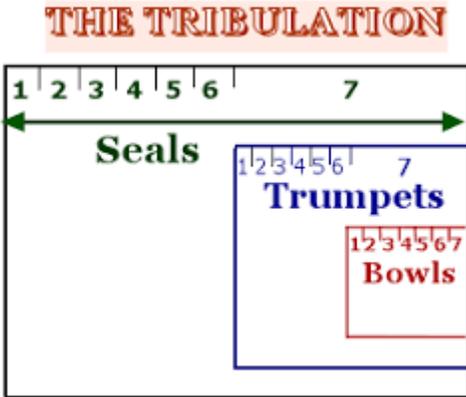


Revelation 7 & 8



7:1–17 Chapter 7 forms a parenthesis between the sixth seal (6:12–17) and the seventh seal (8:1) and answers the question posed at the end of chap. 6. Two distinct groups will survive the divine fury: 1) 144,000 Jewish evangelists on earth (vv. 1–8) and 2) their converts in heaven (vv. 9–17).

7:1 four corners. The 4 quadrants of the compass; that is, the angels will take up key positions on earth. **four winds.** A figurative expression, indicating all the earth’s winds—those from S, E, N, and W. The 4 angels will turn off, for a brief interlude, the essential engine of our earth’s atmosphere.

7:2 seal of the living God. “Seal” often refers to a signet ring used to press its image into wax melted on a document. The resulting imprint implied authenticity and ownership and protected the contents (cf. 9:4; Ezek. 9:3, 4). In this case, the mark is the name of God (14:1).

7:4 One hundred and forty-four thousand. A missionary corps of redeemed Jews who are instrumental in the salvation of many Jews and Gentiles during the Tribulation (vv. 9–17). They will be the firstfruits of a new redeemed Israel (v. 4; Zech. 12:10). Finally, Israel will be the witness nation she refused to be in the OT (see notes on Rom. 11:25–27). **all the tribes of the children of Israel.** By sovereign election, God will seal 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes, promising His protection while they accomplish their mission.

Genesis 29-30	Numbers 1	Revelation 7
Reuben	Reuben	Reuben
Simeon	Simeon	Simeon
Levi		Levi
Judah	Judah	Judah
Dan	Dan	
Naphtali	Naphtali	Naphtali
Gad	Gad	Gad
Asher	Asher	Asher
Isaachar	Isaachar	Isaachar
Zebulun	Zebulun	Zebulun
Joseph		Joseph
	Ephraim	
	Manasseh	Manasseh
Benjamin	Benjamin	Benjamin

7:9 a great multitude. While the tribulation period will be a time of judgment, it will also be a time of unprecedented redemption (cf. v. 14; 6:9–11; 20:4; Is. 11:10; Matt. 24:14). **all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues.** All the earth's people groups. **white robes.** See note on 3:4. **palm branches.** In ancient times, they were associated with celebrations, including the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:40; Neh. 8:17; John 12:13).

7:10 Salvation belongs to our God. Salvation is the theme of their worship, and they recognize that it comes solely from Him.

7:11 elders. See note on 4:4. **four living creatures.**

7:12 Blessing ... and might. See note on 5:12.

7:13 white robes. See note on 6:11.

7 Things Belong to God

"Blessing, glory, wisdom,
thanksgiving, honor, power, might"

