

The Days
of the
Seventh
Angel

Book 2: The Seven Seals

Study Notes
on the

Book of Revelation

by

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Milo Edition

Volume 2 (of seven volumes)

The Seven Seals

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The reason for the use of an older version is two-fold: The first reason for the author, at least; is lifetime familiarity. The second is that the *King James Version* is very “literal,” and therefore seems to honor more consistently than some, word uniqueness, something especially important in the study of the *Apocalypse*.

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Table of Contents

<i>Introduction.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Time-Calibrated Fulfillment of Prophecy.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>The Rainbow</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>The Four Living Creatures.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>The Sealed Book.....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>The Government of Heaven.....</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>The Twenty-Four Elders</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Revelation 4 & 5 a Judgment Scene.....</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>The Breaking of the Seals.....</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>The Eschatological (End-time) Fulfillment of the Seven Seals.....</i>	<i>77</i>
<i>The Sealing.....</i>	<i>87</i>
<i>Who Are the 144,000?.....</i>	<i>93</i>
<i>The Identity of the 144,000.....</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>The "Jew First" Principle</i>	<i>114</i>
<i>The Order of the Tribes in Revelation 7</i>	<i>118</i>
<i>The Omission of Dan from the 12 Tribes.....</i>	<i>126</i>
<i>More About the Seventh Seal</i>	<i>133</i>
<i>Trumpets/Plagues Immediately Follow The Sealing.....</i>	<i>141</i>
<i>The Altar Before the Lord</i>	<i>143</i>
<i>The Storm Scenes and Their Meaning</i>	<i>145</i>
<i>General Outline of Eschatology as it Relates to the Seven Seals ..</i>	<i>153</i>
<i>Appendix—Dual Application of Prophecy.....</i>	<i>154</i>
<i>Study Guide—Volume 2</i>	<i>157</i>

Introduction

This is the second volume of a series of studies on the book of Revelation. If the reader is unacquainted with the first book a few recommendations are necessary from the author's perspective before one enters into this study. It is the hope of the author, of course, that any reader will start with the first volume, inasmuch as it contains the keys and interpretational tools that are used in the subsequent studies. Order in studying the Revelation is very important. But if this specified order cannot be observed I would like to offer a few comments.

First is that this is not a professional work, nor does it pretend to be. Human error will often find its way into this document. For these I indulge the reader's patience as the editing procedure continues.

Second, this is not intended to be a commentary on every verse or topic in the book of Revelation. The purpose of this writing as stated at the outset is different than this. The focus of these pages is not to be a comprehensive commentary, in that many others have done a more exhaustive and better job of that already. The aim is to concentrate on troublesome passages or concepts that in the author's opinion are overlooked by other commentators or that are missed by many students of the book.

Third, this book is not written with the general public in mind. Anyone is more than welcome to examine the following pages, but this work is written primarily to Seventh-day Adventist Christians who I believe need to have a better self-understanding of the awesome messages to found in the last-day book of Revelation.

Reading the following pages presupposes also an understanding of the principles of proper prophetic interpretation (hermeneutics) covered in the

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

original book. The reader is encouraged to refer to them. However, for the sake of review, and for the sake of introduction to the new reader, these are briefly re-iterated in the next few paragraphs. These, I believe are so important that Revelation as a prophetic book cannot be understood at all without them.

The “ten commandments” of interpretation are as follows. “Thou shalt not interpret without them!”

1. The Direct Use of symbols

Revelation is a book of symbols. Symbols are code words for realities and not generalities. There are several important rules on how to directly apply symbols. These must be honored, or else the *Apocalypse* becomes relatively meaningless, and it won’t be properly understood.

2. The Recognition of Patterns and Cycles

Noting the cyclical patterns, the orderly arrangements of certain passages is essential to finding the right mode of interpretation.

3. The Law of Heavenly Counterparts

This rule applies to several passages in prophecy. In certain passages understanding is enhanced when realizing that for every earthly reality there is found a corresponding heavenly reality. For example; there appear angels in heaven, as well as “angels” on earth.

4. The Use of Synonymic Parallels

These thematic devices appears everywhere in the Revelation. They are word-sisters or parallel ideas that form a pattern throughout the book. Recognizing them or locating them can significantly shift or elucidate the understanding of certain passages. A significant listing of these appears in the later volumes (4 and 7).

Introduction

5. The Control of Prophetic Testimony

This concept provides that responsible interpretation is to a degree controlled by the later testimony of other prophets. It does not ignore prophetic guidance as some seek to suggest. This concept teaches that a later prophet is often given keys to certain locked passages by God's design. It is foolish to take a position that is not in harmony with the prophetic testimony to the church.

6. The Recognition of Biblical Sources

This is the principle that one passage of Scripture is interpreted by another, and first and foremost by those passages in the same and immediate context. The book of Revelation is a mosaic of Old Testament thoughts and ideas, and the book simply cannot be understood without reference to the Old (and New) Testament Scriptures and the Hebrew thought-lines there contained.

7. The Rule of Context

The recognition of this rule and other related grammatical and syntactical rules is critical and the student of prophecy cannot operate without them.

8. The Law of Enlarged Fulfillment

This rule recognizes that in the New Testament-- names, places, and concepts are enlarged from local and ordinary, to universal and worldwide. Therefore "Jews" are not literal Jews; and the "Euphrates" is more than a particular river in the Middle East.

9. The Moral Purpose of Prophecy

This law of interpretation demands that prophecy is written for the purpose of informing the Christian believer. It is intended to help the Christian understand the times in which he lives in the context of religion and not secularism. This idea rules out certain figures such as "Hitler" or "Stalin"

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

as direct fulfillments of a prophecy, *except* when their actions, for instance, would directly impact religious history or would intersect with the specified religious purpose of prophecy.

10. The Law of Greater Fulfillments

This is the law that prophecy in certain cases may have more than one particular fulfillment. This concept is addressed more completely in this volume.

There will be found in this volume many things that may be “new” to the student of prophecy. This writer does not expect that everyone will agree with some of the thoughts expressed. He does ask that the reader examine these things carefully and prayerfully, however, and not reject something because it is “new,” or because it is different than what he was once taught. Rather, if the idea is rejected, let it be because there are good biblical reasons for doing so.

The aim of this study is not to cause controversy, but to arouse the sleeping saints to the awesome words of revelation given to us as a people. The days of the voice of the seventh angel are upon us-- even now. Let us revive our souls in the pages of the great book of Revelation. Let us take to heart its messages. Let us warn others of the things soon to come before it's too late; before the Great Censor of Grace crashes to this earth, never to be used again.

The Reduplication of History And Prophecy

"Produce your cause, saith the Lord, bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and show us ***what shall happen***: let them show ***the former things***, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or **declare us *things for to come***." Isa. 41:22

"The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us." Eccl. 1: 5-10

(NEB "What has happened **will happen again**, and what has been done **will be done again**.")

"That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past." Eccl. 3:15 (NEB "Whatever has been already, and whatever is to come has been already, and **God summons each event back in turn**.")

"For **whatsoever things were written aforetime** were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Rom. 15:4

"But there **were** false prophets also among the people, **even as there shall be** false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." 2Pet. 2:1

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

"Now all these things happened unto them **for ensamples**: and they are written **for our admonition**, upon whom the ends of the world are come."
1Cor. 10:11

Time-Calibrated Fulfillment of Prophecy

If any subject is pivotal to the understanding of Revelation's prophecies it is certainly the subject of interpretational approaches. The knowledge of how to interpret prophetic works must be carefully weighed and investigated by each expositor. Most important, the subject must be prayerfully considered and the mind must stay open.

It is felt that before understanding the section before us, The Seven Seals, it is necessary to make the commentary that follows. Such background is quite essential in establishing any convincing conclusions.

Briefly there are four basic approaches to prophecy, plus a few other variations or combinations. Most writers and teachers have zealously and sincerely walled themselves into one of them. Like any personality type, however, each can have its good traits, and each can have equally bad traits. The four basic ones are mentioned in a very skeletal way here:

Preterist: This view finds the fulfillment or understanding of a prophetic work in the present experience of the original writer. This view essentially denies the possibility of future knowledge or the ability to foretell. It denies the "prophetic" gift. This naturally is a favorite among secular interpreters. The downside is that it fails to recognize the accurate fulfillment in modern times to prophecies made centuries ago by inspired writers. No believing Christian, who understands God's ability to know the future can subscribe to this view alone.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Historical: Historicists insist that prophecy is to be understood in the religious and secular events of history. Prophecy often details what actually takes place in the events on earth and through time in earthly and heavenly occurrences. Once an event is considered to have occurred as described, the writings pertaining to this event are considered to have been fulfilled. Usually this would mean that such prophecy has only one fulfillment.

In the historical school there are "recapitulationists" and "straight-line" interpreters. Recapitulationists notice repeated cycles within the given work of events beginning at the time of the prophet's writing and going down to the very end of time. The straight-line interpreter usually finds a historical continuity from the beginning of the book or prophecy down to the end of the prophecy, making the prophetic description one complete chronological unit.

Futurist: This view limits the fulfillment of prophecy to the very final days of this earth's history and in essence teaches that many events have not yet transpired. This view is very popular in modern times and though it is mistakenly believed to be the sole product of the Catholic counter-reformation, and it has certainly been useful to those opposed to the traditional historical interpretations that clearly identify the Papacy. These students of prophecy wish to remove such designations and refer the audacious claims of the beast and the antichrist to the more irrelevant future. Other popular futurist views come in the teachings of Christian *Dispensationalism*. More technically this prophetic scheme is what is usually meant by "futurism."

Spiritual: This view, popular in the last century and still having active proponents sees prophecy chiefly according to its spiritual impact. Such students of prophecy do not wish to see particular historical events chronicled in history, past or present. The spiritualist would rather look for parabolic lessons and truths and not concentrate on pinpointing earthly events in history.

Time-Calibrated Fulfillment of Prophecy

Other variant views of prophetic interpretation exist beyond these, or the above views are sometimes expressed under different nomenclature. There are even views that accommodate or combine certain factors taken from the principle interpretive modes outlined above.

Which view one takes obviously makes a world of difference as to how one understands the book. The preterist misses the greater part of the purpose of prophecy by denying God's work in history. On the other hand, the futurist may be relegating to the future the very purpose for which the prophecy might have been written, to recognize and identify in his or her day the dangers and warnings that affect his or her existence. As has been seen in former times and especially as one might note in the days of Jesus, this view can be very dangerous. For believing whether the real Messiah has come, or conversely that the Messiah is yet to come naturally divides such great streams of religion as Christianity and Judaism. The "spiritualist" may seem like a safe position, but in reality it becomes easy to "spiritualize" and to reduce momentous truths to such general ambiguity that no one sits up and takes notice of the stupendously important warnings regarding real events and God-given signs and portents. Even the historicist easily roams onto dangerous ground, for he can become so engaged in historical events that the Spirit of the Prophets makes no spiritual impression. In addition, the historicist easily ends up making ridiculous applications or leaving his hearers confused as to the "real" fulfillment. History is so full of events that one can make a case that the beast is most anyone; Nero, Hitler, or most anyone else!

First, when considering which road to take, one must consider the broad purposes of God in giving a prophecy. Such comprehensive reason and purpose must be seen in the incarnation and the cross of Christ. Did Christ come to earth to save man, or did he come to defeat Satan? Or did he come to show the character of the Father to earthlings, or to demonstrate the justice of God to the universe? Did he come to pay the penalty for sin or to give such a great demonstration of love that he would draw all men unto him? To take just one theory of the atonement and reject the others leaves the Christian in a hard place, for in certain ways all may be true.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

In the same way many make the mistake of boxing themselves into one interpretational "school" or another. In this respect great errors result for any exclusive position. No school should have absolute dominance for the full purpose of prophecy to be realized. At the same time we must recognize that all schemes of prophecy in all of their variations cannot live in the same house and many are ill founded or are mutually exclusive. What is essential is to find the perfect blend of all of the elements of prophecy that are homogenous and meaningful. I believe this is possible for the sincere student who hears and keeps the things that are thus written within the revelatory word of God.

For instance, one can be a *preterist* in the sense that he recognizes that the entire prophecy of Revelation had some relevance to the first century Christian. At the same time he can believe that it has relevance to the reader today who recognizes events leading to this hour in history. Yet to stop here would not be enough. For the purpose of the prophecy is also for exhortation, and to fail to apply the lessons of the churches, for instance, to the present personal experience of the Christian would be a terrible loss. Even beyond this, a student who believes in the inspiration of the prophecy of Revelation, has to recognize that some events described are yet future, and in fact as we hope to demonstrate, in a qualified sense, that the present student of Revelation must be to a degree, even a "futurist."

The purpose of the prophecy of Revelation as is stated in the book itself is well-stated and interesting as well, for it carefully designates that such a balance is demanded for a proper understanding of the book:

"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." (Rev. 1:19)

This statement of purpose is clearly stated to include *preterism*, for it states that the things which John has seen includes the present, the things which are. In the very first verse of the book it says that things were shown to John which must "shortly come to pass." "The time is at hand." (1:3) This is undeniable preterism.

Time-Calibrated Fulfillment of Prophecy

Yet the events of history are also clearly the focus for it says that he must write also even the things which shall be hereafter. This is undeniable prophetic historicism and claims unequivocally that God through his prophets can foretell the future.

However, at the same time is inferred the fact that the prophecy has two dimensions; the present and the future. One might say that this does not mean two applications. Very well. But this is not precluded in the statement. The statement as given can include that all the things written in the prophecy are applicable to the reader in every age, both as to the present and as to the future.

The purpose of the Revelation is also spiritual, for a blessing is pronounced upon those who "hear" (*akouō*; heed; understand; more than auditory) and "keep those things which are written therein." (1:3) Ultimately the divine purpose for any inspired utterance is to inform and to transform the reader. The entire book is meat for such a purpose.

Multiple Fulfillment?

For hundreds of years prophetic students have noticed the principle of dual-fulfillment, or sometimes multiple fulfillments of prophecy. One term now used in some circles is the so called "apotelesmatic¹ principle" which means nothing to those previously unacquainted with the designation. Basically the word, apotelesmatic comes from the Greek roots "apo," meaning from, and "telesmatic," denoting afar or the end. The idea is that there can be a perspective view of prophecy that finds fulfillments both early and at the end.

¹ "Apotelesmatic" is described by George McCready Price as the "accomplishment of a prophecy, by which is meant that a partial or preliminary fulfillment may take place in one age, then long afterward a much more complete fulfillment." Louis F. Were, *The Certainty of the Third Angel's Message* (First Impressions, PO Box 300, Berrien Springs, MI, 1979, by Hans K. LaRondelle).

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

What is to be recognized, however, is that the possibility exists that *prophecy may have a valid historical fulfillment and at the same time foresee another valid and usually more forceful or definite fulfillment in the future*. This means that there would be a "historical" fulfillment and also an "eschatological" fulfillment.

For instance we appeal to the control of prophetic testimony in regard to the messages to the seven churches:

*"The names of the seven churches are symbolic of the church in different periods of the Christian era. The number seven indicates completeness, and is symbolic of the fact that the messages extend to the end of time, while the symbols used reveal the condition of the church at different periods in the history of the world."*²

Now it is obviously clear to anyone noting the first three chapters of the book of Revelation that the seven churches, real churches existing in the first century, are addressed in their present day condition. Yet, just as clear, we note from the above statement that these churches are given prophetic/historical significance as well. This is a well-known example of dual application. In addition it would be easy to demonstrate that there is a spiritual application made of these messages hundreds if not thousands of times by the same writer to the church now living on the earth. All of these are considered valid applications in their own spheres. But does it go beyond this?

Unbelievably, some of the same interpreters who accept the above scheme, (probably, in part, because there *is* clear prophetic testimony to back it up; and to not accept would show them disapproving of the prophetic writer) reverse their position when another page is turned and the rest of the book of Revelation is considered. These same expositors (we cannot call them consistent) become ardent and exclusive historicists, saying that a dual application of prophecy is valid only in rare and certain incidents that have

² E.G.White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), p. 585.

Time-Calibrated Fulfillment of Prophecy

the necessary "markers." These markers are either seldom if ever identified, or if they are, found too weak to be convincing. But to know what these so-called "markers" are is paramount in importance.

Other "special" prophecies are known to have dual applications because the apostles gave them such and one dare not go against the apostles. But where, one might ask are the "markers" in these prophecies? Where are the markers in Isaiah 53, written of "my servant Jacob" yet known to all as describing the suffering Christ? (Acts 8:26-40). Where are the markers in Jonah that describe the descent of Christ into the grave? Where are the markers in Psalm 22 that describe almost perfectly the events of the cross of Christ? There are **no** such markers in many of these texts yet these passages were clearly considered prophetic and answering with a fulfillment in the first advent of Christ.

What is needed one perhaps will find is not whether or not prophecy has multiple applications but **HOW** and under what circumstances are applications to be made.

But first let us investigate more examples; particularly now, by references made by modern prophetic testimony. First, concerning applications of the Old Testament made by Peter under the ministration of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, using the prophecy of *Joel* we find:

“In immediate connection with the scenes of the great day of God, the Lord by the prophet Joel has promised a special manifestation of His Spirit. Joel 2:28. This prophecy received a **partial fulfillment** in the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost; but it will reach its **full accomplishment** in the manifestation of divine grace which will attend the closing work of the gospel.” E.G. White, *The Great Controversy*, ix. #3

And again concerning a different passage:

Joel 2:28, 29 (Acts 2:17, 18). A More Evident Fulfillment. "If this prophecy of Joel met a **partial fulfillment** in the days of the

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

apostles, we are living in a time when it is to be **even more evidently manifest** to the people of God. He will so bestow His Spirit upon His people that they will become a light amid the moral darkness; and great light will be reflected in all parts of the world. O that our faith might be increased, that the Lord might work mightily with His people." (MS 49, 1908). 4BC³ 1175 (cf. AA 41 also)

"The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The **prophecies which were fulfilled** in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel, **are again to be fulfilled** in the latter rain at its close." *The Great Controversy*, p. 611, 612.

In this case the Holy Spirit itself authorizes a dual application of a certain prophecies. Two things are evident:

1. **This particular prophecy in God's design has a dual fulfillment.**
2. **The second application is the more complete of the two.**

This principle is not isolated to the above case. The writer Ellen White observed also the following in considering the eschatological material found in Matthew 24:

"Christ upon the Mount of Olives rehearsed the fearful judgments that were to precede His second coming: "Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: . . . Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows." (Matthew 24:6-8).

While these prophecies received a partial fulfillment at the destruction of Jerusalem, they have a **more direct application** in the last days." Undated MS. 84, (*Christ our Helper in the Great Crises*, p. 1-10).

³ *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, F.D. Nichol, editor (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1957)

Time-Calibrated Fulfillment of Prophecy

“The Savior's prophecy concerning the visitation of judgments upon Jerusalem is to have **another fulfillment**, of which that terrible desolation was but a faint shadow. In the fate of the chosen city we may behold the doom of a world that has rejected God's mercy. . . **Let men beware lest the neglect the lesson conveyed to them in the words of Christ.** As He warned His disciples of **Jerusalem's destruction**, giving them a sign of the approaching ruin, that they might make their escape; so He has warned the world of the day of **final destruction** and has given them tokens of its approach, that all who will may flee from the wrath to come.” *The Great Controversy*, pp. 36,37.

“Christ's words had been spoken in the hearing of a large number of (This chapter is based on Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21-5-38.) people; but when He was alone, Peter, John, James, and Andrew came to Him as He sat upon the Mount of Olives. “Tell us,” they said, “when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Jesus did not answer His disciples by taking up separately the destruction of Jerusalem and the great day of His coming. **He mingled the description of these two events.** Had He opened to His disciples future events as He beheld them, they would have been unable to endure the sight. In mercy to them **He blended the description of the two great crises**, leaving the disciples to study out the meaning for themselves. When He referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, **His prophetic words reached beyond that event** to the final conflagration in that day when the Lord shall rise out of His place to punish the world for their iniquity, when the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain. **This entire discourse was given, not for the disciples only, but for those who should live in the last scenes of this earth's history.**” *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 627, 628.

Therefore we see that in certain instances in which there is later prophetic insight given there is a dual application authorized by the Lord himself. It must also be noted that it is more than an “application,” but even the word “fulfillment” is used, and in most cases the second application of the prophecy is the more direct of the two.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

The objection naturally asserts itself here, however. Is the dual application principle limited to the above few and other isolated instances or does the principle have a greater and broader usage?

It has been noted by various church commissions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (S.D.A.'s being primarily the focus of this writing) that Seventh-day Adventists have typically and traditionally been from their founding days "historicists" when it comes to interpreting prophecy. This is vital to Seventh-day Adventist self-understanding and vital to purpose and message of Seventh-day Adventism. "Long live the historical application of prophecy!" Without it there would have been no 1844 Midnight Cry, William Miller movement, etc. Without it the church would perhaps have little relevance today.

But we need to ask the reasons for scuttling the prophetic tool of dual application, in this case as it relates to the seals, trumpets, and other parts of Revelation. And, incidentally, also ask whether the fact that Adventists have historically been "historicists" is really the best reason for remaining so. If it is, then probably we should all belong to the Flat Earth Society because some of our forebears, for ages of history, thought the world was flat.

Following are given in brief the results of the *Sanctuary Review Committee* of Glacier View and particularly the more recent determinations of the Daniel and Revelation Committee (DARCOM) and the Biblical Research Institute (BRI) of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. These are quoted in part:

"The committee agrees that:

1. The literary structure divides the book of Revelation into two major sections: (1) a historical section (Rev. 1-14) that emphasizes the experience of the church and related events during the Christian Era, and (2) an eschatological (end-time) section (Rev. 15-22) that focuses particularly on end-time events and the end of the world.

Time-Calibrated Fulfillment of Prophecy

2. The series of the seals and of the trumpets occur in the historical section of Revelation. Consequently their fulfillment should be sought for in historical time, the Christian Era.

3. The prophecies of the seals and of the trumpets have only one prophetic fulfillment. . . .

a. (e.g., *Daniel, examples, etc.*). . . .

Dual/ multiple fulfillments of Daniel and Revelation fail to find support in Ellen White.

b. Dual fulfillment may be present in some general/classic prophecies in which there are contextual markers indicating such--.....Joel 2, the virgin birth, Isaiah 7. But no such markers are present in the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. . . .” (then follows a note about how making a last day interpretation of the trumpets is superfluous and unnecessary because of the later description of the plagues)⁴

Unfortunate indeed! But these sweeping conclusions in nearly every case when closely investigated will be found to be somewhat false! With no intention to push barbs or cast aspersions, or to be so bold and opinionated as to sound audacious, it must be said that the above determinations simply **cannot be true** coming from the groundwork and hermeneutics we have forwarded so far.

