ‘his right hand’] to heaven,

And swore by him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things that are therein, that there should be time no longer:

But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets” (Rev. 10:5-7).

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great [‘loud’] voices in heaven, and they said, The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ: and he shall reign forever and ever” (Rev. 11:15, ASV).

“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great [‘loud’] voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done” (Rev. 16:17).

The thought in Rev. 10:5-7; 11:15 (*cf.* 10:1-6) is not that “the kingdom of the world” *is about to become* “the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.” Rather, when the seventh trumpet sounds, “great [‘loud’] voices in heaven” *will clearly state* that the kingdom, ruled by Satan up to this point in time (Satan through his Christ — Antichrist — during the last half of the Tribulation), *has become* “the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.”

It will all be over at this point in the book. Not only will the kingdom have previously been delivered into the Son’s hands by the Father (Dan. 7:13, 14), but a repentant and converted Israel will have been restored to the land, the Gentile armies of the earth will have been destroyed, Satan and his angels will have been put down, Satan will have been bound in the underworld, and *Christ can now take the sceptre and, with His co-heirs, reign over the earth for 1,000 years.*

The scene presented when the seventh trumpet sounds takes one to the point in time following Rev. 20:3.

And *this same thing* is clearly stated another way in Rev. 16:17 through the words voiced *in a loud manner by God Himself, from His throne in heaven*, “It is done.” These words are the translation of a perfect tense in the Greek text, indicating action completed in past time and existing during present time in a *finished state*.

(This is the same tense used when Christ cried out from the Cross, “It is finished” [John 19:30]; and it is the same tense used in Eph. 2:8 relative to man’s eternal salvation, based on Christ’s finished work at Calvary — “...you have been saved...” A person having believed on the Lord Jesus Christ *has been saved in past time, based on a finished work in past time.* Both man’s salvation and the finished work which makes this salvation possible *exist during present time in a finished state.* And, since that is the case, *man’s salvation is just as secure, complete, and unchangeable as the finished work upon which it rests.*

This is the reason why that once a man has been saved, God *never* deals with him on the basis of his eternal salvation again. To do so, God would have to go back and deal with His Son’s finished work — an impossibility. At this point in time, *everything has been finished, completed; and, accordingly, everything related to man’s eternal salvation can only continue to exist forever in that same finished state.* All of God’s dealings with saved man *can only have to do with present and future aspects*

of salvation [with the Messianic Era in view], never with the past aspect of salvation [with eternal salvation in view].)

In the preceding respect, when God Himself one day proclaims, *in a loud voice*, “It is done,” matters surrounding the judgments of the seven-sealed scroll will be just as complete as His Son’s finished work at Calvary when the Son cried out, “It is finished.” The work surrounding God’s redemption of the inheritance will, at that point in time, exist in the same finished state as His Son’s prior redemptive work at Calvary, the same finished state in which man’s salvation presently exists.

Sixth Trumpet, Sixth Vial (9:13-21; 16:12-16)

Both the sixth trumpet and sixth vial judgments have to do with *the great river Euphrates*.

When the sixth angel sounded his trumpet, the command went out, “Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.” And these four angels are said to have been “prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.” Then the actual slaying is seen being carried out at the hands of an army of two hundred million.

When an angel poured out the sixth vial upon the great river Euphrates, the waters were dried up to make way for the kings of the East. Then, three unclean spirits — demonic spirits — are seen going forth “unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God almighty,” to “Armageddon [meaning, ‘the Mount of Megiddo’].”

The picture is that of the armies of the earth, the armies of a kingdom in complete disarray and collapse, being gathered to the Middle East, to the land of Israel. And they are being gathered by demonic spirits, for *a single purpose on Satan’s part*, as well as *a single purpose on the Lord’s part*.

On Satan’s part, they will be gathered to the land of Israel in order to destroy a converted and regathered people (the Jewish people) and their King (the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will be residing

in their midst in that future day).

On the Lord's part, they will be gathered to the land of Israel in order to themselves be destroyed, bringing an end to Gentile world power.

Through God's sovereign control of all things, He will allow Satan to effect a gathering of the armies of the earth to the Middle East in order to, in turn, bring to pass that which He has decreed. God will have brought the kingdom of Antichrist into complete disarray and collapse during the Tribulation. Then, immediately following the Tribulation, following His Son's return and the subsequent conversion and restoration of the Jewish people, the military leaders and armies of an already decimated kingdom will be brought into the land of Israel *to be destroyed*.

