

SPIRITS
LAMPS
SEALS
ANGELS
TRUMPETS
THUNDERS



Bible Studies
Term 4 2021

7s: Spirits, Lamps, Seals, Angels, Trumpets, Thunders**7s****Spirits, Lamps, Seals, Angels, Trumpets, Thunders**

This term we turn from Abraham, to whom the promise to bless all nations was given, to the culmination of that promise in the last days. We move from the letters to the seven churches to the fate of the universal church and indeed of the whole of the cosmos as it is revealed to us in groups of 7 visions. Indeed, as Revelation 4:1 says, we look into the open door of heaven. In a dazzling array of visions and images and events we see what the Lord God has in store for his people, for the world and for those who persists in their rebellion against him.

As one writer has said, these passages are written “to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.”

May our Sovereign Lord, Jesus, who is indeed the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, grant to us understanding, encouragement and motivation as we read and study this section of his Word.

Greg Holmes, September 2021

Study		Revelation	Title	Page
1	Sun 10 Oct	4: 1-11	<i>A Throne in Heaven</i>	8
2	Sun 17 Oct	5: 1-14	<i>Worthy is the Lamb</i>	11
3	Sun 24 Oct	6:1-17	<i>Who Can Stand?</i>	14
4	Sun 31 Oct	7:1-17	<i>A Great Multitude</i>	17
5	Sun 7 Nov	8:1-5	<i>The Seventh Seal</i>	20
6	Sun 14 Nov	8:6-9:21	<i>One Third</i>	23
7	Sun 21 Nov	10:1-11	<i>Sweet or Sour?</i>	26
8	Sun 28 Nov	11:1-15	<i>Two Witnesses</i>	29

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RESOURCES

Chester, T. Revelation for You (God's Word for You) (United Kingdom, The Good Book Company, 2019). *I highly recommend this little book as an easily accessible, readable, lay persons 'commentary' on Revelation*

Barnett, P, Revelation – Apocalypse Now and Then (Reading the Bible Today) (Sydney South, Aquila, 2001)

Keener, C The NIV Application Commentary : Revelation (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2000).

Morris, L, "Revelation" (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries) (IVP, Leicester, 1987).

Bewes, R. The Lamb Wins! A guided tour through The Book of Revelation (Ross-Shire, Christian Focus, 2000).

Also, the outlines of Book of Revelation (Parts 1 and 2) on the Bible Project website. <https://thebibleproject.com/all-videos/>

Please note that as many of you may be doing these 'solo' that the booklet entitled 'Thoughts' is available to everyone via the KAC website or through the Office.

A note on the approach taken here...

There are a great variety of ways that this book of Revelation can be approached and a number of 'isms' that are associated with them.

Throughout these studies we have tried to take a broad picture approach that looks at the main message for Christians of the 1st Century and now the 21st Century. The details are meant to convey a picture, or a metaphor if you like, and most of them are not required to be nailed down to a precise meaning or time. The images used would have been familiar to the first readers but many are somewhat unfamiliar to us (except perhaps in fantasy novels or films). The times and numbers are generally symbolic and representative and not to be taken literally.