This issue requires a book in itself, but the humble writer of these words appeals to be indulged of the reader in this written work to be given opportunity to show that in almost every significant series in the book of *Revelation*, that the above "general principles" are not only in error but are dangerous, in that they may be cause for some to cast aside certain warnings and light given us through the Holy Spirit. Let the reader understand!

⁴ W. Richard Leshner and Frank B. Holbrook, "Issues in the Book of Revelation" (*Adventist Review*, Aug. 3, 1989) pp. 13-15.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Following are but a few comments relative to the above points offered by the committee:

1. First, the conclusion that the Revelation has a structural or literary division at its mid-point between historical and eschatological, is arbitrary and can certainly and in certain ways be forcefully argued against. It is true that there is a general movement in the book from the primarily historical sections, such as the present day churches of Revelation's writer at the first of the book to the grand sweeping climax of the eschatological restoration of all things at the end of the book. But to arbitrarily make the division in chapter 14, or even elsewhere, simply begs for better internal support. Chiasm fanatics may be forcing an artificial imposition of such a division. (See the discussion re: Synonymic Parallels vs. chiasmus in Vol. 1; "The General Organization of the Book").

There are many examples I hope to demonstrate, (more than commonly realized) of eschatological events and overtones in the so-called "historical" sections. A whole chapter is given to the "sealing" (chapter 7), for instance, *near the front of the book*. Conversely, one can even perhaps find historical understandings of passages as far toward the end of the book as Revelation 17, 18. The view for centuries was that the plagues were historical and this was accepted by many famous historicists. James White was among the first of Seventh-day Adventists, for instance, to suggest the seven last plagues were actually eschatological or last-day events. (See L. E. Froom, *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*). But more on this later.

2. The Seals and the Trumpets are in the "historical" section therefore are only historical. This conclusion, of course, comes as a result of the above premise or assumption. This is a categorical error. (One mistake usually gives rise to another)

3. The consequent conclusion that the seals and the trumpets have **only one** prophetic fulfillment and the inference by some on the committee that any praying Bible scholar who does not honor this binding hermeneutic is

Time-Calibrated Fulfillment of Prophecy

a "hobbyist" (see *Adventist Review*, Aug. 3, 1989, p.13) we object to. This will be addressed shortly in greater detail.

a. In addition, the conclusion that multiple fulfillments fail to find support in Ellen G. White is a statement bordering on absurdity. The more correct statement is that the committee fails to find support in Ellen White as a result of **their own conclusions** concerning her statements, and perhaps concerning her inspiration, even to the attempt to dismiss one statement by making reference to the fact that she may not have meant what she said because she was feeling tired and overworked when she wrote it.⁵

Usually, however, there is a degree of respect. But the truth, it seems, is sometimes washed away by relegating certain statements to the "homiletic" category, or to spiritual generalities and counsel. Though Ellen White has a broad use of Scripture from general spiritual counsel to specific doctrinal definition, it is unwise and unfair to dismiss statements meant to give specific prophetic light as general and ambiguous statements from which we can draw no interpretive guidance. To so dismiss certain statements in this way is in direct violation of the control of prophetic testimony, as defended in this book.

b. The tokenism in granting that some dual fulfillments are recognized in certain "general" or "classic" prophecies results in inconsistency, at least as expressed by the committee. (Why is one prophecy considered general or classic?) The idea that never in *Daniel* and *Revelation* or in apocalyptic prophecies is the principle to found is we suggest too narrow by the extreme. If any prophecies are "classic," *Daniel* and *Revelation* would have to head the list.

For instance, the committee would agree that Matthew 24 is one of these "classic" prophecies. It would be an overt disputing of the above quotes

⁵*Symposium on Revelation*, Book 1, Frank B. Holbrook, editor, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series (Silver Spring, Maryland: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), Appendix A, p. 369.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

supplied by Ellen White if they say it does not have such a dual fulfillment. However, these same committee members show in detail how the *Seals* are nearly a mirror of the order and signs given in the Olivet Discourse. If this is the case, and so it is, why can't the meaning of the Olivet sermon be transferred to its new setting? As the committee would have it the Sermon on the Mount means one thing, and the Seals that parallel it means another!

A simple syllogism would demonstrate that if one twin looks exactly like the other twin they must be twins! But the committee for fear of giving prophecy a "wax nose" prefer a "hard nose" and refuse to give the twins any real fraternity.

To return the case at hand, using the seals as fodder, let us note the following statements. Let it also be noted that Ellen White did not make numerous statements that would authorize wholesale multiple applications, but the careful and believing student will find that she does make some important observations on this subject. In considering the entire testimony she does make in books such as the Early Writings, The Story of Redemption, The Testimonies, The Great Controversy, and several other places, the student of prophecy will be able to recognize these. With a little effort the student will be able to responsibly fit into the prophetic scheme many statements and events which describe eschatological events **AND AT THE SAME TIME** substantiate and corroborate the generally correct understandings of the traditional historical fulfillments.

Statements Regarding the Seals

9T p. 267 (References are abbreviated for convenience)

“The fifth chapter of Revelation needs to be closely studied. It is of great **importance to those who shall act a part in the work of God for these last days**. There are some who are deceived. They do not realize what is coming on the earth. Those who have permitted their minds to become beclouded in regard to what constitutes sin are fearfully deceived. Unless they make a decided change they will be found wanting **when God**

Time-Calibrated Fulfillment of Prophecy

pronounces judgment upon the children of men. They have transgressed the law and broken the everlasting covenant, and they will receive according to their works.”

It appears from the above that there is complete liberty for the reader to gather that the fifth chapter of Revelation has material which Ellen White felt applied as well to the last days and which in particular applied to the time of the investigative judgment. Though this one statement alone would not suffice perhaps, it certainly would be wrong to do as does J. Paulien,⁶ to cast doubt upon its true eschatological significance, because it is just as fair to see it as valid applying to the present as it is to relegate it only to the past.

S.D.A. Bible Commentary, Vol. 7, p. 968, #5:

Opening of the Fifth Seal

“When the fifth seal was opened, John the Revelator in vision saw beneath the altar the company that were slain for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. **After this came the scenes described in the eighteenth of Revelation,** when those who are faithful and true are called out from Babylon.” [Rev. 18: 15 quoted] (MS 39, 1906). (Also quoted in *Maranatha*, Chapter title: “Martyrs in the Last Days,” p. 199.)

Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 116

*“We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Many of the prophecies are about to be fulfilled in quick succession. Every element of power is about to be set to work. Past **history will be repeated**; old controversies will arouse to new life, and peril will beset God's people on every side. Intensity is taking hold of the human family. It is permeating everything upon the earth. . . .*

Study Revelation in connection with Daniel, for history will be repeated. . . . We, with all our religious advantages, ought to know far more today than we do know.”

⁶ Cf. DARCOM, vol. 1, pp. 146-172.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

NOTE: PLEASE DO NOT MISS THE FACT THAT THE IDEA OF REPEATING HISTORY, WHICH REALLY CAN HAVE NO LOGICAL OUTCOME DIFFERENT THAN A SECOND APPLICATION, IS PARTICULARLY ASSOCIATED IN THIS PLACE TO THE STUDY OF THE APOCALYPTIC BOOKS OF DANIEL AND REVELATION!

The statement is made by some that it is history that is repeated and not prophecy that is repeated. Such should take a course in logic. If a later historical event re-iterates or echoes the original AND IN MOST CASES THE SECOND IS A MORE DIRECT EQUATION TO THE ORIGINAL PROPHECY who is to say which is the fulfillment and which is the merely history repeating itself? As the saying goes, "if the shoe fits, wear it." Historicists, of all people ought to understand the nature of history and the nature of the interplay of the influences of good and evil in the great conflict; that the former events are types of the latter ones and will happen AGAIN. But as Winston Churchill supposedly once said, "The only thing I learned from history is that people do not learn from history." Let it not be said of the astute student of Bible prophecy; that he has not learned from history.

Much more can be said⁷ about this and will be said about this as the book is investigated according to principle of larger fulfillments, keeping in solid perspective the true and genuine establishments of historical reckoning. We are in no way undermining or discarding these valid fulfillments. Just the opposite. It is certain that defining rules will have to be exposed to keep unwarranted conclusions from being adopted. This problem has plagued historicism as much as futurism. But let the student of prophecy keep both of their eyes open.

⁷ For Further Study note also the following quotes which Paulien and the DARCOM committee are fully aware of, but who dismiss as clearly intimating any particular last-day application: Letter 79, 1900-- Ellen White "weary from overwork and sleeplessness" (DARCOM, p. 369); and the significant "unrolling of the scroll," (several statements; yet future) 6T 17. (DARCOM, p. 370).

Time-Calibrated Fulfillment of Prophecy

However, much more should also be said about the runaway conclusions of those who get "caught up" with the principle of larger fulfillments. But this abuse has only caused the "baby to be thrown out with the bath water." Using *Inspiration* as our guide, let the reader at least entertain the idea of further fulfillments with an open mind and not stumble at this point before all the data is in. For in time, as the study progresses from prophetic series to prophetic series some things hopefully will make more complete sense. In no real sense should or will the sacred beacon of historical prophecy and the pillars of Advent truth be harmed or destroyed.

Further Quotes:

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 294:

"Thus the Jewish leaders made their choice. Their decision was registered in the book which John saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the book which no man could open. In all its vindictiveness this decision will appear before them in the day when this book is unsealed by the Lion of the tribe of Judah."

Testimonies for the Church Volume Six, p. 17:

"The light we have received upon the third angel's message is the true light. The mark of the beast is exactly what it has been proclaimed to be. Not all in regard to this matter is yet understood, nor will it be understood until the unrolling of the scroll; but a most solemn work is to be accomplished in our world. The Lord's command to His servants is: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1.

S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 7, p. 967:

(chs. 7:1-3; 16:13-16; Heb. 1:14; see EGW on Heb. 9:24). Angel Hands Linked About the World. --John writes, "I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne." Angels were united in the work of Him who had broken the seals and taken the book. Four mighty angels hold back the powers of this earth till the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. The nations of the world are eager for conflict;

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

but they are held in check by the angels. When this restraining power is removed, there will come a time of trouble and anguish. Deadly instruments of warfare will be invented. Vessels, with their living cargo, will be entombed in the great deep. All who have not the spirit of truth will unite under the leadership of satanic agencies. But they are to be kept under control till the time shall come for the great battle of Armageddon."

* The above quote is the quote Ellen White supposedly wrote in a "rambling" letter perhaps indicative of her weary and tired condition.

More examples of larger fulfillments will appear as this study progresses. These prophetic reckonings are not only important interpretationally, but actually "demand" that the prophetic student look at them that way. An appeal is made to be extremely careful how one processes this matter. "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

The Rainbow

The Rainbow:

A rainbow of color appears here in the first parts of the book. The same spectrum appears in the latter parts of the book in the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem.

The refraction of the sunlight by droplets of water thus creating the rainbow has fascinated men for ages. To the ancient Greeks it was a messenger of the Gods. The Hindus regard the rainbow as symbolizing both war and peace. Scandinavians have considered it a bridge uniting heaven and earth.

A Symbol of God's Covenant Love

The rainbow is most simply an indication of God's love and covenant:

Advent Review and Sabbath Herald
12-13-92

"The Lord has said, "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. . . . And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you, and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh."

In the rainbow above the throne is an everlasting testimony that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Whenever the law is presented before the people, let the teacher of the truth point to the throne arched with the **rainbow of promise, the righteousness of Christ**. The glory of the law is Christ; he came to magnify the law, and to

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

make it honorable. Make it appear distinct that mercy and peace have met together in Christ, and righteousness and truth have embraced each other.”

“As the bow in the cloud is formed by the **union of the sunlight and the shower**, so the rainbow encircling the throne represents the **combined power of mercy and justice**. It is not justice alone that is to be maintained; for this would eclipse the glory of the rainbow of promise above the throne; men could see only the penalty of the law. Were there no justice, no penalty, there would be no stability to the government of God. It is the mingling of judgment and mercy that makes salvation complete. It is the blending of the two that leads us, as we view the world's Redeemer, and the law of Jehovah, to exclaim, "Thy gentleness hath made me great."

Spiritual Gifts. Volume 3, p. 75:

“A rainbow is represented in Heaven round about the throne, also above the head of Christ, as a **symbol of God's mercy** encompassing the earth. When man by his great wickedness provokes the wrath of God, Christ, man's intercessor, pleads for him, and points to the rainbow in the cloud, as evidence of God's great mercy and compassion for erring man; also the rainbow above the throne and upon his head emblematical of the glory and mercy from God resting there for the benefit of repentant man.”

Note re: *Pentecost*

The rainbow is a sign of the covenant. It is almost always associated with the Day of Pentecost. According to Biblical tradition the first rainbow (Noah) was seen on the Day of Pentecost, the “covenant day.”

Supposedly the covenant with Abraham occurred on the Day of Pentecost. Likewise the giving of the Law on Sinai, and I believe the giving of the vision to Daniel in chapter 8 (cf. my book, *Articles of Faith*, “Daniel 8:14 a Typological Prophecy”). Thus Rev. 4,5

The Four Living Creatures

They are the cherubim; a superior order of angels around God's throne.
(Isaiah 6)

These can represent characteristics of God and of Christ:

The Lion: Kinglike and strong
The Calf: Sacrificial and Gentle
The Man: Intelligent and Wise
The Eagle: Swift and Having Oversight

The Lion as the king of beasts is authoritative and powerful. God is omnipotent, having all power.

The Calf or young bull was the supreme sacrifice. God through Jesus is all-loving and is wholly sacrificial.

The Face as a Man, man being wisest in nature, represents God's Omniscience, having all knowledge.

The Eagle known for his supervisory oversight and incredible vision represents God's omnipresence, his all-seeing nature.

In Christ, we see God as expressed in the four Gospel writers, which tradition (Augustine) assigned the following characteristics:

Matthew: Presents Christ as King of authority, the **Lion** of the tribe of Judah.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Mark: Presents Christ in his humanity therefore like a **man**.

Luke: Presents Christ as a sacrifice for all races and conditions, thus the **ox**.

John: Presents Christ according to the highest heights of thought, as flies the **eagle**. (Barclay, Vol. 1, p. 161)

(Several other church fathers made such applications but identified them in a variety of different ways.)

One further consideration of interest is taken from the following quote:

"Four heavenly angels⁸ always accompanied the ark of God in all its journeyings." *The Story of Redemption*, p. 184.

These seem to correspond to the *Cherubim* seen elsewhere in Scripture.

The Creatures Represent the Creation of God

Since the four *living creatures* represent a diversity of created beings, they clearly represent God's creation. Since the number four is the universal number for spatial and physical dimensions they represent the whole creation.

This is why the elders (and not the four beasts) fall before the throne saying, "For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (4:11)

The lion is the king of wild beasts; the bull the strongest of domesticated beasts. The eagle is the king of the air, and man was given dominion over all on account of his wisdom.

⁸ They take, it seems, the position of "friends of the king," and "bodyguards." One is on each side, to protect from any eventuality.

Time-Calibrated Fulfillment of Prophecy

These beings serve as prime-ministers, in direct service to God, carrying out his mandates and sharing his administration.

The Sealed Book

The following statement has been overlooked in commentaries and in compilations. It answers once and for all what is found in the sealed book. It is supplied here:

E.G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 12, pp. 296,297.

[Quoted Rev. 5: 1-3] "There in His open hand lay the book, the roll of the history of God's providences, the prophetic history of nations; and the church. Herein was contained the divine utterances, His authority, His commandments, His laws, the whole symbolic counsel of the Eternal, and the history of all ruling powers in the nations. In symbolic language was contained in that roll the influence of every nation, tongue, and people from the beginning of earth's history to its close. This roll was written within and without. John says: "I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon" [verse 4]. The vision as presented to John made its impression upon his mind. The destiny of every nation was contained in that book. John was distressed at the utter inability of any human being or angelic intelligence to read the words, or even to look thereon. His soul was wrought up to such a point of agony and suspense that one of the strong angels had compassion on him, and laying his hand on him assuringly, said, "Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" [verse 5]. John continues: [verses 6, 7, quoted]. As the book was unrolled, all who looked upon it were filled with awe. There were no blanks in the book. There was space for no more writing. [Rev. 5:8-14; 6:8-11; 8:1-4, quoted.]

Time-Calibrated Fulfillment of Prophecy

A similar statement to the one above is found in Manuscript Releases, Vol. 9, p. 7 (Letter 65, 1898) and is followed by what is quoted next:

“The same spirit is seen today that is represented in Revelation 6:6-8. History is to be repeated. That which has been will be again.”--Letter 65, 1898, pp. 6-9, 12. (To Brethren Griggs and Howe, August 23, 1898.)

The book is not particularly the book of life or the book of death. It is the record book of heaven, that chronicles all the affairs of men. This archive is useful in judgment, and the book can only be declared to be full when history is complete. However, the book is also prophetic, containing the future of the Christian era that is “unrolled” as time passes.

What a masterful symbol, so chosen, as to readily apply to the scene of the Lamb at Pentecost as well as to the judgment at the very close of time!!

The Government of Heaven

(Rev. 4,5)

The array of thrones, rainbows, voices, robes and crowns with their accompanying cherubim, elders, angels creates such a magical and mystical scene that readers miss a dimension of revelation which is intentionally and graphically portrayed for our benefit. What a rare privilege is offered in this passage to catch an exceptional view into the heavenly realms. Human curiosity is seldom rewarded when the scriptures are searched for specific information about the mystery of God, his transcendent nature and person, and the workings of the divine will. One might often wish he could be "a fly on the wall" in the inner sanctum of the corporate executives, hearing what they say, getting in on the plans and direction of the company. But here heaven is opened and we have an intimate glimpse into the very government of heaven.

What is most informative in this respect is that God's government does not take the form that is foremost in one's mind initially. We expect it to be purely one of sole rulership, despotic and absolute. But this is not exactly the case in this picture. True, God's sovereignty and authority are repeatedly acknowledged by the panel of judges. But this is because it has withstood a heavenly audit and God's character and his righteousness has been vindicated.

In the human realm there are different types of hierarchical government:

1. **Absolute monarchy**--a king or emperor, makes all decisions; they are not questioned or challenged.

The Government of Heaven

2. **Limited monarchy**--a monarch's power is limited by a constitution. Representatives are elected to make laws. (Great Britain) The king is usually ineffective or merely symbolic.

3. **Oligarchy**--A few rule. This bureaucratic form of government often becomes *aristocracy* where the wealthy and influential rule absolutely.

4. **Democracy**--The people rule. In a *pure democracy* people meet in congregational fashion and enact laws. This can become very impractical so *representative democracy* is often the result. People elected by popular vote are made empowered representatives to enact laws. This form of government is called a *republic*.

5. **Dictatorship**--This exists when an absolute ruler emerges even though there may be an existing king or government. Otherwise it is similar to a monarchy except there is no divine right recognized as it were. (*Our Wonderful World*, Vol. 4, p. 376)

One can argue as to which most closely resembles the heavenly government. However certain points about the nature of heaven's governmental system can be recognized which tells us much about the great controversy of heaven and the nature of God.

First, God's government is not purely monarchical because there exists a heavenly triumvirate in the executive office. Although God's absolute supremacy is obvious, God does not exploit it. He surrounds himself with counselors, judges, representatives, whom he asks in essence to challenge and scrutinize his judgments.

Secondly, however, he does have a constitution. But his sovereignty is not merely a token, that of a figurehead, now found in many limited monarchies. He is still God, with effective power.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Thirdly, one can see by the myriads of witnesses around the throne, the universal dimensions as represented in the cherubim and the enthroned elders, that heaven knows nothing of *oligarchy*.

There are many ties to representative democracy in God's way of governing. There are represented the three branches of such a government in the heavenly assembly. There is executive: God and the Lamb; There is legislative: representatives in their seats; and judicial: in the same way elders on thrones, witnesses and attendants. But the democracy is not pure, because God is still the center and is willingly given back his absolute rulership because his creatures trust him.

Lastly, God is not a dictator for he is awarded rulership willingly by the populace, and leaves himself open to question. No dictator would promise that any and every faithful citizen can sit down and rule with him in his throne, or for a thousand years live and co-reign with him. Satan, the dragon, however fits this leadership style best, though he claims as do the many of the Marxist ideologies do, to promote another more equitable form of government.

An attempt to summarize God's government follows below. There are at least SEVEN types of heavenly figures:

1. GOD THE FATHER (chief executive)
2. GOD THE SON (co-executive, premier)
3. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT (co-executive, central intelligence, note: seven lamps of fire, invisible functions)
4. CHERUBIM (cabinet, ministry of affairs, central committee)
5. ELDERS (congressional representatives, judicial function)
6. SEVEN SPIRITS (ambassadors, ministers of state)

The Government of Heaven

7. ANGELS (emissaries, spokesmen, pages, deputies, govt. workers)

An absolute determination of each phase of this government cannot be made, and the above is we are sure an imperfect representation in many ways. What is evident, though, is that God's is a perfect government, which comprehensively incorporates the best of all legitimate governments; balancing absolute effectiveness with honesty and the universal right of appeal. This fits the scenario of the God we know as he acts in salvation history and throughout the great cosmic controversy.

(Cf. Patriarchs and Prophets, "Why was Sin Permitted," pp. 33-42)

Also:

"Satan has sought to cast contempt upon the law of God, and to fasten reproach upon God before his created intelligences. He has sought to make men believe that the law must be modified, because it does not meet the needs and possibility of men. But God is truth itself, and **in no instance can Satan find a flaw with his will or character**. If his law could be changed in one jot or tittle, Satan would have an advantage in the controversy, and would carry the human family with him in fastening reproach upon God; for if one jot or tittle is in need of change, all may be faulty. But in the future the evil one himself will have to confess that his charges against God have been unjust, for with God is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. He will make this confession before the fallen world, before unfallen worlds, before the hosts of heaven. He will acknowledge that God has spoken immutable, eternal truths, and that he cannot alter the thing that has gone out of his lips." *The Signs of the Times--03-12-96*

The Twenty-Four Elders

Rather than attempt a verse-by-verse explanation of Revelation 4-7 the writer chooses to take the approach of dealing with the major themes and characters of the section. When this is done the individual pieces can be quite easily fit together by the reader and the few remaining difficulties can be explicated.

Let us begin by seeking an understanding of what this throne scene is about. A door is opened in heaven, God is seen on His throne, seated around him are twenty-four elders. Near Him and praising him are four living creatures. In the active heavenly theater a book in God's hand is taken by a lamb that has been slain and is dramatically unfolded seal by seal.

Though the identity of the twenty-four elders⁹ is not particularly necessary as a starting point, let us nevertheless arbitrarily take it into consideration first:

Who are the Twenty-Four Elders?

First. . . .