(Bible students viewing this end-time sequence of events often see the armies of the earth being gathered to the Middle East and coming against the Jewish people before the end of the Tribulation. Once they are gathered, Christ then returns and destroys the armies of the earth in the land of Israel, delivering His people through this means.

However, that is *not* the Biblical picture at all. Such a sequence of events is completely out of line with anything seen in the Old Testament — in Biblical typology or in the Prophets.

One thing which would preclude such a sequence of events is the fact that the Jewish people in the land during time covered by Daniel's seventieth week will be uprooted from their land in the middle of the Tribulation and driven back out among the nations. Aside from a possible small scattering of Jews, there will be no Jewish people in the land of Israel during the latter part of the Tribulation for Gentile armies under Antichrist to come against near the end of the Tribulation. Jerusalem will be trodden down of the Gentiles throughout this time [Luke 21:24; Rev. 11:2].

The correct sequence, as will be shown, is Christ returning before the armies are gathered to the Middle East, with an unconverted Jewish people still scattered throughout the Gentile nations. The national conversion of Israel will occur *following* Christ's return while they are still scattered among the nations [the order seen in O.T. typology, the Prophets, and the Jewish festivals of Lev. 23], and Christ will then send His angels out to regather His people back to the land [Matt. 24:30, 31].

Then, the armies of the earth will be gathered into the Middle East. And once they have been gathered, Christ, beginning His march into battle from the Mount of Olives, will go forth and destroy these invading armies, delivering His people [Zech. 14:1-9].)

1) *Symbolism Used in the Sixth Trumpet and Vial Judgments*

The angel sounding the sixth trumpet is commanded to loose four angels which were “bound in the great river Euphrates.” These angels were being held for a particular mission which was to occur at *a previously set time* — “an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year.” And this would be in complete accord with the manner in which God acts — *at set times which He Himself has previously established*.

These angels are apparently synonymous with the three demonic spirits seen when the sixth vial is poured out (two ways of describing the same angels), which are to go out into all the world and gather the kings of the earth, with their armies, into the Middle East.

Four and *three* — referring to the angels, the demonic spirits — are evidently *representative numbers*; and *meaning* would be provided from the numbers referenced, like the twenty-four elders in Revelation chapter four. And, as with the twenty-four elders, a much larger contingent of angels would undoubtedly be in view.

“Four” is a number having to do with *the earth*, and “three” is the number of *Divine perfection*. The former shows the extent of their mission (the four corners of the earth, the four points of the compass); and the latter, as seen in the text, has to do with a counterfeit Divine perfection, coming “out of the mouth of the dragon” (Satan [Rev. 12:9], who sought, in time past, to be as God [Isa. 14:13, 14]), “out of the mouth of the beast” (who will declare himself to be God [II Thess. 2:4]), and “out of the mouth of the false prophet” (who will direct all worship toward the Beast [Rev. 13:12]).

The Euphrates River, where these angels are said to be bound, is the largest river in the Middle East (abt. 1,700 miles long), forms the northern boundary of the land in the Abrahamic covenant,

and forms a natural divide between the land of Israel and the nations beyond. It is apparent that the Euphrates is being used in a metaphorical sense in the preceding respect, and a literal river or a literal drying up of that river is evidently not what is in view at all.

The reason given in the text for the drying up of this natural divide is “that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared” (16:12). The way modern armies move, rivers wouldn’t stop them; nor would the drying up of rivers help them to any degree. The reference is undoubtedly to the removal of anything which would prevent various Gentile armies worldwide from moving into the Middle East.

Numerous metaphors are also used to describe the armies making their way into the Middle East (“army,” KJV [9:16] is plural in the Greek text; *ref.* NASB). These armies are seen as horsemen, wearing breastplates described by the words *fire, brimstone, and blue smoke issuing forth from the brimstone* (that referred to by the word translated “jacinth” [KJV] or “hyacinth” [NASB]). And the horses which they ride have *heads as lions, with fire, smoke, and brimstone issuing forth from their mouths*.

“A lion” would portend *qualities of majesty or courage*. The lion is the king of the beasts, and these individuals are being led forth in this majestic and courageous manner by an individual Scripture refers to as “a beast” himself (Dan. 7:7; Rev. 13:1). Then, the description of the breastplates worn by the horsemen and that coming from the mouths of the horses — *fire, smoke, brimstone, blue smoke from the brimstone* — would all have to do with *judgment*.

