



Fundamentos

LESSON 32

Foundations Curriculum

Revelation, Part 2: The Lamb, the Seals, and the Trumpets

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Introduction

Revelation, Part 2: The Lamb, the Seals, and the Trumpets

In this thirty-second lesson, we will talk about the importance of the book of Revelation and explain what the seals and the trumpets mean. We will also guide the church in the correct way to study the book of Revelation, without adding to it or taking away from it, and without speculating about subjects that appear as “symbols” and are not clearly explained. We will also speak of the great signs, among other things.

The book of Revelation is very special, even though it is one of the least read by the Church. This happens for a few reasons. Some brothers and sisters do not much enjoy reading it, finding it complicated because of the many figures it contains. Other people are afraid of it.

However, the time has come to convey an overview of the book, in a very simple and instructive way, so that the Church may come to see it with greater simplicity and interest. Our hope is to encourage everyone to read it, to immerse themselves in it, and to come to love this book.

A brother once said that the devil does not much like this book, “because the book of Revelation shows the victory of Jesus and the defeat of the devil, how it will all end.” The fact is that this book shows us something of the glory the Lamb has, and the glory He has yet to receive.

1) The Book of Revelation

When people use the expression “from Genesis to Revelation,” they mean, metaphorically, the beginning and end of something. But the word “Revelation” does not mean “end,” even though the book is the last one in the Holy Bible.

Revelation means to reveal, that is, to make known something that was hidden; it is like “removing the veil” that lies over something.

The book begins:

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place.

Revelation 1:1 (NKJV)

In other words, this is a revelation that the Father gave to Jesus, for Him to share with us (His Church) about His own person, and about what is to come. It is a most precious book that becomes a special blessing to those who read, hear, and keep this word (Revelation 1:3).

May the church be encouraged to read, to hear, and to keep it!

An important observation:

At the end of the book there is a promise of punishment for anyone who adds to it or takes away from it (Revelation 22:18–19). These blessings and curses show how seriously God regards the facts and truths revealed in this book. Let it be treated with the seriousness it deserves.

2) For Whom Was the Book Written?

The book was written to the seven churches of Asia. Not only were the letters individual, but the entire book was written for all the churches of Asia and, of course, also for us (the people of God who would gain access to its contents long afterward).

The purpose of Revelation is not simply to predict (anticipate) the future in order to satisfy our curiosity. We must ask: why was all this revealed to John? Why did the Lord ask him to convey it to the Church? Why do we need to read and keep these words?

3) The 4 Important Reasons and Purposes of Revelation

They are:

01 To Reveal the Person of Christ

Jesus is, in fact, the main revelation of this book — the perfect Man who will come to reign over all things and to judge everyone.

02 To Reveal the End of History

Every story we know, whether from books or films, has a beginning, a middle, and an end (and a message). The purpose of the book of Revelation is to reveal the victory of Jesus (the end), the defeat of Satan, and the final fulfillment of God's eternal purpose. This book gives very important answers to central questions of the faith and of humanity itself concerning our destiny. The Scriptures could not be left incomplete without this book.

03 To Prepare the Church for the Lord's Return

It is also given to encourage the Church and strengthen her for the end times (which will soon arrive). A certain brother said that the book of Revelation is a “manual for the great tribulation.” That makes sense.

04 To Announce the Judgment of God

This book, more than any other, announces the judgment that is coming, as well as the rewards and the eternal punishment. This is a most important foundation. In summary, this book exists to prepare the Church for the things that are to come.

4) How Should We Study It?

Read it in a simple and direct way:

Do this several times, seeking to gain a view of the whole, without worrying about understanding the “lesser” details, and without interpreting the figures according to your own understanding.

It is worth noting that the book has a central portion in which there is a sequence of three sets of events: the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls. This is an important chronology to observe.

It is important to notice that in these accounts, in these three sequences, there are sometimes interruptions, and chapters appear that function as “parentheses” to the content, detailing some event in the middle of these sequences.

An example, to illustrate:

Chapter 6 recounts the first six seals. When the sixth seal ends and the seventh should follow, the text does not speak of the seventh seal. Instead, it speaks of the 144,000 sealed of Israel and of the multitude that comes out of the great tribulation. That is a parenthesis.

