

2.) Jesus opening the seals of the Revelation to reveal its contents, with John recording. (Chapter 6:1-17, 8:1.)

Due to the fact that chapter 6:1 involves Jesus opening seals, which reveal descriptions of events, we will break this *Long Series* up into two parts. Although it is a single, unbroken *Series*, dividing it into two portions allows us to designate two timeframes. The first portion, which corresponds to No. 1 above, concerns first century events, such as Jesus' receiving the Revelation from the Father and John receiving the vision and recording it. The second portion, which corresponds to No. 2 above, contains descriptions of events that occur in the future, in the closing years of the Age, long after the first century.

Part A, which runs from chapter 1:1-6:1, starts with Jesus sending his angel, the Holy Spirit, to John. The Holy Spirit then shows John a vision of Jesus Christ in heaven in which Jesus speaks to John and dictates the cover letters to send to the 7 churches. Then, after the dictation of the cover letters, the Holy Spirit takes John to heaven to witness the Father giving the Revelation to Jesus so that John can record the content of that Revelation in a book.

Furthermore, as we have already stated above, No. 1 has an *Expansion* in a chapter 10, while No. 2 has numerous *Parallel Descriptions*. In fact, these numerous *Parallel Descriptions* to the 7 seals described in chapter 6:1-17, 8:1 comprise the bulk of the rest of the book of Revelation. As mentioned previously, the first of these *Parallel Descriptions* is found in chapter 7.

However, the Holy Spirit comes to John in chapter 1 *before* John witnesses and records the opening of the Revelation by Jesus Christ in heaven in chapter 4. As such, since we are going through the book chronologically, we must first cover the *Expansion* of the Holy Spirit's appearance and transmission of the Revelation to John *before* we go on to cover the numerous passages chronologically paralleling the imagery of the 7 seals opened by Jesus. In this way, we will cover all of the descriptions pertaining to the Holy Spirit *facilitating John seeing the vision* before we cover *the record* of the vision which results. As we said earlier, this *Expansion* of the opening *Long Series* is found in chapter 10, which we will cover in our next section below.

But before we move on, we can take note of which of our 8 conceptual threads are touched on in this opening *Long Series*. Earlier, we stated that the following 8 overarching concepts comprise the total of what is described in the book of Revelation.

1. The angel's appearing to John for the transmission of the Revelation to God's servants
2. The transmission of the Revelation from the Father to Jesus
3. The ministry of the 2 witnesses (including the Temple's building) and plagues
4. God's covenant people, Israel: purging & protection; the 144,000; building the Temple
5. The fall of the Satanic Kingdom and the subsequent falling away in the Church

6. The rise of the last empire and the antichrist; tribulation and the persecution of saints
7. The battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ
8. Millennial reign of Christ and the final judgment

Of these 8 conceptual threads, Part A of this first *Long Series* only touches on numbers 1 and 2. To state it plainly, this portion of the *Long Series* only directly comments on the Holy Spirit's appearing to John for the transmission of the Revelation to God's servants and the transmission of the Revelation from the Father to Jesus.

So, at best, of these 8 overarching threads, we might say that really only 2 are covered by Part A of this opening *Long Series*, and in fairly limited detail, thus, leaving the other 6 completely without description. This relatively limited scope and equally limited level of detail explains why additional *Parallel Descriptions* and *Expansions* are necessary to build the full picture of events, how they relate to each other, and how they relate to previous biblical prophecy.

On its own, this opening *Long Series* wouldn't fully cover all the relevant information. But, on the other hand, as we will see, it is this opening *Long Series* that provides most of the skeletal structure for placing the additional segments of Revelation chronologically. Thus, the opening *Long Series* plays a critical role meriting its central placement spanning 6 chapters at the beginning of the book, yet despite this essential function, this *Long Series* alone is not enough to convey a vision and narrative of this complexity.

We will now turn our attention to the *Expansion* for Part A of this *Long Series*, which can be found in chapter 10:1-11:13.

Section 1.02 – Expansion: Chapter 10:1-11:13, Part A More on the Angel and John's Book

As stated above, chapter 10:1-11:13 is an *Expansion* of details from the *Long Series* which runs from chapter 1:1 to chapter 8:1. Specifically, this *Expansion* provides additional details concerning Jesus sending the Holy Spirit, his angel, to John in order to show and deliver to John the vision of the Revelation, which John is to record in a book. And even more specifically, one of the primary purposes of this *Expansion* is to connect John's receiving of this vision to existing Old Testament prophecy and imagery. But before we discuss this passage's connection to the Old Testament, let's first establish that it is indeed an *Expansion* of details from the *Long Series* in chapter 1:1-8:1.

Commonalities Establishing Connection

Five uncanny similarities establish that chapter 10 is providing an expanded description of briefer statements in chapter 1:1-8:1. (Please note that by

comparing chapter 1:10-18, chapter 4:1-2, and chapter 10:8 we have already established that Jesus is the voice speaking to John from heaven.)

1. In both chapter 1 and chapter 10, *an angel* comes to John. (Revelation 1:1, 10:1, 9).
2. In both chapter 1 and chapter 10, that angel *comes specifically to deliver something to John* (Revelation 1:1, 10:1-2, 8).
3. In both chapter 1 and chapter 10, what John is receiving from the angel *is a book* (Revelation 1:11, 10:2, 8-10).
4. In both chapter 1 and chapter 10, the angel's delivery of this book *occurs at Jesus' direction* (Revelation 1:1, 10:8).
5. In both chapter 1 and chapter 10, John's receiving and declaring the book is *described as prophecy*. (Revelation 1:3, 10:11).

As we can see from the verse references above, while chapter 1 is quite brief, chapter 10 is quite a bit more descriptive. Yet, they both contain these same 5 peculiar details. Either this is happening twice or chapter 10 is an *Expansion* giving a more explanatory description of an element that in chapter 1 only receives a passing mention. Given the uncanny nature of the correspondence between these details, the latter option seems to be a far more plausible and efficient interpretation.

The Reason for the Segment

So, what is the relevance of the additional details that chapter 10 provides? What exactly does this additional detail explain?

1. This *Expansion* provides a general connection to Old Testament Prophets, which means to the God of the Old Testament and to completing the same Israel-centered plan unveiled by God in the Old Testament.
2. This *Expansion* provides a specific connection to Ezekiel 1-3 and the vision in Ezekiel 43, which includes similar depictions and interactions with the Holy Spirit as well as measurements for the temple altar, which completes the temple measurements that begin in chapter 40. On this point, it is also important to note that in both Revelation and Ezekiel, the measuring of the temple takes place during the vision itself, not in real time, and at a point in history when the temple has been destroyed. Ezekiel never participates in a real temple measuring. Thus, like Ezekiel, John's participation in measuring the temple is most likely as a stand-in, rather than a prophecy of John one day doing so himself.

On this point, we would make note that even in modern times, some Jews believe that Elijah will not only return as the forerunner to their Messiah, but also that

Elijah will provide the Jews with the measurements and the location for building the temple, in particular the altar. These beliefs are reflected in the excerpts below.

<http://www.beingjewish.com/unchanged/rebuild.html>

Why Don't We Rebuild The Holy Temple?

“The next problem is **the location of the Altar**. The Law is very precise about just where the Holy Altar must be located. It is forbidden to place the Altar anywhere else. When they built the Second Holy Temple, they had to find reliable witnesses who could testify to the exact spot. They found three such witnesses, the prophets Haggai, Zephaniah and Malachi, but we don't have any prophets or witnesses today. **Thus, until a prophet (we assume that it will probably be Elijah) comes and tells us where to build the Altar** (among many other things we need to know first), we cannot build the Holy Altar.(4) The answer to this I shall discuss later, Hashem willing.”

http://www.moshiach.com/discover/tutorials/the_prophet_elijah.php

Tutorial

The Prophet Elijah: Harbringer of the Redemption

by Rabbi Jacob Immanuel Schochet

“**The prophet Elijah's functions will thus include:** to rectify Israel's behavior, causing them to return to G-d with *teshuvah*, as a preparation for the Messianic redemption;^[7] to proclaim the imminent coming of Moshiach;^[8] **to restore the sacred objects placed in the Holy of Holies of the first *Bet Hamikdash*, and later hidden by King Josiah^[9] before its destruction;^[10]** and to be involved with the resurrection of the dead.^[11] Above all, the essential task of Elijah will be to resolve legal disputes and to establish peace in the world, as it is said, ‘He will turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.’ (Malachi 3:24)^[12]”

Similar sentiments are also prominently reflected in modern Jewish Passover celebrations.

