

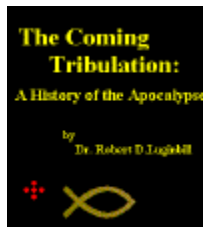


The Coming Tribulation: A History of the Apocalypse

Part 3A

From the Seventh Seal to the Two Witnesses: Revelation 8:1 - 11:14

by Dr. Robert D. Luginbill



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Introduction: Four major trends, two divine and two satanic, dominate the events of the Tribulation's first half (the subject of our present study). Within each of these two pairs, we find one trend concerned with the spiritual matters and one with the temporal events which characterize those first three and one half years. These four trends are, on the spiritual

level, the massive falling away from truth on the part of believers on the one hand (the Great Apostasy: section II), and the unique movement of worldwide evangelism on the part of the 144,000 on the other (represented by the two witnesses who direct them: section V), and, on the level of world events, the rise to power and military expansion of antichrist on the one hand (Part 3B), and God's warning judgments to the world on the other (the Trumpet Judgments: section III):

	Satanic		Divine
Spiritual level:	The Great Apostasy	<>	Worldwide evangelism
Temporal level:	The Rise of Antichrist	<>	Worldwide warning judgments

With the removal of Holy Spirit restraint (covered in detail in the previous installment of this series, part 2B), the increasing lawlessness of the world will be preeminently evident in its rejection of truth (even on the part of former believers who will fall into apostasy in great numbers). This rejection will fly in the face of the unparalleled evangelism of the world Jewish community by the 144,000 under the direction of Moses and Elijah. A similar opposition of trends will be seen in the unprecedentedly swift and complete accession to power on the part of antichrist, coupled with his correspondingly impressive political and military successes, contrasted to the equally extraordinary worldwide judgments that will emanate from God, designed to warn the world of these dangers. These pairs of trends are entirely interconnected. For just as the warning judgments will also serve as a call to repent and turn back to God, so the rejection of the remarkable evangelism which will fill the world at that time will serve to invoke God's judgment. And just as this wholesale rejection of truth on the part of believers and unbelievers alike at that time will leave them completely vulnerable to antichrist's charisma and appeal, so his rise would be impossible without this prior worldwide diminution of respect for the truth.

I. The Seventh Seal: Revelation 8:1-5

Revelation 8:1-5:

(1) And when He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. (2) And I saw the seven angels who stood before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. (3) And another angel with a golden censer came and stood by the altar, and much incense was given to him so that he might offer it for the prayers of the saints on the golden altar in front of the throne. (4) And smoke from the incense went up from the hand of the angel before God for the prayers of the saints. (5) Then the angel took the incense holder and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it to the earth. And there occurred thunderous voices⁽¹⁾ and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