Afterward, in chapter 8, the seventh seal continues. This happens, and it is important to observe it, as one becomes more familiar with the book. This same kind of parenthesis occurs again between the sixth and seventh trumpets, and between the trumpets and the bowls of wrath.

It is important to read Revelation by fitting the events it describes together with the events described by Jesus and by the apostles. The teaching of Jesus in the Gospels is the backbone — although the book of Revelation is as well, since it is Jesus who is speaking. However, because of the figures used, we must fit the facts into what is clear in Matthew 24 (our principal reference). In Revelation, we find the events Jesus gives us in Matthew, but other events also appear that will come afterward.

Something of the utmost importance:

Do not allow yourself to speculate. This means that stating what is not said in the Scriptures is not right (indeed, it is sinful and dangerous). We must respect the Bible's silences. They exist for some reason determined by God. In Revelation, more than ever, we need to take this care — not saying what is not written, and not inferring what is not clear. The figures, for example — some are explained in the text itself. We can say, for instance, that the seven lampstands are the seven churches, because the text says so clearly.

Another example:

We can say that the dragon is Satan, because the text says so. As for the other figures that are not clear, we cannot affirm anything, and this certainly will not hinder our study in any way.

5) A General Overview of the Book

There is an opening part of the book, a middle part, and a final part.

The opening part, Revelation 1–3, we have already studied in previous lessons, concerning the Jesus who will come to reign with great power and glory; and in chapters 2–3 we read about the seven churches of Asia, with the warnings and promises that also apply to us (if you still have questions, be sure to consult the previous lessons).

Chapters 4 and 5 are the scenes that take place in heaven and that precede the beginning of the sequence of events of the seven seals, and everything that comes after, until the end.

01 Revelation 4: The Vision of the Throne of God

This is one of the few descriptions in Scripture that we have concerning heaven, concerning the throne of God. If you are curious to take a peek into the throne room, the Lord here opens a window onto that possibility and shows us what happens there.

After Jesus gave the seven letters to John, He called him and said: “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.”

So John finds himself in the Spirit in heaven, and sees a throne, and someone sitting on that throne. The scene is one of splendor and glory, almost impossible to describe.

He says that the One seated on the throne resembles precious stones — jasper and sardius. Around the throne there is a rainbow resembling an emerald.

Let us picture this scene.

From the throne come lightnings and thunderings. Before the throne, he says, there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal. In chapter 15, John describes this sea, saying that it seems to be mingled with fire. What place is this?

For information's sake, the word “throne” appears fifteen times. It signifies rule. The Lord is seated there in that place, and from there He governs the universe.

God is seated; He is not agitated, He has no need to be nervous, nor is He surprised by anything. He knows exactly everything that happens, and nothing occurs without His permission. He is fulfilling all His plans.

In that place He receives unceasing worship!

Around the throne are four living creatures — one like a lion, another like a calf, another with the face of a man, and another like an eagle.

We believe these are figures of the Lord Jesus Himself — aspects of Him: the calf as servant, the man expressing His humanity, the eagle resembling His deity, and the lion picturing Him as king.

02 Who Are These Beings?

The text does not say, but we may believe they are cherubim. This is because Ezekiel had an almost identical vision of these beings and of this throne (Ezekiel 1:1–28 and 10:1–22). In that text he says they are cherubim. They worship the Lord without ceasing, day and night: holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. No matter what happens on earth, the Lord is receiving permanent, unceasing worship in heaven.

Around the throne are the twenty-four elders, clothed in white, seated on twenty-four thrones. They have “crowns” and “thrones.” And they fall down, worship, and lay their crowns before the Lord to worship Him.

Who are they? The text does not say. We cannot be certain. They may be representatives of the two peoples of God's covenant — Israel and the Church — but this is only speculation. On the wall of the New Jerusalem are the names of the twelve tribes, on the twelve gates, and the names of the twelve apostles on the twelve foundations of the walls. These twenty-four elders fall down and worship the Lord and lay their crowns before Him.