<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?tocId=9032391&query=elijah&ct=eb>

“**Elijah's cup** – in Judaism, the fifth ceremonial cup of wine poured during the family Seder dinner on Passover (Pesah). It is left untouched in honour of **Elijah, who, according to tradition, will arrive one day as an unknown guest to herald the advent of the Messiah**... In this way the Seder dinner not only commemorates the historical redemption from Egyptian bondage of the Jewish people but also **calls to mind their future redemption when Elijah and the Messiah shall appear.**” – Britannica.com

In fact, the two Jewish websites below lists 15 points for the celebration of Passover of which number 13 pertains to the coming of Elijah before the Messiah and number 15 includes the hopeful declaration “next year in Jerusalem,” which means *with* the Messiah finally arrived.

<http://passover.matzohballsoup.com/haggadah.html>

Passover Haggadah

“*What is the Passover Haggadah?*”

The Passover Haggadah is the "instruction manual" for the Passover Seder, which is the festive meal celebrated by Jews in the evening that opens the Passover holiday.

What is in the Passover Haggadah?

The Passover Haggadah consists of 15 steps which were first arranged in an ordered manner by the ancient Talmudic rabbis during the first two centuries after the beginning of the Common Era...

Passover Haggadah Step #14:

Hallel ("praise" in Hebrew): In this step, **we first fill a 5th cup of wine for Elijah The Prophet...** We then sing songs of praise to G-d and His wonderful deeds that he has bestowed upon the Jewish people and ask **that he rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem ‘speedily in our day’...**

Passover Haggadah Step #15:

Nirtzah ("accepted", or "it should be accepted" in Hebrew): ... **We conclude with a wish to be in Jerusalem the following year for the Final Redemption: ‘Next year in Jerusalem!’”**

<http://www.jewfaq.org/holidaya.htm>

Pesach: Passover

Level: Basic

“13. Barech: Grace after Meals

The third cup of wine is poured, and birkat ha-mazon (grace after meals) is recited. This is similar to the grace that would be said on any Shabbat. At the end, a blessing is said over the third cup and it is drunk. **The fourth cup is poured, including a cup set aside for the prophet Elijah, who is supposed to herald the Messiah,** and is supposed to come on Pesach to do this...

14. Hallel: Praises

Several psalms are recited. A blessing is recited over the last cup of wine and it is drunk.

15. Nirtzah: Closing

A simple statement that the seder has been completed, **with a wish that next year, we may celebrate Pesach in Jerusalem (i.e., that the Messiah will come within the next year).** This is followed by various hymns and stories.”

3. Consequently, this *Expansion* also provides a connection to the two witnesses measuring the temple, which fulfills an expected role for Elijah (and Moses who built the tabernacle) and which contributes to the ministry to, preparation and conversion of Jews in Israel. This is also similar to Zechariah and Haggai, two prophets and contemporaries, who preached concerning the rebuilding of the temple to the Jews who’d returned from exile. Haggai denotes the temple’s rebuilding is a precursor to the Messiah’s coming. Additionally, both of these prophets conclude by discussing to the salvation of Jerusalem from Gentile control and the coming destruction of the Gentile nations. So, whether the imagery involves Elijah or Moses, Zechariah and Haggai, or Ezekiel and John, we can see that there is much historical precedent that foreshadows the two witnesses

as prophets overseeing the rebuilding of the temple. Those modern Jews who expect something similar are right to do so.

An additional parallel between Revelation 11:1 and 11:3 may further indicate the involvement of the two witnesses in the rebuilding of the temple. In Revelation 11:1, John is “given” (Strong’s No. 1325, *didomi*) a reed to measure the temple, its altar and courts. In Revelation 11:3 the two witnesses are “given” (Strong’s No. 1325, *didomi*), but no object is provided in the text as to what is “given.” Are the two witnesses given something? Or are the two witnesses themselves given, in the sense of being appointed or commissioned by God?

Many translations include the word “power” as the object implied by the specific rendering of the Greek word for “given” even though the word “power” does not appear in the Greek. While we agree that it may be the two witnesses themselves that are given, or commissioned by God, we believe another alternative is strongly suggested by the language of the text. We believe that the object implied by the word “given” in verse 3 is the same object given to John just 2 verses earlier – a reed to measure the temple. If the reed given in Revelation 11:1 is the implied object given to the two witnesses in Revelation 11:3 then this is another indication that the two witnesses will be involved in the rebuilding of the temple. Revelation 11:3 would then describe two periods of the two witnesses’ ministry. In the first half of the final week they are involved in rebuilding the temple. In the final 1,260 days, they prophesy and smite the earth with plagues.

4. And finally, this *Expansion* denotes the rebuilding of the temple, an event that is essential to fulfillment of both New and Old Testament prophecy, particularly concerning the antichrist.

5. As we continue to examine the book of Revelation, we will discuss details indicating that the final 3 1/2 years before Christ’s return will largely be a time of testing for the many believers from all nations while a (mostly) Jewish group that is in Israel at the time of the abomination will be in a place of safety in the wilderness. And although the references to the measuring of the temple in Revelation 11 most certainly do pertain to an actually, physical rebuilding of the temple, one detail about this rebuilt temple potentially also relates to this concept of the mostly Jewish group in Israel which will be protected while other believers who from and in other nations are tried. Revelation 11:2 states that the outer court of the temple is not measured because it will be given unto the ungodly to trample it down for 3 1/2 years. The inner court of the Jewish temple was reserved for Jews, including Gentiles who had adopted the whole Law of Moses. But the Temple’s outer court, spoken of here in Revelation 11, was reserved for Gentiles who had converted to Judaism, but instead of adopting the whole Law, were only required to keep seven precepts.

“Proselyte – Is used in the LXX. for "stranger" 1Ch 22:2 i.e., a comer to Palestine; a sojourner in the land Ex 12:48 20:10 22:21 and in the New Testament for a convert to Judaism. There were such converts from early times Isa 56:3 Ne 10:28 Es 8:17 The law of Moses made specific regulations regarding

the admission into the Jewish church of **such as were not born Israelites** Ex 20:10 23:12 12:19,48 De 5:14 16:11,14 etc... And the prophets speak of the time as coming when the strangers shall share in all the privileges of Israel Eze 47:22 Isa 2:2 11:10 56:3-6 Mic 4:1 Accordingly, in New Testament times, we read of proselytes in the synagogues, Ac 10:2,7 13:42,43,50 17:4 Ac 18:7 Lu 7:5 The "religious proselytes" here spoken of were proselytes of righteousness, as distinguished from proselytes of the gate. **The distinction between "proselytes of the gate" Ex 20:10 and "proselytes of righteousness" originated only with the rabbis.** According to them, **the "proselytes of the gate" (half proselytes) were not required to be circumcised nor to comply with the Mosaic ceremonial law. They were bound only to conform to the so-called seven precepts of Noah, viz., to abstain from idolatry, blasphemy, bloodshed, uncleanness, the eating of blood, theft, and to yield obedience to the authorities.** Besides these laws, however, they were required to abstain from work on the Sabbath, and to refrain from the use of leavened bread during the time of the Passover. **The "proselytes of righteousness", religious or devout proselytes Ac 13:43 were bound to all the doctrines and precepts of the Jewish economy, and were members of the synagogue in full communion.**" – Easton's Revised Bible Dictionary

Consequently, in New Testament terms, the outer court of the temple would be a very good way to represent Christians living in foreign lands. Therefore, a reference to the outer court of Gentiles being trampled under foot while the inner court is measured and apparently protected, not only would describe the physical rebuilding of the temple, but could indicate that this will be a time of testing for many Gentile (possibly even Jewish) Christians all over the rest of the world, while believers from Israel (presumably mostly Jewish) will largely be protected in the wilderness. In addition, the phrase "trampled under foot" may indicate that Gentile believers living around the world are being tried perhaps because they've largely lost their "saltiness" as Jesus' indicates in Matthew 5:13-14 (see also Mark 9:49-50).