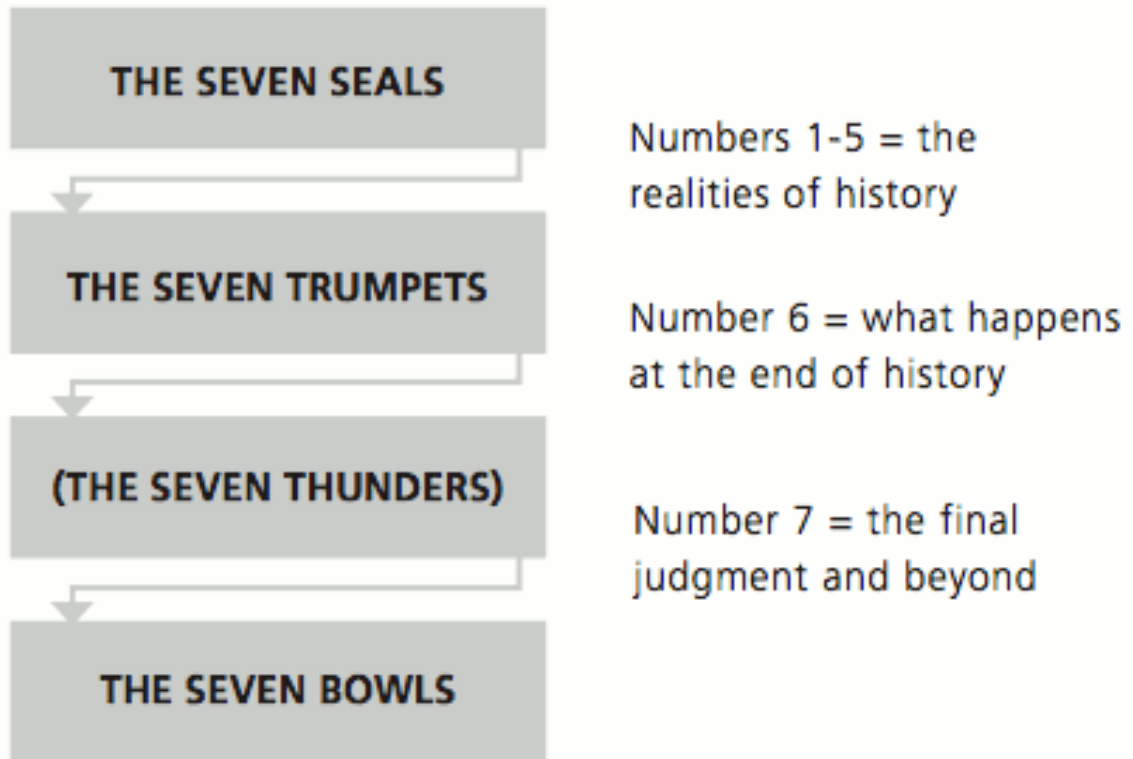
It is perfectly possible to get the important teachings of Revelation straight and right while remaining agnostic about some of the details.

In these studies I have taken the approach that the 7 seals, trumpets, etc. are not successive but each group represents human history from the time of Jesus' first coming to his second. Tim Chester (2019) represents them like this:

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THE SEVENS

THE "SEVENS" DO NOT FOLLOW ONE ANOTHER. THEY ARE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON THE SAME SEQUENCE OF EVENTS:



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Revelation.

SPECIFIC ADVICE FOR READING THE REVELATION

You may easily find yourself in the company of most contemporary Christians for whom the Revelation is difficult to read, mostly because we are so unfamiliar with John's medium of communication—apocalyptic literature with its bizarre imagery. Thus, along with knowing about the historical context and the way John works out his overall design, two other items will greatly aid your reading of this marvellous book—(1) to take seriously John's own designation of his book as 'the words of this prophecy' (1:3) and (2) to have some sense of how apocalyptic imagery works, even if many of the details remain a bit obscure.

By calling his work 'the words of this prophecy', John is deliberately following in the train of the great prophets of the Old Testament in several ways:

- (1) He speaks as one who knows himself to be under the inspiration of the Spirit (1:10; 2:7; etc.).
- (2) He positions himself between some recent past events and what is about to happen in the near future.
- (3) He sets all forms of earthly salvation and judgment against the backdrop of God's final end-time judgments so that the fall of Rome is to be seen not as the end itself but against the backdrop of the final events of the end.
- And (4) most important for good reading, John sees everything in terms of the *fulfillment* of the Old Testament. He has over 250 specific echoes of or allusions to the Old Testament so that every significant moment in his 'story' is imaged almost exclusively in Old Testament language. This begins with the picture of Christ (1:12–18, with its extraordinary collage from Dan 7:9; 10:6; Ezek 43:2; et al.), climaxing in Revelation 5:5–6, where the 'Lion of the tribe of Judah' (Gen 49:9), the 'Root of David' (Isa 11:1), turns out to be a slain Lamb (from the Passover and sacrificial system). The church is imaged in the language of Israel in every possible way, beginning in Revelation 1:6, with its echoes of Exodus 19:6; its sins are expressed in terms of Israel's failures (Balaam/Jezebel) and its redemption in Revelation 7 is pictured, first, as a remnant of the twelve tribes and, second, as a

