

The Book of Revelation
Revelation 8 (NIV)
“The Seventh Seal”

Introduction

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 seven trumpets were given to them. Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God's people, on the golden altar in front of the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God's people, went up before God from the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake. Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them.

Revelation 8:1-6

Types and shadows are events in the *Old Testament* that give insight into the things God will do in the future. For example; the story of Noah's ark (one righteous man and his family being placed into the Ark and rescued from death) is a picture of The Church (Noah and his family) being sealed by God in Christ (the Ark) and thereby protected from the coming wrath. Abraham, offering his only son as a sacrifice, is a picture of God sending Jesus to die for us as a substitutionary sacrifice. Lot being rescued before the destruction of Sodom is a type of the rapture that will deliver the people of God from the devastation to come in the Great Tribulation. God always has, and always will be a shelter for His people.

In this world, the believer has been promised persecution. Jesus told His disciples the night before He endured the cross that they should not be surprised that this world would hate them.

If then world hates you, understand that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, then the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you. John 15:18-19

So we of course understand that we will be persecuted for our faith. This *world* may indeed cause us great harm. However we can rest assured that God's wrath will never be poured out upon His own children. We may suffer at the hands of evil men, but we shall never experience firsthand, the wrath of God.

For our God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our LORD Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

Even those who are saved out of the tribulation period, though they will be ruthlessly slaughtered by evil men, shall be kept safe by the protection of God for all eternity (**Revelation 7:9-17**). And those whom God will call to preach during the tribulation shall be sealed with His protection until their task is accomplished (**Revelation 7:1-8**). God always makes provision for His own, even in the most dire of circumstances.

We must keep these truths in mind as we continue our study of the events that shall take place during the great tribulation. And once again we will see similarities to events described in the *Old Testament*. When the seventh seal is opened there shall be hail, darkness, waters becoming polluted, hordes of demons compared to locusts, which all are reminiscent Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage in **Exodus 7-12**. In the days of Moses, God sent plagues upon the Egyptians in order to deliver

the nation of Israel from her cruel bondage. The great tribulation will be of a similar nature. Israel will be delivered much as she was in the Exodus. God will pour out His wrath upon the kingdom of the antichrist and Israel will turn to her deliver for refuge. It is against this backdrop that we must examine the disasters that will befall the wicked with the loosening of the seventh seal.

Prior to the opening of the seventh seal, John describes for us all the “sounds of heaven”. He describes for us the resounding chorus of worship around the throne of God, as those who are martyred during the tribulation are forever in the presence of The One Who has brought them to safety. Every creature in heaven will join together in thunderous praise of our God, Who sits upon the throne and to The Lamb (***Revelation 9:10-12***). At this moment in time, heaven will be filled with reverberations of joyous worship. I imagine that it would have been difficult for John to even hear himself think, as he found himself in the midst of such thunderous praise.

But immediately following all of the noise of heaven, everyone and everything shall grow completely silent in breathless anticipation of what is now to come. The opening of the seventh seal, is God’s answer to the growing chorus of prayers from the martyrs which began with the opening of the fifth seal and have continue to grow in strength as the multitudes of souls have been added to their ranks.

LORD, The One Who is holy and true, how long until you judge those who live on the earth and avenge our blood?” ***Revelation 6:10***

The day of God’s vengeance has finally come. And the awe of its magnitude stills the tongues of every creature in heaven. The silence to John must have been overwhelming, and he undoubtedly began to quake with fear as all of heaven is immersed in contemplation of the coming horrors that were soon to befall the inhabitants of the earth. The imprecating prayers of the martyrs had risen to the throne as the smoke from incense rises to the heavens. And now the answer had come. It is one thing to pray for God’s vindication, yet quite another to realize that the day of that vindication has arrived. So this silence in heaven speaks volumes.