On the other hand, the New Testament declaration that it is not necessary to keep the Law of Moses is not applied only to Gentile believers as if Jewish believers were still required to keep the Law. Rather, the New Testament indicates that neither Jewish nor Gentile followers of Christ had to keep the Law of Moses. Likewise, the New Testament conveys no lesser status on Gentile followers of Christ, but makes them full participants alongside Jews who through faith in Jesus participated in the New Covenant with Israel (Romans 1:16, 2:9-29, 10:12, 11:13-32, Ephesians 2:12-22, Galatians 3:16-29, Colossians 3:11). These observations would make it difficult to derive any meaning of Revelation 11's references to Temple courts that would necessitate a strict segregation or distinct treatment between Jews and Gentiles under the New Covenant. As Ephesians 2:14-15 declares the wall of the Temple that separated the court of the Jews from the court of the Gentiles has been torn down through Christ's atoning work.

Ephesians 2:11 Wherefore remember, that **ye being in time past Gentiles** in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in

the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time **ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise**, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13 **But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.** 14 For he is our peace, **who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;** 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 **Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;**

Furthermore, the language of Revelation 11:1-2 may actually indicate that none of the courts of the Temple will be rebuilt. Verses 1-2 of chapter 11 state “measure the Temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court that is without the Temple leave out, and measure it not.” In the Greek the word “Temple” is “naos” (Strong’s number 3485). This word specifically refers to the Temple building itself (the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies). It is not used to refer to the entire Temple complex. The Greek word for the entire Temple complex is “hieron” (Strong’s number 2411). “Hieron” refers to the building itself as well as all the various courts for Jews and Gentiles along with all the architecture, rooms, and colonnades, etc. We must note that it is “naos” (not “hieron”) that is used in Revelation 11. And there are clear statements that only that which is within the Temple building itself is to be measured and that the court(s) outside the Temple building should not be measured. It is very possible that the rebuilt Temple of the final 7 years will only include the Temple building itself and not any of the courts that surrounded the holy building. If this is the case, then we have another reason that Revelation 11’s description of the rebuilt Temple would not present any concept of a distinction between Jewish and Gentile followers of Christ, including what kind of treatment or persecution they receive on that basis of ethnicity. Here it is also worth noting that the need for Christians living in Israel to be protected (while there is seemingly no mention of similar protection for Christians living elsewhere) may simply reflect that persecution is greatest or perhaps focused in the Middle East, which could theoretically be the main region where the mark of the beast is implemented.

Additional Relevant Comments

As we move on to cover the numerous *Parallel Descriptions* to the opening *Long Series* in chapter 1:1-6:17, 8:1, we should make the following note concerning this *Expansion* in chapter 10:1-11:3. As the angel continues to speak to John, Revelation 10 transitions directly into chapter 11. Starting in verse 3 of chapter 11, the angel begins to describe a series of figures and events that overlap the timeframe of the 7 seals in chapter 6:1-17, 8:1. In this regard, the remaining half of the chapter 10-11 *Expansion* functions as a *Parallel Description* to the last

portion of the opening *Long Series*. For that reason, we will cover chapter 11:1-13 as we move ahead through the other *Parallel Descriptions*.

In addition, although Revelation 10-11 does include references to events that take place before the final 3 ½ years, those references are quite brief and not presented *within the body* of the sequence describing the last 3 1/2 years. In contrast, most of the vision in Revelation pertains to the final 3 1/2 years and presents the information in a heavily sequenced format of events. Thus, like chapter 12:1-6 described (as discussed in a previous segment), these short, referential mentions of elements before the final 3 1/2 years typically function as minor elements of a backstory, which are intended to set the backdrop for the sequences that describe the final 3 1/2 years.

Revelation 10's mention of the measuring and rebuilding of the temple is a good example of this. In particular, as discussed above, this quick reference to the temple's rebuilding is connected to the ministry of the two witnesses to Jews in Israel *before* they begin their 3 1/2 years of prophecy. In fact, as we will see, many of these shorter references to events prior to the final 3 1/2 years provide us additional, albeit non-sequential and less detailed, information about the ministry of the two witnesses in Israel *before* the final 3 1/2 years. In this particular instance, this trend is evidenced in part by the fact that the mention of the two witnesses' prophecy comes immediately *after* and in the same segment as the measuring of the temple. It is also evidenced by the particular implications of some of the figurative language that we find scattered throughout other *Parallel Descriptions*, just like the similarities between chapter 10 and Ezekiel 43. We'll cover more examples of this trend as we move ahead.

Status of the 8 Conceptual Threads

Lastly, we take note of the 8 overarching conceptual threads described in the book of Revelation.

1. The angel's appearing to John for the transmission of the Revelation to God's servants
2. The transmission of the Revelation from the Father to Jesus
3. The ministry of the 2 witnesses (including the Temple's building) and plagues
4. God's covenant people, Israel: purging & protection; the 144,000; building the Temple
5. The fall of the Satanic Kingdom and the subsequent falling away in the Church
6. The rise of the last empire and the antichrist; tribulation and the persecution of saints
7. The battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ
8. Millennial reign of Christ and the final judgment

Of these 8, we noted that only 2 (nos. 1 and 2) were mentioned in Part A of the opening *Long Series* in chapter 1:1-6:17, 8:1. So far, this *Expansion* in chapter 10:1-11:13 has only covered number 1 in any real detail while also providing a

brief mention of number 3. So, between the two passages that we've covered so far, we still only just started to see 2 of these 8 threads described with any detail. That leaves a lot of room for *Parallel Descriptions* and *Expansions* to fill in, explain, and connect this unfolding chronology.

Section 2.01 – Long Series: Chapter 1:1-6:17, 8:1, Part B More on Jesus Opening the Seals

At this point, you may have noticed that our *Section* title has changed from Section 1 to Section 2. You may have also noticed that this happened once already when we moved from Section 0 to Section 1. The reasoning behind this pattern is that each section number is being used to denote a new timeframe within the overall chronology.

For example, Section 0 dealt with a backstory in chapter 12:1-6, which detailed events that occurred before the Revelation was given, as well as another issue that had to be addressed before moving on to chapter 1:1. We gave them the section number 0 to reflect the fact that those segments of our analysis covered items pertaining to issues *before* the clock starts ticking in Revelation 1:1. Once the clock started ticking beginning with the events surrounding John's receiving the vision, we changed to Section 1. This timeframe covers events taking place in the first century, such as Jesus receiving the Revelation from the Father and John receiving the vision and recording it as book. Now that we have largely completed portions of Revelation that deal with events taking place in the first century, we have entered Section 2. Section 2 will cover the many *Parallel Descriptions* and *Expansions* that pertain to the closing years of the Age, just before Jesus' return and establishing of his millennial kingdom here on earth.

This timeframe leads us to pick up with Part B of the opening *Long Series*, which runs from Revelation 1:1-6:17, 8:1. As we mentioned in Section 1.01, we stopped at chapter 6:1 because starting in chapter 6 we begin to receive a description of events occurring at the end of the Age, rather than in the first century. Specifically, this description is contained in the seven seals. As we also mentioned during Section 1.01, the numerous *Parallel Descriptions* to the 7 seals described in chapter 6:1-17, 8:1 comprise the bulk of the rest of the book of Revelation. As mentioned previously, the first of these *Parallel Descriptions* is found in chapter 7.

Before we move on to chapter 7, we can take note of which of our 8 conceptual threads are touched on in Part B of this opening *Long Series*. Earlier, we stated that the following 8 overarching concepts comprise the total of what is described in the book of Revelation.

1. The angel's appearing to John for the transmission of the Revelation to God's servants
2. The transmission of the Revelation from the Father to Jesus
3. The ministry of the 2 witnesses (including the Temple's building) and plagues

4. God's covenant people, Israel: purging & protection; the 144,000; building the Temple
5. The fall of the Satanic Kingdom and the subsequent falling away in the Church
6. The rise of the last empire and the antichrist; tribulation and the persecution of saints
7. The battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ
8. Millennial reign of Christ and the final judgment

Of these 8 conceptual threads, Part A of this *Long Series* only touched on numbers 1 and 2. Part B actually touches on numbers 6 and 7. Specifically, Part B comments on the rise of the last empire and the antichrist and the return of Christ. However, in reality, the comments concerning number 7 are quite brief, mentioning only a few of the surrounding events that occur right before the Lord's return without mentioning the return directly. And the battle of Armageddon isn't mentioned at all.

