

Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas
Fredericksburg Bible Church
107 East Austin
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624
830-997-8834 jthomas@fbgbible.org

A0545 – November 6, 2005 – Revelation 7:15-8:1 – Promises to the Martyrs

Revelation 7:15 "For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. ¹⁶ "They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; ¹⁷ for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes." Revelation 8:1 When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

PRESENT LOCATION OF THE MARTYRS (7:15a)

Revelation 7:15a "Because of this, they are before the throne of God;

dia touto (because of this or for this reason) refers back to the end of verse 14. Because ***they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb...they are before the throne of God.*** Their past washing-whitening which took place while they were still on earth and had faith in the Lamb of God, symbolizing forgiveness-justification qualifies this great multitude of martyrs from every nation, people, tribe, and tongue to stand ***before the throne of God.*** This is the heavenly ***throne of God.*** Thus, immediately upon martyrdom they receive ***white robes*** and are given access to the ***throne of God.***

PRESENT FUNCTION OF THE MARTYRS (7:15b)

Revelation 7:15b and they serve Him day and night in His temple;

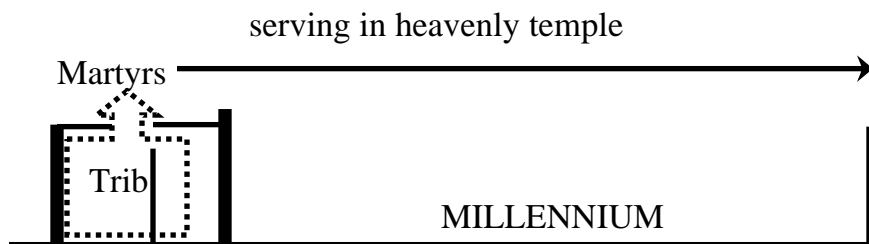
Their function ***before the throne of God*** is to ***serve Him day and night in His temple.*** This “serving” is a present function and not a future one; thus, after they are martyred, they will go to heaven and will begin to ***serve Him day and night in His heavenly temple.*** There are seven temples mentioned in Scripture.

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| 1. Solomon's Temple | (1 Kings 5-8; 2 Chron 2:1-18) |
| 2. Zerubbabel/Herod's Temple | (Isa. 44:28; Matt. 24:1-2) |
| 3. Individual Temple | (1 Cor. 3:16; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19) |
| 4. Body Temple | (2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21-22) |
| 5. Heavenly Temple | (Rev. 4-5; * 11:19 ; 14:15, 17; 15:5, 6, 8; 16:1, 17) |
| 6. Tribulation Temple | (Matt. 24:15; Rev 11:1-2) |
| 7. Millennial temple | (Ezek. 40-48) |

At present individual church saints are a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16; Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 6:19) as well as the corporate church (2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21-22). This is not Herod's temple (Matt 24:1-2), the Tribulation temple (Matt 24:15; Rev 11:1-2) or the earthly Millennial Temple (Ezek. 40-48). Nor is this a temple in the New Heavens and New Earth for the Lord God and the Lamb are its temple (Rev 21:22) of which church saints will be pillars (i.e., citizens, cf Rev 3:12). The only option left is the heavenly temple of which the OT tabernacle and Solomon's Temple were patterned after (cf. Heb 9:24). This heavenly temple is mentioned several times in the Revelation (Rev 4-5; 7:15; ***11:19**; 14:15, 17; 15:5, 6, 8; 16:1, 17).

Revelation 11:19 And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened;

The point is that upon entrance into heaven these martyrs will continually *serve Him day and night in His heavenly temple*. The duration of their service in the heavenly *temple* is not completely clear. It will continue at least until the end of the Tribulation and probably to the end of the Millennium.



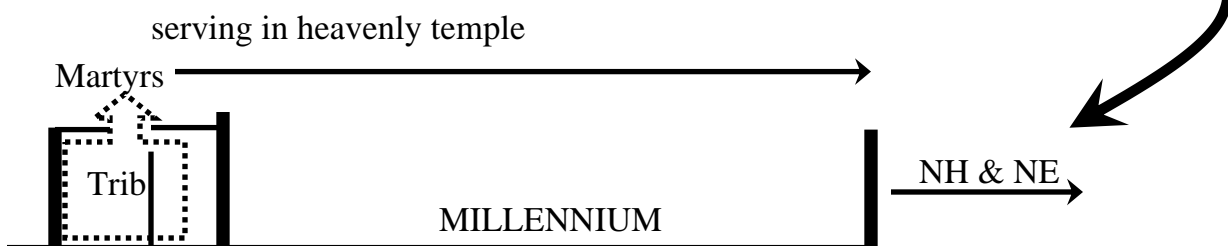
The nature of their service is indicated by the Greek word *latreuo* as priestly service. They will not be involved in external rites but spiritual worship in the form of praise and adoration as in verse 10. The continual praise and adoration is signified by the words *day and night*. There is no day or night in heaven so the point is that their worship will not cease.