⁹ "Lenski (p. 179) says that one writer lists twenty-one efforts at a solution, to which he adds another equally acceptable." Robert Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), p. 137.

The Twenty-four Elders

Who were the "earthly" twenty-four elders?

It is well documented by such scholars as Joachim Jeremias,¹⁰ that there were divisions of the priesthood representing all of the regions of Israel or Palestine¹¹. To quote:

"The division of the priesthood into **twenty-four courses**, each of which did service one week in Jerusalem from Sabbath to Sabbath (CA 2.108; Ant. 7.365; Luke 1:8)-- for which reason they were called weekly courses--was the system prevailing at the time of Jesus." (p. 199)

Biblically there are even references to these twenty-four courses.

1 Chron. 24:1-18

Describes that there were twenty-four priests that represented Israel.

Nehemiah 12:1-7

Gives names of twenty-four chief priests.

Luke 1:5,8,9

Mentions Zacharias the father of John the Baptist as a priest ministering in his course.

"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zechariah, of the course of Abijah: And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord."

¹⁰ Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Fortress Press, 1969), pp. 147, 163, 199.

¹¹ Regarding the 24 elders and the Passover season. "At the temple all twenty-four divisions of priests were in attendance, though normally there was only one." *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 3, "Passover," p. 664.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Therefore there were twenty-four courses or districts, each which sent their representative priest to worship and minister in God's temple. It so happened that in the Gospel story, Zacharias, served his course, representing the priestly district of Abia, or Abijah.

The Heavenly Twenty-four Elders

Many who have examined this heavenly scene recognize elements typical of what must have happened in heaven at the inauguration of Christ in the heavenly courts just following His ascension. The opening of heaven's door, the lamb freshly slain and now full of authority and worthy to enter upon his work, the praising throng rejoicing over the salvation won for man are clearly pictured in this passage. God and Christ are seen in the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary (lamps of fire, incense bowls, offering of blood) and there Christ enters upon His priestly work made possible by his death¹².

However, recognizing the law of heavenly counterparts is important at this point.

As there was a temple on **earth**
There also is a temple in **heaven**

As there were twenty-four districts with priestly representatives on **earth**,
There would then be twenty-four districts with priestly
representatives in **heaven**.

Particularly enlightening is the following prophetic insight:

¹² This is also the conclusion, thankfully, of the DARCOM Committee.

The Twenty-four Elders

The Desire of Ages, p. 833, 834.

"(1) **There is the throne**, and (2) **around it the rainbow of promise**. (3) **There are cherubim and seraphim**. The commanders of the (4) **angel hosts**, the sons of God, (5) **the representatives of the unfallen worlds**, are assembled. The **heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,--all are there to welcome the Redeemer**. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King...."

The **voice of God** is heard proclaiming that justice is satisfied. Satan is vanquished. Christ's toiling, struggling ones on earth are 'accepted in the Beloved.' Eph. 1:6. . . The Father's arms encircle His Son, and the word is given, 'Let all the angels of God worship Him.' Heb. 1:6....

With joy unutterable, **rulers and principalities and powers acknowledge the supremacy of the Prince of Life**. The **angel host prostrate themselves before Him**, while the glad shout fills all the courts of heaven, '**Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing**.'

It seems evident to this writer that we should recognize in these twenty-four priests or elders in heaven, typical of the twenty-four courses that represented all of Israel, the divine council of heaven¹³ representing not just earth but all the unfallen worlds and the grand universal and cosmic Israel of God's design.

¹³ Again we find Mounce in line, for he sees the 24 elders in terms of heavenly counterparts. Ibid., p. 135

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Even though man will have a great part and in time will reign with God as victors through Christ over sin it seems *far too narrow and finite to think that our earth would have all twenty-four seats of a twenty-four seat congress*. The supreme court of heaven would represent in heavenly counterpart the infinite and vast universe of which God is sovereign. God is trying in this revelation to make humans see a much grander scale. Though the earth may be represented by such as Elijah and Moses, or Enoch, it is unlikely that the entire heavenly universe could be well represented by only earthlings.

We know that the representatives of unfallen worlds were there to welcome God's Son. If they aren't represented in these figures then they are excluded from this great scene in Revelation 4 and 5, which is not really an acceptable conclusion.

We have been taught that these twenty-four elders are men redeemed and taken to heaven at Christ's ascension. ***This is pure assumption.*** Not in one place does even Ellen White mention that the multitude of captives taken back to heaven are the twenty-four elders. She does say:

The Desire of Ages, p. 833

All heaven was waiting to welcome the Saviour to the celestial courts. As He ascended, He led the way, and the multitude of captives set free at His resurrection followed. The heavenly host, with shouts and acclamations of praise and celestial song, attended the joyous train.

The Desire of Ages, p. 786

"As Christ arose, He brought from the grave a multitude of captives. The earthquake at His death had rent open their graves, and when He arose, they came forth with Him. They were those who had been co-laborers with God, and who at the cost of their lives had borne testimony to the truth. Now they were to be witnesses for Him who had raised them from the dead."

The Twenty-four Elders

The traditional identity of the elders as men comes largely from a mistranslation from inferior manuscripts¹⁴, for instance in the King James Version which reads:

*"for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed **us** to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made **us** unto our God kings and priests and **we** shall reign on the earth."* (5:9,10)

*The best manuscript evidence gives the reading basically, "thou hast redeemed **men** unto God. . . and hast made **them** kings and priest and **they** shall reign on the earth."* (Thus C. Mervyn Maxwell¹⁵)

Some object to the twenty-four elders being anything but human representatives. One reason for this is that the elders wear crowns, and expositors feel that heavenly beings never wear crowns. I believe this is simply untrue¹⁶.

¹⁴ Mounce supports the idea that the best reading for this passage regarding the 24 elders should be "them," and not "us." The latter reading is based on inferior variants. Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, The New International Commentary on the N.T., William B. Eerdmans, p. 148. Cf. also Maxwell, *God Cares*.

¹⁵ C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares*, Vol. 2 (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985), p. 153.

¹⁶ J. Paulien asserts of crowns that "angels never wear them." (DARCOM, Vol. 1, p. 215). Cf. the following:

"Then I was pointed to the glory of heaven, to the treasure laid up for the faithful. Everything was lovely and glorious. The angels would sing a lovely song, then they would cease singing and take their crowns from their heads and cast them glittering at the feet of the lovely Jesus, and with melodious voices cry, "Glory, Alleluia!" Early Writings, p. 66.

"I beheld Jesus in the garden with His disciples. In deep sorrow He bade them watch and pray, lest they should enter into temptation. He knew that their faith was to be tried, and their hopes disappointed, and that they would need all the strength which they could obtain by close watching and fervent prayer. . . .

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Therefore our determination is at this point is that this scene represents the inauguration of the risen Christ in heaven. Present are the Father, Son, and Spirit, the cherubim (the four beasts), the elders (the representatives of the universe), the angel hosts and their commanders. These are praising God and His Son for what they have accomplished.

However we must look at another dimension before settling on this as the only valid interpretation. The difficulty that most traditional historic expositors have is that they limit themselves to but one fulfillment, and they discard important elements that fit other schemes and prophetic revelations because of this. They also minimize the prophetic counsel given for this very purpose---to open the prophetic books to our understanding. Enormous meanings and lessons of heavenly import are thereby tragically lost.

This fuller concept will be explored in the following chapter.

*Angels were hovering over the place, witnessing the scene, but only one was commissioned to go and strengthen the Son of God in His agony. There was no joy in heaven. The angels cast their crowns and harps from them and with the deepest interest silently watched Jesus.” *Early Writings*, p. 167.*

Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 1, p. 21.

“ The news of man's fall spread through heaven. Every harp was hushed. The angels cast their crowns from their heads in sorrow. All heaven was in agitation”.

In addition, crowns are mentioned as part of the angel regalia in several other places. Of particular interest they are referred to in the descriptions of Jesus welcome back to heaven at the ascension, the very theme of Rev. 4,5. Enoch, an earthly representative wears one in Early Writings, and truly they are usually referred to biblically in reference to redeemed humanity. But crowns are not only a symbol of victory. They are and were a symbol of HONOR and position as well. They are worn by more than humanity.

Revelation 4 & 5 a Judgment Scene

Other (primarily Adventist) students of this passage argue that what is being described in Revelation 4 and 5 and even beyond is the INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT. The Daniel and Revelation Committee flatly states this is not a judgment scene. Other Adventist writers such as Mervyn Maxwell recognize the similarities with judgment scenes like that of Daniel 7 but reject the idea on the basis of the differences. Because everything does not line up in perfect literary comparison, the possibility of a judgment scene is rejected. This comes from a whole-scale rejection of the principle of what we have called *the time-calibrated fulfillment principle* applicable in many, many cases of apocalyptic and general prophecy.

Following is a comparison of the judgment scene in Daniel 7 to Revelation 4,5. Surely, it seems, no self-respecting Adventist scholar can assert that there is absolutely no relationship between these two events here described? But this they indeed assert. The reader is asked to study the two events noting similarities as well as differences, noting, of course, in the case of the differences whether or not they are **mutually exclusive** differences:

There are undeniable earmarks of judgment scenes. In both are found the throwing down of thrones, or the seating of a council and heavenly beings about the throne. The casting down of thrones was a generally understood indication to any near-Eastern personage of council or judgment. God does not sit on a throne to rest. *He sits to judge.*

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

In addition we have already noted several references which infer that Revelation 4-7, especially chapter 5 is to be understood in a judgment sense by last-day Christians. The rainbow that represents both mercy and justice is present because God judges in this way. Witnesses are present at a judgment and are represented in full quorum.

A (temple) door is opened in heaven (not into heaven). This is exactly what Adventists teach happened in 1844, and Revelation 4 & 5 comes as a perfect excursus in flashback to the experience of the faithful in the Philadelphian church who followed Jesus through this door, a heavenly door, because no man can open or shut it.

"But clearer light came with the investigation of the sanctuary question. They now saw that they were correct in believing that the end of the 2300 days in 1844 marked **an important crisis**. But while it was true that the door of hope and mercy by which men for eighteen hundred years found access to God, was closed, **another door was opened**, and forgiveness of sins was offered to men through the intercession of Christ in the most holy. One part of his ministration had closed, only to give place to another. There was still an '**open door**' to the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ was ministering in the sinner's behalf." GC 429, 430.

The investigative judgment procedure and the necessary personnel for such a judgment are described in Revelation 4,5 placed at the end of the historical section of the churches and connected in reference by a door to last two churches. (Particularly *Philadelphia*, but both churches have doors mentioned in them; *Laodicea* is the "second" door) The purpose of the investigative judgment includes consultation of the council of the heavenly universe.

Following is a comparison of Daniel 7 and Revelation 4 and 5:

Revelation 4 & 5 a Judgment Scene

BOOK OPENED REVELATION 4,5	BOOKS WERE OPENED DANIEL 7
4:4 "round the throne were twenty-four thrones"	7:9 "thrones were placed"
4:2 "a throne stood in heaven with one seated on the throne"	7:9 "Ancient of Days took his seat"
4:5 "from the throne issued forth flashes of lighting, etc."	7:10 "A fiery stream issued from before Him"
5:11 "I heard around the throne. . . the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands"	7:10 "A thousand served Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him"
5:6 "Lamb (Son of man, Jesus) is presented"	7:13 "there came one like a son of man and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him"
5:12 "Worthy is the Lamb to receive power (dunamis) and wealth, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing."	7:14 "and to Him was given dominion and glory and kingdom"
(1:6 "to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever")	7:14 "his dominion. . . everlasting"
5:9,10 "didst ransom men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation and hast made them a kingdom of priests to our God"	7:14 "all peoples and nations and languages should serve him"
5:9 "by thy blood didst ransom men"	7:23 "judgment was given for the saints of the Most High"
5:5 "then one of the elders said to me."	7:16 "I approached one of those who stood there and asked him"

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

(dialogue with a holy being)	(dialogue with a holy being)
------------------------------	------------------------------

Revelation 4 and 5 is clearly a judgment scene as well. Each judgment, including this one has a purpose. The purpose of the investigative judgment is particularly for the heavenly universe, and they are invited to second God's judgment *before* he acts to save the righteous.

PURPOSES OF THE JUDGMENTS (Investigative; Millennial; Executive)

1. InvestigativeFor God (14:6) and the Heavenly Universe—(Thus the presence of the elders, angels, cherubim)
2. Millennial For the saved and righteous from earth
3. Executive..... For the unsaved and wicked from earth

The case can be made that Revelation 4 and 5 describes also the transition from the Holy Place ministry of Christ to the Most Holy Place Ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary in 1844:

For instance starting in chapter 5 a strong angel with a loud voice that (Rev. 5:2; and 14:6—first angel judgment) represents a message proclaimed. John experiences a "great disappointment" regarding the contents and understanding of a book¹⁷.

¹⁷(To the puzzlement of some scholars, Ellen White even makes statements inferring that this book is the book of *Daniel*, then reject the idea because it does not fit their scheme, along with other E.G.W. statements; making it only the *book of history* or the *book of life*. In any event, the same book (history) would be

Revelation 4 & 5 a Judgment Scene

The Lamb receives authority and dominion, and because of His sacrifice he is worthy to judge the contents of the book. Then comes the unrolling of the scroll---end-time events—war, famine, pestilence--- which are clearly identified by prophecy and which are being and will be repeated before our very eyes.

Since it is the *beginning* of a time of judgment there is pictured no movement from the holy to the most holy place initially. The scene is clearly in the holy place. It cannot be any other way, for to have such a movement clearly defined would invalidate the valid, primary, historical application of the seals in prophetic/historical time. But this does not mean that these throne scenes cannot represent a judgment saga. Either interpretation can be made to work if the law of multiple fulfillments is properly employed, and if one makes his start in the appropriate chronological framework.

This is no doubt very troublesome to some, who have always been told and have believed for their whole lives that prophecy can only have one fulfillment. How can both schemes be valid? Perhaps, it is difficult. But we might as well ask Jesus why he “difficultly” mingled the destruction of Jerusalem with the end of the world, or why there was an outpouring of the Spirit in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, and that for the very same prophecy there will be an even greater fulfillment in the future. God has his purposes. Our duty is to concentrate on understanding them.

However, by rightly applying the principle of *time-adjusted fulfillment*, huge problems can disappear as well. Ellen White's prophetic gift shines more brightly, and by recognizing the principle of repeated fulfillment the seeming contradictions are partly removed. It also makes less necessary

needed in the pre-advent judgment. The books of Daniel and Revelation truly do "unroll" history just as a scroll "unrolls."

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

the need for scholars to make precarious attempts to excuse, cover up, or discard the inspired material.

It really is not inconsistent to view this passage as relevant to the time of the pre-advent judgment. It fits very well.

- It begins with an open door (cf. the history of the Advent movement)
- Thrones are cast down, judges take their seats, authority is given to the Lamb
- A message is given with a loud voice (cf. Rev. 14:6)
- The giving of the message is followed by a great disappointment (wept much)
- The focus of the crisis is over a book of history, a particular book that foretold the cutting off of the Messiah by the Jewish leaders, and also foretells the coming judgment hour at the *eschaton*.
- The saints are favorably judged
- The Lamb is exonerated just *prior* to the final woes of war, famine, and pestilence.

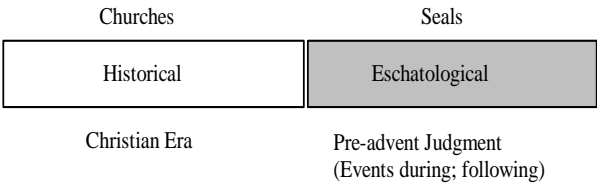
Many more parallels could be examined and argued. The reason that it is difficult to take only one interpretation at the expense of the other is because it is a valid historical principle that history in a specialized sense repeats itself, type and anti-type. Therefore both events will appear similar, though separated by significant historical segments of time. It is a valid biblical principle that what has happened before, will happen again. There is a solid reduplication of the past, and usually the final fulfillment is the most significant. Therefore the picture is never complete unless both types are represented and accounted for in the prophetic scheme.

Revelation 4 & 5 a Judgment Scene

SLIDING-SCALE RECKONING OR TIME-ADJUSTED FULFILLMENT

We can only begin at this point to build a diagrammatic representation of how such prophecies as the seals and the trumpets can be understood both historically and eschatologically. But let us begin as follows:

In the historical scheme we see for instance in the churches section of the book a progressionary outworking of history through the Christian Dispensation. Taking the churches therefore as historical and prophetic, which we should, we look toward the latter days of the churches and a door is opened. (3:8; 4:1) Then begins an excursus explaining what this open door represents. In the last days of this earth's history came the anti-typical Day of Atonement and the investigative judgment. Therefore since we are living in the last days we would consider that the *investigative judgment interpretation* is an eschatological interpretation, which follows the historical section of the churches.



However, if one is asked to look at a certain given section under different pretenses, then a reversal or a time-adjustment is made and the prophetic scheme makes a decided, yet I believe, for all intents and purposes,

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

harmonious change. Perhaps one way to look at it is like the old slide rules that were used before the days of pocket calculators. By moving the center bar, the relationship to the other calibrated bar changed and mathematical calculations could be read or easily determined. It seems, therefore, that Revelation's scheme is at times and in many ways much like such a "sliding" scale.

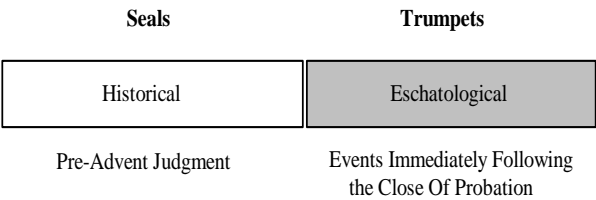
If now, another position is recognized that the understanding of the section on the **Seals** is to be sought for in **past historical time** then a change occurs for all, and one finds that it now fits nicely into the traditional/historical application of prophecy starting with Christ's return to heaven at Pentecost and followed by the signs of the Christian Era right up through the orderly progression of the sealing, and the close of probation described during the seventh seal.

But the Revelation, purposely recognizing the revolving door, or sliding scale purposely leaves no decided and clear ending, no absolutely definitive marker between the end of the seals and the beginning of the trumpets. It can hardly be marked where the seventh-seal ends and the first trumpet begins. This is because on the scale we have just described the trumpets *might* now be viewed as eschatological, describing it appears, post-probation events poured out on those who are not sealed and who seek no repentance.

It only depends on the starting point. If the starting point is taken as eschatological, then the following section might best be understood as historical. But if the starting point is taken as purely historical, then the following piece might best be understood as explaining an eschatological *excursis* to be inserted into the final part of the historical dialogue. For this author, at least, a consistent arrangement can be carried thus through the entire document.

It is really a very ingenious arrangement, fitting the inspirational quality of the book. Such a fineness, such a brilliant divine code, could only have one source. It is the set up that only the wise can understand, by the immortal God through his Spirit.

Revelation 4 & 5 a Judgment Scene



NOTE: This is not a complete explanation and calls for further elucidation and explanation. The reader is asked to simply consider at this point that the concept is over-simplified here for the point of clarity.

Keeping these ideas in mind it is time to proceed to a review of the breaking of the seals *first* as viewed in traditional, **historical time**:

The Breaking of the Seals

The first four seals, have a fairly consistent structural pattern:

1. Opening of the seal
2. Voice of the beast saying, "Come."
3. A colored horse is seen
4. A rider is seen
5. An object or tool is in the rider's hand
6. Something else is "given" to the rider
7. There is a commission or authorization--a job to do

Note: The expression "Come" or "Come and See" (KJV) is more appropriately translated: "Go!" or "Happen."

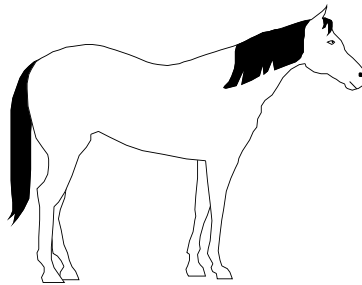
A White Horse . . .

What does the white horse and rider represent?

The rider has:

- a) a bow
- b) a crown (*stephanos*)
- c) he goes forth conquering and to conquer

- The **bow** in this case is a weapon of war for the rider goes forth to conquer.
- The **crown** is a symbol of honor and success (as is also the white horse)
- The **rider** has some success (conquering) but he doesn't have complete universal success for he rides with the purpose of greater conquest.



The White, Red, Black, Pale Horses in Relation to Church History

The typical interpretation for this horse and rider is that the success of the gospel in the first century is portrayed here. This can be true if one takes ALL of the seals as typifying the **church**. The red horse, the black horse, the pale horse, all have to then pertain directly to the church. But it is not appropriate to mix metaphors or to switch as some do back and forth between subjects. Yet, it is true that the gospel was spread quickly and was crowned with success in the early Christian centuries. The church went forth mightily, conquering and to conquer.

It therefore follows that the red horse could typify bloodshed, martyrdom and persecution of the church. For this indeed was what happened in the

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

early Roman persecutions, where through gladiatorial contests, the giving of Christians over to hungry wild beasts, and the slaying of thousands of martyrs took place.

But the church soon lost its fervor and sank into spiritual deterioration. The Black horse and his scale indicating famine and poverty symbolize this condition.

Finally the church approached complete death in the apostasy of the Middle Ages. The pale and sickly horse naturally stands for this apostate situation.

Greater Cosmological Impact Recognized Beyond Only the "Church."

However, there are problems with applying the seals only to the history of the Christian church. It is clear from the symbols used that the **PRIMARY** conditions represented by these horses affect the WORLD and not just the church and have universal-like impact:

Commentators in general are more correct to recognize in these horses and riders world conditions that have existed throughout the Christian era. These conditions were foretold by Jesus and have indeed been the case. There have indeed been wars and rumors of wars, violence and bloodshed, economic inequity and famine, disease and death by wild beasts.

These are **WORLDLY** events. The red horse and rider, take peace from the EARTH. The fourth and final horse has authority over the fourth part of the EARTH. It is important to recognize that these opening seals, though they have significance for the church, are primarily aimed at **ALL** mankind and are indicative of broader events transpiring on the earth.

In addition, owing to the fact that there are four horses, four being the number of earthly completeness and is particularly a dimensional number (i.e. "four corners (directions) of the earth") means that they apply to the geography of the earth. Zechariah clearly gives his similar horses directional significance, (north, south, east, west).

The Breaking of the Seals

White Horse

While the white horse seems applicable to the triumphant spread of the gospel, there are problems with this exclusive view.¹⁸

1. The bow is an unlikely weapon for symbolizing the spread of the gospel. The chief weapon of the Christian is the word of God, typically represented by a sword.
2. If the other horses represent war, famine, and pestilence; as they clearly seem to do, the white horse being a positive figure (if taken for the success of the gospel) keeps bad company, for all the rest of the horses are evil.
3. The background of the passage is war and conquest (conquering and to conquer), contradictory to the gentle white purity of Christ's gospel. Though the triumphs of the church are even in Scripture often likened to war there needs to be readily identifiable symbols of "Christian" conquest (such as the sword of the spirit, or the breastplate faith, etc.) and such a symbol is not provided, unimpeachably, in a bow.