So, at best, of these 8 overarching threads, we might say that really only 3 ½ are covered by both parts of the opening *Long Series*, and in fairly limited detail, thus, leaving the other 4 ½ completely without description. This relatively limited scope and equally limited level of detail explains why additional *Parallel Descriptions* and *Expansions* are necessary to build the full picture of events, how they relate to each other, and how they relate to previous biblical prophecy.

On its own, this opening *Long Series* wouldn't fully cover all the relevant information. But, on the other hand, as we will see, it is this opening *Long Series* that provides most of the skeletal structure for placing the additional segments of Revelation chronologically. Thus, the opening *Long Series* plays a critical role meriting its central placement spanning 6 chapters at the beginning of the book, yet despite this essential function, this *Long Series* alone is not enough to convey a vision and narrative of this complexity.

We will now turn our attention to the *Parallel Description* for Part B of the opening *Long Series*, which can be found in chapter 7.

Section 2.02 – Parallel Description: Chapter 7 The Four Winds, the Sealing of 144,000 Jews, and the Completion of the Martyrs

As we begin to examine the overlapping *Parallel Descriptions* in the book of Revelation, we should first take note that the imagery of a harvest is prominently featured throughout the book. This is a facet that is inherited directly from some of Jesus' own parables on the subject, which can be found in the Gospels and which the epistles also mention.

First and foremost, concerning that harvest imagery we should note that not only are men represented as various forms of vegetation depending upon their maturity, fruitfulness, and endurance, but we likewise find imagery concerning

locusts and strong winds, which come to devour the harvest. Examples of this occur right away in chapter 7.

Revelation 7:1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, **holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.** 2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3 Saying, **Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees,** till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

And we will see more examples of this recurrent imagery as we move forward to later chapters as well.

Second, the scope of the majority of Revelation, except for the closing chapters, largely involves imagery concerning the fall or casting out of the remaining adversarial angels from heaven, their subsequent instigation of the rise of the last of the Gentiles empires including the antichrist, and the return of Jesus Christ to defeat them in the earth as well and establish his kingdom here. In addition to references to the early ministry of the two witnesses *before* the final 3 1/2 years in which they prophecy, the earliest elements in Revelation typically pertain to events surrounding this central falling or casting out of the remaining satanic angels from heaven to the earth.

Commonalities Establishing Connection

We have already covered the opening *Long Series* in chapter 1:1-6:17, 8:1, which includes the 7 seals and acts as a sort of a skeletal structure for placing the additional segments of Revelation chronologically. Using that as a quick jumping point, we take note that the first thing described in the sequence of the Seals is the going forth of four angelic horsemen.

Revelation 6:1 And I saw when the Lamb **opened one of the seals,** and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. 2 **And I saw, and behold a white horse:** and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: **and he went forth** conquering, and to conquer. 3 And when he had opened the **second seal,** I heard the second beast say, Come and see. 4 And **there went out another horse that was red:** and *power* was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. 5 And when he had opened **the third seal,** I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, **and lo a black horse;** and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. 6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and *see* thou hurt not the oil and the wine. 7 And when he had opened **the fourth seal,** I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. 8 And I looked, **and behold a pale horse:** and **his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.** And power was given unto

them over **the fourth part of the earth**, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

Of course, these events and even these horsemen don't simply pop out of thin air. They have a history before this release in chapter 6 and some of the details leading up to that release are described in a few of the *Parallel Descriptions* that compliment chapter 6:1-17, 8:1. Because we're moving chronologically, we'll cover some of these earlier details, leading up to the release of the four horsemen until we arrive at that release, which is also described elsewhere in Revelation.

These four angelic horsemen are also described as four horseman and the four horns in Zechariah and as the four winds in Daniel. In both books, they are presented as responsible for political conquests, for putting down or lifting up one nation or another. A few examples from Zechariah and Daniel help to illustrate the concept.

From Zechariah, notice the mention of the man on the red horse, his connection to the fact that the earth sits still at rest, which is equated to the heathen nations being at rest. Also notice the immediate alternate imagery of the four horns (of the Gentiles), which are responsible for lifting up their horn over Judah and scattering the Jews to the nations.

Zechariah 1:8 I saw by night, **and behold a man riding upon a red horse**, and he stood among the myrtle trees that *were* in the bottom; **and behind him *were there* red horses, speckled, and white.** 9 Then said I, O my lord, what *are* these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will shew thee what these *be*. 10 And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, **These *are they* whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.** 11 And they answered the angel of the LORD that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, **all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest...**15 And I am very sore displeased with **the heathen *that are* at ease:** for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction...18 **Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns.** 19 And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What *be* these? And he answered me, **These *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.** 20 And the LORD shewed me four carpenters. 21 Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, **These *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head:** but these are come to fray them, to cast out **the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up *their* horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.**

Likewise, notice from Zechariah 6 that again the red horseman is mentioned, this time alongside 3 others on horses that correspond to those in Revelation 6. Here they are referred to specifically as “the four spirits of the heavens,” which “go forth” into the nations of the earth.

Zechariah 6:1 And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, **there came four chariots** out from between two mountains; and the mountains *were* mountains of brass. 2 **In the first chariot *were* red horses; and in the**

second chariot black horses; 3 And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses. 4 Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What *are* these, my lord? 5 And the angel answered and said unto me, **These *are* the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth** from standing before the Lord of all the earth. 6 The black horses which *are* therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them; and the grisled go forth toward the south country. 7 And the bay went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and he said, **Get you hence,** walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth. 8 Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying, **Behold, these that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country.**

Notice similarly from Daniel, that the four winds strive upon the sea, which is a depiction of the mass of mankind, and that the result of their striving upon the sea is the lifting up of empires, particularly four Gentile empires that extend over the land of Israel.

Daniel 7:2 Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, **the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.** 3 **And four great beasts came up from the sea,** diverse one from another... 17 **These great beasts, which are four, *are* four kings, *which* shall arise out of the earth.**

Consequently, Revelation itself describes them as the four horsemen, the four angels, and as the four winds. And while the *Series* in Revelation 6 begins describing them at their release, by comparing this release in chapter 6 to *Parallel Descriptions* elsewhere in the book, we get a very detailed picture of their status leading up to this release.

The Reason for the Segment

In the close of the previous segment covering the *Expansion* in chapter 10:1-11:13, we stated that the rebuilding of the temple was part of the earlier work of the two witnesses as they minister in Israel before they begin to prophecy for 3 1/2 years. In the statement before that, we noted that Revelation chapter 7 is an *Interlude*, a *Parallel Description* that interrupts the text of the *Long Series*, which runs from chapter 1:1-8:1 as well as overlapping its timeframe. So, it is not surprising that in the *Parallel Description* in chapter 7, we find that the four winds are not released to blow on the earth until after the 144,000 Jews have been sealed. The sealing of the Jews indicates their having been reborn by the Holy Spirit by whom we are sealed (2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:13, 4:30).

Revelation 7:1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. 2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: **and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,** 3 **Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees,**

till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. 4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were* sealed an hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. 5 Of the tribe of Juda *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad *were* sealed twelve thousand. 6 Of the tribe of Aser *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses *were* sealed twelve thousand. 7 Of the tribe of Simeon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar *were* sealed twelve thousand. 8 Of the tribe of Zabulon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* sealed twelve thousand.

Simply put, chapter 7 connects the release of the four horsemen described in the first four seals to the conversion of 144,000 Jews, providing the chronological order between those two events. Specifically, chapter 7 denotes that these four angelic horsemen, which stir up the nations, lifting up some over others, are not allowed to begin to stir up the sea, the mass of humanity, to produce another empire until *after* the these 144,000 have been sealed, an event that will come in combination with the two witnesses' ministry and the rebuilding of the temple. This places the release of the four horsemen in chapter 6 chronologically *after* chapter 7's presentation of the sealing of the 144,000 Jews during which the four angels are held back. Only *after* these 144,000 have been sealed are these four angels let loose to stir up the nations, resulting in the rise of the final empire under the antichrist.