6 FUTURE PROMISES TO MARTYRS (7:15c-17)

Revelation 7:15c and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. ¹⁶ "They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; ¹⁷ for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

While the martyrs present location is heaven and their present function is worship verse 15c shifts to future promises guaranteed to these faithful martyrs. The source of these promises is **He who sits on the throne**, a clear reference to God the Father because the Lamb is standing in front center of the throne (cf v 17). The first promise is that God the Father **will spread His tabernacle over them**. God will “tabernacle”, “tent”, or “dwell” with them. In the OT God tabernacled among Israel in the tabernacle and later in Solomon’s temple by way of the Shechinah Glory. “The Shechinah Glory is the visible manifestation of the presence of God.”ⁱ He appeared as a burning lamp when God covenanted with Abram in Gen 15. He appeared in the burning bush to Moses in Exod. 3. He appeared as a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day as He led Israel out of Egypt in Exod. 13:21-22. He appeared as fire on Mt Sinai at the giving of the Law in Exod. 19. Moses built a portable tabernacle so God could dwell among His people. Later, Solomon built a Temple to serve as a more permanent dwelling place for the Shechinah Glory. He departed from the Solomonic Temple during the Babylonian deportations described in Ezekiel.ⁱⁱ He was the star which led the Magi to the home of the baby Jesus in Matt 2 and He appears many other times throughout Scripture. The point today is that God the Father is here promising to **dwell** among these martyrs. We can be certain that this is a reference to the promise of the Shechinah Glory dwelling with them. The fulfillment of this promise will not be in the Millennium as the Shechinah will then fill the Millennial Temple (Ezek. 43) but will be in the New Heavens and New Earth which follow.

Revelation 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,



In the NH & NE there will be no heavenly temple distinct from the earth. Heaven and Earth will become one reality. There will be no need for a temple because the Lord God and the Lamb are its temple (Rev 21:22).

Revelation 21:22 I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

Thus, after the martyrs finish their task of serving God in the heavenly temple (at the close of the Millennium) God will once more tabernacle with men on earth (Rev 21:3) in the New Heavens and New Earth.

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea.

Many phrases in Rev 7:16-17 have close parallels to Revelation's descriptions of the New Heavens and New Earth in chapters 21-22.

no more hunger	Rev 7:16	Rev 22:2
no more thirst	Rev 7:16	Rev 22:17
no more sun	Rev 7:16	Rev 21:23-24; 22:5
no more heat	Rev 7:16	Rev 21:23-24; 22:5 (implied)
springs of the water of life	Rev 7:17	Rev 21:6; 22:1
no more tears	Rev 7:17	Rev 21:4

Revelation 7:16 "They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat;

The second promise is that ***They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore***. They have just come out of a time of famine under the 3rd Seal and intense famine under the 4th Seal. In the NH & NE there is no more hunger or thirst (Rev 22:2; 22:17). On a deeper level however, their spiritual hunger and spiritual thirst will be met. In eternity future the saved will always hunger and thirst for God, but that hunger and thirst will always be satisfied. We will continually be coming to know God better. Since He is infinite there will be no end to coming to know Him. We will be able to learn about Him for all eternity and we will never come to know Him exhaustively. Even in eternity future we will not become omniscient, we will always depend upon Him for knowledge and during that time our hunger and thirst to know Him will never be left unsatisfied.

The third promise in verse 16 says ***nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat***. Both the second and third promises, in fact the whole of Rev 7:16-17, allude to

Isaiah 49:10 "They will not hunger or thirst, Nor will the scorching heat or sun strike them down; For He who has compassion on them will lead them And will guide them to springs of water.

We all know the intense scorching that the sun can cause. Many of us have been burned by the sun. One must stay in the shade to avoid its scorching effects. (During the 4th Bowl judgment, the intensity of the sun will increase). However, in the NH & NE there will be no need of the sun.

Revelation 21:23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb.

Revelation 22:5 And there will no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

Revelation 7:17 for the Lamb in the front center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

The reason there will be no need for the sun to light one's way is because ***the Lamb...will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life***. In the present heavens and earth, we need the sun to light our way. But in the NH & NE there will be no need because ***the Lamb***, the crucified Messiah ***will be their shepherd and will guide them***. The fact that ***the Lamb*** is here called a ***shepherd*** recalls Ps 23.

