

## Revelation 8

### Verse 1

There was silence in heaven for about half an hour – The purpose of the silence is apparently to prepare for what is about to happen and heighten the expectation. It may also represent God listening to the prayers of the saints.

### Verse 2

*Seven angels who stand before God* – Seven angels of obviously great authority.

*Seven trumpets were given to them* – Trumpets are very important throughout the Bible.

- They were part of Israel's ceremonial processions
- Announced assembly for war, journeys, special feasts
- They will warn of the coming Day of the Lord
- They announce the new year in Israel
- Here they announce divine judgment

### Verse 3

*Another angel came and stood at the altar* – This angel acts in a priestly role as he stands before the heavenly altar and offers incense.

*Holding a golden censer* – A bowl or container for carrying the fire from the altar of incense into the Holy of Holies where incense would be added.

*Incense was given to him that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.*

### Verse 4

*And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.* The smoke, going up before God, symbolizes God receiving the prayers of His saints. The cry of the martyrs around the throne (6:9-10, 7:14-15) of "how long" is now about to be answered. Some believe the angel, acting in a priestly role, is Christ. Jesus often appeared in the Old Testament as the Angel of the LORD.

### Verse 5

*And the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar and threw it to the earth and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.* The censer is used here as a symbol of judgment, apparently in response to the intercession and prayers of the suffering saints in the midst of the tribulation.

### Verse 6

*And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them.* The trumpet judgments proceed out of the seventh seal. When John saw the Lamb break the seventh seal he saw a whole new series of judgments. These coming judgments have been held back by the angel from the east (7:2-3) until the events of chapter seven were fulfilled. Now the seven angels stand ready to sound their trumpets!

### Verse 7 The First Trumpet – The earth smitten

*And there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth* – Either the appearance of blood or perhaps an indication of the bloodshed that will occur because of this judgment.

- A third of the earth was burned up...
- A third of the trees were burned up...
- All the green grass was burned up... Apparently the grass will grow again as it exists in 9:4.

### Verses 8-9 The Second Trumpet – The sea smitten

*Something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea* – A large object coming from the heavens and on fire is thrown into the sea.

- A third of the sea became blood – Either literal blood or the appearance of blood.
- A third of the sea creatures died
- A third of the ships were destroyed – At whatever location this great object lands it will destroy a third of all life and ships in that area.

### Verses 10-11 The Third Trumpet – The waters smitten

*A great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch* – A heavenly mass from outer space, probably a large meteor or comet.

- A third of the rivers
- A third of the springs of waters
- The name of the star is called Wormwood* – Wormwood grows in Palestine and has a strong bitter taste. The fallout from this falling star will poison a third of the fresh water sources.

### Verse 12 The Fourth Trumpet – The heavens smitten

- A third of the sun...
- A third of the moon...
- A third of the stars were smitten so that...
  - the day might shine for a third of it...
  - and the night in the same way.

The Day of the LORD is often pictured as darkness in the Old Testament (Amos 5:18, Isaiah 13:10, Joel 2:2).

### Verse 13 The Three Woes to Come

The severity of the final three trumpets are announced by an eagle flying over the earth. It is a triple "woe" and these woes are different from the first four trumpets as they specifically affect people rather than objects of nature. "Woe" is used over 100 times in the Bible. "Woe, woe" is used only four times. This is the only place in the Bible that a triple "woe" is used and it announces the great calamities that are about to come upon men.