6) Revelation Chapter 5: The Sealed Scroll and the Lion-Lamb

John sees that in the hand of the One seated on the throne there is a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals, and an angel was asking “who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?” There was no one, neither in heaven, nor on earth, nor under the earth. And John wept much.

What is in this scroll, written inside and on the back? We do not know; the text does not say. We may suppose that the scroll contains the sequence of events that will come at the end, because when Jesus begins to open the scroll, these events begin to unfold. But we do not know what is in this scroll.

At that moment, while John is weeping, one of the elders said to John: do not weep. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed to open the scroll and its seven seals. And John looks, and does not see a lion — he sees a Lamb as though it had been slain. Hallelujah!

Jesus is our Lion-Lamb. The Lamb who was slain. The Lion who has prevailed, and He is worthy to open the scroll. The Lamb takes the scroll from the One seated on the throne, and the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fall down before Him and worship Him, saying:

You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

Revelation 5:9 (NKJV)

They proclaim not only who He is, but also His work — what He has done.

Both of these things qualify Him to loose the seal and open the scroll and release these events that will bring our age to an end.

And at that moment millions of angels worship Him and say, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing.” Then

every creature in the universe joins together, and now they worship the Father and the Son together, and declare:

Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!

Revelation 5:13 (NKJV)

Both are worthy.

Both were involved in this eternal purpose. Both suffered together to make it possible to have this people with them. The worship offered in this moment is one more of the great evidences of the deity of Jesus, because He receives praise and worship together with the Father. Hallelujah!

7) Revelation Chapter 6: The First Six Seals

Beginning in chapter 6, the sequence of the events of the end times begins. This chapter presents the first six seals. We can confirm that these six seals are in sequence, with no interval between them.

In verses 1–8 we have the first four seals.

Let us look at them:

1st Seal – White Horse:

A rider with a bow, and a crown was given to him; he went out conquering and to conquer. There are various theories about who this rider might be. In our view, the best possibility is that this pictures the Antichrist — in the beginning of his manifestation (recorded in Daniel's final week).

2nd Seal – Red Horse:

It was granted to the rider to take peace from the earth; men will kill one another. This speaks of a great war.

3rd Seal – Black Horse:

A rider with scales in his hand; wheat and barley are costly. Here, perhaps, this speaks of a shortage of food — that is, great famine on the earth.

4th Seal – Pale Horse:

A rider named Death, and Hades follows him. He has authority to kill by sword, by hunger, and by the beasts of the earth. A fourth of the earth will die because of war, famine, natural deaths, and “beasts,” perhaps indicating epidemics or biological weapons. We do not know for certain — it is a possibility that the world will experience social collapse, violence, and new epidemics.

We can clearly see a parallel between the picture presented in these first seals and the picture of the events that Jesus relates at the beginning of sorrows. This appears in Matthew 24 and Luke 21. It is possible to relate the four seals to these elements mentioned:

Nation against nation;
Famines;
Epidemics;
Earthquakes.

8) Revelation 6:9–11 – The 5th Seal

The Martyrs — The Souls of Those Slain for the Word of God and Their Testimony

How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?

Revelation 6:10 (NKJV)

And they were told "...that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed."

We continue to recognize a parallel with Jesus' description at the end of the beginning of sorrows and during the great tribulation, when the disciples will be afflicted and killed because of their testimony. In Matthew 24:9 it says:

Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.

Matthew 24:9 (NKJV)

9) Revelation 6:12–17 – The 6th Seal: Great Signs

The sun turns black; the moon becomes like blood.

The stars fall to the earth; the sky recedes as a scroll when it is rolled up; the mountains and islands are moved out of their places.

We continue to fit these events into the account of the sixth moment of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 24:29: *"the sun will be darkened, and... the powers of the heavens will be shaken"*.

An important observation:

Revelation contains no explicit, clear account of the appearance of the Sign of the Son of Man or of the Rapture. One possibility is that this moment corresponds to the sixth seal, because here men declare that the great Day of Wrath has come.

The absence of this clear information does not change anything we have studied so far. The sequence of events is the one Jesus taught. The rapture occurs only after the Great Tribulation and after the sun is darkened and the powers of the heavens are shaken. We see in the fifth seal the martyrs, and in the sixth seal the sun and moon growing dark and the sky being shaken. And afterward there is a mention that the Day of Wrath has come.