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fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant, thus including the nations. So also the judgment against Rome (e.g., 14:8; 18:1–24) is expressed in the language of the prophetic judgments against Babylon (Isa 13–14; 21:1–10; 47; Jer 50–51), so much so that Rome is simply called ‘Babylon’. The climax of the fulfillment is found in Revelation 22:1–5, with the restoration of Eden and total overturning of the curse. It is hard to imagine a more fitting way for the biblical story to end!





About John’s use of apocalyptic imagery, you need to be aware of the following:

- (1) The apocalyptic imagery is primarily that *of fantasy*—a beast with seven heads and ten horns, a woman clothed with the sun...
- (2) John himself interprets the most important images (Christ 1:17–18; the church 1:20; Satan 12:9; Rome 17:9, 18), which give us our essential clues to the rest.
- (3) Some of his images are well known and fixed—a beast coming out of the sea represents a (usually evil) empire; an earthquake represents divine judgment—while others are fluid and are used to evoke feelings as well as mental pictures.
- (4) Visions are to be seen as wholes and not pressed regarding all of their details; that is, the details are part of the evocative nature of the imagery but the *whole* vision is what counts.

If you keep these various matters in mind as you read, you should be able not only to make your way through the Revelation but begin to appreciate some of its utter majesty.

(From Fee, G.D., Stuart D. How to Read the Bible Book by Book (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2002)

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<i>Revelation 4</i>		<i>1</i>
<u>The Throne at the Centre</u>		<i>Some Thoughts</i>
What shines from the Passage? 		
What questions does the passage raise? 		
What personal response can you see? 		
What are you prompted to pray about? 		

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Study 1: Revelation 4 The Throne at the Centre

Before You Start

What are your impressions of the visions in Revelation?

Why do you think God has seen fit to preserve them for us?

Listen Carefully to Revelation 4

The Big Picture

1. Note Chapter 1 of Revelation. Who is the 'central character'?
What is verse 3 telling us about the aim of the book?
2. Consider what you remember of the thrust of the letters to the 7 churches in chapters 2-3.
3. What do you think is the impression we are to get from Chapter 4?

The Basics

1. Where is chapter 4 set?

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2. What is at the centre of this vision?

3. What activity is taking place?

Connections

1. Look at 1:10. What does this voice now say (4:1)? Why is it significant that it is the same voice?

2. Re-read v2-3 and note Isaiah 6:1–5; Ezekiel 1:4–28; Daniel 7:9–14. What sort of place is God's throne room? What description of God do these passages give?





3. What impression do you get of this place?

Impact

1. What does this chapter say about our gatherings to worship God? Pray 4:8b and 11 as praise to our God.

2. Tim Chester - 'Revelation For You: *"When you turn on your television or go online, what do you see? What messages, priorities and values are being conveyed? In what ways do these conflict with the gospel of Jesus Christ?"* Discuss.

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<i>Revelation 5</i>		2
<u>Worthy is the Lamb</u>		<i>Some Thoughts</i>
What shines from the Passage? 		
What questions does the passage raise? 		
What personal response can you see? 		
What are you prompted to pray about? 		

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Study 2: Revelation 5 **“Worthy is the Lamb”**

Before You Start

What images or metaphors do you think of when you consider Jesus?

Listen Carefully to Revelation 5

The Big Picture

1. *“Chapter 4 is like the scenery of a stage. In chapter 5 the drama begins.”* (Tim Chester – ‘Revelation For You’) What is the reason for the drama?

2. Who provides the solution?

The Basics

1. How is the lamb described?

2. Why is the lamb ‘WORTHY’?

3. Note the words of praise directed to the Lamb? What do they tell us about him?

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Connections

1. Genesis 49:8-12 speaks of the 'Lion of Judah' (v5). What is said about him in Genesis and here?

Isaiah 11:1-10 speaks of 'the root of David'. How does Jesus fulfill both these prophecies?