The Seals Correlate Largely with The Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24,25)

That the Seals are very closely tied with the sermon Jesus gave on the Mt. of Olives to his disciples about the signs of His coming and the future is widely attested and generally recognized. The material is very similar and even is narrated in similar **order**. The typical explanation of the first seal

¹⁸ Beasley-Murray makes a good argument against the white horse as being Christ or the proclamation of the gospel. He says it is a "strange notion to make the Lamb one of the riders" and that such interpretations "play havoc with the whole scheme of John's vision." J.R. Beasley-Murray, *The New Century Bible Commentary; Revelation*, (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1974, Rev. 78, Rep. 1983).

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

as exclusively describing the evangelistic church essentially ignores and denies this order:

Seals and Signs are similar and symbolically synonymous:

Seals = Signs

Jesus throughout the opening of the seals is clearly describing what to expect in the world throughout the Christian era, just as he did in Matthew 24, which is about the signs of the end.

The **very first warning** or comment Jesus gave to his disciples and repeated numerous times in the Olivet Discourse is the warning against **false Christs and false prophets**. In other words the most important and relevant warning Jesus had to give his disciples concerned false prophets. *Would it not seem strange, that a theme that Jesus gives priority and is repeated for emphasis throughout the Olivet sermon, and is thematic to the book of Revelation, would be entirely omitted in the unfolding of the seals? Notice the priority given to this theme:*

Matt. 24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple.

Matt. 24:2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Matt. 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Matt. 24:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, **(Seal 1) Take heed that no man deceive you.**

Matt. 24:5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

The Breaking of the Seals

Matt. 24:6 And ye shall hear of **(Seal 2) wars and rumours of wars**: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

Matt. 24:7 **For nation shall rise against nation**, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be **(Seal 3) famines, (Seal 4) and pestilences**, and earthquakes, in divers places.

Matt. 24:8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.

Matt. 24:9 **(Seal 5)** Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

Matt. 24:10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

Matt. 24:11 **And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. . . .**

Matt. 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. (Note: *This is actually said more in context of the end and not the beginning of history*)

(. . . *Desolation of Jerusalem and flight. Days shortened* vs. 15-22)

Matt. 24:23-28 **Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christ's, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. . . .**

Behold I have told you before,

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold he is in the desert; go not forth... believe it not. . . for as lightning cometh. . . for wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered.

Matt. 24: 29 ff. (**Seal 6**) Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven will be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven

Matt. 24:31 . . . they shall gather his elect from the **four winds** . . .

- It is therefore purported here that the first horse and rider can perhaps best represent FALSE CHRIST'S AND FALSE PROPHETS.

---Following are reasons which inform this conclusion:

1. A white horse would probably be ridden by the Messiah, and thus any messianic pretender. (Rev. 19) White horses were often ridden by leaders and generals. Anyone claiming to be the Messiah would be thought to ride triumphantly on the celebrative white horse. White horses symbolized honor and success in ancient times.
2. A white horse would fit well the nature of false prophecy which looks good but really is not. (Note: Wolves in sheep's clothing; white) This "white" is symbolic of superficial purity.
3. Something is lacking and is earthly about the white horse and rider. The comparable symbol in Revelation 19 has the **Messianic** figure riding on a white horse. But this genuine victorious figure has highly specific names; King of Kings, the Word of God, and is from heaven. But the "**no name**" of this passage, though partly successful, lacks such credentials.
4. The rider carries a bow, literally a toxon, related to the word known today as "toxic." Such bows were used to shoot "fiery" arrows tipped with poison inflicting not only the obvious wound, but deceptively hiding the

The Breaking of the Seals

real killer, the poison which brought death soon after the fiery and poisonous agent did its baleful work. Such deceptive and cruel results are those of false prophecy and the arrows of hellish origin. In fact the Scripture identifies the source of the fiery arrows. They are the "fiery darts of the evil one." Ephesians 6:16. Christians use truth to conquer, not poison. A Christian would never use a "toxon."

Some etymologies show the Greek word "diabolos" broken down to mean dia; "through or toward," (a dart, arrow) and bolos; from baleō, "to throw." Every time then the word "devil" is used in Scripture we would have him identified as "the dart thrower."

5. The firsts in a series are often equated with the false, or with zeal which turns out to be false. Ephesus the first church is plagued with those claiming to be apostles and who are not. The first plague is poured out upon the men who have bought into the deception those who have the mark of the beast and worshipped its image. There is even good reason to see the first trumpet as pertaining to false leaders.¹⁹

6. And finally consider the unique phrase: "conquering and to conquer."

Literally translated: "[Continually] overcoming and in order that he might overcome"

(The first verb is a present participle and the second is an aorist subjunctive)

Why this unique expression? Why not just say "he went forth conquering?"

¹⁹ (Cf. J. Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*) (Note: According to the principle of synonymic parallels we would expect this section to refer somewhere to the practice of deception. There is nothing in this half of the section on the Seals which comes closer to filling this place)

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

The point seems to be that the rider is successful at conquering (wears a victorious crown), yet he attempts to conquer more, but his aim of absolute conquest is not always realized or accomplished. If this is God, he isn't totally successful. God is usually pictured in Revelation as totally and finally successful.

He rides forth to conquer and *with the purpose* of conquering (lit. that he “might” conquer).

- The word nikaō, to overcome, is used variously, even in the book of Revelation. Generally, of course, it means to overpower or overcome. But it sometimes infers more than physical overmastery. It can mean spiritual or mental overmastery.

-----For instance it was noted in the study of the seven churches that the expressions “Nicolaitans” and “Balaam” both mean, “overcoming the people,” because in both cases, the Greek and Hebrew languages respectively give this meaning. Therefore the word also can mean TO DECEIVE, for this is what Balaam and the Nicolaitans are known to be; deceivers---false prophets----false Jews---- liars. The false powers of Revelation 13 both seek to “overcome” (nikao) the saints (13:7) and to deceive “them that dwell on the earth” (13:14).

Therefore this rider, if he is as we suggest, a false Christ or prophet, would seek to do the same, overcome the people:

We note from Matthew 24, the very subject of much of this discourse, a familiar phrase:

*For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if **it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*** This is almost a direct paraphrase of the same idea.

“If it were possible they might overcome the very elect.”

The Breaking of the Seals

This is the intent and purpose of all false prophets authorized by the Enemy of Souls. The deception is almost overmastering, it looks SO MUCH LIKE THE GENUINE, but the true disciple is not fooled. Thankfully, the elect ultimately are not deceived. This is actually very good news.

False Christs and False Prophets

From the very beginning of the Christian Era the church has been plagued with false prophets, and the plague continues to the present day.

Especially, however, beginning in the days of Jesus and the apostles many false messiahs positioned themselves as promised deliverers. The Bible mentions these, some by name such as Theudas. The history of the time of the Maccabean revolts down to the Bar Cocheba revolt ca. 135 A.D. is replete with claimants to the messianic dream. Historical writers of this period describe the continuing state of expectancy among the people of Judea regarding the coming of the Messiah. The prophecies were seen as upon the verge of fulfillment and the despised overlordship of the Romans only made this to be the more desired. What better time, the Jews thought, than the present (then) to be blessed with the promised deliverer.

Such aspirants used force and customarily gathered about themselves a band or army. To this Jesus referred when he spoke of "men of violence" trying to bring about God's kingdom "by force." (Matthew 11:12). The normal pose of a Messiah was one of a warrior carrying weapons, militaristic; not like the Christ we know today and the "suffering servant" type of a Christ they did not expect.

False prophets have arisen in various forms, from the Balaamites and Nicolaitans, the Simon Magus's, to the coming of the man of sin, the anti-christ of the New Testament who sits on God's throne and makes himself out to be God. Many have said and yet still say "Lord, Lord," and are the very servants of Satan. The grand and overmastering delusion still awaits.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

We therefore conclude the coming of false christs and false prophets is what is here taught and that it is one of the "signs" of the beginning of sorrows and one the "signs" of the approaching day of the Son of man. Finally, this interpretation exonerates the prediction of Jesus and honors the order, context, and force of the great Olivet sermon.

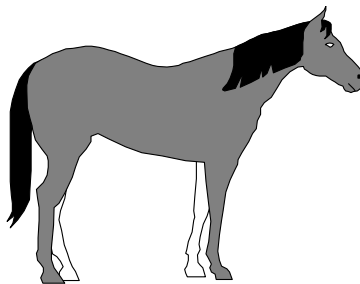
A Red Horse . . .

Following the scheme of mentioned above, giving honesty to the text, and by comparison with the Olivet sermon it is easy to generalize what is meant by the red horse.

"Power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they shall kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword." (6:4)

Said Jesus: "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." Matthew 24:6,7.

The blood red horse, rider, and sword signify-----**WAR.**



The Breaking of the Seals

Little needs to be said about the presence of war on this earth. There are at between 15 or 30 wars going on at any time. Starting at the time of the writing of *Revelation* the Pax Romana, the Roman peace, soon gave way to the incursions of barbarian hordes. Then came the crusades, the Moslem torments, the European conflicts. History is full of Charlemagnes, William the Conquerors, Napoleon Bonapartes, Kaisers, Hitlers and Husseins. World wars and continual conflicts of a lesser nature have continually drenched the earth in blood. Jesus said this was to be expected, and the fact that it has happened is plain for all to see.

By applying this red horse exclusively to the “persecution of the church” the global effect of war is excluded. The sword bearer referred to in this passage “takes peaces from the EARTH.” The “persecution” interpretation is far too narrow to be the only interpretation, as are most other private interpretations offered about this horse. It is primarily referring to war and bloodshed throughout the earth, nothing else.

It is true that what happens in the world is mirrored in history by what happens in the church. In this way it would certainly apply. As the global situation deteriorated during the Dark Ages, so did the integrity of the church. “The noon of the papacy was the midnight of the world.” But the primary meaning of this passage is exactly what is described in Matthew 24, wars and rumors (reports) of war. This position is exonerated by a simple look at history.

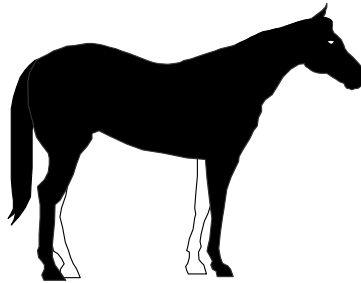
The Black Horse

Next on the scene comes a black horse, whose rider carries a balance. It becomes readily apparent that food is in scarce quantity. The food is expensive for the amount, taking essentially a days wage to make a scant meal.

In such times, economic inequities are only increased. Bread is scarce, but the food and luxuries of the rich, oil and wine, are spared. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

But the emphasis is on the famine conditions throughout parts of the world. Famine and scarcity have been another ever-present confirmation of Jesus words.



In this situation, grain and barley; food staples; are expensive and have to be rationed through economics. Thus we find the use of the scales. When food is plentiful it does not have to be thus carefully measured.

But what is meant by:

"But do not harm the oil and the wine?"

Isaiah 65:8 records: "Thus says the Lord: "As the wine is found in the cluster, and they say, 'Do not destroy it, for there is blessing in it,' so I will do for my servant's sake, and not destroy them all."

The meaning here is often missed. But the idea is one a **righteous remnant**.

Says the SDA Bible Commentary:

"The picture is that of a vineyard. The yield is mostly wild, sour grapes (see ch. 5:4). But the gatherers come across a cluster of good grapes capable of producing good wine, and the decree is issued, 'Destroy it not.' This illustrates the attitude of God toward His people. They have sinned,

The Breaking of the Seals

and judgment has been decreed upon them. But they are not all wicked, and not all are to be destroyed. Those who are righteous among them will be spared and restored to their land."²⁰

The point is that a **remnant** will be saved. God always spares a **remnant**. The oil and wine represent the righteous, but particularly the righteous as the faithful ones **at the end**.

The very last crop of the season was wine from the grapes, and apparently the olives made into oil also. Barley was the first. But the vintage of grapes was the remnant crop.

Even during the thickest persecutions and the most forbidding circumstances, God has preserved his faithful ones. He has not allowed the threats of persecution and deception to completely eradicate his precious saints. God has in every age had his 7,000 righteous who have not bowed the knee to Baal. (Allusion here to the famine in Elijah's day). In the long, dark ages of the intervening centuries, he had the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Anabaptists, the Huguenots and others who stood for truth as they best knew it. Though decimated by persecution and plague, and their ranks fallen thin, yet there shall be, even to the close of the age, the remnant who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

This then is the meaning of this symbolic horse and rider.

²⁰ *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, F.D. Nichol, editor, (Washington, D.C.: The Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1957) Vol. 4, p. 330,331.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

The Pale Horse

The prophet **Ezekiel** describes the judgments of God to be brought against Israel because of her sins:

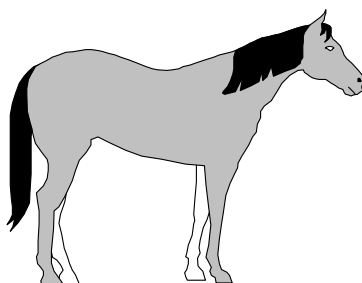
- 5:11 "because you have defiled my sanctuary"
5:12 (you shall die of pestilence, famine, and be scattered)
5:16 "I will send famine and wild beasts against you. . . pestilence and blood shall pass through you. . ."
7:2 "An end! An end has come upon the four corners of the land"
7:26 "Disaster comes upon disaster. . ."
9:1-11 (the sealing described)
10:2 "fill your hands with burning coals from between the cherubim, and scatter them over the city. . ."
12:16 "But I will let a few of them escape from the sword, from famine and pestilence"
14:21 "For thus says the Lord God: How much more when I send upon Jerusalem my four sore acts of judgment, sword, famine, evil beast, and pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast."

Likewise the pale horse stands for the culmination of all of the judgments of God mentioned heretofore, a period of death. And now wild beasts and pestilence are added:

"And power was given unto them over the *fourth part* of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with hunger and with death, and with the beasts of the earth." 6:8. (four things)

The "death" mentioned above is **disease** and sickness (Rev. 2:23). This horse is a pale horse, appropriate for death and sickness.

The Breaking of the Seals



The word for "pale" or as some translations "pale-green" is chloros, the color from whence the substance "chlorine" derives its name. This term is also associated with grass (8:7), really that in-between color found in shoots and new growth or in vegetation that is green or more specifically "yellow-green." (chlorophyll) The emphasis is for its paleness, the lackluster color between life and death.

This writer believes atypically that this horse has a **pair** of riders, Death and the Grave (which follows after or behind, yet exist together----Not two horses with two riders as often pictured---the antecedent is a single horse). At this dividing line of the section of the Seven Seals there are several interesting counter-comparisons harking back to the first three²¹ seals:

Symbol of Duality: **pair** of balances

Four parts: 3 quarts barley; 1 quart wheat

Pale Yellow-green Substance:

Oil

Famine conditions: scarce grain

A great Sword

Etc.

Symbol of Duality: horse with two riders

Four parts: Four judgments; fourth part

Pale Yellow-green horse

Famine

The sword

²¹ The dividing line in the churches section is also between the third and the fourth church.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

There naturally follow many more bi-sectional parallels, of course, as one includes more prophetic material on each side of the equation.

Four is the mid-point of seven and we look to the large Middle Ages, and the mid-point of the Christian Dispensation for the historical fulfillment of this prophecy. It finds a clear corroboration in history.

Probably the best description of the Dark Ages could be summed up in these verses as pertains to the world situation at that time. It was truly and period of all the elements listed in the passage, Death and the Grave reigned supreme.

The Sword: It was a time a continual war, lawlessness, and violence.

Famine: Famine raged as ignorance fell to its lowest ebb. This was caused by a famine for the word of God.

Death: The Black Death by some approximations depopulated Europe by 1/3. Disease without cure was rampant.

Wild Beasts: Until the days of Louis Pasteur and the modern era, rabies and the like claimed thousands of lives.

Number Pattern

One will notice, incidentally, that each of the seals are number coded or at least intended to be number appropriate. The number is in directed toward what is in the riders hand or what is in his general purpose:

Seal 1: one object, a bow (why the arrow is not mentioned, perhaps)

Seal 2: power to take peace, a sword (two abilities)

Seal 3: wheat/barley (3 measures-to one), oil, wine (3)

Seal 4: sword, famine, pestilence, beasts of earth (4)

The Breaking of the Seals

The Fifth Seal

"Souls under the altar"

"The figure of the shed blood under the altar is taken from Leviticus 4:17, 18. 'And the priest shall. . . pour all the blood at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.' The blood under the Levitical altar was from the atoning sacrifice for sins, and 'the life of the flesh is in the blood.' (Leviticus 17:11). The Hebrew word for "life," nephesh, is often translated "soul."²²

God spoke to Cain concerning the **first martyr** and **first altar** mentioned in Scripture:

"And the Lord said, 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground.'" Gen. 4:10 RSV

In the fifth seal the righteous and martyred dead are pictured in extended torment. *Five is the number of progress yet incompleteness, prolongation and waiting.*

Those who truly understand the correct doctrine of the state of the dead realize this is clearly symbolic. God would not take the righteous to heaven and leave them crammed under an altar. But like their brother Abel, their blood "cries" up from the ground. If Abel was then living, Cain really did not commit a crime, but rather sent Abel to a better place.

Five Symbolism

In the **fifth** seal the righteous are in prolonged agony asking for something to be done. In the **fifth** trumpet the wicked are in prolonged torment, as also in the **fifth** plague. The suffering righteous in the fifth seal receive white robes as do those of the **fifth** and barely surviving church, Sardis.

²² Henry Morris, *The Revelation Record*, p. 118.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

This passage is just the first of several in the book, which associate the altar and the faithful martyrs. There have been estimates ranging even beyond 50,000,000 for the number of Christian martyrs who were victims of first, imperial, and then papal, Rome. The God of heaven has not and will not forget their cry as long as time shall last. By the time of the days of the fifth seal, the cry for justice still waited in prolonged suspension for God's intervention.

Particularly helpful are the words of J.A. Seiss:

“It was at the altar of burnt offerings that all the bloody sacrifices were made. Under it there was a deep excavation in the solid rock, in which the blood of the slain victims was poured I have myself stood in the opening under the rock, on which the altar had its place, and stamped my foot upon the marble slab which closes the mouth of the vast receptacle, and satisfied myself, from the detonations, that the excavated space is very deep and large. And as the life of the animal was in its blood, this vast subterranean cavity was, naturally enough, regarded as the receptacle of the lives of the victims which were there slain. The Mohammedans to this day, as I was told on the spot, regard it as the place where spirits are detained until the judgment day. They call it *The Well of Spirits*.”²³

The Sixth Seal

The sixth seal brings natural phenomena, terrestrial and celestial.

The celestial phenomena described at the opening of the sixth seal are given in the same order as in Matthew 24:29. This should not by now cause any surprise.

²³ J.A. Seiss. *The Apocalypse* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1964), p. 146.

The Breaking of the Seals

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and powers of the heavens will be shaken."

There are Seven Phenomena:

1. there was a great earthquake
2. the sun became black
3. the moon became as blood
4. the stars fell
5. the sky vanished like a scroll
6. every mountain moved
7. every island moved

Seven Classes of People Cry For Mercy:

1. the kings of the earth
2. the great men
3. the mighty men
4. the rich
5. the strong
6. the slave
7. the free

Quoted are:

Isaiah (2:19)

"And men shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the Lord, and from the glory of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth."

Also:

Hosea 10:8

"The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us."

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

(Luke 23:30)

("Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.")

Comment:

During this period of history from the Lisbon earthquake on Nov. 1, 1755 to the falling of the stars on Nov. 13, 1833, all of these signs found an historical fulfillment coming in the order Jesus specified. Several published works detail these signs and cite witnesses to them. Time is not taken to recount them here. This is done effectively elsewhere.

Some object to the significance of these events saying there have been historical events that surpass them in magnitude or importance. The answer to this is best stated by Mervyn Maxwell who states that these particular historical phenomena are "not so important scientifically and historically, but what is most important is how they were perceived by the people who saw them."²⁴ Such did indeed find them as fulfillments and thousands thought indeed that the Lord of heaven was coming to earth to give judgment.

Interlude Before the Seventh Seal

Chapter seven describes the Great Awakening that culminated in the time of the early 1800's. During this time the seal of God was "re-discovered." The Advent Movement rose most distinctly in the "eastern" territories of the United States. This truth and it's seal was transferred from the eastern direction--- across the ocean in Europe and the Holy Land.

As time has passed, the Advent Movement has grown from a relative number of few believers gathered from various Christian denominations to an international movement of global proportions. While the end is near,

²⁴ Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares*, Vol. 2; pp. 194-201.

The Breaking of the Seals

the angel's withhold the winds of strife until the final sealing of God's people can take place.

It will end with the time of great tribulation, which the people of God will pass through, unharmed. The Lamb shall feed them and shelter them from the plagues and from their heat. Then will come the seventh seal. More important comment for this particular event follows later in this document.

The Eschatological (End-time) Fulfillment of the Seven Seals

Having demonstrated the historical application of the seven seals it is time to turn to the proposal that an end-time application is also valid and particularly relevant.

In the following pages one will find an almost entire reliance upon prophetic testimony. This may trouble some, yet since these events are mostly (at least in their eschatological form) in the FUTURE it is therefore necessary to look to *prophetic light* as regards them.

One will find that the secondary or last-day application of these opening seals *in no way contradicts or invalidates* the earlier understanding, in that no *particularly new* construction is put upon them. The only difference is that the same events and conditions are repeated in the setting of last-day events.

The following quotes are given as explanations and little comment otherwise needs to be made. Hopefully the reader will find the evidence almost overwhelming in favor of pertinence and relevance for the present day and the days immediately ahead.

The Eschatological Fulfillment of the Seven Seals

THE FIRST SEAL----

False Christs

It is an undeniable fact that false Christs, apostles, and false revivals will be repeated in the last days. Can the warning against these only apply to the time of the apostles and not to our day?

The Great Controversy, pp. 624,625:

“As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, **Satan himself will personate Christ**. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour's advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. Revelation 1:13-15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: "Christ has come! Christ has come!" The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths that the Saviour uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day that he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion. Like the Samaritans who were deceived by Simon Magus, the multitudes, from the least to the greatest, give heed to these sorceries, saying: This is "the great power of God." Acts 8:10.

