

Before plunging further into the details of the four narratives, or attempting to indicate the beginning and division of the last great week, let me say a few words on the four great sevens of the Apocalypse; the seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials.

The seven Churches are a pattern of the Church of Christendom from the Lord's Ascension until His return. I have not time at present to go into the question how far we can distribute the history of the Church of Christ into periods corresponding to the seven epistles; but I think that the seven certainly parts into a four and a three; and that the four earlier epistles reflect the earlier history, previous to the Reformation, the three latter the subsequent history to the end.

And in particular, if we want two types of Christianity, one to follow and one to avoid, in the present day, our example may be found in Philadelphia, and our temptations in Laodicœa. Both epistles present our Lord's return as imminent, and not long to be delayed. But I hope to return to this subject later on.

The opening of the seven seals must be carefully distinguished from the sounding of the seven trumpets and from the emptying of the seven vials. The three actions—opening a seal, blowing a trumpet, emptying a bowl—bear not the faintest resemblance to each other.

It is only reason to suppose that they point to things entirely different. Take the trumpets and vials first. The trumpets are *warnings* and beginnings of judgment; in the vials the wrath of God is, so to speak, exhausted. Compare each trumpet with the corresponding vial, and it will generally be found that the vial ends what the trumpet has begun.

The seals are quite different. A book in the hand of our Saviour is fastened by seven seals. These He is able to open, *by virtue of His death*. It is manifest, then, that the sealed book is not merely a book of unfulfilled prophecy. Many prophecies were fulfilled by our Lord before His death: not a few before He was born.

THE BOOK IS THE BOOK, NOT OF PROPHECY, BUT OF REDEMPTION. It is as Dr. Seiss has pointed out, the title deed of man's heritage, promised by his Creator in the beginning (Gen. i., 26), but forfeited by the fall, and, as it were, pledged and mortgaged to Satan; only