The power of those being led forth into battle is said to be in the mouths of the horses; but the horses are also seen to have tails “like unto serpents,” with heads on their tails. “A serpent” has to do with *deceit and subtlety*. This was Satan’s chosen vehicle when he exhibited these qualities following man’s creation in Genesis. Now in the Book of Revelation, when the reason for man’s creation in the beginning is about to be realized, the matter comes full-circle. Through the armies which Satan leads — armies led through a Beast described in a similar metaphorical way, a Beast having seven heads and ten horns (Dan. 7:7, 8; Rev. 13:1) — he

will launch his final thrust in his vain efforts to destroy the King and His people in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

All is an apparent reference, through metaphorical means, to the modern-day methods of travel to the battlefield, the vast array of modern-day weapons of warfare, etc. All-in-all, the multifaceted reference to that which will climactically occur can only be a horrific and unimaginable scene of judgment, bloodshed, and death.

2) *The Order of Events in the Sixth Trumpet and Vial Judgments*

Armies numbering 200,000,000 are seen being led into the land of Israel, and they are seen being led to a particular place in the land referred to *in the Hebrew tongue* as “Armageddon,” a word derived from two Hebrew words (*har Megiddo*), meaning, “Mount of Megiddo.”

The number comprising the armies being led into the land — 200,000,000 — literally reads in the Greek text, “two myriads of myriads” (the Greek word *urias*, “myriad,” appears in the plural twice in the text, preceded by the number “two”). *Murias* is used in the New Testament in seven different references, and it is used mainly, if not exclusively, referring to a large indefinite number (e.g., Luke 12:1; Heb. 12:22; Jude 14). And the number “two,” used in connection with the myriads of myriads is possibly a reference to the only two directions which land armies comprised of myriads of individuals can be brought into the land of Israel — from the north and from the south. In other words, “two” could possibly refer to the myriads which will come from one direction and the myriads which will come from the other direction (cf. Ezek.21:19-27).

The reference to the Mount of Megiddo in Rev. 16:16 would call attention to more than just one mountain in the land of Israel. The entire surrounding area, the valley of Megiddo, which would include the plain of Esdraelon (the valley of Megiddo is in this plain), would have to form part of the area referenced. The plain of Esdraelon is about twenty miles long and fourteen miles

wide, forming a natural battleground where opposing armies have met at different times over the centuries.

Because of the size of the invading armies, the central point for this battle could very well be the area surrounding Megiddo. But vast areas beyond this would have to fit into the equation. Note that blood from this battle is going to run “even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs [abt. 180 miles]” (Rev. 14:20). And this battle — God’s Son *treading the winepress*, “alone” — will extend all the way down into Edom (Isa. 63:1-6).

Thus, is it any wonder that the Spirit of God has gone to great lengths to describe this climactic scene, through the use of numerous metaphors, when the sixth trumpet sounds and the sixth vial is poured out? Nondescriptive language simply would not do justice to the scene at hand.

(In the preceding respect, “Armageddon” in Rev. 16:16 is apparently used in a metaphorical sense, drawing from the type battleground and the history of this battleground rather than to the actual geographical location of the battle itself.

The point toward which the invading armies will move is Jerusalem, located some fifty miles south of the plain of Esdraelon. And it is from Jerusalem, beginning from the Mount of Olives, that the Lord will go forth to tread the winepress [*cf.* Joel 3:1, 2, 12-16; Zech 14:1-4].)

a) *The Battle in Biblical Typology*

To see the proper timing and sequence of events in what is often referred to as “the Battle of Armageddon,” note two Old Testament types in the history of Israel, separated by a forty-year period — the leading of the Israelites out of Egypt under Moses, and the leading of the Israelites into the land under Joshua.

The death of the paschal lambs, the proper application of the blood, and the Lord passing through the land of Egypt the night of the Passover (executing the death of the firstborn if it had not already occurred vicariously through the death of a lamb from the flock) occurred while Israel was still in Egypt. This occurred immediately before the Israelites began their march toward the Red Sea.

The Passover is the first of the seven Jewish festivals in Leviticus chapter twenty-three and has yet to be fulfilled insofar as Israel is concerned. The Jewish people have slain the Lamb, but they have yet to apply the blood. And this application of the blood will occur while they are still in the land typified by Egypt, seen in Exodus chapter twelve. This (a proper application of the blood through their believing on the Lord Jesus Christ) will occur while the Israelites are still dispersed throughout the Gentile nations, prior to their restoration. The fifth festival, the feast of Trumpets, has to do with a removal from the nations and a restoration to the land; and that to which these festivals point will be fulfilled in the order of their occurrence.