Oddly, just as verses 1-8 of chapter 7 describe events *just prior to* the first four seals in chapter 6:1-8 in which these four angels are released, the remaining 9 verses of chapter 7 describe the events that relate to the seventh and final seal in Revelation 8:1. During the fifth seal, in chapter 6:9-11, the martyred saints of times past ask God how long before he will take vengeance upon the people of the earth but they are told to wait for a short time until their number of martyrs is complete. As the last seal, the seventh seal denotes the completion of these events. Not surprise then, is that this *Parallel Description* in chapter 7:9-17 describes the arrival in heaven of the souls of the rest of the martyrs created by the intervening tribulation, a tribulation that arises when the four horsemen are released to blow upon the sea and stir up the rise of the antichrist and his empire, which is the primary source of persecution against the saints.

Lastly, we might include some additional discussion of the 144,000 that are sealed in Revelation 7:3-8. One question that may emerge as we read about those who are sealed here in chapter 7 is: why this specific, exact figure? Why are there precisely 144,000 who are sealed (12,000 from each tribe)?

As we read through this chapter we might also note that immediately after the sealing of the 144,000 from the twelve tribes of Israel, we are presented with a great number of people from all nations, kindreds, peoples, and tongues (verse 9). Likewise, chapters 14:1 mentions the 144,000 from the tribes of Israel and chapter 15 follows with a presentation of people from the tribulation who have gotten

victory over the beast. The specificity of the number of the 144,000 along with the subsequent mention of people from the rest of the nations may suggest something about the 144,000. In addition, between chapter 14's mention of the 144,000 and the chapter 15's mention of the people who are victorious over the beast, we are told about the going forth of the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In fact, chapter 14:1-6 presents the 144,000 in immediate succession with the preaching of the gospel to the nations.

Revelation 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him **an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.** 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but **the hundred and forty and four thousand,** which were redeemed from the earth. 4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. 5 And **in their mouth was found no guile:** for they are without fault before the throne of God. 6 **And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,**

Right before verse 6's mention of the preaching of the gospel to the nations, the 144,000 are described as "having no guile." New Testament discusses the idea of guile, deceitfulness, craftiness or subtlety using Greek words with similar meanings to discuss those who proclaim false teachings (Acts 13:10, Romans 16:18, 2 Corinthians 11:3, 2 Cor. 12:16). Those who teach and proclaim the truth are often spoken of with contrasting terms (1 Thess. 2:3-4, 1 Peter 2:14, 18, 21-22, 1 Peter 3:10, Colossians 2:4, 2 Cor. 4:2, 2 Cor. 11:3, Eph. 4:14). For example, in John 1:47, Nathanael is selected by Jesus to be one of the twelve apostles. Here Jesus declares him to be a person in whom there is no guile. John 1:47 uses the same word found in Revelation 14:5.

Similarly, Revelation 14:5 references the mouths of the 144,000 specifically as having no guile. In several places Revelation uses the idea of the mouth to appropriately represent a person who proclaims something to others. For instance, Revelation 13:5 discusses the mouth that speaks great things and blasphemies. And Revelation 16:13-14 depicts unclean spirits which proceed from the mouth of the dragon, the false prophet, and the beast and which go forth to the kings of the earth in order to get them to gather together to battle on the great day of God.

Therefore, the declaration that in the mouths of the 144,000 was found no guile may well indicate that they have some role in preaching or teaching others, particularly the rest of the nations.

Furthermore, the Greek word for "sealing" which is used of the 144,000 in Revelation 7 is the verb "sphragizo" (4972).

4972 σφραγιζω sphragizo sfrag-id'-zo

from 4973; TDNT-7:939,1127; v

AV-seal 22, set to (one's) seal 1, stop 1, seal up 1, set a seal 1, vr seal 1; 27

1) **to set a seal upon, mark with a seal**, to seal

1a) for security: from Satan

1b) since things sealed up are concealed (as the contents of a letter), to hide, keep in silence, keep secret

1c) in order to mark a person or a thing

1c1) **to set a mark upon by the impress of a seal or a stamp**

1c2) angels are said to be sealed by God

1d) **in order to prove, confirm, or attest a thing**

1d1) **to confirm authenticate**, place beyond doubt

1d1a) of a written document

1d1b) **to prove one's testimony to a person that he is what he professes to be**

The Greek verb "sphargizo" (4972) comes from the noun "sphragis" (4973).

4973 σφραγις sphragis sfrag-ece'

probably strengthened from 5420; TDNT-7:939,1127; n f

AV-seal 16; 16

1) a seal

1a) the seal placed upon books

1b) a signet ring

1c) **the inscription or impression made by a seal**

1c1) of the name of God and Christ stamped upon their foreheads

1d) **that by which anything is confirmed, proved, authenticated, as by a seal (a token or proof)**

We can see then that being sealed conveys the notion of showing confirmation that a thing is authentic. This is related to the affirmation of a testimony. It includes the idea of stamping or impressing a mark to denote that something was proved or authentic. Elsewhere the New Testament discusses this concept of people and testimonies that were approved or authentically from God using the Greek word "dokimos" (1384).

1384 **dokimos**

from 1380; TDNT-2:255,181; adj

AV-approved 6, tried 1; 7

1) **accepted, particularly of coins and money.**

2) accepted, pleasing, acceptable

By contrast, persons and teachings that were not approved by God were qualified with the negative adjective "adokimos" (96) which is formed by adding the Greek negative particle "a" to the word "dokimos."

96 **adokimos**

from 1 (as a negative particle) and 1384; TDNT-2:255,181; adj

AV-reprobate 6, castaway 1, rejected 1; 8

1) **not standing the test, not approved**

1a) **properly used of metals and coins**

2) **that which does not prove itself such as it ought**

2a) unfit for, unproved, **spurious, reprobate**

(For more information on these terms and their use in the New Testament please refer to our study on Unity and Excommunication.)

Both terms (“dokimos” and its negation, “adokimos”) relate to the idea of approved metals or coins. In the ancient Greek world, coins which were approved and authentic were stamped with a seal created by the state. When the coins were minted they were pressed with this official mark which signified that they were approved by the state for use in trade. In this way approved coins were able to be distinguished from those made by counterfeiters who sought to deceive their patrons.

Ancient Greek Coinage - The first coins were issued in either Lydia or Ionia in Asia Minor at some time before 600 BCE, either by the non-Greek Lydians for their own use or perhaps because Greek mercenaries wanted **to be paid in precious metal** at the conclusion of their time of service, and wanted **to have their payments marked in a way that would authenticate them...Minting - All Greek coins** were hand-made, rather than machined as modern coins are. **The design for the obverse was carved (in incuso) into a block of bronze or possibly iron, called a die. The design of the reverse was carved into a similar punch. A blank disk of gold, silver, or electrum was cast in a mold and then, placed between these two and the punch struck hard with a hammer, raising the design on both sides of the coin.** - wikipedia.org

Coining - In minting, coining or coinage is the process of manufacturing coins using a kind of stamping which is now generically **known in metalworking as "coining"**. This process is different from cast coinage, and can be classified in hammered coinage or hammering and milled coinage or milling. **A coin die is one of the two metallic pieces that are used to strike one side of a coin.** A die contains an inverse version of **the image to be struck on the coin...Ancient Coin Dies - Prior to the modern era, coin dies were manufactured individually by hand by artisans known as engravers.** - wikipedia.org

It is interesting to note that in the ancient Greek world it became common practice for coins to be inscribed with the image of the king as well as his name.

Ancient Greek Coinage - The most striking new feature of Hellenistic coins was the use of portraits of living people, namely of the kings themselves. This practice had begun in Sicily, but was disapproved of by other Greeks as showing hubris (arrogance). But the kings of Ptolemaic Egypt and Seleucid Syria had no such scruples: having already awarded themselves with "divine" status, they **issued magnificent gold coins adorned with their own portraits,** with the

symbols of their state on the reverse. **The names of the kings were frequently inscribed on the coin as well. This established a pattern for coins which has persisted ever since: a portrait of the king**, usually in profile and striking a heroic pose, on the obverse, **with his name beside him**, and a coat of arms or other symbol of state on the reverse... - wikipedia.org

The New Testament attests to this practice of marking a coin with the king's image and name in order to show its authenticity. It is also relevant that according to Jesus the bearing of a king's image and name indicates that something belongs to that king and their kingdom. Of course, this concept is relevant to the 144,000 as well as those who bear the mark or name of the Antichrist.