S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 5, pp. 1105, 1106. (Compare with Revelation 19, and the rider on the white horse):

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

“As the second appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ draws near, satanic agencies are moved from beneath. Satan will not only appear as a human being, but **he will personate Jesus Christ**; and the world that has rejected the truth will **receive him as the Lord of lords and King of kings**. He will exercise his power, and work upon the human imagination. He will corrupt both the minds and the bodies of men, and will work through the children of disobedience, fascinating and charming, as does a serpent.

Fundamentals of Christian Education, pp. 471,472:

“Satan is striving to gain every advantage. He desires to secure, not only students, but also teachers. He has his plans laid. Disguised as an angel of light, he will walk the earth as a wonder-worker. In beautiful language he will present lofty sentiments. Good words will be spoken by him, and good deeds performed. **Christ will be personified**, but on one point there will be a marked distinction. Satan will turn the people from the law of God. Notwithstanding this, **so well will he counterfeit righteousness, that if it were possible, he would deceive the very elect**. Crowned heads, presidents, rulers in high places, will bow to his false theories.

Testimonies to the Church, Vol. 8, p. 28; 6BC 1106; 7BC 911:

“A power from beneath is working to bring about the last great scenes in the drama--**Satan coming as Christ**, and working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are binding themselves together in secret societies.”

Selected Messages, Book 2, p., 87:

“Satan will work with all deceivableness of unrighteousness to personate Jesus Christ; if it were possible, he would deceive the very elect. Now if the counterfeit bears so close a resemblance to the genuine, is it not essential to be on your guard, that no man deceive you?”

Selected Messages, Book 2, pp. 394,395:

“If men are so easily misled now, how will they stand **when Satan shall personate Christ**, and work miracles? Who will be unmoved by his misrepresentations then--professing to be Christ when it is only Satan

The Eschatological Fulfillment of the Seven Seals

assuming the person of Christ, and apparently working the works of Christ? What will hold God's people from giving their allegiance to false christs? "**Go not after them**" (Luke 17:23)."

Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 411:

"The conflict is to wax fiercer and fiercer. **Satan will take the field and personate Christ.** He will misrepresent, misapply, and pervert everything he possibly can, **to deceive, if possible, the very elect.**"

Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 62:

"Fallen angels upon earth form confederations with evil men. In this age **antichrist will appear as the true Christ**, and then the law of God will be fully made void in the nations of our world. Rebellion against God's holy law will be fully ripe. But the true leader of all this rebellion is Satan clothed as an angel of light. Men will be deceived and will exalt him to the place of God, and deify him. But Omnipotence will interpose, and to the apostate churches that unite in the exaltation of Satan, the sentence will go forth, 'Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.'"

The Great Controversy, p. 624:

"Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle-working demons. The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception, and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of heaven. By these agencies, rulers and subjects will be alike deceived. Persons will arise pretending to be Christ Himself, and claiming the title and worship which belong to the world's Redeemer. They will perform wonderful miracles of healing and will profess to have revelations from heaven contradicting the testimony of the Scriptures."

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

False Apostles and Prophets

“The apostles, as personated by these lying spirits, are made to contradict what they wrote at the dictation of the Holy Spirit when on earth. They deny the divine origin of the Bible, and thus tear away the foundation of the Christian's hope and put out the light that reveals the way to heaven.” "Advent Review and Sabbath Herald," 12-18-88, paragraph 25.

“Satan came as an angel of light in the wilderness of temptation to deceive Christ; and he does not come to man in a hideous form, as he is sometimes represented, but as an angel of light. **He will come personating Jesus Christ,** working mighty miracles; and men will fall down and worship him as Jesus Christ. We shall be commanded to worship this being, whom the world will glorify as Christ. What shall we do?--Tell them that Christ has warned us against just such a foe, who is man's worst enemy, yet who claims to be God; and that when Christ shall make his appearance, it will be with power and great glory, accompanied by ten thousand times ten thousand angels and thousands of thousands; and that when he shall come, we shall know his voice.”

False Revival Before True

Selected Messages, p. 111:

“Before the work is closed up and the sealing of God's people is finished, we shall receive the outpouring of the Spirit of God. Angels from heaven will be in our midst. The present is a fitting-up time for heaven when we must walk in full obedience to all the commands of God.”--Letter 30, 1907.

The Great Controversy, p. 464:

“The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he will make it appear that God's special blessing is poured out;

The Eschatological Fulfillment of the Seven Seals

there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit. Under a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world.”²⁵

Relation to the Plagues and the Great Time of Trouble

The Great Controversy, pp. 561, 562:

“Little by little he has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of spiritualism. He has not yet reached the full accomplishment of his designs; but it will be reached in the **last remnant of time**. Says the prophet: “I saw three unclean spirits like frogs; . . . they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go 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.” Revelation 16:13, 14. Except those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in His word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion. The people are fast being lulled to a fatal security, to be awakened only by the **outpouring of the wrath of God.**”

Early Writings, p. 266:

“After putting Jesus in the background, they attract the attention of the world to themselves and to their miracles and lying wonders, which, they declare, far exceed the works of Christ. Thus the world is taken in the snare and lulled to a feeling of security, not to find out their awful deception until the seven last plagues shall be poured out. Satan laughs as he sees his plan succeed so well and the whole world taken in the snare.”

²⁵ The work of false prophets and Christs is mentioned first, but is so positioned not to show that it only happens then, but rather to show that it repeats and continues through the conflict and culminates perhaps in the very “personation” of Christ toward the very end of the sealing time. “Personation” is different than “impersonation” in that Satan at that time will not be presented as a mere actor but will present himself as the very Christ. Our people are not even ready for this, how then the Christian world?

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

SECOND, THIRD, & FOURTH SEAL

Comments: The Former Time of Trouble

The period of the Seals corresponds for the most part to "The Sealing Time," which is the period of the Investigative Judgment and the time up to the close of probation and the Great Time of Trouble or the Plagues. The strife of nations, the recurrence of natural disasters, violence and political strife will be typical during this time. This time is known as the "Little Time of Trouble" and the period of the seals spotlights this time in history.

Just as false religion, wars, famine, and pestilence have all occurred during history, so they will also continue until Jesus comes. **The order is not necessarily as important** as is recognizing the four-dimensional or four-directional (universal) effect upon the world. This is why the horses fan out in various directions. But war, famine, and pestilence happen at all times. The order given in Revelation 6 is logical but not necessarily at all times meant to be directionally and chronologically consistent.

The time of trouble will in a sense begin during the sealing time, but will be held in check until the work of the angel of Revelation 18 can be satisfactorily completed. A remnant, the oil and wine, will be spared the atrocities of the great time of trouble.

During this time we know that the third angel's message will be given with greater power and the latter rain and the loud cry will come. But this will be preceded by the false revivals of Christendom. The giving of the true message will arouse opposition and persecution. Satan likely will not save his "masterpiece of deception" to the days after probation closes but will use it during this time. Finally as the door of mercy is closing and the four angels loose the four winds, decisions will be made and the world will be turned over to destruction by Satan.

The Eschatological Fulfillment of the Seven Seals

The unrolling of the scroll and the breaking of the seals perfectly describe the eschatological events that are right upon us. It is a shame that there are those who blindly teach that the Seals have no particular last-day application. **No material could be more cogent and applicable to the church and the world than these very passages at this very time!**

Naturally the prophetic testimony is in direct harmony with this conclusion:

Early Writings, pp. 33,34:

“I saw that God had children who do not see and keep the Sabbath. They have not rejected the light upon it. And **at the commencement of the time of trouble**, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and **proclaimed the Sabbath more fully**. This enraged the churches and nominal Adventists, as they could not refute the Sabbath truth. And at this time God's chosen all saw clearly that we had the truth, and they came out and endured the persecution with us. **I saw the sword, famine, pestilence, and great confusion in the land**. The wicked thought that we had brought the judgments upon them, and they rose up and took counsel to rid the earth of us, thinking that then the evil would be stayed.”

Early Writings, p. 85,86:

“The commencement of that time of trouble,” here mentioned does not refer to the time when the plagues shall begin to be poured out, but to a short period just before they are poured out, while Christ is in the sanctuary. At that time, while the work of salvation is closing, trouble will be coming on the earth, and third angel..... At that time the “latter rain,” or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out.”

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

THE FIFTH SEAL

SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 7, p. 975; 9T, p. 229:

“The time is coming when God's people will feel the hand of persecution because they keep holy the seventh day.”

Selected Messages, Book 2, p.375:

“God's Sabbath will be trampled under foot, and a false sabbath will be exalted. In a Sunday law there is possibility for great suffering to those who observe the seventh day. **The working out of Satan's plans will bring persecution to the people of God.** But the faithful servants of God need not fear the outcome of the conflict.”

NOTE: Note carefully the wording of the fifth seal. It speaks of those that remain, to fill up the total number of those destined to suffer persecution. The Dark Ages cannot be referred to here exclusively, for the last martyrs had not yet given their blood, and have not even to this day. Therefore, the fifth seal HAS to have some eschatological application to make the best sense of it. Consistent to the prophetic datum, this is exactly what we are told will still occur during the “little time of trouble” before probation closes.

The Sixth Seal

(The events described in the sixth seal will be repeated during the time of trouble as tokens of the Biblical day of the Lord. Such events are consistently portrayed as happening right before the Day of the Lord, the true Day of the Lord being when Jesus comes.)²⁶

²⁶ Read E.G. White, *The Great Controversy*, “God’s People Delivered,” *Last-Day Events*, etc. Cf. also Joel, chapter 2 and 3, Isaiah 13:10, etc.

The Eschatological Fulfillment of the Seven Seals

It is not necessary to recount all the events of Jesus actual coming here, but the actual Day of the Lord will come associate with all the phenomena described in the prophets. Signs in the heavens, blood and fire, and pillars of smoke.

The Seventh Seal

According to our eschatological/historical pattern we have suggested in this book it makes perfect sense to see that when one reaches the seventh in a series, or at the transition of sections, one can interpret consistent to whether he sees the previous section as historical or as eschatological.

If one is following the *Seals* section as wholly eschatological, then what happens **in** the seventh seal is also eschatological and is parenthetical (i.e., the pouring out of the trumpets as expanded into the Great Time of Trouble.) Therefore, the seven seals (little time of trouble) is followed by the close of probation (throwing down the censer) and the great time of trouble or the plagues.

But if one is seeing the Seals as a description of the history of the entire Christian dispensation, from the time of the apostles to the end of probationary time, then the seventh seal marks the end of the cycle or pattern, the end of time, and only briefly summarizes the coming of Jesus in the clouds of glory. The final hour simply represents in a few words the entire show down or end game.

The Sealing

To understand the sealing one must first identify the symbols used. The following key symbols can mean:

WINDS=Strife, the final works of Satan

EARTH, SEA, AND TREES= Earth, Sea, and the things living upon it. Populous and sparsely populous area as well are affected. The things mentioned are the things that wind can affect. Trees represent kingdoms, tribes, and nations.²⁷

FOUR CORNERS OF THE EARTH=The entire earth, the four directions from which winds blow²⁸.

THE SEAL²⁹ OF GOD= The Sabbath³⁰

²⁷ Cf. Volume 3, the article entitled, “The Symbology of Grass and Trees in the Book of Revelation.”

²⁸ Barclay offers the interesting fact that ancient peoples believed that favorable winds came from due north, south, east, and west while those that blew diagonally were harmful. This is why the angels are at the corners of the earth. William Barclay, *The Revelation of John*, Vol. 2, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, p. 19. This is also found in R.H. Charles, *The Revelation of St. John*, Vol. 1, p. 204, along with example references in 1 Enoch lxxvi. and xxxiv. 3.

²⁹ Note that allusions to the Sabbath come in several ways from these passages. The number four is prominent. The Sabbath commandment is the “fourth” commandment. And always in the background is the number seven, the Sabbath being the “seventh” day.

The Sealing

"The fourth commandment alone of all the ten contains the seal of the great lawgiver, the Creator of the heavens and the earth." 6T 350

(Seal=name, territory, title)

The seal of a document was usually found at its center.³¹

"Those who would have the seal of God in their foreheads must keep the Sabbath of the fourth commandment." 7BC 970.

"There is to be a mark placed upon God's people, and that mark is the keeping of His holy Sabbath." 7BC 981.

"True observance of the Sabbath is the sign of loyalty to God." 7BC 981

(See Ezekiel 20:20 and Exodus 31:13)

The Seventh Seal:

More will be said on this important subject ignored largely by commentators in the upcoming chapter, " More about the Seventh Seal." Following are some informative quotes in regard to the relation of the seventh seal with the events of the previous seals and with the trumpets.

Note the wording carefully:

³⁰ Mounce notes that according to Jewish tradition, the four angels are not able to keep the Sabbath (cf. Jubilees 2:18 ff.) This is an interesting background and context for the seal of God being the Sabbath. Mounce, p. 165.

³¹ Cf. Doukhan, p. 71.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Early Writings of Ellen G. White, p. 36,37:

"I saw that the four angels would hold the four winds until Jesus' work was done in the sanctuary, and then will come the seven last plagues. These plagues enraged the wicked against the righteous; they thought that we had brought the judgments of God upon them, and that if they could rid the earth of us, the plagues would then be stayed. A decree went forth to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance. This was the time of Jacob's trouble."

Early Writings, pp. 279, 280:

"I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven. An angel with a writer's inkhorn by his side returned from the earth and reported to Jesus that his work was done, and the saints were numbered and sealed. Then I saw Jesus, who had been ministering before the ark containing the ten commandments, **throw down the censer.** He raised His hands, and with a loud voice said, "It is done." And all the angelic host laid off their crowns as Jesus made the solemn declaration, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

There is no other place in Revelation where we have a clearer affinity to these quotes than in the seventh chapter. There can be no doubt whatsoever that there is eschatological significance to the throwing down of the censer, the winds of strife, the final sealing, and the time of trouble, or the plagues. While these things can have a justified historical application as well, the better and more forceful of the two is the eschatological focii. When this is realized, chapters 8 and 9 describe in perfect detail the final plagues upon this earth.

The Sealing

The Symbolism of the Angel From the Sun-Rising

Let us begin by summarizing the principle points given us in the symbolism used and in the light of the overall context:

1. An angel is Revelation is in these types of cases is always indicative of a "message." This is what the word "angel" actually means. Therefore, we have before us in this passage the rise of a religious movement giving a particular **message** of the nature there described.
2. The time this happens is also generally indicated in the passage. It is an **eschatological** message for it happens as angels are called to carefully preserve the "sealed" immediately before the final plagues are poured out on the nations (trees: i.e. people groups, families, tribes).
3. The group, the 144,000 we have seen, are a group that are originally **assembled from all of Christendom's major denominations** to form a special group, tasked with giving a last day warning song/message.
4. The angel has the "seal" of God, and His people are to be "sealed" with this seal. Other places indicate this to be none other than the true biblical **Sabbath, a sign** of sanctification, "sealing" the believer into eligibility for final salvation. The Sabbath is also directly inferred in the very phrase: the "seal of the living God." The "living" God is not merely a claim that God is living, for anyone who believes in Him knows that already. It is in participial form to indicate that it is a "qualitative" seal of the God of "life," "living things," or "creation;" thus the Creator God as claimed in the fourth commandment. The same 144,000 in chapter 14 repeat this first message as a message of judgment and particularly enjoin all to worship God "who made the earth, the sea, the rivers, and the fountains of water."
5. The angel ascends from the **east**. The "east" is always indicative of the advent of the Messiah and the realization of the hopes of Israel. The Messiah comes from the east in all the Old Testament motifs. Israel

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

entered Palestine on the east side of Jordan to fulfill the prophetic dream of Exodus to Advent. Elijah was raptured in the east to prefigure the rapture of the saints, who will likewise be visited and raptured from the east. Jesus, the true Messiah, began his ministry by entering Judea and Galilee from the east, being baptized near Jericho at the Jordan. Therefore the message is one that highlights an ever increasing interest in the Advent of Christ. It is an "Advent" message that is given in Revelation 7, clearly and directly.

6. The seal in the angel's hand would gleam brightly, as would a star. In the eastern direction this could be none other than the "morning star." (The "phosphorus," "Venus") Of course, Revelation consistently represents the morning star as equated with Jesus himself. But other places of Scripture (1 Peter 1:21) indicate that this star is the **star of HOPE** that announces the approach of THE DAY, the new day. It announces the promise of a **soon coming** new day. It is the "aurim" (Urim), synonymous with the "sunrise" or the "aura" of the morning. "Some glad morning Jesus will come." "Some golden daybreak Jesus will come." It is the "Maranatha," "even so come, Lord Jesus" day of Revelation 22, final verse.

7. The seal is in the *right hand*, where a signet would be placed. It is in Revelation 7 presented as a **truth that is the "right handed" to the message of the advent**. Consequent to the proclamation made by early Adventists of Christ's coming came the discovery of the Sabbath truth. In fact Ellen White saw an "aura," a "halo" of light upon it. Hiram Edson said it was "*light* and truth," and he was with the believers to keep it. Bates and others identified it as the Seal of God. The message began among a select few in the East, and indeed it was an old truth that was but "resurrected" from the East (the Bible lands). It then grew from the darkness of dawn into full day and has now spread across the globe.

Synthesis

There can be no other consistent interpretation of this passage than to identify it with the Advent movement of the current day. This is not a

The Sealing

reach. This is exactly what it means and was intended to mean. The symbols all directly teach the Adventist doctrine and does so in one brilliant picture of **proclamation**. Shown is a **message**, a message of **hope** about the **Advent**. Along with it is seen the **Seal of the God**, the God of **creative** life who made all things. It is a **last-day** message warning the world of impending doom for this planet where all things living will be affected by the **winds** of strife and commotion that we are seeing even in these days. The angel in the sun-rising can best be summarized with the words; a **message** of "**Advent Hope**"----The blessed hope and appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven. The message will **increase** and increase until "The Day dawns, and the Daystar arises in our hearts." It must go to every kindred and nation, tongue and people. It is the message of the commandments of God and the true **faith of Jesus**, who is Himself "The Morning Star. It is written in and all over this passage that this is passage is for and about Adventists. No question.

Who Are the 144,000?

(THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE 144,000)

To determine correct understanding of this doctrine one must:

- Examine **ALL** pertinent characteristics
- Discard pre-conceived notions
- Study the prophetic counsel
- Avoid absolute dogmatism

By merging chapter 7:4-17 with 14:1-5, fourteen (2X7) characteristics are noted. Each of these will be examined individually in the following pages:

- They are eschatological last day “Jews” or “Israelites.”
- They are from the “12 tribes of Israel.”
- They have the seal of God on their foreheads (names of God & Jesus).
- They are designated distinctly from a later and separate group taken from all nations and races of the world. (7:9)
- Their number is 144,000.
- They stand on Mt. Zion with the Lamb.
- They sing a new song.
- They have harps.
- They are “redeemed” from the earth.
- They are virgins; or chaste.
- The song they sing is unique to them.
- They follow the Lamb wherever he goes.

Who are the 144,000?

- They are “firstfruits.”
- They have no guile in their mouth.

1. They are Jews.

Are they literal Jews or Spiritual Jews?

In Revelation (according to the New Testament rule of enlarged understanding) all the faithful are considered to be “Jews.”

- There are those who “say” they are Jews and are not. (Yet this is said to largely a gentile audience)
- They enter the New Jerusalem through “tribal” gates.

Galatians 3:28,29:

“And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.”

Therefore they are “spiritual” Jews and not literal Jews. They claim to be God’s people in a general sense. The conclusion would be that they are a group who are *Christians*.

2. They are from 12 tribes.

If the 144,000 are Christians; that is, modern Israel; what would the 12 tribes naturally represent?

Each tribe in the Old Testament was given a blessing including a characterization or description of that tribe. Therefore some commentators attempt to divide modern Israel according to temperament. But it is doubtful that heaven has particularly organized personality types the way we have.

However, the Christian church has fallen into several classifications or denominations since the time of the apostles. Most significantly these divisions have been brought about in these last days. There are now Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Christians,

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Congregationalists, Lutherans, and scores of others. It might then be noted that the 144,000 would necessarily consist of representatives from such subgroups or divisions.

3. This group has the seal of God.

The seal or mark of God, the sign of His ownership is clear (Ex 31:13; Ezekiel 20:20; Exodus 20:8-11) This group keeps the Sabbath.

4. They are distinct from a later group from all nations.

There is evident in the prescribed contexts a progression by the glorified throngs from a “national” base/group to an “international” movement. This group consequently represents a group that moves from relative isolation to global recognition. This characteristic change in the two groups of Revelation 7 is a supremely important marker ignored by most everyone, especially those who falsely co-identify the two groups. This identifying characteristic must be recognized and acknowledged. It is very important.

5. They have a definite and specific number.

The number is too exact and suspicious to be absolutely literal yet at the same time is measurable and specific. The number has purpose or else this group would be designated generally and more ambiguously than it is.

6. They are seen on Mt. Zion.

This associates them with the ministry of God’s temple or sanctuary. It assigns this group a priestly role designating that they are:

- Religiously ardent
- Faithful to the Levitical precepts
- “Jewish” in their religious orientation and worship

Who are the 144,000?

7. They sing a “new” song.

Songs are always messages; expressions of the heart. Especially in Hebrew culture, the musical score was not so much important as was the lyric. This group therefore has a “new” message, unique to themselves, new to the world.

8. They possess harps

(*kithara*)(guitara) Harps were a lute-like instrument usually having **12** (sometimes 11) strings. They are associated often with temple worship in the Jewish writings. Notably they are associated with the services for the re-dedication of the temple or sanctuary and the subsequent annual celebrations honoring that event. (See IDB, Vol. 2, p.526.)

9. They were “bought” from the earth from among men.

- They are *men*, not angels, earthly, not heavenly creatures
- Christ’s blood has made atonement for them.
- Inference is made that they are in a “lay away plan,” *purchased to own*.
- They are “sealed” or marked prior to or before others. This distinction is incredibly significant.

They are “bought” or “redeemed.” “Redeemed” does not necessarily mean “translated” as many mistakenly assume³².

³²In biblical times redemption was enacted by the closest of kin (the “goel,” or redeemer) toward the person in circumstantial jeopardy. The redeemer would intercede for the person who owed a debt, or who owed a penalty that he could not pay. Since many of these legal transactions were monetary, the words “redeem” and “bought” are interchangeable. In an intercessory fashion the redeemer was the legal protector of that person’s rightful property. In the case of the *levirate marriage law*, the redeemer even assumed the care of his deceased relative’s wife.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

- They are bought from the earth, implying that they were once “possessed” by the earth. (Technically purchased from the earth alludes to *death*; i.e., burial in the ground). Traditionally, expositors teach that the 144,000 are “translated” FROM the earth and are seen “proleptically” on Mt. Zion (Rev. 14:1 ff.). This assumed meaning, however, may cloud the true intention of Revelation’s author in using this particular phrase “redeemed **from** the earth.”

10. They are pure.

The King James Version says “virgins.”