2. What is the importance of the 'Lion' being a Lamb, indeed a slain Lamb?

3. What does this chapter add to the picture of Jesus we see as the wandering Rabbi (teacher) in Palestine?





Impact

1. Tim Chester – 'Revelation For You': *"But the emotional force of chapter 5 is that conquering through death is real victory."*

Consider or discuss.

2. Jesus is the only one worthy to open the seals of the scroll of history. Do we trust Jesus to handle the things in our life which we consider most private/precious?

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<i>Revelation 6</i>		3
“Hide Us”		<i>Some Thoughts</i>
What shines from the Passage? 		
What questions does the passage raise? 		
What personal response can you see? 		
What are you prompted to pray about? 		

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Study 3: Revelation 6 “Hide Us”

Before You Start

Consider what it means that God is a righteous Judge.

Listen Carefully to Revelation 6

The Big Picture

1. What is your overall impression after reading Revelation 6?
2. What role does Jesus (the Lamb) play in the events we see in this chapter?
3. What time frame is encompassed?

The Basics

1. What do the first four seals unleash?
2. What is the result of opening the 5th seal?
3. And the sixth seal?
4. Against whom is God’s wrath (v16-17) directed?

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Connections

1. Read Nahum 1:7-8? Where is it safe to hide? Note Revelation 6:17
2. Note Zechariah 1:8-17; Isaiah 34:4 and Joel 2:31 and the similarity of the images here to those in Revelation 6.

Impact

1. What does this chapter say to our comfortable church complacency?
2. What is to be our attitude when being Christian is difficult and wearying?
3. Jude 23 tells us to 'save other by snatching them from the fire'. What from Revelation chapter 6 should motivate us to tell others about Jesus?

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<i>Revelation 7</i>		4
<u>"A Great Multitude"</u>		<i>Some Thoughts</i>
What shines from the Passage? 		
What questions does the passage raise? 		
What personal response can you see? 		
What are you prompted to pray about? 		

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Study 4: Revelation 7 “A Great Multitude”

Before You Start

Who can be saved? – Consider and discuss

Listen Carefully to Revelation 7





The Big Picture

1. In broad strokes, what is happening here?
2. To whom do all these people belong (v4-9)? How is this signified?
3. What are all these people doing?

The Basics

1. Why are the four angels restrained?
2. Why 144,000? How many altogether? What 'sorts'?
3. Why white robes?
4. What is 7:15-17 promising/foreshadowing?

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<i>Revelation 8:1-5</i>		5
<u>The Seventh Seal</u>		<i>Some Thoughts</i>
What shines from the Passage? 		
What questions does the passage raise? 		
What personal response can you see? 		
What are you prompted to pray about? 		

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Study 5: Revelation 8:1-5

“The Seventh Seal”

Before You Start

How do you pray about the rampant injustice and cruelty in our world?

Listen Carefully to Revelation 8:1-5

The Big Picture

1. How does this chapter open?
2. How is this chapter related to Chapters 6 and 7?
3. What are we left waiting for at the end of verse 5?

The Basics

1. Who is the ‘He’ who opens the 7th seal?
2. What are the various angels in these verses doing?
3. What happens with the prayers of God’s people?

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Connections

1. Read Isaiah 23:2; 41:1; Habakkuk 2:20; Zechariah 2:13 and Romans 3:19. What is the importance of silence in these passages?

2. It is confronting, but where do the judgments hurled on the earth in v5 come from?





Impact

1. How can we as Christians pray well about the injustice, cruelty and inequality in our world knowing that the answer may involve God's judgement on some people?

2. What does this chapter say about the efficacy of your prayers?

3. Jude 23 tells us to 'save others by snatching them from the fire'. What from Revelation 8:1-5 should motivate us to tell others about Jesus?

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<i>Revelation 8:6-9:21</i>		6
One Third		<i>Some Thoughts</i>
What shines from the Passage? 		
What questions does the passage raise? 		
What personal response can you see? 		
What are you prompted to pray about? 		

