

# **BOOK OF REVELATION**

## **Part 15 – First Four Trumpets: Chapter 8**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

We saw the Lord Jesus Christ, in heaven before God's throne, opening the seven sealed scroll, that was presented to him in Chapter 5. We saw the first six of seven Seals on the Seven Seal Scroll opened in Chapter 6. The opening of each one brought a terrible judgment on the earth. Specifically, the judgment was what God allowed to happen as a natural result of man rejecting God and in seal six, we saw what happened when God simply withdrew his continuous grace from the Earth. In Chapter 7 we saw, what was the first parenthetical passage in the Book of Revelation. There was a pause in the progression of the judgments to seal the 144,000 Jewish male witness so that they could not be harmed or killed. We also saw God's mercy being exemplified once again in the fact that he halted the progress of the judgments. It was not necessary in order to seal these witnesses. God is giving mankind time to reflect on the judgments and a short season to repent. Now we will see the opening of the Seventh Seal in Chapter 8, which leads into another set of judgments.

### **II. EXEGESIS – SEVEN SEAL OPENED AND TRUMPETS ONE THROUGH FOUR OPENED.**

#### **A. VERSES 1-6: PREPARATION TO SOUND**

*VERSE 1 “ And when he had opened the seventh seal,  
there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.”*

We see something very unique here. SILENCE. There is silence in heaven for about 30 minutes. The passage gives us no reason to take this except literally. Remember since eternity past there has always been worship and activity before the throne of God. The worship of God goes on continuously but here we see a significant enough event that God brings worship to him to a halt and has silence for ½ hour.

*Isaiah 6:1-4 “(1) In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. (2) Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. (3) And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. (4) And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.*

Based upon the scripture, having silence before God's throne is very unusual. This scene in Chapter 7 conveys the the next in God's program is about to re-commence.

*VERSE 2 “ And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.”*

Now we see an event which is unusual. We see seven angels given seven trumpets. Trumpets were often used in the Old Testament to initiate battle or announce important events. This time they will signal for a particular judgment to commence.

*VERSE 3-4 “(3) And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. (4) And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.”*

When one smells something sweet, he inhales through the nose to take in more of the scent and it causes a feeling of euphoria. This is the perfect analogy of how God reacts to the prayers of the saints, when they are right with him. The prayers of the saints is described as being sweet to God. They are sweet to Him and it gives Him a good feeling that He is important to His children. When we are right with God, He hears our prayers and they do not fall upon “deaf ears”. Prayers given in the proper spiritual attitude, is always sweet to God.

*Revelation 5:8 “And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.”*

*1 Peter 3:12 “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.”*

*VERSE 5 “ And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake”*

We see the earth is given warning that the period of God's mercy is coming to an end and the next period of judgment is about to begin. This warning is not as intense as the previous judgments and are not a judgment in and of themselves. They are meant as a warning and announce that judgments are about to re-commence and that the next set of judgments are totally divine in nature and cannot be stopped by man. Can a man stop lightning, thundering or an earthquake? No he cannot and likewise he cannot stop the judgment of God that is about to re-commence.

*VERSE 6: And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.*

While the fire is being cast to the earth to show that the next judgments are about to begin. Notice here the angels prepare to sound. Most musicians preparation to use an instruments has two phases: (1) The instrument needs to be adjusted for proper functioning and (2) The musician must prepare himself to play that instrument. The word “sound” carries the meaning of “preparing to blow”.

## **B. VERSES 7-12: TRUMPETS ONE THROUGH FOUR SOUND**

*VERSES 7 “The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.*

The first of the total supernatural judgments is about to begin. This judgment leaves no doubt that it is the hand of God and not man's. How do we know this. (1) The judgment is exactly one-third in scope. One third of all green vegetation is destroyed. If this fire had been caused by a natural disaster or man's doing, it would not have destroyed one-third of all vegetation on earth. It would have been allowed to destroy more or perhaps less, if men wanted to inflict damage on groups of other people. (2) The hail is mixed with fire and blood. The description given here leads one to the conclusion that is totally supernatural in nature.

*Exodus 9:23-24 “(23) And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. (24) So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.*

Also because of the fact that only one third of all green vegetation is destroyed, life could continue on earth, but life would be much more difficult.