Matthew 22:19 Shew me the tribute money. And **they brought unto him a penny.** 20 And he saith unto them, **Whose is this image (1504) and superscription (1923)?**

Mark 12:15 Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? **bring me a penny**, that I may see it. 16 **And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image (1504) and superscription (1923)? And they said unto him, Caesar's.**

Luke 20:24 **Shew me a penny. Whose image (1504) and superscription (1923) hath it?** They answered and said, **Caesar's.**

The Greek word translated as "image" in the above passages is "ikon" (1504). It is the same word used in Romans 8:29, 1 Corinthians 15:49, 2 Corinthians 3:18, and Colossians 3:10 to refer to our being made in the image of Christ as we follow his teachings. It is also the same word used in Revelation 13:14-18 and 14:9-11 and so forth to talk about the economic system instituted by the False Prophet involving an "image" and a "mark" of the beast without which no man can buy or sell. The Greek word for "mark" in Revelation 13:16-17 and 14:9-11 is "charagma" (5480) which means to be engraved, stamped, or imprinted with a mark.

5480 χαραγμα **charagma** khar'-ag-mah
from the same as 5482; TDNT-9:416,1308; n n

AV-mark 8, **graven 1; 9**

1) **a stamp, an imprinted mark**

1a) of the mark stamped on the forehead or the right hand as the badge of the followers of the Antichrist

1b) the mark branded upon horses

2) thing carved, sculpture, graven work

2a) of idolatrous images

The concept of a name being marked on a person or a coin for economic purposes is related to the idea expressed by the inscriptions of kings' names on the official coins of the state. The Greek word translated as "superscription" in the gospels' discussion of coins belonging to Caesar is the noun "epigraphe" (1923). It comes

from the verb “epigrapho” (1924). The verb “epigrapho” (1924) comes from the Greek preposition “epi” (1909) meaning “upon” joined to the Greek verb “grapho” (1125) for “writing.”

1923 επιγραφή **epigraphē** ep-ig-raf-ay'

from 1924; ; n f

AV-superscription 5; 5

1) **an inscription**, title

1a) in the NT of an inscription in black letters upon a whitened tablet

1b) **of the inscription on a coin**

1924 επιγραφῶ **epigraphō** ep-ee-graf'-o

from 1909 and 1125; ; v

AV-write 2, write over 1, write thereon 1, with this inscription + 1722 + 3639 1; 5

1) **to write upon, inscribe**

2) metaph. to write upon the mind

1125 γραφῶ **graphō** graf'-o

a root word; TDNT-1:742,128; v

AV-write 206, writing 1, describe 1, vr write 1; 209

1) to write, with reference to the form of the letters

1a) to delineate (or form) letters on a tablet, parchment, paper, or other material

2) to write, with reference to the contents of the writing

2a) to express in written characters

2b) to commit to writing (things not to be forgotten), write down, record

2c) used of those things which stand written in the sacred books (of the OT)

2d) to write to one, i.e. by writing (in a written epistle) to give information, directions

3) to fill with writing

4) to draw up in writing, compose

Revelation 14:1 uses the Greek verb “grapho” (1125) to refer to the seal borne by the 144,000. It apparently involves the Father’s name being written on their foreheads.

Revelation 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him **an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written (1125) in their foreheads.**

The Book of Revelation seems to parallel and contrasted the 144,000 with those who contrarily promote or receive false religious teaching. We can also see that in the New Testament the idea of being sealed or marked through the impression of an image and the inscription of God’s name can also be used to convey the idea of having the approved testimony of God. The apostles used these terms to contrast apostolic teaching and evangelism (which was confirmed through the miracles given by the power of the Holy Spirit - Mark 16:17, 20, Acts 2:22, 43, Romans 15:19, 2 Cor. 12:12, Hebrews 2:4) with the messages of false teachers (2 Timothy 3:8, 1 Cor. 11:19, 2 Timothy 2:15, 2 Corinthians 13:5-6). And they used these

terms to refer to the authentic preaching that was authorized by God and which was delivered through Jesus and his apostles (John 3:33, 6:27, 2 Cor. 1:22, 1:13).

It is possible then that Revelation 7 and 14 are hinting at an evangelistic role carried out by these 144,000 Jews wherein the 144,000 are responsible for preaching the approved gospel to the rest of the nations of the world. This would be necessary since there are many divergent “gospels” that exist today and will be preached by false preachers at the end of the age (Matthew 24:24, Mark 13:22). It will be necessary for God to distinguish between the gospel message that is from him and those messages that are not. And it would also make sense with Revelation’s declarations of the going forth of the gospel in the end times. The New Testament reports that in the first century the gospel first went forth to the nations through the ministry of Jesus twelve Jewish apostles (Matthew 28, Mark 16, Acts 1). This also fits with Jesus’ concept that a prophet is often more effective when sent to other nations than his own (Matthew 13:57, Mark 6:4, Luke 4:24, John 4:44). Since Revelation is clear that the gospel will be preached again to the Gentile nations in the years before Christ’s return, it would make sense that this would occur through Jewish preachers. Revelation 10:11 may even indicate this very concept when the apostle John, perhaps acting as a stand-in, is told that he must prophesy again before many people, nations, tongues, and kings. (In the New Testament “prophecy” can be used to refer to sharing God’s words and teachings with others. For more on this see our Church Gatherings and Leadership study.) In this way, the sealing of the 144,000 could very reasonably be related both to the idea of their having received the approved message from God and their being approved messengers to the nations. This possibility might also explain the peculiarity of the number 144,000.

The gospels report that Jesus sent out the twelve apostles to preach the gospel to Israel (Matthew 10, Mark 3:14, 6:7, Luke 9). (The effectiveness of these early evangelistic efforts by the apostles in Israel may perhaps be measured by the fact that only 120 people were present in the upper room on Pentecost. (It is intriguing that like 12,000 or 144,000, the number 120 is a multiple of 12 and 10.) Of course, after Pentecost the apostles were much more effective in preaching to their Jewish brethren. Nevertheless, the New Testament and history alike attest to the great success these Jewish apostles had as they preached to the nations in accordance with Jesus’ commission. It is also important to note that all twelve of the apostles were Jewish men whom Jesus later states would judge over the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28, Luke 22:30). Here in Revelation, in an end-times setting we have the presentation of a number of Jews from the twelve tribes of Israel in a number that is a multiple of 12. After his death and resurrection, Jesus sent the twelve apostles out to preach the gospel to Israel first and then to the Gentile nations (Matthew 28:16-20, Mark 16:14-15, Luke 24:33-49, and Acts 1:2-8). The rest of the New Testament records the apostles’ fulfillment of the evangelization of the Jewish nation first followed by the rest of the nations. Right alongside the number of 12,000 Jews from each tribe, Revelation presents a great number of people from the Gentile nations to whom the gospel is preached (Rev. 14:1-6).

Likewise, Revelation 8-9 presents a series of events corresponding to the sounding of seven trumpets. Revelation 12, 13, 17, and 18 discuss seven kings and a seven-nation empire system. And chapters 17 and 18 use imagery and phrases borrowed from Isaiah 23 and Ezekiel 26-28. These Old Testament texts discuss the Phoenicians and their cities. All of these items from the Book of Revelation reflect a correspondence with the conquest of the seven Canaanite nations under Joshua. The Canaanites were after all a Phoenician people whose conquest by the Israelites began with the seven trumpets heralding the fall of Jericho. We might recall that before the Israelites began their conquest with the city of Jericho, Moses first sent twelve spies into the land of the seven Canaanite nations (Numbers 13). We might also note that there was one spy from each of the 12 tribes (Joshua 3:12, 4:2-4). The 144,000 may perhaps be an end-times' parallel to this concept with the number 12 being multiplied many times over in order to go into a much larger and much more populated world.