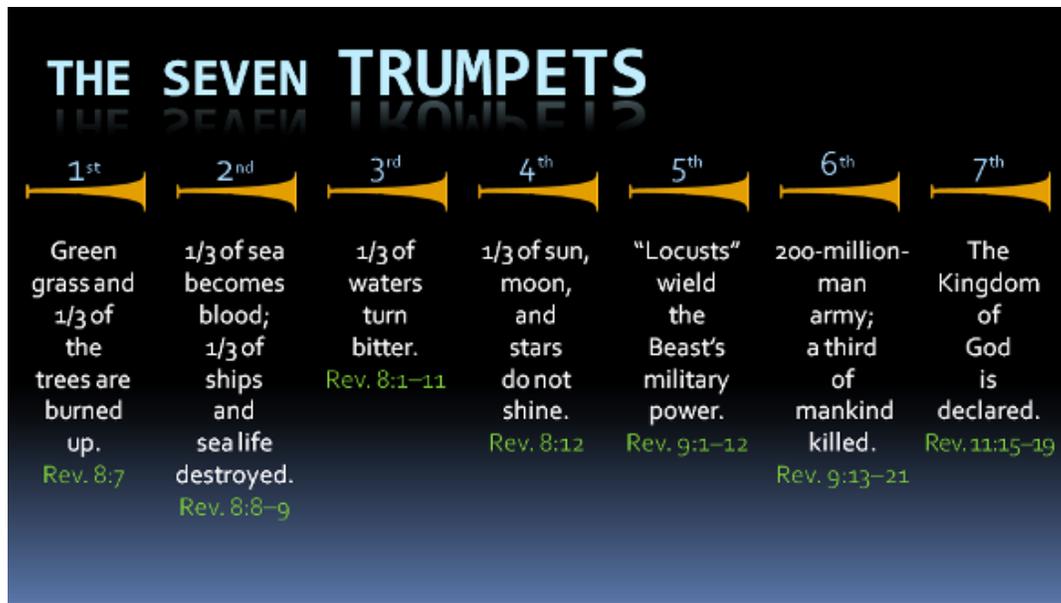
7:14 the great tribulation. See notes on 3:10; 6:1, 9, 12. These people didn't go with the raptured church, since they were not yet saved. During the 7 year period they will be saved, martyred, and enter heaven. Though it is a time of unparalleled judgment, it is also a time of unparalleled grace in salvation (cf. Matt. 24:12–14). **washed their robes.** Cf. 19:8. Salvation's cleansing is in view (see Titus 2:11–14). **blood of the Lamb.** This refers to the atoning sacrifice of Christ (cf. 1:5; 5:9; Rom. 3:24, 25; 5:9).

7:15 His temple. This refers to the heavenly throne of God (see note on 11:19). During the Millennium there will also be a temple on earth—a special holy place where God dwells in a partially restored, but still fallen universe (see Ezek. 40–48). In the final, eternal state with its new heavens and earth, there is no temple; God Himself, who will fill all, will be its temple (21:22). **dwell among them.** The preferred reading is that He "will spread His tent over them." God's presence will become their canopy of shelter to protect them from all the terrors of a fallen world and the indescribable horrors they have experienced on the earth during the time of tribulation.

7:17 shepherd. In a beautiful mix of images, the Lamb has always been the Shepherd (Ps. 23; John 10:14ff.; Heb. 13:20).

8:1 the seventh seal. This seal includes not only an earthquake, but the 7 trumpet judgments (8:1–9:21; 11:15ff.) and the 7 bowl judgments (16:1–21), with the bowl judgments flowing out of the seventh trumpet and coming in rapid succession just before Christ's return (see note on 6:1). **silence in heaven.** The silence of awe and anticipation at the grim reality of the judgments God is about to unleash.

8:2 seven trumpets. In Revelation, trumpets primarily announce impending judgment. The trumpets are of greater intensity than the seals, but not as destructive as the final bowl judgments will be (cf. 16:1–21). They occur during the final 3½ years, but the time of each is indefinite, except the effects of the fifth trumpet judgment, which will last 5 months (9:10). The first 4 announce the divine destruction of earth's ecology (vv. 6–12), while the final 3 involve demonic devastation of earth's inhabitants (9:1–21; 11:15ff.).



8:3 censer. A golden pan, suspended on a rope or chain, that was used to transport fiery coals from the brazen altar to the altar of incense, in order to ignite the incense, symbolizing the prayers of the people (5:8; Ex. 27:3; cf. Luke 1:8, 9). This occurred twice daily at the time of the morning and evening sacrifices.

8:5 thunderings, lightnings. See note on 4:5. **an earthquake.** Surely of equal or greater intensity than one described in the sixth seal (see note on 6:12).

