**SEALS, TRUMPETS & VIALS OF REVELATION by W. G. Guy**

The Book of Revelation seems to be shrouded in mystery causing numerous and varied interpretations of events described. Many try to take everything in the Book of Revelation literally. However, it must be understood that prophetic events are often given figuratively as illustrations and cannot be interpreted literally. This is expressly demonstrated in the Book of Daniel where descriptive animals are used to refer to future empires and nations. The same applies in the Book of Revelation; much is figurative and not literal.

Something else that needs to be recognized is that a lot of traditional prophecy teaching ties events in the Book of Daniel in with the events of the Book of Revelation. This is not proper because each book was written to and about two different groups of people and their particular experiences with only a partial overlapping of time. Daniel is written to the Israelites and describes what the future holds for them as a nation, a peculiar people, and who it is that oppresses them.

Daniel 10:14 –*Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to* ***your people*** *in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come.”*

The Book of Revelation is written to the churches (Christians) and describes what the future holds for them:

Revelation 1:10-11 – *I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying,“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send it* ***to the seven churches*** *which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”*

Only at the very end is the possibility that Israel and the church shall experience the same things; and that only because Israel finally accepts Christ as their Messiah and they become Christians – the two become one in Christ:

Romans 11:25-27 – *For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.”*

So then Israel becomes part of the last day church and numbered with the saints of God. Now let’s consider the Seals, Trumpets and Vials in the Book of Revelation from a fresh perspective.

In Revelation Chapter 5 we are told about a special book in the right hand of God, our Heavenly Father. This unique book has seven seals that lock it and prevent anyone but the owner, or the one with proper authority, from opening. The seal refers to a personal identification of ownership or authority which is designated to an item or document. Then we read that God’s Son, Jesus the Christ, is the only person that can open this special book because only He has the authority to break open the seals.

This book is the prophetic future of the saints on earth from the ascension of Jesus to heaven until his return and the end of the age. This book contains a synopsis of what occurs during the last two millennial days, or two thousand years. It appears that the seals are consecutive, each one at the beginning of a new chapter of prophetic time periods. It must be understood that what is recorded after the letters to the seven churches is all for the future, covering the time from when John wrote down what the Lord showed him until the end of this age.

Revelation 4:1 - *After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.*

Tradition refers to the first four seals as the Four Horseman of the Apocalypse; however, this is a misnomer as these four horsemen are no longer future to us in this day as they have already run their course. They do not represent the apocalyptic or end time conditions. These first four horse riders were, however, future to the apostle John in 94 A.D. when Jesus revealed all this to him.

The seven seals are opened by Jesus, The Lamb, in Revelation Chapter 6. (Note: In the Book of Revelation, Jesus is referred to as the King only two times, but he is referred to as the Lamb 27 times. The significance of this is that Jesus is memorialized as God’s sacrificial Lamb for all of mankind, and will forever be so recognized.) Remember, this book and the seven seals are a series of stories foretold to the early church of what is yet to be experienced by the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ until His return.

Seal #1 (Revelation 6:1-2) describes a white horse whose rider has a crown on his head indicating a ruler or a person of authority. This authority goes forth to conquer nations or territories to bring them under control of his dynasty. This could refer to the Roman Catholic Church which did, in fact, conquer nations and brought kings under subjection to it. Notice that the conquering does not mention death or destruction as occurs in typical warfare; therefore this conquering does not involve war or an army of any kind. This occurred during the first several centuries up into the dark ages.

Seal #2 (Revelation 6:3-4) tells of a red horse whose rider removes peace from the earth and kills multitudes and terrorizes people by sword. Here we have conquest by warfare. This likely refers to Islam that began its conquests of former Christian nations and territories by sword which began in the seventh century A.D. It is noteworthy to recognize that the seven churches mentioned in Revelation Chapters 2 and 3 are located in what is now called the nation of Turkey. These churches ceased to exist following the conquest of Islam over the area, and in particular, the nation of Turkey. Turkey was once the seat of the Orthodox Church that was established by Emperor Constantine but has been a Muslim nation since the violent and barbaric conquest by Islamic radicals - Jihadists.

