

## Revelation - Chapter Eight

**Chapter summary** - *THIS CHAPTER OPENS with the announcement that the seventh seal is opened. This is the last of the seven seals marking the prophetic judgments of God. With the opening of the seventh seal the narrative is resumed from the close of chapter 6. Though simply introduced, the seventh seal is obviously the most important development up to this point.*

*Contained in the seventh seal are all the subsequent developments leading to the second coming of Christ, including the seven trumpets and the seven bowls of the wrath of God. Scroggie, after a careful discussion of the chronological order of the book of Revelation, concludes:*

*The trumpets, therefore, do not double back over all or some of the Seals, but lie under the sixth Seal, and proceed from it. For this reason it is equally incorrect to speak of the Trumpets as following the Seals. They do not follow, but are the Seventh Seal.*

*In like manner he holds that the bowls constitute the seventh trumpet:*

*Therefore the Bowls do not double back over the Seal and Trumpet judgments; neither is it correct to say that they follow the Trumpet visitations. They do not follow because **THEY ARE THE SEVENTH TRUMPET CONTENTS.***

*In fitting recognition of the important character of this seal, the Scriptures record that there is silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. Though thirty minutes is not ordinarily considered a long time, when it is a time of absolute silence portending such ominous developments ahead it is an indication that something tremendous is about to take place. It may be compared to the silence before the foreman of a jury reports a verdict; for a moment there is perfect silence and everyone awaits that which will follow.<sup>1</sup>*

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IV. the vision of the Final Days, (Chs. 6-22)

A. **THE SEAL JUDGMENTS** - (6:1-8:5)

7. The seventh seal, (8:1-5)

1) Heaven is silent, (1)

 **INTERPRETATION:**

### **When Silence Is Not Bliss!**

<sup>1</sup> **When** (the parenthetical narrative [Rev. 7] was over), **He** (the Lamb, Jesus Christ), **opened the seventh** (and final), **seal** (when He did), **there was silence in** (all of), **heaven for about half an hour.** (It's not a siesta, it's a New Testament selah).<sup>2</sup>

**NOTES:**

 **COMMENTARY:**

<sup>1</sup> Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, p. 150, 151

<sup>2</sup> "There came silence." Dramatic effect by this profound stillness with no elder or angel speaking, no chorus of praise nor cry of adoration, no thunder from the throne (Swete), but a temporary cessation in the revelations. (Robertson, Archibald Thomas, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Logos Library System)

2) God's angels are prepared, (2)

**INTERPRETATION:**

<sup>2</sup> **And** (following the silence), **I saw the seven angels who** (now), **stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.**<sup>3</sup>

**3) Prayers of the saints go up, (3-5)****INTERPRETATION:**

<sup>3</sup> **Then** (after each of the seven angels received a trumpet), **another angel** (appeared), **having** (with him), **a golden censer** (like the ones that were used at the temple to carry hot coals from the brazen altar [*were the sacrifices were offered*], to ignite the incense on the altar in the temple before the curtain of the holy of holies; [*which symbolized the prayers of the saints*], he), **came and stood at the altar** (in heaven). **He was** (then), **given much incense** (to ignite), **that he should offer it with** (respect to), **the** (many), **prayers of all the saints** (of the tribulation), **upon the** (heavenly), **golden altar which was** (literally), **before the throne**, (of God the Father).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> **And** (when the angel poured the incense on the hot coals), **the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints** (being represented by it), **ascended before God from the angel's hand**, (testifying to God the Father's awareness of their prayers and determination to respond accordingly to them).

<sup>5</sup> **Then** (in response to the ascending prayers of the suffering saints),<sup>5</sup> **the angel took the censer** (and this time), **filled it with fire from the altar** (symbolizing further judgment from God), **and threw it to the earth. And** (as a result), **there were noises** (in addition to), **thunderings, lightnings, and an** (additional), **earthquake**, (being in this case like the roar of a sow with cubs standing before you shaking her head and baring her teeth, or like a

<sup>3</sup> According to Numbers 10, trumpets had three important uses: they called the people together (Num. 10:1–8); they announced war (Num. 10:9); and they announced special times (Num. 10:10). (Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Logos Library System)