8:7 hail and fire followed, mingled with blood. This may describe volcanic eruptions that could certainly result from the earthquake in v. 5. The steam and water thrown into the sky by such eruptions could easily condense into hail and fall to earth along with the fiery lava (cf. Ex. 9:13-25). Dust and gases may so contaminate falling liquid water that it appears blood red. **a third of the trees were burned up.** The lava storm will create a blazing fire that devastates one-third of the earth's forests.

8:8 like a great mountain. Probably a huge meteor or asteroid surrounded by gases that will ignite as it enters earth's atmosphere. Its impact will create a tidal wave, destroying a one-third of the world's ships. **sea became blood.** This may refer to an event known as red tides, caused by billions of dead micro-organisms poisoning the water—in this case the result of the meteor's collision. Or it may be actual blood, a clear act of eschatological judgment.

8:10 great star fell. Another celestial body, perhaps a comet in this case since it leaves a fiery trail (see notes on v. 8; 6:13). It will disintegrate as it nears the earth, scattering over the globe.

8:11 Wormwood. A bitter, poisonous substance, derived from a root, that causes drunkenness and eventually death (Deut. 29:18; Prov. 5:4; Jer. 9:15; Lam. 3:15).

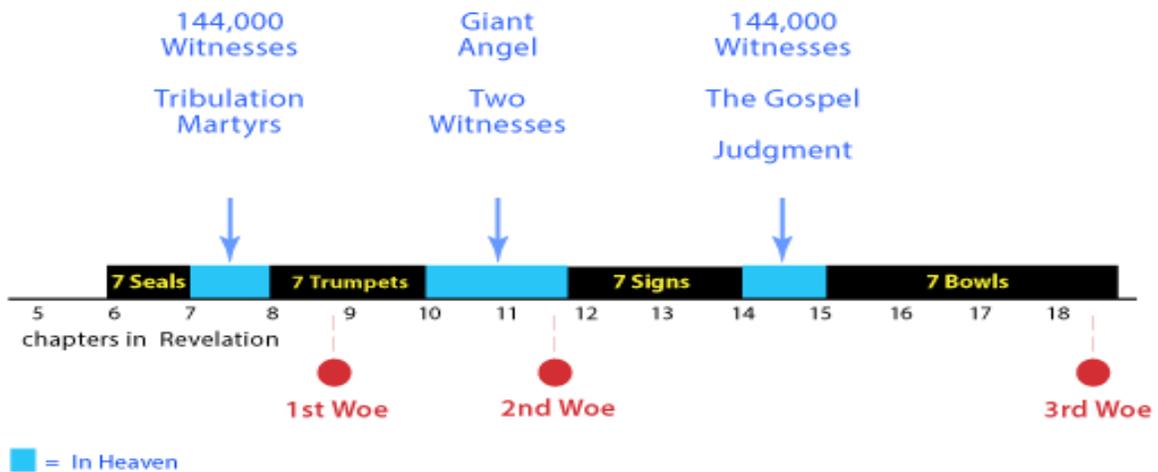
8:12 a third of the sun was struck. God will supernaturally reduce the intensity of the celestial bodies by one-third. The loss of solar heat will cause a radical drop in temperature, producing severe changes in meteorological, botanical, and biological cycles (Luke 21:25; cf. Ex. 10:21-23). But this is temporary (cf. 16:8, 9).

8:13 Woe, woe, woe. One for each remaining trumpet blast. Although the first 4 trumpets are unimaginable, they will be nothing like the 3 to come (9:1–21; 11:15ff.).¹

Woe means “grief, anguish, affliction, wretchedness, calamity, or trouble.”

The *Dictionary of Bible Themes* categorizes the uses of the word *woe* in the Bible: “Woe as an exclamation of judgment on others,” “Woe as an exclamation of misfortune on oneself,” “Woe as an exclamation of sadness over others,” and “Woe may give way to forgiveness, comfort, and deliverance” (Manser, M., ed., Zondervan, 1999).

Revelation’s Scenes In Heaven



¹ John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 2001–2003.