Seal #3 (Revelation 6:5-6) reveals a black horse whose rider represents famine of normal grain foods implying a period of drought of the required “former and latter rains”, but not all rain ceases since the oil and wine still remain. Oil, from the olive tree, and wine from grapes, do not require the same rains needed by grain crops. A famine of grain crops forces populations to move or migrate to more fertile regions; this has happened more than once in the past two thousand years.

Seal #4 (Revelation 6:7-8) is about a pale horse, (actually referring to a horse that is black and blue as though severely bruised), whose rider was named Death, and Hell followed him. His influence of death covered one-quarter of the earth by means of war, hunger and plagues; and wild beasts consumed the dead bodies. This period likely included the “crusades” when Christians attempted to liberate former Christian territories conquered by Muslims. This is also indicative of the middle-ages, also called the “dark ages” which were filled with false religious worship and superstition due to the absence of God’s Word and truth which produced spiritual darkness, depravity and ignorance as to sound doctrine. Also included in this period was the lack of cleanliness and health matters that accompanied such which caused the black plague.

When the dark-ages came to a close it was because of the reformation, a return of the light of truth of God’s Word and grace to mankind that also fostered the renaissance. It is also worth noting that with the reformation came revolution as man began to voice independence from tyrants, dictators and the control of the Pope and the Church of Rome. Much death came as a result of people voicing their independence: consider the consequence brought about by the Inquisition, the French and American Revolutions. This covered a period of a couple hundred years.

Now we leave the four horses and their respective riders as they represent history now past. Our current place in history may be represented by the fifth seal; however, we on earth do not physically see or experience the occasion of this seal but it is no less a prophetic record of the things happening in the spirit realm in heaven as a result of what has transpired on earth. Since this occurs in heaven there is no indication of the length of time this takes place.

Seal #5 (Revelation 6:9-11) here the souls of the martyred saints are recognized as being in a heavenly place and acknowledged for their witness and living testimony in the face of hostile opposition that killed them because of their faith and faithfulness. These are likely those who died at the hands of Islamic conquerors, despotic rulers, and the victims of the ruthless persecution of true believers by the Roman Catholic Church’s Inquisition. They cry out for vengeance on the ungodly, but are told they must be patient a little longer until other faithful believers who are destined to be martyred are also killed as they were. This indicates that more Christians are to be killed in the time remaining until the end of the age. These martyrs are then given special garments that represent their holiness and righteousness by their relationship with Christ.

Seal #6 (Revelation 6:12-13) describes a great earthquake, as well as celestial events that are also described in Hebrews 12 as a time where everything shall be shaken that can be shaken. This ushers in what is referred to as The Day of the Lord in several Old Testament prophesies. This seal is a pronouncement of the Lord’s vengeance on the wicked, also called a day of destruction; thus a lot of damage is going to occur on planet earth, to people and nations, and the environment. What is interesting is that the wicked on earth will recognize all this as God’s wrath poured out and they seek to hide from it by making their own form of security or shelter. (Note: the ungodly often refer to natural disasters as “an acts of God”.)

This may still be future to this present day; however we may very well be right on the threshold of this Seal at this time. Social, political and environmental shaking seems to have greatly escalated beginning in 2010-2011; and the ungodly are even more defiant of God than ever before. This means that the seven trumpets are next and about to sound bringing God’s wrath on the wicked. – but the end is not yet; that comes at the seventh, or better known as the last trumpet.

Revelation 6:15-17 – *And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”*

Seal #7 (Revelation 8:1-2) brings a period of silence in heaven, most likely in awe of the heavenly inhabitants seeing what is about to happen on earth as a result of God’s wrath. The seven angels with their trumpets are introduced. Their trumpets announce, or signal, events about to take place that are the long prophesied events on the wicked. Note that these trumpets designate events that are parallel to the seven vials that are poured out, which will be covered after discussion of the trumpets.

It is important to recognize and remember that trumpets are used to announce or signal specific events; these events being the outpouring of God’s wrath on the wicked. This is likely the beginning of what in scripture is referred to as the Day of the Lord, a Day of Vengeance and Destruction; a time of darkness, as prophesied in the Old Testament to come upon the wicked, (Isaiah 13:13 & 34:8; Jeremiah 46:10; Joel 1:15 & 11; Amos 5:18-20). In the New Testament it is time for God’s wrath to start to be poured out.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 – *But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.*

Trumpet #1 (Revelation 8:7) brings hail mixed with fire and blood upon the earth which burns 1/3 of the vegetation. This means food crops and feed for cattle is totally eliminated in certain areas.