*VERSE 8-9 “(8) And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; (9) And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.*

We again here see that due to the type of judgment that it cannot be anything but supernatural in nature. Notice a pattern you see emerging. Notice that this judgment affects one-third of its intended target. In this case the intended target is now the sea. The last target was land.

This “great mountain” could be possibly a very large meteorite. With today's technology, a meteor of this size approaching earth unobserved is very unlikely but there is very little man can do to stop it from striking the earth. However this “meteorite” will hit the ocean and turn one third of the sea into blood and cause (1) One third of the life in the oceans to die and (2) One third of all shipping to be destroyed. A large enough meteor strike hitting the ocean could easily destroy one third of the shipping at sea with the resulting Tsunami that its impact would cause but how could it turn one third of the oceans into blood. Given the context of the passage, there is no reason not to take this passage as anything but literal.

*VERSES 10-11 “And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; (11) And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.*

Wormwood is a herbal plant that is known for tasting very bitter. Wormwood was known to have certain healing properties and the plants themselves were laid around items that people wanted to keep insects and moths away from. There is an ancient proverb that says, “As bitter as Wormwood”.

The burning star, was given its name to the effects that its impact caused. Its impact upon the rivers of the world was to turn the waters bitter, just like the taste of Wormwood. One third of all the rivers and possibly fresh water lakes that were not affected by the previous judgment are now impacted. One third of the fresh water on earth is turned poisonous. Now the land, sea, and rivers are all impacted. Notice these judgments happen in quick succession. What do you not see is a massive repentance from sin. Revelation in fact indicates that they did not repent at all.

*VERSE 12 “And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.*

Now you will notice the parallel between these judgments and the judgments that God put upon Egypt for not letting the Children of Israel out of captivity.

Now the sun is reduced to two-thirds of its normal intensity. Likewise moonlight is reduced by one-third of its normal level as well. This judgment even dims the stars by one third of their normal brightness. This judgment impacts the whole created universe. The earth would be essentially be turned much colder than it is currently and life would become very difficult due to the impact of less solar radiation. Crops that are planted would suffer from less sunlight and harvest would be affected and already one-third of all vegetation would have been destroyed by a previous judgment that just occurred. The last impact of the judgment, which is very interesting to ponder is that the night is one third shorter indicating each day and each night is shorter by one-third indicating the rotation of the earth could have been modified by this judgment. This would mess up the life cycle of all plants, animals, and even people on the earth.

**LENGTH OF THESE JUDGMENTS:** How long do each of these four judgments last. The scripture does not tell us exactly or even approximately but based upon the context of the passage, each of the judgments must have happened very quickly. Trumpet judgments one through three could have each happened in a few moments and the impacts to take a day or several days to come to fruition. Trumpet judgment four could have been over several days or weeks. Again we are not sure. Regardless of the timing these judgments would devastate life on earth tremendously.

## C. VERSE 13 – WARNING OF THE NEXT TRUMPETS

*VERSE 13 “And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!”*

There is now a very brief pause in the judgments here so the angel can announce to the whole earth that the worst of the trumpet judgments are yet to commence. And indeed they will be even worse than what has happened so far. The judgments themselves are called “woe”. Each woe is one judgment. This is for possibly two reasons: (1) Giving mankind another chance to repent and God showing grace once again. (2) To give the saints a short time to prepare for what is coming next. Remember the angel proclaims to the whole world what is going to occur next. The Tribulation saints will still have access to God's word and then based upon what this passage says can prepare for the coming judgments, which will be far worse. The tribulation saint who survives the tribulation will help re-populate the earth in the Millennial Kingdom

## III. APPLICATIONS

- Take comfort. The Church age saint will not go through the Tribulation or the judgments described here.
- There will be many who will accept Christ during this time (after the Rapture) and they will be Tribulation Saints.
- However, the Tribulation Saints, unlike the 144,000 Jewish male witnesses, and the Two Witness to yet be described until Chapter 11, will have to endure the judgment of God. They missed their chance to escape.
- The believer, once he has accepted Christ as Saviour, is forgiven of his sin forever.
- However that saint must still pay for the consequences of his sin.