The Day of Wrath will come after the church has been raptured.

10) Revelation 7: A Parenthesis (to Be Discussed in a Later Lesson)

11) Revelation 8 and 9: The Last Seal and the Seven Trumpets

Revelation 8:1–6 – The 7th Seal

The text describes an angel with a censer in his hand. The incense is the prayers of the saints. He threw the censer down to the earth, and there were thunderings, voices, lightnings, and an earthquake.

Revelation 8:7–9:21 – The First Six Trumpets

We will give a brief account of each trumpet without concerning ourselves with interpretations, nor with the time at which they will sound. Some think they will sound during the time the Church is still on the earth — that is, the church would witness all these events. Others believe they are part of the Day of Wrath, together with the seven plagues, which will occur only after the Church has been raptured.

We will not take up this subject here, since we ourselves do not yet hold a settled view on the matter.

The 6 Trumpets:

1st Trumpet – Revelation 8:7

Hail and fire fall upon the earth. A third of the earth is burned up, along with a third of the trees and all the green grass.

2nd Trumpet – Revelation 8:8–9

A mountain burning with fire is thrown into the sea. A third of the life in the sea dies.

3rd Trumpet – Revelation 8:10–11

A great star burning like a torch (Wormwood) falls. A third of the rivers and springs of water become bitter. Men are not able to drink the water.

4th Trumpet – Revelation 8:12–13

A third of the sun, moon, and stars are darkened.

5th Trumpet – Revelation 9:1–11

A star fallen to the earth opens the shaft of the bottomless pit, from which smoke rises that darkens the sun and the air. Locusts appear with the power of scorpions. They will torment for five months those men who do not have the seal of God. Men will seek death and will not find it. There is much speculation about what these locusts might be, and about who the sealed ones might be (whether the 144,000 Jews or the church). We will not go into these details.

6th Trumpet – Revelation 9:13–21

Four angels, and armies of horsemen numbering two hundred million. A third of mankind is killed.

Revelation 10:1–11:14: A Parenthesis (to Be Discussed in the Next Lesson)

There are some descriptions here that lie outside this present context.

Revelation 11:15–19 – The Last Trumpet

The 7th Trumpet: the kingdom has become our Lord's, and He will reign forever and ever (verse 15).

In verse 17 there is an interesting expression: "...who is and who was, because You have taken Your great power and reigned." The expression "who is to come" is not mentioned again — an expression that appears twice in chapter 1 — perhaps indicating that Jesus has already come, has already appeared in heaven.

In verse 18 it is mentioned that:

The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth.

Revelation 11:18 (NKJV)

This is another moment at which the coming of the Lord and the Rapture could possibly take place. Besides the language used here, this fits with Paul's reference to the last trumpet (the dead will be raised). He speaks of this in his first letter to the Corinthians and his first letter to the Thessalonians. There is mention of a trumpet being sounded.

Should this be the moment of the rapture, at the seventh trumpet, then all the events from the sixth seal to the last trumpet would be taking place within that fourth moment Jesus mentions — the grave cataclysms, in Matthew 24:29.

Finally, we will continue in coming lessons to speak of other parentheses that appear (chapters 12 and 13, for example) and will carry the sequence forward until we reach chapter 22.

CONCLUSION

In this thirty-second lesson of the Foundations Curriculum, we studied some chapters of the book of Revelation — a simple exposition, free of speculation, highlighting what the Scriptures affirm and respecting the Bible's silences. We fit these facts into the "backbone" of Matthew 24 and came to know the seven seals and the seven trumpets. We also had a wonderful experience of glimpsing the heavens, the throne of God, and the glory of the Lamb.

CONSIDER CAREFULLY

- 01** Why is the book of Revelation important? Have you been reading it?
- 02** Can you picture the scene of heavenly worship described in Revelation 4 and 5? What has your own experience of beholding and worshipping the Lord been like?
- 03** Can you see the relationship between the events that occur in the seals of Revelation 6 and the signs Jesus describes in Matthew 24?

*having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.*

Ephesians 2:20 (NKJV)

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