<sup>4</sup> This angel is not Christ, who is the Lamb opening the seals, and directing these processes of judgment. The fact that this angel is at the altar, and has incense, has led many, in their very jealousy for the Great High Priest, to forget the vision of the Lord in chapter 1 as Judge, clad in the robe of the Judge, not of the Priest. The vision of chapter 1 must control all the book--"Write the things which thou sawest (the glorious Lord); and the things which are (that are on-Church things); and the things which shall come to pass. After these." (Revelation 1:19). It is not a book of salvation, nor of intercession, but of processed judgment. (Newell, *The Book of the Revelation*, p. 121)

<sup>5</sup> John MacArthur believes that their "prayers were for Satan to be destroyed, sin to be defeated, their deaths to be avenged (cf. 6:9-11), and Christ to come." (MacArthur, *Revelation 1-11*, p. 241)

gorilla screaming, pounding his chest and smashing trees signifying the displeasure of your presence before they angrily attack.)<sup>6</sup>

**F APPLICATION:**

Like it or not, the prayers of God's people are involved in the judgments that He sends. The throne and the altar are related. The purpose of prayer, it has often been said, is not to get man's will done in heaven, but to get God's will done on earth—even if that will involves judgment. True prayer is serious business...!<sup>7</sup>

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**B. THE TRUMPET JUDGMENTS CONTAINED IN THE SEVENTH SEAL - (8:6-11:19) -- "AN INSURANCE COMPANY'S WORST NIGHTMARE"**

**1. The prelude prior to the trumpet soundings, (8:6)**

**📖 INTERPRETATION:**

<sup>6</sup> **So** (as God expressed His displeasure concerning the sinful practices of man on the earth), **the seven angels who had the seven trumpets** (knew it was a signal that further judgment was about to begin and thus), **prepared themselves to sound**, (to execute that judgment by blowing their trumpets).

**2. The first four soundings, (8:7-12) -- "PANDORA'S BOX AT ITS BEST!"**

**1) The first trumpet sounds, (7)**

**📖 INTERPRETATION:**

**Agricultural Disasters**

<sup>7</sup> **The first angel sounded: And** (when he did), **hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth**, (similar to the 7th plague in Egypt [Ex. 9:18-26]). **And** (as a result of the hail and fire), **a third of the** (worlds), **trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.**<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The first embers from the alter begin to reach the earth, in the form of a great world storm of thunder lightening, but still no rain. A fearful sight this will be, with lightning bolts crashing from the sun-filled sky and leaden atmosphere. Atmospheric physicists will be called on to explain the strange phenomenon, and perhaps will venture some hypothesis that will calm the disturbed "voices" of the frightened populace for a time.

But then another great earthquake strikes around the world, and the voices of alarm become more clamorous. There had also been lightnings and thunderings and voices around the throne (Revelation 4:5), but these seem to be on the earth, to foretoken the great judgments about to fall when the seven mighty archangels sound their trumpets. (Morris, *The Revelation Record*, p. 144)

<sup>7</sup> Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Logos Library System.

<sup>8</sup> Some of the speculations as to how this fire and hail mixed with blood may take place is that the earth goes through the tail of a comet or huge volcanic eruptions. It could be that there is not natural reason for it also. God may just do it supernaturally.

## 2) The second trumpet sounds, (8, 9)

NOTES:

### INTERPRETATION:

#### Nautical Disasters

- <sup>8</sup> **Then** (after this), **the second angel sounded: And** (when he did), **something like a great mountain burning with fire** (possibly a massive meteorite or asteroid), **was thrown** (by divine intervention), **into the sea, and** (as a result), **a third of the sea became blood**, (similar to the 1<sup>st</sup> plague in Egypt [Ex. 7:14-25]).
- <sup>9</sup> **And** (also), **a third of the living creatures in the sea died** (creating tremendous pollution and stench), **and a third of the ships were destroyed**, (creating great hardship and monetary loss).

## 3) The third trumpet sounds, (10, 11)

### INTERPRETATION:

#### Hydrological Disasters

- <sup>10</sup> **Then** (following the nautical disasters), **the third angel sounded: And** (when he did), **a great star** (a massive celestial object), **fell from heaven, burning like a torch**<sup>9</sup> (probably from the fiery debris of the tail of a meteor or comet), **and** (its swathe was wide and long enough so that), **it** (the fiery debris), **fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs** (underground reservoirs), **of water**, (polluting them all [cp. Ex. 7:21, 24]).
- <sup>11</sup> **The name of the star is Wormwood**,<sup>10</sup> (*lit.*, bitterness and *figuratively* it relates to calamity or sorrow). **A third of the waters became wormwood** (poisoned by this bitterness), **and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter**, (toxic).