This is taken to mean that they are doctrinally and spiritually pure since they have not committed “fornication” with Babylon. However the symbolism surpasses this:

It does not necessarily mean that they are unmarried or that it is a virtue to not be married as some for centuries have read into this. Revelation itself, as a book, uses marriage as a divine illustration; something that is natural and good (holy city=bride, pregnant woman yet clothed with purity, etc.). What is referred to here then is ritual and Levitical purity.

The point is that they are “men/priests” who are *ritually* clean in preparation for a coming religious holy day. Israelites were enjoined only in two circumstances to prepare thus:

- At the giving of the law on Sinai
- Immediately before the Day of Atonement

They were to prepare in the following way:

1. Wash their garments (robes)
2. Temporarily abstain from sexual relations

This fasting and preparation was particularly observed before the Day of Atonement. This is well documented in Josephus and the Jewish writings. Biblically, another instance of this was before the giving of the law on Sinai. God told Moses; “consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let

Who are the 144,000?

them wash their garments” (Ex 19:10). In verse 15 Moses instructed, “do not go near a woman,” or in the KJV, “Go not at your wives.” According to ceremonial regulations a man who had sexual relations with a woman was considered unclean for a specified length of time. To be “chaste” or “clean” required only momentary abstinence.

Therefore it can be concluded that his group is represented as having a religious experience that leaves them prepared for the coming (1) Day of Judgment and for (2) receiving the Law of God.

11. The song or message they sing is unique to them.

What this says is that this group’s song/message is “new³³” and “reformatory” and is therefore not fully appreciated by the rest of Christendom. The amazing specificity in the fulfillment of this and other characteristics in modern times is truly amazing!

12. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes.

They are aware of the “movement” of the Lamb (in the temple on Mt. Zion, which was the focus, of course!) and they go with Him through the holy apartments.

13. They are “firstfruits.”

- Firstfruits were offered before the general harvest.
- The living righteous when Jesus comes are not in that context the first to be “translated.”

³³ Considering the "new song" of the 144,000, we can be sure that it is the message of the three angels. To quote: "A new song is to be put into their mouths. They are to go forth to impart to others now in darkness the light of the third angel's message." 7T 40

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

“They are caught up together. . . to meet the Lord in the air” (1Thess. 4:16,17); i.e. together with the righteous dead.

- They will not then precede them. (Cf. RSV; Greek translation, etc.)

Thought Questions:

- Are only 144,000 “caught up” when Jesus comes?
- Are there only “spiritual Jews” raptured?
- What about those from every kindred, nation, tongue, and people?

Therefore, the 144,000 appear to be a specially designated group, bought, sealed, and enrolled sometime prior to the coming and before the three angels have completed their work. And this is exactly the historical order in which they are placed in Revelation 7 and in Revelation 14.

14. They have or speak (“proclaim”) the truth.

This is not speaking only of basic “honesty.” This is regrettably where some expositors leave us. It is doctrinal and biblical honesty, for they are pure, on Mt. Zion with the Lamb. They have the “truth.” They have no “guile in their mouths.” They have the “Everlasting Gospel.”

The Identity of the 144,000

Assuming the foregoing considerations as valid, a profile may be built as follows:

The 144,000 describe an ardent last-day religious movement, formed out of the many 'tribes' or Christian denominations that have an estimable number; whose work and ministry result in a worldwide multitude of believers. They have the seal of God, His Sabbath, and they have experienced a preparation for the Day of Judgment. They have a distinct message or song that they only teach and know, namely the messages of three angels. They exist prior to the final harvest and are 'firstfruits' of that group. They are in the prophetic spotlight before their mission becomes global (nations, kindreds, tongues, and people). They preach the truth of the everlasting gospel, the judgment, and the keeping of God's commandments. They follow the movement of the Lamb within the sanctuary precincts of Mt. Zion.

PREMISE:

The 144,000 are the early faithful Adventist believers, a group now largely in the past, but who have preached and lived the message faithfully.

Further Clarifications:

Parts of this view are no doubt startling to some and need further explanation. There naturally are glaring objections that can be raised with

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

regard to this group being placed in the past, especially in reference to the testimony of Ellen White who seems to place them as the living righteous when Christ comes. But there are problems even with this view when examined carefully. A further look at the evidence and the history of early Adventism may at least partially solve this dilemma.

Early Adventist History

In about 1831 William Miller began to preach the imminence of Christ's return on the basis of Daniel 8:14 and other prophetic passages. By the year 1844 the advent movement had swelled into the "midnight cry." The first angel's message was sounded with a loud voice; "the hour of his judgment has come." Unlike many religious movements the Millerite movement was cross-denominational: Says G. Damsteegt:

"The Millerites were of the following persuasions: "Protestant, Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Protestant, Primitive Methodist, Wesleyan Methodist, Closed Communion Baptists, Open Communion Baptists, Calvinists and Arminians, Baptists, Presbyterians, Old and New School Congregationalists, Old and new School Lutherans, Dutch Reformed.... (etc. etc.)."³⁴

There were also significant numbers of people who had part in this movement:

"Estimates of the number of people who publicly identified themselves with the second-advent message in the thirteen years of Miller's movement (1831-1844) range from Miller's characteristically modest 50,000 to a scholarly estimate of around 135,000."³⁵

However with the disappointment and the failure of their hopes the movement soon nearly died out. The stragglers took several different

³⁴ P. Gerard. Damsteegt, Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Association, 1977), p. 14.

³⁵ (Maxwell, p.361)

The Identity of the 144,000

positions. However, one particular group successfully grew out of the movement on the platform of the anti-typical Day of Atonement and the Temple (sanctuary) doctrine; then came the subsequent discoveries of the Sabbath as the Seal of God, the gift of prophecy, the yet expected coming of Christ (the everlasting good news) and other doctrines.

Soon thereafter the group solidified and went out with missionary zeal to sound the message of all three angels. At this stage they were dealing with formative issues, and issues such as the "shut door," of Rev. 3:7 taken from the message to the church of Philadelphia. They soon began to realize that they "must prophesy again to many nations, and kindreds, and tongues and kings. " The movement grew.

But by the 1860's and around the time that the church officially organized under the name, *Seventh-day Adventist*, a declension in zeal and spirituality was noticed and the message to the church of Laodicea was brought to the forefront.

This shift is interesting for the following reason:

The Testimony of Ellen G. White

The visions and messages to the 144,000 are all couched *in the language of the next to last church*; Philadelphia, *not the very last church*, Laodicea. Especially this is true of the earliest and first vision given to Ellen Harmon just months after the disappointment. The case should be made that this correlation with the apocalyptic message to the church of Philadelphia has prophetic significance and is not merely a homiletic application to the church at this time. Note the many parallels in the following quotes, most of them extracted from the very first vision of Ellen Harmon, who God gave to comfort the people in the movement at that time. Also for purposes of comparison the message to the church of Philadelphia is first quoted:

Rev. 3:7 -13. ***"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man***

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. "

(Early Writings:)

*".... and from His arm came a light which waved over the Advent band, and they shouted, "Alleluia!" Others rashly denied the light behind them and said that it was not God that had led them out so far. The light behind them went out, leaving their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and lost sight of the mark and of Jesus, and fell off the path down into the dark and wicked world below. Soon we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus' coming. The living saints, **144,000 in number**³⁶, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake. When God spoke the time, He poured upon us the Holy Ghost, and our faces began to light up and shine with the glory of God, as Moses' did when he came down from Mount Sinai. The 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads was written, God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus' new name. At our happy, holy state the wicked were*

³⁶ In the 1860 revision of this first vision recorded in *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 2, made by James and Ellen White themselves, the words, "144,000 in number" were eliminated from this phrase. Why is an interesting question to pursue. (Ron Graybill, "Visions and Revisions, Part I," *Ministry*, February, 1994) p. 12.

The Identity of the 144,000

enraged, and would rush violently up to lay hands on us to thrust us into prison, when we would stretch forth the hand in the name of the Lord, and they would fall helpless to the ground. Then it was that **the synagogue of Satan knew that God had loved us** who could wash one another's feet and salute the brethren with a holy kiss, **and they worshipped at our feet.** . . .

Jesus raised His mighty, glorious arm, laid hold of the pearly gate, swung it back on its glittering hinges, and said to us, "You have washed your robes in My blood, **stood stiffly for My truth**, enter in." We all marched in and felt that we had a perfect right in the city. . . .

We tried to call up our greatest trials, but they looked so small compared with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that surrounded us that we could not speak them out, and we all cried out, "Alleluia, heaven is cheap enough!" and we touched our **glorious harps** and made heaven's arches ring. . . .

Mount Zion was just before us, and on the mount was a **glorious temple** And as we were about to enter the holy temple, Jesus raised His lovely voice and said, "Only the 144,000 enter this place," and we shouted, "Alleluia. . . ."

This temple was supported by seven **pillars**, all of transparent gold, set with pearls most glorious. The wonderful things I there saw I cannot describe. Oh, that I could talk in the language of Canaan, then could I tell a little of the glory of the better world. **I saw there tables of stone in which the names of the 144,000 were engraved in letters of gold.** After we beheld the glory of the temple, we went out, and Jesus left us and went to the city. Soon we heard His lovely voice again, saying, "Come, My people, you have come out of great tribulation, and done My will; suffered for Me; come in to supper, for I will gird Myself, and serve you." We shouted, "Alleluia! glory!" and entered into the city."

Early Writings, p.15-19.

It is clear that according to the testimony of Ellen White that the 144,000 she saw in vision are awarded characteristics of the **Philadelphian** church together with the same characteristics given that church in the book of Revelation:

- A small band ("little strength")

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

- Interest in the temple or sanctuary
- Congregated on Mt. Zion
- God's name on their foreheads
- "New Jerusalem" on their foreheads
- Jesus new name on their foreheads
- Pillars
- Names engraved
- Faithfulness to God's truth
- Persecuted by the synagogue of Satan

They Follow Lamb Wherever He Goes

They also follow the movements of the Lamb in and about the temple:

In an early vision Ellen White saw the heavenly transference from the holy place ministry of Christ to the most holy ministry of Christ:

"I saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies within the veil, and sit down. Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and the most of those who were bowed down arose with Him. I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to the careless multitude after He arose, and they were left in perfect darkness. Those who arose when Jesus did, kept their eyes fixed on Him as He left the throne and led them out a little way." EW 55 (See also p. 255).

To this faithful company who worked faithfully when the cause was unpopular and small the promise is also significantly made:

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience,"³⁷ I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. "

³⁷ In the previous volume it was discovered that this term is referring particularly to the ten commandments.

The Identity of the 144,000

This will indeed be the case for Ellen White and all the firstfruits of the Adventist movement who lived and worked faithfully to their deaths. In certain places Ellen White and her contemporaries are treated as being grouped or associated with the 144,000. For instance:

"I begged of my attending angel to let me remain in that place. I could not bear the thought of coming back to this dark world again. Then the angel said, "You must go back, and if you are faithful, you, with the 144,000, shall have the privilege of visiting all the worlds and viewing the handiwork of God." EW40

" I saw that she (Mrs. Hastings) was sealed and would come up at the voice of God and stand upon the earth, and would be with the 144,000. I saw we need not mourn for her; she would rest in the time of trouble, and all that we could mourn for was our loss in being deprived of her company. I saw her death would result in good."--Letter 10, 1850. (2 SM 263) (EGW Biography, Vol. 1, p. 173)

(White Estate editors of course feel compelled to give explanatory notes for each of these quotes, emphasizing the "with" or seeking to apologize for or explain what appears to be impossible. Mrs. Hastings was one of the first³⁸ losses in death to the early Adventist believers and a very close personal friend of Ellen White.)

Note also the following statements concerning the sealing time; written long enough ago now that no person then living could still be alive today to be living when Christ comes:

"Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads--it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved--just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come.

³⁸ Notice that Mrs. Hastings was already "sealed" more than a "lifetime" ago. Ca. 1850. There are sealings in every age, perhaps, but this one is directly equated with the 144,000.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming "(MS 173, 1902). 4BC 1161.

*"Live and act wholly in reference to the coming of the Son of man. The sealing time is very short, and **will soon be over**. Now is the time, while the four angels are holding the four winds, to make our calling and election sure." EW 58.*

Though no doubt all of God's people, including the great multitude from all times and places will in a sense be sealed, the sealing work predominantly figures into the focus on the 144,000 in the book of Revelation. In fact the verb forms indicate them as "already having been sealed" in the same context as the angel's still holding the winds.

A simple syllogism will equate that if the sealing work was *nearly over* an hundred or more years ago, and the sealing work *had already begun*, that at least most of those sealed in that era can never be alive "**until**" Jesus comes.

But they certainly will be alive "**when**" Jesus comes. The following progressionary chart illustrates how those who are raised in the special resurrection will experience everything that is described as being the experience of the 144,000 in the visions. This concept is very important to this discussion. In Revelation 7, careful exegesis demonstrates that it is the "great multitude" who go through the great time of trouble and who are arrayed in white robes and about whom the elder of John's acquaintance speaks. But this cannot be necessarily assumed of the first group who many expositors carelessly co-identify with the great multitude group from many nations.

First Vision (EW, p. 15)

Advent band follow light
(some fall)
(p. 15)

Great Controversy Vision

Sabbath test, time of trouble
(chapters 38,39)

The Identity of the 144,000



Some in prison, mountains;
threatened with death (p.635)

Darkness and rainbow around
each praying company (p. 635)

Saints look up, cloud parted,
see Jesus at right hand of God
(p.636)

Midnight--Sun appears, nature
turned out of course. (p.636)

Voice of God: It is done---
earthquake, mountains sink,
cities leveled---prisons rent
asunder (p.637)

SPECIAL

RESURRECTION--third
angel people raised to hear
covenant (p.637)

Voices heard by false teachers,
demons cry out (p.638)

Celestial City and tables of
stone seen (p.639)

"We hear the voice of God
announcing the day and hour"
(p.15)

Voice declaring day and hour
and deliverance of covenant
(p.640)

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

"Living saints" 144,000 in
number understand voice--
wicked do no, faces light up
with Holy Sp. (p.15)

Synagogue of Satan worship at Wicked distraught (p. 640)
feet
(p. 15)

Small cloud in the east (p.15) (White cloud, Jesus is seen)	Small black cloud, etc. (640- 644) (He comes)
--	---

Graves are opened (general res.) p. 16	Calls forth sleeping saints (p.644)
--	--

Travel to heaven and enjoy the glories of the place; Fitch & Stockman, etc. (p.16ff)	Ransomed and 144,000 enter the city of God (p.645-652)
---	---

Please notice how the parallels suddenly emerge just after the special resurrection. Those raised in the special resurrection receive every benefit and see every sign that is promised to the 144,000.

As demonstrated in the preceding comparison, it fits quite appropriately that the 144,000 are a special group who had a special message for their time whose works are not forgotten, who died in the Lord. "Their works do follow them." (14:13)

Note: The Revelator recognizes that some will die before the final events because this is mentioned *post* the presentation of the 144,000 and *post* to

The Identity of the 144,000

the presentation of the three messages. It would seem that more than martyrs are included in this first fruits group³⁹.

Typology and History

Throughout Salvation History a consistent pattern has developed; it is this: God calls a people. Then he seeks to reach the world through them.

He started with Israel, and called them out as a nation. They were of one family. But God was not playing favorites. His plan was that they would evangelize the world. According to Isaiah they were to be a "light" to the Gentiles. When they failed he started over. This Jesus did by calling 12 apostles, (12 sons of Jacob), sending out 70 (seventy elders) and so forth. They were to first go to the lost sheep of the tribe of Israel. This is what happened. The first Christian converts were all Jews. If they had not been so prompted the gospel may have never gone to the Gentiles. But in time it was proclaimed "first to the Jew and then to the Greek."

It so happened with the Advent message. It went at first to the existing churches of Christians. But now the world is in a stage of proclaiming the gospel so that the "heathen" from all lands who are accepting it outnumber the original church-spawned group.

Israel that came out of Egypt was God's "firstborn." These firstborn were "redeemed" with shekels. They belonged to God. They are a type of the

³⁹ It is not the claim of this author that Ellen White herself understood the 144,000 in the way presented in this treatise. It is quite clear from her statements that she understood them to be of the generation of which she was a member, for she believed that the church was on the very verge of Canaan and that Jesus' coming was within only a few years. She did not envision that a whole century and more would pass, and that none of those living with her in the message would live to see Jesus come. No doubt, in vision she saw the triumphant Adventist throng; those raised to see Jesus come, and naturally assumed that those she saw in vision were those living at the end of time, or the like. God did not reveal to her the times, but only the outcome. Only with the time having now elapsed could any of us understand anything different than she did concerning the 144,000.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

firstfruits or firstborn in the final Exodus from Egypt, or the coming out of Babylon. Hopefully, God's people will cross Jordan without too long of a rebellious stay in the wilderness.

The number 144,000 is not simply symbolic as so many propose; weakly laying it aside. God could be more general if he wanted, but he has purpose in the number. Yet it is too exact to be absolutely literal. Only God can know the true heart, and only he can reveal in the judgment who they individually are. It seems clear however, that they typify the genuine ones of those who first proclaimed the full Seventh-day Adventist message, beginning in the last century. It is a very realistic, symbolic number for that group of early Adventists who accepted the Sabbath and taught it with energy. Only one group on earth can fulfill all fourteen characteristics that are reviewed above.

Whether it represents "all" of the faithful of that generation, or whether it refers to the "men-priests," the "first-born of Israel," that is; ministers who have given the message, we may not be sure. But it really does not matter, because the number is not as important as the "group" that the number identifies.

This is also where they chronologically come in the prophetic narrative. It is important to notice that in both passages, Rev. 7 and 14, the 144,000 are mentioned *prior* to the later international group or the message that goes to them. This would seem to indicate that they come into prophetic history in that very order.

A WORD OF CAUTION

Regardless of what view is taken of the 144,000 it is important not to be dogmatic. The above considerations are not conclusive and it is not the author's intention to make them so. At the very least, however, it does seem unequivocal that the 144,000 refer to the great Advent movement since no other movement can qualify under so many characteristics. This much is faith building and legitimate. Whether or not they are alive until

The Identity of the 144,000

Jesus comes or are a group marked and sealed beforehand is not a matter that should be insisted upon.

In some ways it makes wonderful sense to this writer, and explains away an exclusive favoritism often troubling some students of this subject. It seems incongruous that at the end God would have two righteous groups, one excellent group and then, one inferior sub-group. It also is incongruous that God would limit the saved at the end to a pre-determined small number. This flies in the face of the New Testament teaching. It narrows the “whosoever will may come” idea elsewhere in the Revelation to a very narrow invitation at best.

What is important is to study who they are in an effort to understand God's word for our own enrichment and for the enrichment of other. Such subjects should never become a subject of pure argumentation.

Nor should anyone seek to identify specifically who compose or make up the 144,000 *as individuals*. Only God can judge who will be saved and lost, who is truly pure and who is not. This is a useless ambition. And this is probably what is meant in the cautions about not seeking to determine who the 144,000 are. But it is a noble task to understand God's word and it is God's desire that we understand as much as we can of it.

The following quote says it best:

“Christ says that there will be those in the church who will present fables and suppositions, when God has given grand, elevating, ennobling truths which should ever be kept in the treasure house of the mind. When men pick up this theory and that theory, when they are curious to know something it is not necessary for them to know, God is not leading them. It is not His plan that His people shall present something which they have to suppose, which is not taught in the Word. It is not His will that they shall get into controversy over questions which will not help them spiritually, such as, Who is to compose the hundred and

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

forty-four thousand? This those who are the elect of God will in a short time know without question.” 1 Selected Messages, p. 174.

The "Jew First" Principle

Jesus, the apostle Paul, and other New Testament writers understood a rank in responsibility in regards to the Gospel and its priority with the Jews. This principle appears to have been more than simply historical, that is, that in actuality the Gospel first went to the Jews and then later was directed to the Gentiles. It appears that by divine direction the house of Israel, the chosen race, was to receive priority (in time, at least) in receiving attention concerning the Gospel.

In fact, it was God's plan from the beginning that Israel would be the agent of God in bringing light to the Gentiles. They were given the oracles of God (Rom 3:1,2). They failed their mission in most respects and the *nation* as a spiritual base was rejected. By later New Testament times, the Jewish distinction was eradicated and every true believer was considered as Abraham's seed (Gal. 2:28,28). But God ordained a priority of attention to genuine individuals in Jewry, even after for the most part the Gospel went to the Gentiles. This priority was not really meant to be exclusive or to show favoritism, but nevertheless was a "first right" in perhaps somewhat a legal sense.

The Apostle Paul recognized the "first" position of the Jews:

Rom. 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Rom. 2:9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

Rom. 2:10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

Jesus understood as well the necessary timing and purpose of a Jew-directed Gospel:

Matt. 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

Matt. 10:6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Historically the Gospel did go first to Jews (although the reason was, in part, the inherent bigotry of the Jewish Christians and apostles who apparently believed the Gospel was for them only):

Acts 11:19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

Even Paul, though an apostle sent to the Gentiles, took a priority responsibility for the Jews:

The “Jew-First” Principle

Acts 9:15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

Paul customarily approached the Jews first in any given city, and then turned to the Gentiles:

Acts 13:5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; and they had also John to their minister.

Acts 13:14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.

Acts 13:42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

Acts 13:46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

Acts 14:1 And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.

Acts 18:4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

Acts 19:8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

The Jews were preached to first in Macedonia (Acts 16:1-13), at Corinth (Acts 18:4), at Ephesus (Acts 19:8), and at Rome itself (Acts 28:17-27).

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

- Similarly, it was only at places where the Jewish community almost totally rejected Paul's ministry that he finally turned wholly to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46; 18:6; 28:28)

Therefore it is easy to see how the 144,000 might be seen in this light; "firstfruits" to God. The tribes of Israel represented the *established* church, who as a group rejected the Messiah and the Gospel, but from whom were called a harvest of genuine individuals who accepted the truth of Christianity. Indeed it is possible that the early church saw the 144,000 as a contemporary group, those *racial* Jews who had accepted the Gospel. Upon their heels had come the ingathering of the Gentiles, a harvest from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In a "preterist" sense it certainly applies.

At the very least it is appropriate to notice that the 144,000 being an "eschatological" group would follow the same paradigm. For in religious awakenings at the time of the first proclamations of the three angel's messages were found a group who came out of *established* Christendom, the established churches. This group were maligned and persecuted by those who rejected the advent message and its accompanying truths (Sabbath, Sanctuary, etc.). To the rejecters, the door was shut, much as to the Israelite nation of old, and the message was then proclaimed to an international group as well, calling to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people----a multitude which no man can number.

The Order of the Tribes in Revelation 7

Interpreters generally tell us that the order in which the tribes are enumerated in the description of the 144,000 in Revelation 7 is “probably insignificant.”