Trumpet #2 (Revelation 8:8-9) describes a mountain of fire cast into the sea, likely a volcano that destroys 1/3 of life and shipping in this designated sea area.

Trumpet #3 (Revelation 8:10-11) tells of a toxic meteor or asteroid, or other item from space that destroys 1/3 of fresh water supplies (drinking water) by poisoning them.

Trumpet #4 (Revelation 8:12) brings darkness that obscures 1/3 of the light from the sun, moon and stars; thereby reducing the amount of available daylight.

Next comes the pronouncement of the three woes on the earth that accompany the remaining three trumpets and the last three vials. The use of “woes” at this point indicates that what follows is an increase in intensity. It may be that the previous four trumpets were designed to get people’s attention, to get some of the wicked to repent and cry out to God; but now the warning level from God goes up to three levels.

Trumpet #5 (Revelation 9:1-3) tells us of a celestial figure (an angel) who opens the bottomless pit loosing demonic creatures which torment, but not kill, non-believers. Note: since non-believers are targeted, then it is obvious that true believers are still present on earth; so the rapture has not occurred as yet. (Remember that God’s people, Israel, were not affected by the plagues that struck the Egyptians under the ministry of Moses, so the same could be for Christians.) This is the first woe upon the wicked.

Trumpet #6 (Revelation 9:13-15) is the releasing of four special angels that were bound in the Euphrates River. It appears that they were previously bound there for a specific purpose, for a specific year, day and hour. These angels organize an army of 200,000,000 from the East (possibly China) that are assigned to kill 1/3 of mankind. Nevertheless, those people that remain afterward still refuse to repent and change their ways according to Revelation 9:20-21. This is the second woe upon the wicked; the third woe, brought on by the seventh trumpet, comes shortly afterward. In fact an angel announces in Revelation 10:6 that there will be no more delay. The seventh and last trumpet signals the end of the age and God’s mysterious plan and purpose comes to a conclusion.

Revelation 10:7 – *but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.*

(Note that the ministry of the two witnesses on earth is finished just prior to the seventh trumpet and they are caught up, or raptured, to heaven, Revelation 11:12. Could the two witness of God be the Church and the redeemed remnant of Israel – Romans 9-11?)

Trumpet #7 (Revelation 11:15) the third woe is brought on by this last trumpet. This trumpet signals the end of Satan’s domination of the world as a major declaration comes from heaven by great voices saying, ***The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ****; and He shall reign for ever and ever.* At this point God and His Son Jesus take over.

Revelation 11:18 – *The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come* (or has

already been poured out)*, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged,*

*And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those*

*who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the*

*earth.”*

Note: there are no more trumpets after this seventh one, which is also accompanied by a voice from heaven, making this the very last trumpet in scripture. The significance of this is what it means to true believers, the saints of God still living on earth.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 – *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,* ***at the last trumpet****. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

This is possibly the time of rapture (being caught up) that so many of us are waiting for.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 – *For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

Needless to say, the wicked ungodly people remaining on earth are not too happy about this and they rebel under the leading of Satan who has been cast down and his presence is now limited to planet earth. This leads to the famous Battle of Armageddon where the final conflict of the age occurs.

Now let’s consider the seven vials introduced in Revelation 15 and listed in chapter 16. First it should be understood that the vials are not consecutive to the seven trumpets as is commonly taught, but are, in fact, concurrent with the trumpets. The trumpets are announcing each of the events. The vials describe what is affected in each event as they are poured out, and what it is that the vials are poured out upon. The trumpets and the vials are different descriptions of the same events.

Revelation 15:1 – *Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete*.

Vial #1 (Revelation 16: 2) is poured out on the earth (the ground) and causes severe sores on all who are under the mark of the beast (Satan), and all those that worship his false religions and forms of deification. (Notice the first trumpet involves what hits the ground affecting vegetation.)

Vial #2 (Revelation 16:3) is poured out on the sea or ocean causing it to become as the blood of a dead man which kills everything living in the sea. (Note that the second trumpet is an event that affects the sea destroying 1/3 of life and ships).