From these observations it is possible to suggest that the 144,000 are, in fact, a group of Jews (that like the apostles) are grouped by the number twelve, are representative of the twelve tribes of Israel, and who are sent to preach the gospel to the nations of the earth before Christ's impending conquest of his enemies and, in fact, of all the nations of the world (Revelation 11:15). Alternatively, it is possible that the 144,000 are simply a particularly numbered portion or representation of the Jewish population that goes into protection in the wilderness as described in Revelation 12 and who have no role in evangelizing the rest of the nations.

Additional Relevant Comments

Before we move on, we should note that the completion of the number of martyrs who come out of this tribulation must necessarily include the two witnesses, whose deaths are described at the end of the Expansion in chapter 10:1-11:13 as coinciding with a resurrection, a voice shouting "Come up here," and the last of the seven trumpet. Thus, the second half of that Expansion must also overlap the timeframe covered here in chapter 7 as well as the seals, which span from chapter 6:1-8:1.

Status of the 8 Conceptual Threads

At this point, we will again review the coverage provided to the 8 overarching conceptual threads that we outlined earlier on in this study. Those threads were described as follows:

1. The angel's appearing to John for the transmission of the Revelation to God's servants
2. The transmission of the Revelation from the Father to Jesus
3. The ministry of the 2 witnesses (including the Temple's building) and plagues

4. God's covenant people, Israel: purging & protection; the 144,000; building the Temple
5. The fall of the Satanic Kingdom and the subsequent falling away in the Church
6. The rise of the last empire and the antichrist; tribulation and the persecution of saints
7. The battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ
8. Millennial reign of Christ and the final judgment

We noted repeatedly of these 8 only 3 1/2 (nos. 1, 2, 6 and part of no. 7) were mentioned in the opening *Long Series* in chapter 1:1-6:17, 8:1. Additionally, we noted that the *Expansion* in chapter 10:1-11:13 only covered number 1 in any real detail while also providing a brief mention of number 3, leaving 4 threads without description. The *Interlude* in chapter 7 provides a *Parallel Description* that again only briefly references the imminent rise of the last empire (thread number 6) by mentioning the four winds and the martyrdom of the saints, which occurs under the last empire. Likewise, this *Interlude* provides an equally brief reference to the imminent return of Christ (thread number 7) also by mention of the completion of the martyrs (number 7). Chapter 7 does, however, provide a substantial statement concerning the conversion of 144,000 people from the nation of Israel as described in thread number 4. Nevertheless, the additional comments pertaining to the sealing of the 144,000 Jews are limited here to the numbers of the tribes and completely lacking in any other sequential or connective details. So, after the opening *Long Series*, a partial look at the *Expansion* in chapter 10:1-11:3, and an examination of the *Parallel Description Interlude* in chapter 7, there is still a lot of room for *Parallel Descriptions* to fill in, explain, and connect this unfolding chronology.

Section 2.03 – Short Series: Chapter 8:2-5

The Seven Trumpets, the Prayers of the Saints, and the Fall of Jericho

We stated above that the mention of the last seal in chapter 8:1 concludes the *Long Series* spanning from chapter 1:1-6:17, for which chapter 7 is a *Parallel Description Interlude*. Chapter 8:2-5 provides our first example of a *Short Series*, which we defined as follows.

Short Series – a few verses providing a short summary list of events in chronological order, usually without details, designed to connect elements from different segments together.

Commonalities Establishing Connection

Specifically, chapter 8:2 connects the giving of the 7 trumpets to the angels with the release of the four horsemen and the answering of the prayers of the saints during the fifth seal in chapter 6. In chapter 6:1-11, the four horsemen are released followed by the saints petitioning for vengeance against the ungodly on the earth and asking God how long their enemies will be allowed to continue.

Revelation 6:1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. 2 **And I saw, and behold a white horse:** and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: **and he went forth** conquering, and to conquer. 3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. 4 **And there went out another horse that was red:** and *power* was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. 5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. **And I beheld, and lo a black horse;** and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. 6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and *see* thou hurt not the oil and the wine. 7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. 8 **And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth,** to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. 9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 **And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?**

In chapter 8:2, the 7 angels are given the trumpets.

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

As we will see in the next section, the trumpets denote the fall of the Satanic kingdom and the rise of persecution, including the arrival of two of these four horsemen. And, after verse 3 denotes the initiation of the trumpets, verses 3-4 denote the prayers of the saints.

Revelation 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. 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.**

The arrangement of these two items in Revelation 8:2-4 is identical to Revelation 6:1-11. In Revelation 8:2-5, there is the initiation of the fall of the satanic kingdom as designated by the trumpets and followed by the prayers of the saints. Similarly, in Revelation 6:1-11, there a detailed description of the release of the four angels followed by the saints petitioning God. The four horsemen in chapter 6:1-8 are the chief Adversary who has authority over death, Abaddon who has authority over hell and is the angel out of the bottomless pit, and two other angels that work with them in their role as the four winds. In chapter 6:1-8 they are released to work in the fourth quadrant of the earth, which signifies that the first

five trumpets have been sounded by the time of their release. We will discuss this more in our next section as we examine the meaning of the trumpets and the events, which they signify.

Consequently, the prayers of the saints here in chapter 8:3-4 corresponds to the prayer of the saints in chapter 6:9-11. Both follow a point in time when the four horsemen are in position and have just been released. In chapter 8:2-4 this is indicated by the fact that the trumpets, which describe events leading up to the horsemen's release, begin *before* the prayers of the saints are offered.

The longer description of the saints' prayer in chapter 6 is indicative that the saints are witnessing the onset of a situation that will produce persecution. For, not only do they petition God for vengeance, but they do so in such a way as to ask how long it will be that their enemies are allowed to continue. And the answer is that there will only be a short time of martyrdom before justice is enacted. This indicates that the saints in chapter 6:9-11 are aware of the going forth of the horsemen and their question about how long it will be is related to their awareness of the horsemen's activities. Likewise, the prayer of the saints in chapter 8:2-5 occurs *after* the trumpets begin, which describe the horsemen coming into position to be released, thereby once again indicating that the prayers result from what is occurring in the initial trumpets.

Consequently, this *Short Series* in chapter 8:2-5 functions exactly as a *Short Series* is projected to function in our model. It provides a basic, skeletal chronology of events described in more detail in different Parallel Descriptions. In this case, it properly connects and arranges the order of events in chapter 6:1-11 with the descriptions of the trumpets in chapter 8:6-9:21.

However, verse 5 is also included in this *Short Series* and so it is necessary to comment on verse 5 as well.

Revelation 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 thundering, lightning, and earthquake are a quick, abridged reference to items that occur at the end of the final 3 ½ years, right before the return of Christ. The earthquake occurs at the sixth seal in Revelation 6, where it is placed right alongside sun becoming dark, the moon becoming as blood, the mountains and islands being removed from their place, and the men of the earth anticipating the impending return of Christ and his wrath.

Revelation 6:12 And I beheld when he had **opened the sixth seal**, and, lo, there was **a great earthquake**; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and **every mountain and island were moved out of their places.** 15 And the kings of the earth, and

the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, **Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:**

The earthquake is mentioned again at the resurrection and catching up of the two witnesses, when a voice calls to them saying “Come up here.”

Revelation 11:11 And after three days and an half **the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet;** and great fear fell upon them which saw them. 12 **And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud;** and their enemies beheld them. 13 **And the same hour was there a great earthquake,** and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

This occurs at the seventh trumpet, found just a few verses later in chapter 11, which according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 and Thessalonians 4:13-17 also accompanies a resurrection and a catching away.

Revelation 11:14 **The second woe is past;** *and*, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. 15 **And the seventh angel sounded;** and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. 16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. 18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. 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.**

A comparison of the mention of the “woe” and “trumpet” mentioned in verses 14-15 of chapter 11 quickly reveals that these last 6 verses of the chapter are the conclusion to the *Long Series* of trumpets, which began in chapter 8:6-9:21, with chapter 10:1-11:13 functioning as an *Expansion Interlude* overlapping the same timeframe. Here the great earthquake is accompanied by the lightning, thunders, and hails, and voices, just as at the end of the *Short Series* in chapter 8:5 and also by “great hail.”