Robert Mounce tells us that there are 18 other such tribal lists in the Bible. The most interesting observation coming out of all of these is that there are no two alike and there are none like this one in Revelation 7.⁴⁰

However, it is difficult to believe that anything in this marvelous apocalyptic book is merely random and without purpose. Some comment on the fact that this unique order is given to deliberately demonstrate a discontinuity with the other biblical lists. While I would tend to agree in a particular sense with this suggestion, I do not agree that this is where we should leave the matter or that this is the entire reason why the tribes are placed in the order that they are in Revelation 7:

Judah
Reuben
Gad
Asher

⁴⁰ Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1977), p. 171.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Naphtali
Manasseh
Simeon
Levi
Issachar
Zebulon
Joseph
Benjamin

A Popular Suggestion

One popular way of demonstrating significance for the order in which they are listed is to make a “sentence” story by stringing together the Hebrew meaning of the individual names.

Thus, for example:

(God be) *praised*, *behold a son*, (for) *a troop comes*. *Happy* (those) *wrestling* (with God?) *forgetting* (their past sins?). *Hearing*. (They will be) *joined*. (Their) *reward or wages* (will be a?) *dwelling* (and to) *add* (a) *son of the right hand*.

While this at first seems impressive to some, it is difficult to prove that this was intended. Better renditions are available than the one above. However, they take considerable license with the meaning of the words and take great liberties with transitions added to the names to bring us a sensible translation. In my opinion, the order, spelled out in this way does not seem providential. It requires that it be greatly construed to make proper sense.

The fact is, that a meaningful sentence or story could be thus artificially concocted from just about any words that might be given us. To illustrate this in an anecdotal way let us take an example from old American humor: A fanciful story is told of how an ignorant Black American of yesteryear was asked by his English tutor to create a meaningful sentence or paragraph using the words: defeat, deduct, defense, and detail. After

The Order of the Tribes in Revelation 7

puzzling over the words for a while he verbalized the following expression: “De feet of de duck went over de fence before de tail.”

That the order is intentional in order to make such a sentence could be proven if a Scriptural passage or doxology could be found that equates with the consecutive meaning of the tribal names. However, computer searches scarcely ever match any two consecutive expressions, much less all twelve in a row. Therefore I do not think it is scholarly or biblically permissible to force or promote this idea too far.

The Pattern of the Names

However, I suggest, by closer analysis there does seem to be significance to the order in the list (beyond the common thought observed by expositors that the predominant Judah replaces Reuben as the firstborn, at the top of the list).

Below is a demonstration of what appears, though, to be a further, deliberate ordering. First there appears in the following table the list of names and their generally accepted meanings:

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Tribal Name	Hebrew Meaning	Associated Meaning
Judah	“Praise” (<i>yadah</i>)	"hand"
Reuben	“See! a Son”	
Gad	“A troop comes”	Also, “Fortune”
Asher	“Happy”	
Naphtali	“Wrestling”	
Manasseh	“Causing to forget”	
Simeon	“Hearing”	“The Deity has heard”
Levi	“Joined”	
Issachar	“Wages, hire”	Phonetic—Isaac- “laughter”
Zebulon	“Dwelling”	“Dowry” Genesis 30:20
Joseph	“to add”	
Benjamin	“Son of right hand”	“Son of the South”

With a little more process of thought applied to these meanings there appears a general chiasmic relationship over the list.

The *epanados* appears as follows:

The Order of the Tribes in Revelation 7

Praise or Exaltation (to lift hand-?)

A Son

A multitude (army) will be added (comes)

Fortune

Happy

Wrestling

Forgetting (inattentive) (Heb. *shema*)

Hearing (i.e., attentive, not forgetting)(*nasha*)

Joined (as in wrestling, or battle)

Laughter (happy)

Dowry (Cf. reference below)

(May-a multitude) be added

A Son

Exaltation, Right Hand

The word “hand” in the Hebrew is “yad.” In a linguistic sense it seems, “to praise” (*yadah*), therefore, might involve the idea of a hand perhaps raised in praise. The right hand is synonymous with honor and praise, and is always equated with the most exalted position, or denoting a praiseworthy subject. Thus, we might note, the first and last names of the list could apparently equate thematically.

However the last name, Benjamin, which contains two root ideas, also contains the idea of a son; “ben,” in the Hebrew. This now is found in the second name, Reuben, above. This may at first seem slightly non-symmetrical, but we must notice that as the relationships are continued toward the center of the chiasm, the correspondences persist and the chiasm regularly rights itself. Some names may have more than one nuance, but when considering all the associated possibilities, the equation comes to essential balance in the end.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Zebulon is generally given the meaning of “dwelling.” However, when Leah bore him she made specific comment that his name meant “dowry,” as stated in Genesis 30:20.⁴¹

Issachar, is related to a Hebrew root meaning, “hire” or “wages.” Yet there is an unmistakable similarity in the phonetic pronunciation to “Isaac,” Abraham’s son, whose name meant “laughter.”

The very center of the list contains two expressions that may be judged as “antonyms,” rather than synonyms. They are nearly direct opposites. However, they are both “participles.” “Hearing” in the biblical sense is more than auditory. It means to “hearken” or to “heed.” Thus to remember and to give attention to. To forget, is just the opposite, to neglect. Thus, in this way these also may bear some kind of relationship.

While this pattern may not appear to be directly convincing, there is yet enough correspondence to challenge the notion that this arrangement is accidental. Certainly one of the best order-to-meaning arrangements appears here, I believe--as could be reasonably created-- when attempting to classify this particular list of twelve names.

The thematic parallel ideas follow the pattern:
Exaltation--Sonship--Fruitfulness--Fortune--Happiness--Conjunction--
Remembrance--(**7 themes**) -and then visits these in reverse.

And now appears a thematic pattern that cannot be accidental! That is that each thematic idea is appropriately related to the next one:

Thus:

Exaltation is related to Sonship
Sonship is related to Fruitfulness
Fruitfulness is related to Fortune
Fortune is related to Happiness

⁴¹ (Cf. observations on the word, *zabad*, *Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1962, 1981, Vol. 1, p.867).

The Order of the Tribes in Revelation 7

Happiness is related to Conjunction or Completion
Completion is related to Remembrance or Fulfillment

Here then is a nearly perfect description of all the rewards of the faithful, particularly the faithful 144,000.

The above paradigm may even have some philosophical relationship to the seven days of creation week:

Exaltation is seen with the “light” and “glory,” of the first day. Sonship could represent a second extension and division from a parent figure as in the division of the waters. Fruitfulness reminds us of the rich verdure and fruit-bearing plants made to cover the earth on the climax of the third day; fortune reminding us of the fortuitous stars and the genuine blessings of fertility brought by the sun and stars. Happiness bringing to mind the soaring, singing, and flying of the birds; the joining of male and female in the sixth day represents completion and corresponding perfection, the seventh day is completed in remembrance and rest.

Further Patterning of First Six and Last Six Names

There is also, I believe, other consistent ordering of the first six names as compared to the last six names.

- The first two names are two (of the four original) of the “firstborn” sons of Leah. (Judah, Reuben)
- The second two names are later or “lesser” sons of Leah or her maid, Zilpah—(Gad, Asher)
- The third two are from the line of Rachel, i.e. her maid, or Asenath. (Naphtali—Bilhah; and Manasseh---Asenath (elder to others from Rachel-- with Dan left out)

Starting on the second list of six names the same pattern repeats thus:

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

- The first two names are from the original four firstborn sons of Leah (Simeon and Levi)
- The second two were from the later “batch” which came from Leah (Issachar and Zebulon)
- The last two (Joseph and Benjamin) were the youngest of all and were from Rachel.

Therefore this list presents us with a modern and revised order of the tribes, placed in this meaningful fashion by God, which represents the unity, calling, and mission of the 144,000. The order is not random.

The Omission of Dan from the 12 Tribes

The tribe of Dan is omitted from the tribes included in the 144,000. Why this has happened *is only in part* correctly explained by those who note that Dan's nature according to the blessing given in Genesis is one that is "critical" and "backbiting."

The Blessing:

Gen. 49:16 Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.

Gen. 49:17 Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.

In addition, Dan we know was given to idolatry. But so was Ephraim whose name is also omitted, though the tribes of Joseph and Manasseh are mentioned. ("Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." Hosea 4:17.) It must be reported though that the other tribes were idolatrous as well, and they all eventually went into captivity because of it.

In any case, such characteristics would have no place in the new earth, where idolaters and accusers both are unwelcome.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

However, though this assessment may be correct as far as it goes, it *falls short* of the message that is expressed by the intentional omission of Dan from the list in Revelation 7.

The tribe of Dan is mentioned 72 times in scripture. Most of these references are not exegetically significant in that they are parts of lists and numberings. The few passages, which could have significance, are listed below, and the omission of Dan could be allusive to some of the following:

Possible Allusions:

*Lev. 24:11 And the **Israelitish** woman's son blasphemed the name of the **LORD**, and cursed. And they brought him unto Moses: (and his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of **Dan**:)*

*2Kgs. 10:29 Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit, **the golden calves that were in Bethel, and that were in Dan**.*

*1Kgs. 12:29 And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in **Dan**.*

*1Kgs. 12:30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto **Dan**.*

The most significant passages, however, have to be the Genesis 49 blessing quoted above; and the entire chapter of Judges 18. The entire chapter of Judges requires reading and is included below so the reader does not have to reference it. **But first the blessing in Genesis 49:16,17 needs further attention:**

All if not most observers of this passage miss the most by overlooking the first verse (verse 16) and concentrating on the next verse (verse 17).

Verse 16 says: "Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribe of Israel."

The Omission of Dan From the 12 Tribes

Dan in the Hebrew means, "to judge." But why does it say "as one of the tribes of Israel?" This statement as translated leaves the reader unimpressed. For everyone knows that Dan is one of the tribes of Israel. It is a non-statement. So why is it significant that Dan judges his people?

A better translation adds to the meaning considerably:

Dan shall judge his people as one "out of the tribes of Israel." That is **away from, separate from.**⁴² When the meaning is viewed this way the subsequent history of Dan and how it fulfilled this prophecy is strikingly apparent.

Judges 18 particularly, and also the above passages in 1 & 2 Kings describe how Dan related to the other tribes, especially as regards spiritual worship and the center of worship for all of the tribes in Shiloh and later Jerusalem:

Judg. 18:1 In those days there was no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel.

Judg. 18:2 And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, men of valour, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: who when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there.

Judg. 18:3 When they were by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned in thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and what makest thou in this place? and what hast thou here?

Judg. 18:4 And he said unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his **priest**.

⁴² I believe the word force of the Hebrew is better served in this translation than the traditional one, or the one of Keil and Delitzsch who opt for the meaning of "as one providing justice for all of Israel." (C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), p. 404.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Judg. 18:5 And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous.

Judg. 18:6 And the priest said unto them, Go in peace: before the LORD is your way wherein ye go.

Judg. 18:7 Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any man.

Judg. 18:8 And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto them, What say ye?

Judg. 18:9 And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good: and are ye still? be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land.

Judg. 18:10 When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land: for God hath given it into your hands; a place where there is no want of any thing that is in the earth.

Judg. 18:11 And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed with weapons of war.

Judg. 18:12 And they went up, and pitched in Kirjathjearim, in Judah: wherefore they called that place Mahanehdan unto this day: behold, it is behind Kirjathjearim.

Judg. 18:13 And they passed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto the house of Micah.

Judg. 18:14 Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, **Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? now therefore consider what ye have to do.**

Judg. 18:15 And they turned thitherward, and **came to the house of the young man the Levite**, even unto the house of Micah, and saluted him.

Judg. 18:16 And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which were of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate.

Judg. 18:17 And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, and came in thither, **and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image:**

The Omission of Dan From the 12 Tribes

and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men that were appointed with weapons of war.

Judg. 18:18 And these went into Micah's house, and **fetchd the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, What do ye?**

Judg. 18:19 And they said unto him, **Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth,** and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: **is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?**

Judg. 18:20 **And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people.**

Judg. 18:21 So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage before them.

Judg. 18:22 And when they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men that were in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan.

Judg. 18:23 And they cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company?

Judg. 18:24 And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee?

Judg. 18:25 And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household.

Judg. 18:26 And the children of Dan went their way: and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house.

Judg. 18:27 **And they took the things which Micah had made, and the priest which he had,** and came unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure: and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire.

Judg. 18:28 And there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon, and they had no business with any man; and it was in the valley that lieth by Bethrehob. And they built a city, and dwelt therein.

Judg. 18:29 **And they called the name of the city Dan,** after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel: howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Judg. 18:30 And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.

Judg. 18:31 And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

Conclusion:

What is clear from this story is that the tribe of Dan set up **their own priesthood** for their own tribe, having their own center of worship, and unfortunately that center of worship housed a graven image. The prophecy was fulfilled exactly, that they would judge their own people religiously and politically **separate from** the central government and religion of Israel.

So not only was the tribe of Dan idolatrous, but even more significantly, they were **INDEPENDENT** in their religious affiliation and refused to enter into the worship and priesthood of the rest of Israel. This significant **DISUNITY** is certainly what prompts the tribe of Dan to be left out of the 144,000.

Says the visionary:

*"The 144,000 were all sealed and **PERFECTLY UNITED**." (cf. EW pp.15-19)*

This explains, then, why Dan is left out. He attempts to worship independently. Inspiration again exonerates the answer.

The Omission of Dan From the 12 Tribes

Of course, there is a enormous lesson wrought here about those who feel like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram that they can do better with their own priesthood and that much can be accomplished by working separate from their brethren. There is a time to come out, but that time is too often anticipated too early by some "independents." Their end will be like that of Dan.

More About the Seventh Seal

Revelation 8:1-5

*Rev. 8:1 And when he had opened the **seventh seal**, there was **silence in heaven about the space of half an hour**.*

*Rev. 8:2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given **seven trumpets**.*

*Rev. 8:3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a **golden censer**; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of **all** saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.*

Rev. 8:4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

*Rev. 8:5 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**.*

The determination of some is that neither the seals nor the trumpets refer to eschatological events, but only to events known to us to have occurred during historical time, now chiefly falling into the past. This, however, is here being challenged. The case is to be made that the understanding of

More About the Seventh Seal

the seals and the trumpets can legitimately sought in BOTH historical time and in eschatological time.

Though it is possible that the "throwing down of the censer" happened at the end of a typical days ministry in the temple,⁴³ its greatest significance is that in type this was pointing to the final end of intercession for the entire history of the world, when the "prayers of all saints" would be remembered before God. There is no wish to expurgate from our thinking that the picture presented in the above passage is devoid of the typical historical interpretation and theme of the ongoing intercessory work of Christ. What we wish to rescue is that believing this is somehow exclusive of any significant eschatological meaning.

The simple act of throwing down the censer can easily and best be interpreted by any reader acquainted with the story to mean that Christ's mediation is represented as finished; over; completed. The angel actor, filling his place at the end of the seven seals and closing the work of the sealing must be seen most importantly as closing the intercession of Christ for all time and for all the world. The seal is the last thing in the process.

In addition the censer described here is "golden." The golden censer was supposedly used only on the *Day of Atonement*, the year-end "Day of Judgment."

The normal sequence of events, signs on earth, the holding of the four winds, the sealing, the close of probation, the pouring out of the judgments of God, then the coming of Christ are intrinsic and related to the text of Revelation in these very passages. It is irresponsible and illogical to insist that this does not describe end-time events and particularly at the seventh seal, the close of probationary time. It has to be acknowledged by even opponents of this view that in the prophetic scheme **the sealing of the**

⁴³ Cf. Doukhan, *Secrets of Revelation*, p. 77,78. Something similar to this happened in the daily service and is confirmed in the Rabbinic writings. The mistake made by Doukhan and others is in limiting this passage to a daily significance only.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

servants of God is followed immediately by the close of probation for this earth. Why in the world do some (DARCOM Committee) not wholly acknowledge this simple fact?!

*I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven. An angel with a writer's inkhorn by his side returned from the earth and reported to Jesus that his work was done, and the saints were numbered and **sealed**. Then I saw Jesus, who had been ministering before the ark containing the ten commandments, **throw down the censer**. He raised His hands, and with a loud voice said, "It is done." <And all the angelic host laid off their crowns as Jesus made the solemn declaration, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still." Early Writings, pp. 279, 280*

If this statement is not commentary upon Revelation 8:1-5 of what is it a commentary? There is no other place in scripture that echoes this exact description like this. Those who refuse to see this as the eschatological close of probation are thus bound to conclude that the writer Ellen White made this up, or that God showed her something for which there is no Biblical base. This is simply unlikely and not at all typical, for virtually nothing in the doctrinal teachings of the Ellen White is purely original but is normally, according to God's plan, always an elucidation of prior prophetic revelation.

The scene presented in Revelation 8:1-5 is at the very least a definite reference to the ceasing of the intercession of Christ at the final close of earth's probation. The angel represents Christ⁴⁴ just as Christ is represented by the angel of Revelation 10, etc.

⁴⁴ Jesus Christ as a person or a normal historical character virtually never appears as such in the Book of Revelation. This is because the book is written in "sign language." Jesus is everywhere present, but he appears in symbolic fashion. The principle of the direct association of symbols is very important to applications in this case. He can be represented by an angel. In the Revelation Jesus does not

More About the Seventh Seal

A CLOSER LOOK AT TWO STORIES OF THE BIBLE EXPLAIN THIS TEXT SOME---

Silence is noted for "about the space" of one-half hour.

1/2 hour--(APPROXIMATELY, CLOSE TO)

Applying as others have the typical day for a year principle:

1 day= 1 year

1 hour= 1/24th of a year=15 days (biblical reckoning)

1/2 hour= 7.5 days

Therefore about ONE WEEK OF BIBLICAL TIME.

By examining stories about close of probation in past history---and comparing these elements---the author of these words feels one can be more certain that this passage is talking about the close of probation:

FIRST--The Story of NOAH and the flood---"As it was in the days. . ."

A scenario is presented as follows:

- An Investigative judgment period--120 years.
- The faithful enter the ark of safety--(the church).
- The door is shut---probation in effect closes.
- There comes a **PAUSE FOR SEVEN DAYS**.
- The judgment of God is poured out on the wicked accompanied by a storm, great noise, and great calamity.

appear as Jesus, but as a (1) High Priest, (2) a Lamb, (3) a Angel/Prophet, (4) A Child, (5)a Farmer, (6) a King of Kings, (7) A Judge. Often these parts are acted by angels.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Please notice that the close of probation comes as a process. **The flood does not come when the door is shut.** Though in effect probation has closed there is opportunity to demonstrate to all watching that the minds of the wicked do not change. The fact that during this tarrying time no person asks to be admitted exonerates and corroborates the fact that sealing the door was indeed just and correct. The decisions made on the basis of the warning message given prove to be genuine.

The next story is taken from Joshua, chapter 6. This is the famous story of the fall of Jericho.

JOSHUA 6: 4,5----

Josh. 6:1 Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.

Josh. 6:2 And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.

Josh. 6:3 And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

*Josh. 6:4 And seven priests shall bear before the ark **seven trumpets** of rams' horns: and the **seventh day** ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.*

Josh. 6:5 And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him. . . .

*Josh. 6:10 And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, **Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout. . . .***

More About the Seventh Seal

(Note: Here in effect is seven days of silence! Cf. the author's book *Back to the Future; Foreward to the Past*, "The Last Trump," in regard to the time it would have taken to make one circuit of the ancient city of Jericho, i.e. "about half and hour.")

Josh. 6:15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times.

Josh. 6:16 And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city. . . .

Josh. 6:20 So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

The Scenario

The scenario in this story is similar to that of Noah's story except in Noah's story the faithful are "called in" and wicked are "shut out" where in the Jericho story the wicked are "shut in" and the faithful are "called out." But the closing of probationary doors are still transpiring---:

- A judgment period---the time for the Canaanites is now fulfilled
- The faithful are called out --- Rahab, etc.
- The door of mercy is shut---probation closes in effect
- There are **seven days of silence**---
- The judgments of God upon the wicked come accompanied by a shout and great noise and commotion.

The startling allusions in the **seven trumpets** and the **seven days of silence** are interesting.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

The purpose of God is clear in this regard at the very least. No door is ever shut without one final appeal. God will never act without giving ample and unimpeachable opportunity for all to repent.

It is helpful to imagine what was really happening in the story of Jericho. We may assume that God **wanted** to destroy Jericho. But I don't believe this is the case. Why did God delay the taking of Jericho for seven days? Was it to terrorize and afflict the inhabitants? Think about the army of Israel marching in absolute silence around the city. Only the tread of their feet could be heard. Why this effect?

Was it not a time for those wicked inhabitants to reconsider one last time their stand against God and his people? At any time the city could have surrendered, and it would be interesting to know what God would have done if they had.⁴⁵ But the point is they **didn't**, and God knew they wouldn't because they were hardened against him. But the silent marching was in every way an appeal to their hardened hearts. Like the outsiders of the ark of Noah, their hearts were never broken but persistent unto no repentance. Yet God, in his infinite mercy offers the chance anyway to prove that none were needlessly lost and that decisions were made on solid and adequate evidence. The ultimate message is that God in his love closes probation with reluctance, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

This was the same appeal in type that Jesus gave to the Jewish nation in the final seven days of his ministry, granting one last appeal to the nation that had been entrusted with His oracles, but were rejecting their own God. Looking one last time from Olivet over the doomed city the Savior said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem. . . how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chick under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left unto you desolate." Matthew 23:37 NKJV.

⁴⁵ Cf. Deuteronomy 20:10,11.

More About the Seventh Seal

Quoting further from the book Early Writings:

*In that fearful time, after the close of Jesus' mediation, the saints were living in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. **Every case was decided**, every jewel numbered. **Jesus tarried a moment in the outer apartment** of the heavenly sanctuary, and the sins which had been confessed while He was in the most holy place were placed upon Satan, the originator of sin, who must suffer their punishment. pp. 280,281.*

Again, the God who is reluctant to close the door tarries, silently appealing to the last. This is why there is a period of silence. But at last the judgments of God fall and there are fireworks and noise and commotion that mark a grand finale and the end of time for the present earth.

Once when preaching on this subject I was impressed in the call at the end of this sermon to have a long moment of silence rather than use my voice to plead with the hearers. I believe it was far more effective than anything, anyone, could have said. I wish at times that more pastors and evangelists would be silent and let God do the talking.

The days of the seventh angel are upon us. It is time each disciple listen to pleadings of Our Great High Priest and even *now* obtain the merits of Our Gracious Intercessor.

Trumpets/Plagues Immediately Follow The Sealing

The writer, Ellen White, says that the sealing time, soon to be over will be followed by the seven last plagues. What is described in Revelation 8:1-5 (eschatologically) is the closing of the sealing work.

