

A SERIES THROUGH THE REVELATION

Revelation 8—The Seventh Seal and Four Trumpets | 5.26.22

I. INTRODUCTION (Revelation 8)

- A. Here as we look at **Revelation 8** tonight, it will become clear that God has lifted the pause button on the storyline, bringing us back into His activity among the nations. **Revelation 7**, which we looked at last week was an explanation chapter, where the angel explained to John what God was doing in the opening of those first 6 seals.
- B. **Revelation 7** worked to explain that God was committed to sealing His servants during the Great Tribulation, though they would still be subject to satan, and sinful humanity. But here, as look at **Revelation 8**, we step back into the God's storyline, the 7th seal will be opened, and the first four of seven trumpets will sound.

II. THE ANGELS PREPARE TO SOUND (Revelation 8:1-6)

- A. **Revelation 8:1-2** *“When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.”*
1. Heaven is a noisy place, but not right here. Every time we turn around someone's shouting, someone's singing, thunder and lightning are sounding forth, but not here. All that has given way to silence.
 2. We shouldn't take this as a literal 30 minutes, because John says, *“...for about half an hour.”* It's here that the 7th seal has been broken, and the contents of the scroll, in Jesus' hand are fully exposed.
 3. This silence is a preparatory moment of reverence, a deep breath, a moment of calm, before further destruction comes. The delays are over, the preverbal *Ark* door is closing. The judgments are increasing from ¼ in **Revelation 6**, to 1/3 in **Revelation 8-9**.
 4. There's lots of discussion about these seven angels, with many folks even naming them from Jewish midrash. But in my opinion, this isn't safe, simply because the Bible itself doesn't name them, ever. These angels are important simply because they stand before God.
 5. We might ask, why are they given trumpets? Because God is sounding the final alarm of human history. This is God's final mercy strategy for the earth. This is God's reach to humanity to disavow this age. These trumpets aren't the end, but they are signaling that the end is within view.
 6. Throughout the Bible God used trumpets for many things. Trumpets were used for dedication of the temple (**2nd Chron. 5:12**), the enthronement of the king (**1st Kings 1:34, 39**), before the burnt offering (**Num. 10:10**), and at feasts (**Lev. 23:24; 25:9**). But they were also used to proclaim of impending judgment, approaching enemies and spiritual awakening (**Joel 2:1, 15; Ezek. 33:3-6**).
 7. So, what is the trumpet, a pronouncement of blessing, or the warning of trouble? Yes, it's both. This is the forerunner calling, a trumpet ministry proclaiming both the bitter, and sweet parts of Christ's return (**Matt.13:24-43**).
- B. **Revelation 8:3-5** *“Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before His throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angels hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thundering, lightings, and an earthquake.”*
1. Beloved, this terrifying scene is in response to the prayers of the saints that we saw in **Revelation 5:8**, and **Revelation 6:9-11**. God is moving on behalf of their/our prayers.

2. In the temple ritual, the priest poured out the saucer of incense over the burning coals on the altar of incense. When the incense met the hot coals it created a fragrance, and the idea was that it was acceptable to God.
 - a. The Smoke Of The Incense, With The Prayers For The Saints Ascended Before God From The Angels Hand—The idea is that God has heard the prayers of His people, and they’ve been accepted, or answered. Those prayers which seemed empty, without life, without an answer, suddenly, in this day of divine acceptance, get an immediate reply from God; *approved, accepted, answered*.
 1. **Exodus 3:7**—*“I’ve seen the affliction...and I’ve heard their cries...”*
 2. **Judges 6:6-16**—*“...Israel cried out to the Lord...(and) the Lord sent a prophet...”*
 3. **Daniel 10:10-14**—*“...Daniel, for from the first day you set your heart to understand...your words were heard...and I have come because of your words...”*
 - b. Then The Angel Took The Censer And Threw It To The Earth And There Were Noises, Thundering’s, Lightening’s And An Earthquake—This is God’s response to the prayers of the saints; judgement on the earth (*antichrist, the false prophet, Babylon, earth dwellers*). God’s family is helping lead the judgments of God being poured out on the earth.
 1. This is the intersection of God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility. We pray, we do our part, and then we trust God that He will act when the time is right (**Revelation 6:9-11**). Gods heard, and He’s responding, and this is sufficient.
 2. It’s also worth noting, that the final judgment in each series of 7 (*7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 bowls*) ends this same way (*7th Seal—Revelation 8:5; 7th Trumpet—Revelation 11:15-19; 7th Bowl—Revelation 16:17-21*).
3. With everything cleared out of the way, the seven angels have moved the trumpets to their mouths, and they are ready to sound at the command of God. Again, they aren’t sounding on their own, *“(they)...prepared themselves to sound.”*

III. THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS (Revelation 8:7-13)

- A. **Revelation 8:7-9** *“The first angel sounded; and hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up. The second angel sounded; and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.”*
 1. Again, it’s important to note that God’s family and God’s people aren’t the intended targets of these judgments. They are specifically targeting a violent and hostile world that’s become aggressive towards Christ and His family.
 2. They are also taking a more intense form of suffering and punishment on the earth from the previous seals. But as bad as these are, they aren’t the end, there’s still more to come.
 - a. The First Trumpet Has A Threefold Result—*1/3 of the earth is burned up*—All the cultivated soil on the earth’s surface is totally/utterly destroyed.
 1. *1/3 of the trees are burned up*—Fruit trees were particularly important to those living near Palestine. But it’s not just the fruit trees, it’s 1/3 in general. As of January 24th, 2022, they estimated around 3.04 trillion trees on the earth. 1/3 of the trees destroyed is around 1.01 trillion.

2. *All green grass is burned up*—We aren't told for sure how this happens, but it seems that either the grass grows back by **Revelation 9:4**, or some grass in one place was burned, but because of the earth's cycle, there isn't grass in another place for it to be burned.

i. Overall, it leaves us with a terrible sight, a sight that no solution can solve. Firefighters from another state/country won't be able to contain this destruction.

b. The Second Angel Sounded And Something Like A Great Mountain Burning With Fire Was Thrown Into The Sea, and 1/3 Of The Sea Became Blood—This word used for mountain isn't actually speaking of a literal or physical mountain, but an object that's large like a mountain. John says, *"...it was LIKE a mountain..."*

1. It seems best to see this as a mountain-like chunk, or some meteor-like mass falling from the sky, and however it happens, 1/3 of the sea becomes totally unusable because it's made into blood. As a result, 1/3 of the creatures in the sea died, and 1/3 of the ships were destroyed.

2. This is a supernatural act of God that's devastating the oceans landscape. God seems to be striking at what the human heart loves most; money. No more fish, crab, halibut, shrimp, lobster, tuna, clams, oysters, calamari or salmon (*138-253 billion*). This doesn't even mention the change to the oceans ecosystem.

B. Revelation 8:10-11 *"Then the third angel sounded; and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. The name of the star is wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter."*

1. Then The Third Angel Sounded And A Great Star Fell From Heaven, Burning Like A Torch And It Fell On A Third Of The Rivers And On The Springs Of Water—With so much discussion around this sign, I think it's important to take it at face value. It's a star, falling to the earth, leaving a trail/tail that's burning in the sky making it's way to earth. It's a star or a meteor.

a. Wormwood is a plant found in and around Palestine that has a very bitter taste, though it's not poisonous. Wormwood in the Bible is used to speak of judgment (**Jer. 9:15; 23:15**). The idea is that God is giving back to the nations, what they are giving to Him.

b. This plant is so potent that within even just one ounce mixed into 524 gallons of water, it's still detectable.

C. Revelation 8:12-13 *"Then the fourth angel sounded; and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night. And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpets of the three angels who are about to sound."*

1. The Fourth Angel Sounded—We aren't told what directly strikes the sun, the moon or the stars and that's most likely because the Bible doesn't want us to be more enamored with the striking agent, than the plague itself. Whatever is used, strikes the whole of the heavenly bodies.

a. 1/3 of the day, and 1/3 of the night is around 16 hours of darkness throughout the world. This will create a culture of darkness, the likes of which the earth has never seen.

- b. We've seen this once before in the Exodus account, in **Exodus 10:21-23** where God sent darkness over the whole land, making it impossible to travel because of the darkness, but that was only for 3 days (**Amos 5:18-20; 8:9**).
 - c. Isaiah, Amos, Joel and Jesus referred to the Day of the Lord as a Day of darkness, not just spiritually, and emotionally, and culturally, but also literally (**Amos 5:18; Isa. 13:10; Joel 2:2; Mark 13:24**). Though this doesn't directly touch people's lives, it will indirectly radically re-alter the globe.
 - d. The heavens are reacting to the state of the nations. The nations will experience externally, what's happening internally. Beloved, when we are sinning, were not aware usually of the depth of our darkness.
 - e. **Malachi 2:3**
2. And I Looked, And I Heard An Angel Flying Through The Midst Of Heaven Saying With A Loud Voice, Woe, Woe, Woe To The Inhabitants Of The Earth Because Of The Remaining Blasts Of The Trumpets— Trumpets 1-4 have been blown, but there's a grave warning now issued for the remaining 3 blasts that are still yet to come.
- a. The first four judgements were against nature; the sea, the trees, the grass, the atmosphere, the sun, the moon and the stars. But what is remaining are not directed at nature, but at the earth dwellers.
 - b. This angel is a transition from the four trumpets that have already blown, to the remaining three that are still yet to sound. The three woes are for the three remaining blasts.
 - c. It's a warning that what's happened already has been tragic beyond words, but what's coming will still yet eclipse it yet again.
 - d. But again, the intended target isn't the Church, or God's family, but those who dwell on the earth.