## 4) The Fourth trumpet sounds, (12)

### INTERPRETATION:

#### Celestial Disasters

- <sup>12</sup> **Then** (following the hydrological disasters), **the fourth angel sounded: And** (when he did), **a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars** ("struck;" *plesso* - means plague; God hit the sun, moon and the stars with a plague), **so that a third of them were darkened**,<sup>11</sup> (their light and heat

<sup>9</sup> *Lampas* (**torch**) was used in ancient times to describe meteors and comets. (MacArthur, *Revelation 1-11*, p. 248)

<sup>10</sup> Wormwood is a bitter desert plant mentioned only here in the New Testament. It is mentioned seven times in the Old Testament where it represents sorrow and bitter judgment (Deut. 29:18; Prov. 5:4; Jer. 9:15; 23:15; Lam. 3:15, 19; Amos 5:7). (Walvoord, and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Logos Library System.)

<sup>11</sup> It is possible that this particular judgment is temporary, for the fourth bowl judgment will reverse it, and the sun's power will be intensified (Rev. 16:8-9). Then, at the close of the Tribulation, the sun and moon will be darkened again to announce the Saviour's return (Matt. 24:29-30; see also Luke 21:25-28). (Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Logos Library System)

are reduced by one third). **A third of the** (normal sun's energy for the), **day did not shine, and likewise the night**, (lost one third of its reflective light).<sup>12</sup> (Isa. 13:9-10; Joel 2:1-2; Lu. 21:25, 26)<sup>13</sup>

### 3. The message of woe before the fifth and sixth trumpets soundings, (8:13)

#### INTERPRETATION:

#### **A Warning of Greater Disasters Yet to Come**

<sup>13</sup> **And** (following the stellar disasters), **I looked** (upon), **and I heard an angel** (some manuscripts say "eagle." Maybe it should be an eagle-like angel?), **flying through the midst of heaven** (here meaning "mid-heaven," which the sun occupies at noon, where what is done can be seen and heard by all),<sup>14</sup> **saying with a loud voice** (for all to hear in heaven and earth), **“Woe, woe, woe** (one "woe" for each of the remaining 3 trumpets - "woe" signifying judgment and devastation), **to the** (yet unrepentant), **inhabitants of the earth**,<sup>15</sup> **because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!”** (There is more, and even worse yet to come!)

#### F APPLICATION:

- At the beginning of human history, heaven and earth were united because our first parents honored God and obeyed His will. Satan tempted them to focus on the earth; they disobeyed God; and ever since, a great gulf has been fixed between heaven and earth. This chasm was bridged when the Son of God came to earth and died for the sins of the world.<sup>16</sup> But sin must still be judged.
- God warns people of his judgments before he sends them. He sends these warnings by way of the Scriptures, by godly people, by one's own pricked conscience, and by circumstances and situations. It is one's own fault if he or she doesn't confess and repent of wrong doing and thus suffers God's wrath and/or discipline.
- God's anger against a sinner is a dreadful thing to see and especially experience. It poisons all of one's material and emotional comforts. God's anger makes even life itself bitter and oppressive.

<sup>12</sup> The loss of heat from the sun will cause temperatures to plunge drastically all over the world. That will severely disrupt the earth's weather patterns and the seas' tides, leading to violent, unpredictable storms and tides, the destruction of crops, and further loss of animal and human lives. (MacArthur, *Revelation 1-11*, p. 250)

<sup>13</sup> These plagues are similar to the ninth Egyptian plague, Ex. 10:21-23.

<sup>14</sup> *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*, 1995, [Online] Available: Logos Library System.

<sup>15</sup> The phrase "inhabiters of the earth" (or "them that dwell on the earth") is found twelve times in Revelation (3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10 [twice]; 12:12; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:6; 17:2, 8). It means much more than "people who live on the earth," for that is where *all* living people reside. Instead, it refers to a *kind* of people: those who live *for* the earth and the things *of* the earth. These are just the opposite of people who have their citizenship in heaven (Phil. 3:18-21). John described this worldly sort well in his first epistle (1 John 2:15-17), and later in this prophecy he again makes it clear that "earth-dwellers" are not born again (Rev. 13:8). (Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Logos Library System)

<sup>16</sup> Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Logos Library System.