Psalm 23:1-6 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. ³ He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. ⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. ⁶ Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

The new addition here is that a ***Lamb is the shepherd***. Normally it is a lamb who *needs* a shepherd but here the crucified Messiah fulfills both roles. He is both the ***Lamb and the shepherd***. We are the ones who will need ***the Lamb to shepherd*** us. Perhaps He is pictured here as a ***Lamb*** because of the gentleness with which He will lead us.

Because He will replace the present function of the sun recalls

Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

It is the word of God that casts true light on reality and since Jesus Christ is the word incarnate (John 1:1) so He will be our shepherd and will guide us through eternity. The word ***guide*** is *hodegeo* which is a compound word *hodos* meaning “path” or “road” and *hegeomai* which means “to lead”. He will lead us along the road in eternity. Where will He lead us in eternity? The destination to which He will lead us is where our spiritual thirst can be satisfied; the ***springs of the water of life***. He will satisfy our spiritual thirst beyond measure as He guides us through eternity.

And lastly, ***God will wipe every tear from their eyes.***” Only in the NH & NE will there be no more tears. Not only will there be no more tears but ***God will wipe every tear from their eyes***. The frustration and loss of the present world due to the Fall will no longer be remembered so as to precipitate tears. Our emotions will be so cleansed that we are unable to find sadness and to cry. The OT source for this promise is

Isaiah 25:8 He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken.

This promise is almost identically repeated in

Revelation 21:4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

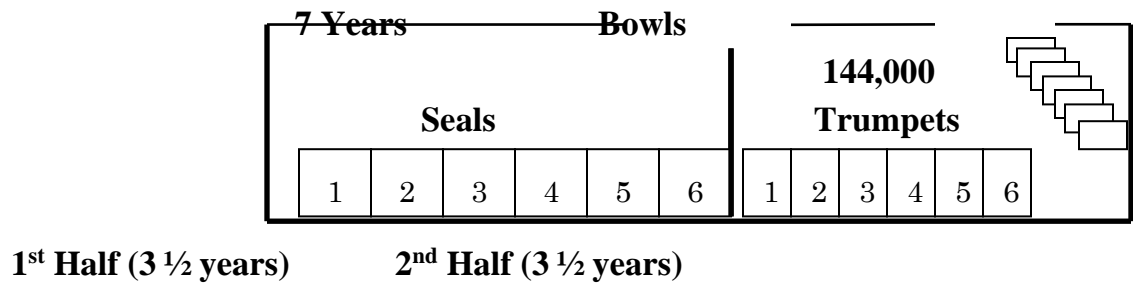
THE 7TH SEAL (8:1)

By way of review here and transition to Rev 8 let’s recall that we are in the 70th Week of Daniel 9, a period of 7 years of 360 days each. This is a distinct time in history when God is removing Satan and His followers who have usurped the creation which is rightly owned

by Christ because He purchased it at the cross. At that time a scroll deed was made, sealed with seven seals, and placed upon the Father’s right hand for safe-keeping until the proper time. Within these seven seals are all the judgments required to remove the usurpers and establish His righteous kingdom on earth in fulfillment of the unconditional Jewish Covenants.

70th Week of Daniel 9
2 Divisions of Birth Pangs

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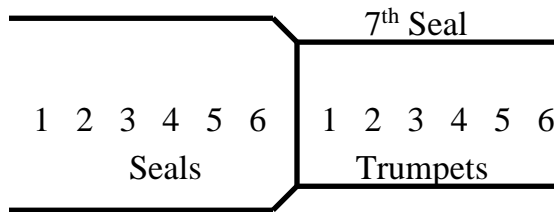
Remember, we have the seven sealed scroll. The Lamb has taken this scroll and has broken the first six seals; peaceful conquest, warfare and bloodshed, famine, death to ¼ of world’s population, martyrs under the altar, and a great shaking. Then two events took place between the 6th and 7th seals to answer the earth dwellers question in 6:17 “*who will be able to stand?*” The answer was two-fold:

1. 144,000 Jewish men who are given a protective seal (7:1-8)
2. A great multitude who goes to heaven before the great tribulation (7:9-17)

Now the 7th and final seal is opened in Rev 8:1.