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Study 6: Revelation 8:6-9:21

“One Third”

Before You Start

How do you see the place of our Church in the world around it?

Listen Carefully to Revelation 8:6-9:21

The Big Picture

1. What is the overall impression these verses give?
2. What is the significance of the ‘one third’? What positive (?) is there in this?
3. Note 9:20-21. What is the attitude of mankind, in general, to these disasters?

The Basics

1. What disasters are brought upon the earth after each of the first four trumpets?
2. Why do trumpets 5 and 6 deserve the ‘woe, woe, woe’ of 8:13?
3. To whom do you think 9:11 is referring?

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Connections

1. Mt. Vesuvius erupted about 20 years before this was written, burying Pompeii. What possible allusions can you see to this event in these verses?
2. Note the references to locusts in Exodus 10 especially v13-17 and Joel 2:1-11. Can you think of any other Old Testament connections in these verses?

Impact

1. Tim Chester – ‘Revelation For You’: *“Do you find it hard to read Revelation chapters 6 – 9 as a description of history? If so, do you agree that this is because our lives are unusually comfortable?”*
2. Given the scope of God’s judgement, what do we as a church or as individuals need to repent of?
3. *“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”*
(C.S. Lewis: The Problem of Pain.) Discuss

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<i>Revelation 10</i>		7
Sweet or Sour		<i>Some Thoughts</i>
What shines from the Passage? 		
What questions does the passage raise? 		
What personal response can you see? 		
What are you prompted to pray about? 		

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Study 7: Revelation 10 Sweet or Sour?

Before You Start

How has Revelation affected you so far?

Listen Carefully to Revelation 10

The Big Picture

1. What are we waiting for? And, what is happening here?
2. This is an interlude like the one in chapter 7. What is it meant to convey to the reader?

The Basics

1. What sort of impression does the description of the 'mighty angel' give you?
2. Note v7 and 11. What is the task hinted at here? Who is to do it?
3. What is the 'little scroll'? Who holds it? And, what is to be done with it?

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Connections

1. How is the 'mighty angel' described? Note Exodus 19:9; Genesis 9:16; Exodus 13:21-22.
2. Read Ezekiel 2:9-3:9. How is Ezekiel's meal like John's?
3. What does the description of the scroll that John eats as sweet and sour convey?
4. Any thoughts as to why the message of the seven thunders is sealed up?

Impact

1. In what ways have you experienced the gospel as both 'sweet' and sour'?
2. Tim Chester – 'Revelation For You': John's *"message to Christians is not that we should endure, if by that we mean avoiding trouble by keeping our heads down. His message is to proclaim the gospel to nations, to peoples, to kings."* Discuss.

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<i>Revelation 11:1-15</i>		8
<u>Two Witnesses</u>		<i>Some Thoughts</i>
What shines from the Passage? 		
What questions does the passage raise? 		
What personal response can you see? 		
What are you prompted to pray about? 		

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Study 8: Revelation 11:1-15

Two Witnesses

Before You Start

How is the witness of the church going in our world today?

Listen Carefully to Revelation 11:1-15

The Big Picture

1. What are we still waiting for?

2. What is the broad message about witness in this chapter?

The Basics

1. What is John told to do at the opening of the chapter?

2. How are the two witnesses described? What is their story as told in these verses? Who do you think they are?

3. Verses 14 and 15 speak of two different things to come. What are they?

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Connections

1. In what city are the two witnesses' bodies displayed? Why is this significant
2. What is the contrast between 11:13 and 9:20-21? What makes the difference?
3. When the seventh trumpet sounds (v15) what is the response?

Impact

1. Tim Chester – 'Revelation For You': *"So the question we should ask ourselves is: Where do we see the two witnesses today? Where do we see God's people faithfully witnessing in the face of hostility?"*
Discuss

2. Tim Chester – 'Revelation For You': *"Revelation 5:9-10 is key not just to these chapters but to John's whole vision:*

*"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased for God
persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.
You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our
God, and they will reign on the earth."*

Discuss.

REVELATION 4-11

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