The reason for the earthquake and the reason it is a unique occurrence is simply that earthquakes, in the bible, accompany resurrections. This can be seen in Matthew 27:50-54 as well as Matthew 28:2. And of course, if bodies which decomposed into the soil of the earth were suddenly reconstituted from the soil of

the earth, an earthquake is just what you'd expect, especially if it was the resurrection of all the righteous dead at the end of the age.

And finally, the earthquake is mentioned again at the last of seven bowls of wrath in chapter 16, where again it is side by side with thundering, lightning, voices, hail, and the moving of the islands and mountains.

Revelation 16:17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. **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. **19** And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. **20** And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

This is why we refer to chapter 8:2-5 as a *Short Series*. Because although it is a very brief passage lacking in much detail, it provides the basic chronological order and connection between the commencement of the 7 trumpets, the prayers of the saints, and the completion of the trumpets and vengeance at the resurrection and catching away of the saints to meet the Lord in the air at his imminent return.

The Reason for the Segment

As we can see, the purpose of this *Short Series* is to provide a basic, skeletal chronology for the trumpets and the saints' prayers, which mirrors the components of chapter 6 in briefer form and connects to additional details and imagery, which we will describe in more detail below. Additionally, this segment serves the purpose of reminding readers that the God of the New Testament, the Father of Jesus Christ, is not a God without judgment or a God that defines love in a way that overlooks sin indefinitely.

Additionally, this passage clearly presents an angel operating in the capacity of a priest. In the Old Testament, starting with Aaron, the incense was to be offered every morning and evening and this was to be carried out afterward (Exodus 30:7-10). In fact, the priests were divided by King David into 24 courses, which each took turns offering the incense, even into the days of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist (2 Chronicles 24:1-19, Luke 1:9-10). This is modeled after the priesthood of the angels who are also divided into 24 (Revelation 4:4, 10, 5:8, 14, 11:16, 19:4). In turn, the priestly position of this angel also connects to the promise made by Jesus that in the resurrection his disciples would be made like angels (Matthew 22:30, Luke 20:36). This passage in Revelation highlights that not only do resurrected, glorified saints become like angels in terms of traits like immortality but also in terms of the priesthood to God and authority over the kingdoms of the world (Revelation 1:6, 5:10, 7:14-15, 20:6).

Furthermore, the imagery of the incense invokes connections to several other Old Testament concepts.

In two separate instances recorded in Leviticus 10:1-11 and Numbers 16:1-50, the burning of incense in a censer is connected to the Lord making a distinction between those he accepts as priests and those he does not. In Leviticus 10, two of Aaron's sons are killed by fire that comes down from heaven to the earth because they deviate from God's instructions for them as priests. Perhaps even more significant to Revelation is Numbers 16, when a Levite named Korah, along with 250 famous leaders of Israel, opposes Moses and Aaron (who foreshadow the two witnesses). These men criticize Moses and Aaron for leading the people out to the wilderness and for lifting themselves above the rest of the people, arguing instead that they too are equal to Moses and Aaron in terms of leadership, priesthood, and holiness. These men, including the 250, are told to take their censers and fill them with fire and incense that the Lord might demonstrate who he has accepted as priests. Again, fire comes down from heaven to earth consuming the 250 men. We'll talk more about this instance later when we cover Revelation 12:7-17.

But from these two Old Testament passages, we can see how the imagery of censers full of incense invokes the idea of God making a distinction between those he does and does not accept as priests, at a time when God is about to fulfill his promises to the saints to make them kings and priests and immortal as angels at the return of Jesus Christ. And in addition, we can see that the image of the fire being cast to the ground invokes the idea of punishment sent on those who are not accepted as priests. Furthermore, that fire has a purging effect removing the unworthy from the congregation of the saints. For this reason, the casting of the fire to the earth in Revelation 8 also invokes the New Testament promise of baptism with fire, to purge the church through tribulation.

The second Old Testament concept that is invoked by Revelation 8's imagery of the censer is the feast of the Atonement. This feast is described in Leviticus 16:1-34, where it ties directly to the priests' duties of offering incense in censers with coals of fire from the altar, just as seen here in Revelation 8. Even when Aaron is first instructed to offer incense daily, there is mention that this will culminate in a ceremony of Atonement once per year (Exodus 30:7-10). First, the inclusion of the Day of Atonement imagery indicates the fulfillment of that longstanding foreshadowing holy day in these events, which precipitate the return of the Lord to establish his kingdom on earth. And second, we notice from Leviticus that there are two goats, one whose blood is shed for a sacrifice to atone for sin and the other who is cast out from the presence of the Lord and bares the blame of the sins of the people. This aspect of casting out also invokes the casting out from heaven of the last of the satanic angels, which is described in chapter 12 of Revelation.

So, in two ways the imagery of the censer filled with incense and fire cast to the earth connects to Revelation 12, which we will look at later. First, in terms of Korah and the 250 leaders of Israel who opposed Moses and Aaron, who led the

people out into the wilderness. And second, in terms of the casting out of the satanic angels from heaven.

In short, the purpose of this *Short Series* in Revelation 8:2-5 is to convey that the Day of Atonement is fulfilled in the unfolding of these last events culminating in the return of Christ Jesus and to communicate that with the trumpets, God is going to punish the wicked, cast out the angelic adversaries from heaven, and purge his people from the wicked among them whom the Lord rejects as priests. And once the angelic adversaries arrive on earth to begin persecution, the saints in heaven pray, just as they do in chapter 6:9-11, to ask God for justice against them and to ask how long it will be until that justice is complete.

Given that Revelation 8:2-5 is intended to convey and connect these particular events, it is no surprise that the imagery of the trumpets, which are introduced in this passage, also invokes the imagery of the falling down of God's enemies. In particular, the introduction of the 7 trumpets relates to the fall of Jericho, who from their high walls looked down upon and opposed the people of Israel who were entering the Promised Land, which foreshadows the coming of the kingdom of God on earth under Jesus Christ. So, here again, we see that the prayers of the saints are connected to God casting down those who have opposed his people who were pilgrims moving toward their promised inheritance. In summary, Revelation 8:2-5 provides a quick outline for the order of the beginning of the fall of the satanic kingdom and the coming of the four horsemen to begin persecution, the saints' prayer for vengeance because of the persecution and asking how long it will last, and the completion of that vengeance when the last trumpet sounds accompanied by an earthquake, voices, thundering, lightning, great hail, the call to "Come up here," and subsequent the resurrection and rapture of the saints.

Status of the 8 Conceptual Threads

Here again for reference is our list of the 8 overarching conceptual threads in Revelation.

1. The angel's appearing to John for the transmission of the Revelation to God's servants
2. The transmission of the Revelation from the Father to Jesus
3. The ministry of the 2 witnesses (including the Temple's building) and plagues
4. God's covenant people, Israel: purging & protection; the 144,000; building the Temple
5. The fall of the Satanic Kingdom and the subsequent falling away in the Church
6. The rise of the last empire and the antichrist; tribulation and the persecution of saints
7. The battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ
8. Millennial reign of Christ and the final judgment

This brief passage of 4 verses provides a lot of connection, completing important Old Testament foreshadowing and showing the relationship between the saints'

prayers and the unfolding of God's vengeance to purge the people and bring forth his priests. In chapter 8:2-5 we've only seen brief, symbolic references to the fall of the Satanic Kingdom, the ministry of the two witnesses, and even their ministry in Israel, which we'll explain further when we arrive at Revelation 12. And we've seen another brief, indirect reference to the return of Christ Jesus in terms of the mention of the earthquake, voices, thundering, and lighting, which occurs alongside the resurrection and rapture at the last trumpet.

However, this passage is only a bare outline, lacking much detail. And this continues to leave much room for additional *Parallel Descriptions*, including Revelation 12, which we mentioned above, to fill in the details, bringing even brief references, such as those found in chapter 8:2-5, all together into a full picture. Yet, despite its lack of detail, these four verses provide essential content, introducing the connection to the previously unmentioned Day of Atonement as well as introducing the previously unmentioned trumpets and connecting them to the prayers of the saints and the climactic sequence of the earthquake, thundering, lightning, hail, and resurrection and rapture.