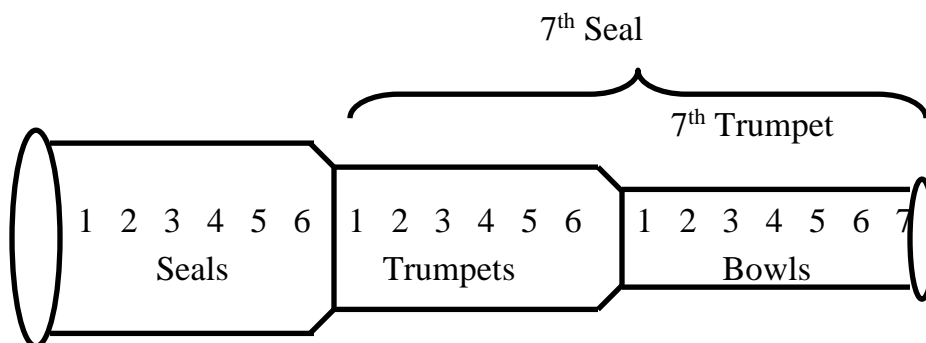
Revelation 8:1 When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ² And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

Here is when I have to explain. From these two verses it is apparent that the seven trumpets were within the seventh seal. Does everyone see that?



This observation and one's I will show you in a moment have led me to conclude that the structure of the judgments is "telescopic". "Telescoping" is a literary form of writing that when illustrated appears much like a "telescope". As you know, if you have an older or traveling telescope, they are often compact and can be extended in stages.

This is the way the Seals, Trumpet, and Bowl Judgments are organized. The 7th Seal is not a judgment itself but is the seven trumpets and the 7th Trumpet is not a judgment itself but is the seven bowls. Thus, the 7th Seal is the trumpet and bowl judgments which correspond to the 2nd half of the Tribulation and the 7th Trumpet is the bowl judgments.



This order is basically chronological but does not exclude some reviewing. For example, Rev 12 reviews history going all the way back to the fall of Satan. So, there are portions that take us back in history to give explanation for what follows but for the most part things

are chronological and the result is this telescopic unfolding of judgments. Let's repeat what we're saying by reading Rev 8:1-2

Revelation 8:1 When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ² And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

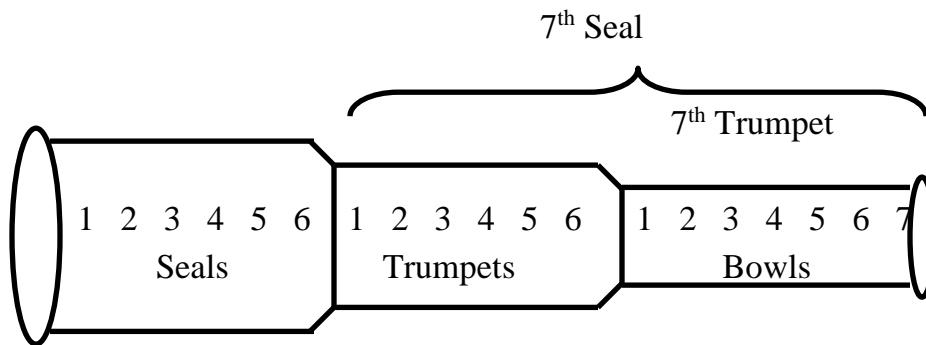
So, the 7th Seal includes the seven trumpets. Is that clear? Now turn to Rev 11:15. Here's the seventh trumpet. Notice, it's not a judgment.

Revelation 11:15-19 Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever." ¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying, "We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. ¹⁸ "And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time *came* for the dead to be judged, and *the time* to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth." ¹⁹ And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

The 7th Trumpet does not begin until the 1st Bowl is poured out in Rev 16:1

Revelation 16:1-2 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God." ² So the first *angel* went and poured out his bowl on the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.

So, concluding today, I wanted to give you an introduction to how we are going to approach the remaining seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments. The structure of the judgment portion of Revelation is telescopic. Just like no one who is seeing a compact telescope for the first time knows that it extends and is surprised when it is extended so no one could have known that the 7th Seal would contain the seven trumpets and seven bowls and no one could have known that the 7th Trumpet contained the seven bowls unless the Bible told us.



ⁱ Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of the Messiah*, (1984), 409.

ⁱⁱ The tabernacle was a portable worship center that was patterned after the heavenly temple. Later, when the nation settled down into a permanent situation David wished to build God a permanent house (2 Sam 7:1-16) but God determined to have Solomon, David's son build the Temple and it was also patterned after the heavenly temple. Solomon's Temple then became the dwelling place for the Shechinah Glory until His departure. His throne was above the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant which was the only article within the Holy of Holies. The high priest would enter the holy of holies once a year to make atonement for himself and the people. Our high priest entered a much better place, the holy of holies in heaven, not a holy of holies built with hands but one whose builder and architect is God. This He did once for all and sat down at the right hand of the Father. There He remains as our High Priest fulfilling the function of advocate and intercessor (1 John 2:1).

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