

The Revelation of Jesus Christ – Message #7
Revelation 8 – The Seventh Seal
(8/16/09 PM)

When we studied the book of Daniel we learned that the time of the Tribulation period would be seven years. We also learned that the seven year period would be divided into two equal halves. An event called “the abomination of desolation” would mark the middle. We also looked at Jesus teaching on prophecy from the Mount of Olives during the last week of His earthly ministry. In that message He outlined the Tribulation. **(Outline Map of the Tribulation)**. We said that the first six Seal Judgments seem to parallel what Jesus called “the beginning of sorrows”, [Matthew 24:8](#). This term means birth pangs increasing in frequency and intensity. We saw that the Seal Judgments of chapter 6 describe the opening events of the Tribulation.

(Refer to overview handout)

Revelation is not necessarily in chronological order. The judgments seem to advance the narrative. Chapter 7 is a parenthetical section that introduces two groups of people who will be saved during the Tribulation. These will include the 144,000 Jewish men and a multitude from every nation, tribe, language, and people group.

1. [The Silence in Heaven \(1\)](#)

The Climatic Calm before the Catastrophic Storm

John has heard a lot of noise up to this moment.

(4:5) “thunderings and voices”

(4:8) The four living creatures constantly crying “Holy, holy, holy”

(5:9-13) The 24 elders, the angels and eventually all creation joins in praise to God

(6:1) The “voice like thunder, ‘Come and see’” repeated with the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Seals

(6:9-10) The cries of the martyrs

(7:9-13) The praises of the redeemed

There is no time in heaven but John dwells in time. To him it seemed a half an hour.

• **The silence of awe inspired worship**

The inhabitants are awe struck with what God is about to do. Silence in scripture is associated with divine judgment.

[Zechariah 2:13](#), “Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!”

[Habakkuk 2:20](#), “But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him.”

The hour of God’s final judgment has come. The trumpets do not follow the seventh seal they are the seventh seal. This seal contains all of the trumpet and bowl judgments. It seems best to see them as telescoping out in consecutive order.

The Seventh Seal Contains All the Final Judgments

2. [The Eight Angels \(2-6\)](#)

Angels Are Involved in God’s Judgment

[Matthew 25:31](#), “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him”

• **The seven presence angels**

(2) “And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.”

The word “stand” is in the perfect tense indicating they were there in the past and have been for a long time. Gabriel identified himself to Zacharias in [Luke 1:19](#) as “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God”. These angels are given trumpets. Trumpets in the Old Testament were used to summon the people and to sound alarm. They were also used for announcing certain events. That appears to be the purpose for these trumpets.

Each Trumpet Will Announce the Next Act of Judgment

- **The one angel at the altar**

(3-6) “Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar”

The first reference in Revelation to the altar is (6:9) “When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.”

This altar is the heavenly counterpart to the altar of incense in the Tabernacle and the Temple. In the morning and evening the Old Testament priests would take coals from the brazen altar. They would carry them into the Holy Place to the altar of incense. The coals would ignite the incense which was symbolic of the prayers of the people. The incense given to the angel so he could “offer it with the prayers of all the saints” (3). This refers back to 6:9-11 and the martyrs imprecatory prayers. There prayers will be shortly answered as that same angel “took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake” (5).

The silence is abruptly broken. The censer that was normally used to bring prayers before God’s throne is now used as an emblem of judgment in answer to those prayers. (6) “So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.”

Almighty God Will Hold Back His Wrath No Longer

At this point you would think that the people of earth would repent and call upon Christ to save them.

3. Trumpet #1 – Hail and Fire (7)

Biblical Emblems of God’s Judgment

One of the plagues upon Egypt was hail and fire, [Exodus 9:13-25](#). This hail and fire has blood mixed with it. This could involve volcanic eruptions as the result of the earthquake. This also fits the description of a nuclear explosion. This judgment is specifically directed against nature. “And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.” This will certainly involve destruction of animals and crops. This will be a bad day to be an environmentalist.

- **God will demonstrate His power to those who defy nature**

Romans 1:25, “who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”

Man Will Be Forced to Understand that Nature is Subservient to God

4. Trumpet #2 – A Great Fireball (8-9)

Description by Comparison

The question in studying Revelation is always the same. What is to be taken literally and what is to be taken figuratively? John continually uses the work “like” in his descriptions. He has never seen anything like this before. He uses what he knows to describe it.

(8) “And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea”

This could be a meteor or asteroid that God allows to strike the earth.

- **Many connect the origin of life with the sea**

(8-9) “...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.”

The world will experience the worst tsunamis and tidal waves in history. This will have a devastating effect upon the world's economy. The seas becoming blood is similar to the plague upon Egypt.

Supernatural Causes and Natural Effects Will Reek Havoc upon the World's Oceans

5. Trumpet #3 – The Great Star (10-11)

Water Is Essential for Life

The repetition of “a third” indicates that there are more judgments to follow. These judgments fulfill the prophecy of Jesus.

Luke 21:11, “And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.”

The Greek word for “star” can refer to any celestial body except the sun or moon. This could be a meteor or a comet. “Like a torch” could be John describing its fiery tail as it passed through earth's atmosphere.

- **A third of the planet's water supply is contaminated**

John uses the descriptive word “wormwood” used only here in the New Testament.

Wormwood is a shrub whose leaves were used to make a substance so toxic that many countries banned its use. In the Old Testament it is associated with bitterness and death.

Jeremiah 23:15, “Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts concerning the prophets: 'Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, And make them drink the water of gall (or poison)...’”

The deadly effect upon mankind is now specifically noted.

(11) “And many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.”

MacArthur, “The rivers will run with deadly poison; the wells will become springs of death; the lakes and reservoirs will be filled with toxic waters.”

Many Will Die but Direct Deadly Judgment upon Mankind Is Yet To Come

6. Trumpet #4 – The Dimming of the Heavens (12)

The Focus Shifts from Earth to the Heavens

“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.”

The word “struck” is the verb from which the noun “plague” comes from. This is a plague from God upon the 2nd Heaven.

- **The effect of this cosmic plague will be catastrophic upon the earth**

Loss of heat from the sun will affect temperatures upon the earth. The moon's impact upon the tides will be altered. There could be violent unpredictable storms and floods.

Isaiah 13:9-11, “Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations

will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine. I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.”

Joel 2:30-32, “And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass

That whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

7. The Announcing Eagle (13)

John Says that He Saw an Eagle

The Greek word for “angel” is *aetos* which is translated “eagle” in [Matthew 24:28](#) and [Luke 17:37](#).

God spoke through a donkey He can certainly speak through an eagle. Some believe it was an angel but John described it as an eagle.

- **The imagery is that of a bird of prey rushing toward its victim**

The triple pronouncement “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth” refers to the last three trumpet judgments. This is the 3rd of 8 references to the earth dwellers. It speaks of those who are settled down permanently in this world. Weirsbee, “It refers, not to those who live on the earth, but those who live for the earth. They are earthlings, people who reject heaven and its Christ and who prefer to live for this world.”

This message of coming judgment is particularly for them. They will not repent and call upon God for salvation. They will not acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. There is nothing left for them but judgment.