Vial #3 (Revelation 16:4) is poured out on the fresh waters which become blood. (Note that the third trumpet involves what hits the fresh water and drinking supply turning them poison which kills 1/3 of the population.)

Vial #4 (Revelation 16:8-9) is poured out on the sun causing it to scorch those on the earth with great heat. (Note that trumpet #4 also involves the sun, moon and stars but describes differing events that could be explained as first the occurrence of great eruptions on the sun or sun spot activity. This activity of the sun then triggers significant volcanic eruptions on earth which spew so much volcanic ash into the air that it obscures the light by 1/3.)

Vial #5 (Revelation 16:10-11) coincides with the beginning of the three woes and is poured out on the seat or throne of the beast, and his kingdom becomes full of darkness which causes significant pain. The darkness may refer to the consequences of the works of darkness that produces all manner of physical, mental and spiritual complications or mental and emotional pain and anguish. (Note that trumpet #5 refers to demonic creatures out of the pit that torment non-believers but doesn’t kill them. Could it be that the real throne of the beast, the place from which he rules, is actually from the pit?)

Vial #6 (Revelation 16:12) as part of the second woe is poured out on the river Euphrates and it dries up preparing the way of the kings of the east, obviously a massive army from the orient. (Note that trumpet #6 also refers to the Euphrates River and the angels that summon a 200,000,000 man army that kills 1/3 of the population.)

Vial #7 (Revelation 16:17) as the third woe is poured out into the air which initiates a voice from heaven saying, “***It is done”****.* This obviously signifies the end of the age and the finality of all prophecy and the initiation of the final judgment of God on the wicked. (Note that the seventh trumpet also includes the pronouncement of finality, that the “kingdoms of this world are now become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ”. Then non-believers face His judgment – the Wrath of God – because they reject His rule and His Kingdom and refuse to repent.)

The following is a side by side comparison of the Trumpets and Vials showing that they are referring to the same event just using different terms:

**Trumpets** **Vials**

Trumpet 1 – What is about to be cast upon Vial 1 – is poured out upon the earth.

the earth.

Trumpet 2 – What is about to be cast into Vial 2 – is poured out on the sea.

the sea.

Trumpet 3 – What is about to be cast into Vial 3 – is poured out on the fresh

rivers and fresh waters. water and rivers.

Trumpet 4 – What is about to affect the sun. Vial 4 – Is poured out on the sun.

The announcement of first of three Woes occurs

Trumpet 5 – A spirit being opens the pit of Vial 5 – Is poured out on the seat of

demons (spiritual darkness) the beast producing darkness.

The second Woe

Trumpet 6 – Releases four angels bound in Vial 6 – Is poured out on the River

the River Euphrates to summon Euphrates making way for the

kings of the East. huge army of the kings of the East.

The third Woe

Trumpet 7 – Voice from heaven declares Vial 7 – Voice from heaven saying “It’s

the end of Satan’s rule as done” (finished).

Christ’s Kingdom now takes over.

Have you noticed that there are seven seals, seven trumpets and seven vials; seven being the number of perfection or completion = finite totality.

Revelation 22:6-7, 10, 12-14, 16 – *Then he said to me, “These words are faithful and true.” And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place. “Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.” And he said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.” Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”*

Contrary to popular doctrine of the :pre-tribulation rapture of the church, it appears that believers are here on earth right up until the seventh (last) trumpet. Those that oppose the post-tribulation rapture argue that believers are not appointed to the wrath of God: this is true, but they assume the rapture is how God’s wrath is avoided. However, we need to consider Bible History in how God protected His people in the past from His wrath or judgments and plagues. Remember when Israel was held captive as slaves in Egypt and God sent the ten plagues upon the Egyptians for pharaoh’s defiance of God’s command to let them go?

Where was Israel when each of the plagues hit Egypt? They were IN Egypt, but they were not affected by any of the plagues. They were sheltered by God. So it will be in the last days when God pours out his wrath against the unrepentant sinners. Believers will see it but will not be touched by it. This is explicitly declared in scripture:

Psalm 91:7-10 – *A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague nigh thy dwelling.*

Numerous other scriptures testify of the same thing for His righteous saints; He knows who they are; where they are; and how to protect and provide for them. Their main requirement is to trust in Him and obey His commands.