It is the close of the Day of Atonement.⁴⁶ The order is significant: A message, resistance to the message, a decision or test, the sealing and the close of probationary time, then the outpouring of the wrath of God.

⁴⁶ The Sealing and the Day of Atonement are related. Take the following quotes from F.C. Gilbert, *Messiah in His Sanctuary*, p. 69:

"During this day, the penitent soul is reminded that he must be sealed before the day closes. During these later hours of the day he prays:

"Our Father, our King, seal our name in the book of life; our Father, our King, seal our name in the book of remembrance; our Father, our King, seal our name in the book of success and prosperity." *"Prayers for the Day of Atonement"*

"Thus the first ten days of Tishri (the seventh Bible month) grew to be the Penitential Days of the year, intended to bring about a perfect change of heart . . . The Day of Atonement was thenceforth made the annual day of divine forgiveness of sin, when Satan, the accuser, failed to find blame in the people of Israel . . . The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. II, p. 281

More About the Seventh Seal

Repeatedly we hear that this passage is concerned only or primarily with past historical time. I would like to suggest this is a dangerous view, for it makes impotent instruction that is vital for today. Disinheriting the eschatological relevance of the Seals or the Trumpets⁴⁷ in effect substitutes Attila the Hun and colorful locusts for the final pleadings of Christ for humanity and a rather precise knowledge of the impending judgments of God. The great and final work of Christ is important *present truth*, and not just forgotten and solidified history. **Revelation MUST be relevant.**

The inference in all the prophetic passages is that the time of trouble IMMEDIATELY follows the Sealing.⁴⁸ This concept should not be so difficult to grasp.

The historical reckoning of these passages are of great importance also in that they locate effectively our time in history, and prove also the wondrous foreknowledge of God. But to box oneself into one genre' of interpretation without accommodating in a responsible way the sliding-scale application of both eschatological and historical timelines as suggested in this work greatly robs the *Revelation* of its relevancy and value. The reader is encouraged to test these principles and refrain from limiting God's purposes in these great prophecies.

"At the close of the services of this day every man and woman meets friend and neighbor. They clasp each other by the hand, and they offer one another a glad expression, "Hope you have received a good seal."

⁴⁷ Please, of course, read Volume 3 of this series. The section of the Trumpets is of extreme importance to the remnant people of God.

⁴⁸ **"I saw that the four angels would hold the four winds until Jesus' work was done in the sanctuary, and then will come the seven last plagues.** These plagues enraged the wicked against the righteous; they thought that we had brought the judgments of God upon them, and that if they could rid the earth of us, the plagues would then be stayed. A decree went forth to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance. This was the time of Jacob's trouble." *Early Writings of Ellen G. White*, p. 36,37.

The Altar Before the Lord

Further corroboration of Revelation 8:3 and the immediate context as referring to the close of probation and final Day of Atonement imagery can be adduced by the expression:

"the altar which is before God."

About ten Old Testament passages clearly link the three ideas of:

1. The altar
2. Incense
3. "Before the Lord"

But only about three of these actually replicate the same order and idiom as the references to the altar in vs. 8:3 and 9:13.

The most obvious and significant of these is **Lev. 16:12** [cf. also 16:18). It is almost certain that this constitutes a direct tie between the Day of Atonement ritual chapter in Lev. 16 and the sanctuary scene in 8:1-5.

(Cf. also Lev. 4:7; 1 Kings 8:64; then the somewhat approximate expressions in Lev. 4:18; 6:14; 1 Kings 9:25; 2 Chron. 1:6)

More About the Seventh Seal

"And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar before the Lord , and two handfuls of sweet incense beaten small; and he shall bring it before the veil....Then he shall go out to the altar which is before the Lord and make atonement for it . . ." (Lev. 16:12,18)

Therefore, if we have the Day of Atonement Golden Censer, with a direct reference to the Day of Atonement chapter, with prayers for all of the saints who ever lived up until the final Day of Atonement, with a Day of Atonement motif of judgment and the close of probationary time, doesn't it seem likely that we have in this passage *and in what follows* at least *some* eschatological Day of Judgment significance?!

The Storm Scenes and Their Meaning

At the ends of the sections of the Seven Seals, the Seven Trumpets, and the Seven Last Plagues are found what some have called "storm theophanies." The typical ambiguous explanation is that these scenes mark important transition points in the heavenly drama but the reader is not informed as to what points these are and the truth-seeker is left unclear as to the true significance of these "storms" or "theophanies" (divine manifestations).

With the help of other Scripture and the "Spirit of Prophecy" a more definite meaning may be assigned to these heavenly manifestations.

These storm scenes include in varying order thunder, lightning, voices, hail, and sometimes an earthquake. They usually occur at the end of a cyclical prophetic series.

The storm scenes are quoted as follows:

Rev. 8:5 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.

The Storm Scenes and Their Meaning

Rev. 11:19 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.

Rev. 16:18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

What is the significance of these according to Inspiration?

It is proposed that there are at least three motifs or associations that the storm scenes characterize. The third is believed to be the primary one.

1. Such depictions in other Biblical passages are associated with the judgments of God:

"Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire." Isaiah 29:6.

In Revelation also, the context in which the storms are given appear to be scenes of judgment. Thus the day of the Lord is to come with a storm of fury and a display of God's power. Therefore the final judgments of God are seen in these manifestations. Further examples are given in the footnote at the end of this section.

2. Such a display was seen at the giving of the law at Sinai and so can be seen as typical of the revealing of God's law.

Exod. 19:16 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Exod. 20:18 And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.

We know that in the scene given at the end of the seventh trumpet that the ark of the testimony, the ark containing the law of God, is revealed in heaven. This will happen at the end of time. Therefore one can discern that such a storm theophany should make the reader think of the revelation of God's law.

3. The most significant, however, is the association which includes the inferences and associations above but which specifically identifies the source of the thunders and lightnings. For when God gives his law he speaks it. And when he judges he also speaks. Particular enlightening are the texts given below which makes these phenomena accompaniments and indications of the VOICE OF GOD.

Job 40:9 Hast thou an arm like God? or **canst thou thunder with a voice like him?**

Ps. 77:18 The **voice of thy thunder** was in the heaven: **the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.**

Ps. 81:7 Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; **I answered thee in the secret place of thunder:** I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.

Ps. 104:7 At thy rebuke they fled; at the **voice of thy thunder** they hasted away.

Thus in judgment, in the revealing of himself through his law and character, even in creation, GOD'S VOICE comes with thunder, lightning, earthquake, and tempest.

The following quotes are important diagnostic indications of the meaning of the storm scenes:

The Storm Scenes and Their Meaning

Early Writings, p. 35

“Then we all cried day and night for deliverance, and the cry came up before God. The sun came up, and the moon stood still. The streams ceased to flow. Dark, heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. But there was one clear place of settled glory, **whence came the voice of God like many waters, which shook the heavens and the earth.** The sky opened and shut and was in commotion. The mountains shook like a reed in the wind, and cast out ragged rocks all around. The sea boiled like a pot and cast out stones upon the land. And as God spoke the day and the hour of Jesus' coming and delivered the everlasting covenant to His people, **He spoke one sentence, and then paused, while the words were rolling through the earth.** The Israel of God stood with their eyes fixed upward, listening to the words as they came from the mouth of Jehovah, and **rolled through the earth like peals of loudest thunder.** It was awfully solemn. And at the end of every sentence the saints shouted, "Glory! Alleluia!"

Note below how the voice of God is described by inspiration in the giving of the law at Sinai, at the end of time, and even at Jesus' baptism:

The Signs of the Times, 12-11-79, #14

“The contrast of this morning's scene with that of Sinai was marked. Then the millions of people gathered before the mountain whose lofty peaks seemed to reach to the very heavens. **The lightnings flashed, and the groaning, muttering thunders, like supernatural voices filled the air, and God's voice was heard in trumpet-like tones by all the congregation.** Moses was commanded to come up and talk with God. He obeyed the mandate, and climbed far up the solitary heights, and God talked with him. On the morning of the third day a thick cloud began to cover the mountain, increasing in denseness every moment, while its billowy form surged violently. **The earth shook and trembled as if convulsed, and the thunder peals** were caught up in reverberations from peak to peak, far and near. The stately tread of the Lord Jehovah and of his Son was upon that mountain. **At intervals, between the**

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

bursts of the thunder were sounds as of a trumpet swelling louder and louder till it rose above the war of the elements."

Spiritual Gifts. Volume 4B, p. 113

"I saw that God would in a wonderful manner preserve his people through the time of trouble. As Jesus poured out his soul in agony in the garden, they will earnestly cry and agonize with him day and night for deliverance. The decree will go forth that they must disregard the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and honor the first day, or lose their lives; but they will not yield, and trample under their feet the Sabbath of the Lord, and honor an institution of the Papacy. Satan's host, and wicked men, will surround them, and exult over them, because there will seem to be no way of escape for them. **But in the midst of their revelry and triumph, there is peal upon peal of the loudest thunder. The heavens have gathered blackness, and are only illuminated by the blazing light and terrible glory from Heaven,** as God utters his voice from his holy habitation."

S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 5, p. 1078

"When Christ presented Himself to John for baptism, Satan was among the witnesses of that event. **He saw the lightnings flash from the cloudless heavens. He heard the majestic voice of Jehovah that resounded through heaven, and echoed through the earth like peals of thunder, announcing, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."** He saw the brightness of the Father's glory overshadowing the form of Jesus, thus pointing out with unmistakable assurance the One in that crowd whom He acknowledged as His Son. . . ."

Therefore the conclusion is offered that the storm scenes represent specifically the **Voice of God**, and in the context the voice of God at the end of the world and the coming of Jesus to this earth. The righteous will be delivered by this voice. This voice will call forth the dead. This voice will renew the covenant of God with his people. This explanation is refreshingly simple and consistent (See the Great Controversy; below).

This also can explain the similar expression in chapter 4:5:

"And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices."

----Naturally from God's throne would come his voice.

The Storm Scenes and Their Meaning

The difference in the above phrase is significant in that it makes no reference to hail or earthquake. This is because this manifestation of God's voice, will, and power is not marking the closing of probationary time. (In addition, this scene is in heaven, and there can be no "earthquake" there, and "hail" would not be typical of heaven either). But the voice of God is heard in heaven, in this case. The effect of God's voice in the other storm theophanies, however, are felt in the earth.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

Further notes:

The Judgments and Plagues From God

The storm scenes resemble one of the plagues upon Egypt:

Exod. 9:23 And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt . . .

Then Pharaoh said:

Exod. 9:28 Entreat the LORD (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.

Exod. 9:29 And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the LORD; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the LORD's. . .

Exod. 9:33 And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto the LORD: and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth.

Exod. 9:34 And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants.

God is pictured some places in scripture as judging with thunder and lightning:

1Sam. 2:10 The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.

Isa. 29:6 Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.

1Sam. 7:10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on

The Storm Scenes and Their Meaning

that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.

The Great Controversy Quotations; Voice of God⁴⁹

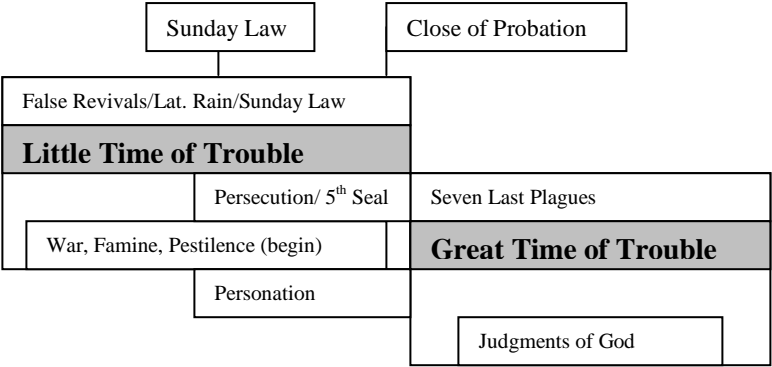
“In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters, saying: It is done.” Revelation 16:17. That voice shakes the heavens and the earth. There is a mighty earthquake” (Revelation 16:17,18,19,21 quoted; earthquake, hailstones, etc.)

“The voice of God is heard from heaven, declaring the day and the hour of Jesus' coming, and delivering the everlasting covenant to His people. Like peals of loudest thunder His words roll through the earth. . . . Their countenances are lighted up with His glory, and shine as did the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai. The wicked cannot look upon them. . . .”

"Amid the reeling of the earth, the flash of lightning, and the roar of thunder, the voice of the Son of God calls forth the sleeping saints." pp. 636, 640, 644.

⁴⁹ I have located seven of these in the closing scenes as chronicled in the book, *The Great Controversy*. I find that rather interesting, especially perhaps in reference to the “seven thunders” of chapter 10. They are not the same, but may bear some relationship.

General Outline of Eschatology as it Relates to the Seven Seals



The Seven Seals

→ Sealing Ends

Appendix—Dual Application of Prophecy

- The reader is encouraged to note the direct expressions of "dual application." The point is made by George Rice and the DARCOM committee (DARCOM, Book 1, *Ellen White's Use of Daniel and Revelation*, p. 145 ff.) that history and not prophecy is repeated. While "technically" this might be true, such a narrow teaching misconstrues the purpose of Ellen White's statements.

While it is true, for example, that the specific prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem will not be repeated; that is, Jerusalem itself will not be destroyed all over again; (the events and characters being different in the last days) it is incorrect to restrict the words of Jesus to only one fulfillment. For in many cases the very same terms, expressions, and figures are to receive both historical and valid eschatological attention and fulfillment.

There is an *abominable sacrilege*, for instance, in both ages; the destruction of Jerusalem first, and now nearly upon us another trampling upon the "holy," in the repudiation of the sacred Sabbath day. Ellen White in these particular cases *is* emphasizing the fact that the *same* prophecy is meant for two different times. She does not typically say that a "similar" or "generally applicable" occurrence will come. She often uses more direct terms; such terms as "the same," "again," "repeated." No creditable advocate of future application teaches that the *exact* same thing will happen anyway. Ellen White also recognizes this, but she takes particular pains *in some cases* to express the application in BOTH AGES as a direct fulfillment of the same prophecy. A certain fluidity occurs to keep the tension between the historical and the eschatological, and every

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

single detail may not always be accounted for. However, in principle all the key points are nearly always to be reiterated in the modern equivalent.

Another incorrect assumption comes in the committee's work. In pointing out Ellen White's unavowed support of "historicism" they box her into "exclusive historicism." This, I believe was not her position. She wishes to protect modern relevance as well as preserve historical and prophetic truth. She in effect teaches dual fulfillment in the sense that prophecies have both historical and eschatological relevance, *especially emphasizing those with end-time importance*. If anything, the second coming of Jesus application of Mt. 24 (eschatological) is the most valid of all, involving the entire world, while the "historical" destruction of Jerusalem is but a faint shadow.

- The Signs of the Times," 02-20-01, #3:

"Take heed that no man deceive you," Christ said. "For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." False messiahs will appear, claiming to work miracles, and declaring that the deliverance of the Jewish nation has come. These will mislead many. Christ's words were fulfilled. Between His death and the siege of Jerusalem, many false messiahs appeared. **But this warning is given to those also who live in this age of the world. The same** deceptions practiced prior to the destruction of Jerusalem will be practiced again. ***The events that took place at the overthrow of Jerusalem will be repeated.***

- 3SM, p. 409

Angels are holding the four winds, represented as an angry horse seeking to break loose, and rush over the face of the whole earth, bearing destruction and death in its path. . . .

I tell you in the name of the Lord God of Israel that all injurious, discouraging influences are held in control by unseen angel hands, until everyone that works in the fear and love of God is sealed in his forehead.-- Letter 138, 1897.

Appendix A-Dual Application of Prophecy

(Unlike the fancy footwork of a rather bigoted historicism the best "application" of this statement appears to find a valid equation of an eschatological "sealing" with eschatological "seals").

Study Guide—Volume 2

Introduction4

1. Review and list the ten principles of interpretation referred to in the introduction:

- _____

The Reduplication of Prophecy (Introduction)9

2. Supply at least one Bible text that teaches the concept of cyclical history _____

Time-Calibrated Fulfillment of Prophecy10

3. Does history repeat itself? _____. Suggest ways it might or might not. _____

4. Define the following general interpretational methods:

- Preterist _____
- Historicist _____

Study Guide- Volume 2

- Futurist _____
 - Spiritual or Idealist _____
-

5. Can prophecy at times have more than one fulfillment?

6. Which fulfillment is usually the most direct? The former or the latter? _____

7. On what basis do you think a prophecy might have a multiple or extended fulfillment? _____

The Rainbow.....28

8. The Rainbow is a symbol of God's love manifest through what two divine characteristics:

- _____
- _____

The Four Living Creatures30

9. The Four Living Creatures are heavenly counterparts for what "earthly" things? _____

10. Why are there "four" living creatures? _____

The Sealed Book32

11. In one phrase describe what the sealed book contains:

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

The Government of Heaven34

12. True or False: God's government is totalitarian and absolute.

The Twenty-Four Elders38

13. Who are the twenty-four elders according to the conclusion of this study? _____

14. How does the law of heavenly counterparts help us to understand their identity? _____

15. What has been the traditional understanding as to who these elders are? _____

- Could you make a case as to why this is difficult to maintain?

Explain: _____

16. Can heavenly beings wear crowns? _____

The Judgment Scene45

17. Give at least five reasons why Revelation 4 and 5 describes a judgment scene:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Study Guide- Volume 2

- _____

18. Give at least five reasons why the throne scene of Rev. 4 and 5 can describe the beginning of the investigative judgment:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

19. By ignoring what principle are some interpreters unable to see that Revelation 4 and 5 can apply both to the welcome of Jesus back to heaven at Pentecost and to the eschatological pre-advent judgment?_____

20. According to adjusted prophetic reckoning how might one view the *trumpets* if the *seals* are viewed as historically unfolding over the Christian era? _____

_____. Contrarily, how might the trumpets be viewed if the seals are themselves viewed as the unrolling of eschatological or last-day events?

The Breaking of the Seals.....54

21. Why are there “four horses” and “four living creatures”?

22. It makes a large difference whether one applies the four horses or the first four seals to the WORLD, THE CHURCH, or whatever.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

What indications are there the **primary** focus of the first four seals are *universal*?

23. The seals are taken from what sermon that Jesus preached?

24. What is the first and the foremost warning that Jesus gave his followers about the future of Christianity? _____

25. What modern word is taken from the Greek word for a “bow,” as in a “bow and arrow?” _____

26. What biblical phrase is similar in meaning to “conquering and that he might conquer?” _____

27. The word for “overcoming” in the New Testament when applying to evil events means to: _____

_____. When applied to the righteous it means: _____.

28. The white horse and its rider is given no name? Why? _____.

When applied to world events it probably represents what? _____

29. The red horse and its rider represents what condition?

_____.

Study Guide- Volume 2

30. What do the oil and the wine (black horse) represent?

31. Were oil and wine the first crops are the last crops of the season?
_____.

32. The pale-green horse probably has _____ riders.

33. In the description of the fifth seal the “lives” of the martyrs are heard from under the altar. It is unlikely that 50 million martyrs would fit under an altar. What substance, biblically representing life, was always poured out at the base of the altar? _____.

34. Why are the memories of these martyrs pictured as crying out “how long?” _____. Why is it significant that his happens during the “fifth” seal? _____

35. The Sixth Seal describes natural phenomena that accompany the eschatological Day of the Lord. How many phenomena are mentioned? _____. How many groups of people plead for mercy? _____. Does Jesus *actually* come in this setting?_____.

The Eschatological Fulfillment of the Seals75

36. The Seven Seals have a historical fulfillment. They also have a _____ fulfillment.

37. What false beings will be seen and heard in our world?

- _____

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

- _____
- _____

38. What will Satan attempt to do before the “Latter Rain” is poured out and the “Loud Cry” is given?

39. What particular period of last-day events do the seals seem to equate with? _____

40. During this time the book Early Writings describes that there will be great trouble in the world. She reports: I saw the _____, famine, _____, and great _____ in the _____.”

(p. 33,34)

41. What is the name of this particular time of trouble and how is it different from the later time of trouble?

42. Will the “historical” events of the sixth seal be repeated at the very close of time? _____.

The Sealing and the Seventh Seal85

43. What will *immediately follow* the sealing and the releasing of the four winds of chapter 7? _____

Who are the 144,000?.....88

44. Be able to list all 14 characteristics of the 144,000:

Study Guide- Volume 2

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

45. When were the *firstfruits* identified in ancient Israel?
_____. At the final harvest?
_____.

46. Is the word “redeemed” as applying to the 144,000 the same as “translated?” Explain: _____

47. What is the “new song” they sing? _____

48. What must happen before a seed can become a firstfruit or a young plant? _____

49. What do you think is meant by the 144,000 being from all the “tribes of Israel?” _____

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

50. In what two particular circumstances were the sons of Israel required to “wash their robes” or “garments?”

- _____
- _____

The Identity of the 144,000.....95

51. In Revelation 7 are the 144,000 seen before, or after the sealing ends? _____

52. In Revelation 14 are the 144,000 seen before, or after the giving of the three angel’s messages? _____

53. The 144,000 have the same characteristics of which church mentioned in chapters 1-3? _____

54. Will those who have fallen asleep in the third angel’s messages be found on the earth when Jesus comes? _____

55. Does the literal number have more than symbolic purpose?

56. Why are we warned against identifying “who is to compose” the 144,000? _____

57. What group “only” can fit all fourteen characteristics?

The Jew-First Principle109

58. Jesus instructed that the gospel should first go to which groups in which order? (Acts 1:8).

Study Guide- Volume 2

- In _____
- And in all _____
- And in _____
- And unto the _____ part of the _____

The Order of the Tribes in Revelation 7113

59. Is there in your opinion a design in the order of the names?

_____.

60. How do these names relate to each other? _____

The Omission of Dan from the 12 Tribes.....121

61. What is the meaning of the phrase: "Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel? _____

62. Give at least two reasons that Dan was left out of the list of tribes? _____.

_____.

63. Does this carry any instruction as relates to the church of God today? _____

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

More About the Seventh Seal.....128

64. What is the significance of “throwing down the censor?”

65. What two biblical stories are important to this seventh seal passage (Rev. 8:2-7)? _____

66. Is God anxious to close probation? _____
Does he close it quickly, or with process? _____

The Altar Before the Lord.....138

67. Where is the significant phrase “the altar before God” taken from in the Old Testament? _____

68. What is that chapter about? _____

The Storm Scenes and Their Meaning140

69. What particular characteristic of God is equated with lightning, thunder, and earthquake? _____

General Outline of Eschatology148

70. Where are we now, in your opinion, in the scheme of last-day events? _____

Study Guide- Volume 2

Notes

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

THE DAYS OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL

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