Then note the sequence of events which followed in the Exodus under Moses. The armed forces of the Assyrian of that day, the Pharaoh of Egypt, *were destroyed in the Red Sea* following the Israelites removal from Egypt by *their passing safely through the Sea* (Ex. 14:21-31).

And exactly the same thing is seen forty years later when the Israelites were led through the Jordan under Joshua. They had been keeping the Passover year by year in the wilderness; and once they had been led into the land, Gentile power was then to be progressively destroyed, beginning with Jericho (Joshua 3ff).

Viewing these two types together, it is an easy matter to see that the Jewish people, yet future, must not only apply the blood of the slain Lamb but be removed from the nations and be placed back in the land *before* Gentile world power under the latter-day Assyrian is destroyed.

b) The Battle in the Prophets

The matter is presented the same way in the Prophets — national conversion, removal from the nations, and the destruction of Gentile world power, in that order. Some of the Prophets present the whole of the sequence, some just part.

Ezekiel chapters thirty-six through thirty-nine would suffice to illustrate the whole of the matter from one of the Prophets. The latter part of chapter thirty six (vv. 17-38) deals with the reason for the dispersion of the Jewish people, their national conversion,

and their restoration to the land. All of chapter thirty-seven then provides more information concerning their national conversion and restoration to the land. Then chapters thirty-eight and thirty-nine have to do with the destruction of Gentile world power once they have been restored to the land, with these two chapters ending at the same place as the previous two chapters — Israel in the Messianic Era, as seen more in detail in chapters forty through forty-eight.

That events in chapters thirty-eight and thirty-nine can occur only after Israel has been restored to the land, following the Tribulation, is evident from things stated in these chapters. For example, conditions seen in 38:8, 11, 12; 39:12 (*cf.* 38:23; 39:21-23) *cannot possibly exist before that time*. These conditions don't exist today; nor can they exist anytime before or during the Tribulation.

And the slaying of “the third part of man” at the hands of the two myriads of myriads (Rev. 9:15-18) would undoubtedly have to do with *the armies themselves* rather with mankind in general (*ref.* Ezek. 38:21; *cf.* Judges 7:22; I Sam. 14:20).

Then note the same sequence of events in the Book of Joel, having to do with the Jewish people regathered to the land and Messiah in their midst before Gentile world power is destroyed (3:1-21). Further, in Joel, these events are seen occurring beyond Man's Day, in the Lord's Day (1:15; 2:1, 2; 3:14).

And this same sequence of events can be seen in Prophet after Prophet in the Old Testament.

Seventh Trumpet, Seventh Vial (10:1-11; 11:15-19; 16:17-21)

Both the seventh trumpet and seventh vial judgments, as previously seen, have to do with *a full and complete end*.

When the seventh angel sounded his trumpet, time in relation to Man's Day no longer existed, the mystery of God was brought to completion, the kingdom of this world became that “of our Lord, and of his Christ,” and there were “lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake [‘a shaking’], and great hail.”

When an angel poured out the seventh vial “into the air,” a

loud voice came out of the temple in heaven, saying, "It is done." Then, the same thing is seen which followed the announcement concerning the transfer of regal power after the seventh trumpet sounded. There were "voices, and thunders, and lightning," along with "a great earthquake [‘a great shaking,’ unlike anything seen since man’s creation]" and "great hail."

The full measure of God’s judgment will have fallen upon the final form of the kingdom of Babylon; and the full revelation of God (Rev. 10:7), made known through a full revelation of the Son (Rev. 1:1), will be realized at this point.

Israel will have been brought to the place of repentance and belief, the inheritance will have been fully redeemed, and the kingdom will have become that "of our Lord, and of his Christ."

A rainbow is seen two times in the Book of Revelation (4:3; 10:1). The rainbow, as first seen in Scripture in Gen. 9:13-16, appeared *following the storm*. And the rainbow is used after a similar manner, in relation to *judgment*, in the Book of Revelation. It is seen surrounding God’s throne in chapter four in connection with *a past judgment of Christians* (chs. 1-3); and it is seen in chapter ten on the head of the "mighty angel" who sounds the seventh trumpet, in connection with *a past judgment of Israel and the nations*.

In both instances, *judgment* will be over. Through the first judgment, *the bride* will have been made known (chs. 1-3); and, through the second judgment, *Israel* will have been brought to the place of repentance, *the inheritance* will have been redeemed, and *the bride* will have become the Lamb’s wife (chs. 6-19).

(The next chapter in this book, Chapter XIX — from the perspective of things seen in the Book of Revelation — deals more fully with events occurring at the time that the seventh trumpet sounds and the corresponding seventh vial is poured out.)