In a place that knows no time, John describes a pause of silence in the only way he can (for about half an hour). Up to this point heaven has been a noisy place. Prayers, singing, and proclamations of judgment have filled the air with a constant roar. Upon the opening of the final seal to unleash God’s final phase of judgment on a fallen world, it is the silence that is deafening. It is the pause before the storm. There is a time to celebrate before the throne of God, there are times to speak, and times to shout for joy, but there is also a time for absolute silence. ***Psalms 76:8-9*** says: ***The earth feared and was still when God arose to judgment.*** ***Habakkuk 2:20*** says: ***The Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth be silent before Him.***

When God displays his might, it is a terrible, and dreadful thing (***Ps. 97***). Everyone in heaven knows what is coming when the seventh seal is broken, and a sense of fear and dread brings will bring all into silent submission and reverence..

Within the seventh seal there are seven trumpet judgments. And within the seventh trumpet are seven bowls of wrath. Just as the city of Jericho was judged by trumpets (***Joshua 6:20***), now all of the earth shall be. After the seven are given their trumpets (***vs. 2***), another (*allos*, meaning another of the same kind) angel brings much incense (many more of the martyrs prayers; ***6:9-11***) to the golden altar of incense before the throne.

It is untold the number of people who will be slaughtered by the anti-christ for their refusal to take his mark by this point in time. The cacophony of prayers for retribution has now reached their final climax. They are about to be fully answered with all the weight and authority of Almighty God. It is a powerful thing to remember ***“the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16 KJV)***. These martyrs have prayed down the very wrath of God. The mighty angel who stands continually before the presence of the throne of God, hurled the censer filled with fiery coals from the altar of incense down to earth and immediately the first trumpeter angel blasts his horn in response. A series of ecological disasters will then begin to wreak havoc upon the earth.

The First Trumpet (vs. 7)

The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down on the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

When the first angel sounds his trumpet (**vs. 7**) a massive hail storm destroys all of the green grass and a full third of all vegetation. The hail is described as fire mixed with blood. Some have speculated that because of the earthquake in **verse 5**, violent fire will reign down along with hail from the storm. Some have even suggested that in the wake of such destructive forces, the actual blood of the slain could rise in heavy clouds of condensation and rain back down as bloody hail. What a horrific image! It is hard to imagine a storm that destroys a third of the earth's plant life, and yet this is only the first of seven trumpets.

A disaster of such scale, which decimates one third of all agricultural production will have an unprecedented impact upon the world's already decreasing food supply. Worldwide famine will have already become a great burden during the first three and a half years of the tribulation (**Revelation 6:5-6**). But with the devastation of one third of the world's plant life, the situation will become dire indeed. In addition to the crop damage, all of the green grass will be burned up. Imagine the difficulty of finding forage for livestock. So the famine will not only effect the crops of the earth but also the meat industry.

As is the case in most world food shortages, the rich are able to get by while the poor are disproportionately affected. But with this much of the world's food supply being destroyed, everyone will suffer, from the richest to the poorest. The land will no longer be able to provide its nourishment when God's 1st trumpet judgment rains down upon the earth.

The Second Trumpet (vs. 8-9)

The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

When the second trumpet sounds and a massive meteor crashes into the sea destroying a third of the earth's oceans and a third of the life in them. After God has poured out His judgment upon the land masses of earth, He will turn His fury to the salt water masses of the planet by causing a large meteor to crash into the sea. The initial impact will also destroy a third of all ships in the ocean, causing such supply-chain interruption the likes of which the world economy will not be able to withstand. Stock markets that have barely survived up to this point will begin to crash.

We also know that an event like this would cause destructive tsunamis (tidal waves) that would also have great effect on the planet. Most of us remember the tsunami after the earthquake in Japan a few years ago. Just imagine the level of catastrophe that a great meteor striking the ocean would generate. Coastal cities will be completely erased from the planet. People will flee for their lives in order to find safety on higher ground.

Every so often we see on the news, a report of some meteorite, that nearly misses the earth (by thousands of miles), and we hear the scientist declare that some day we will not be so lucky. Hollywood has also produced several "sci-fi thrillers" that depict the horror of such an event. But when the second trumpet of God's judgment sounds, it will no longer be a speculative occurrence, but rather a disaster beyond all imagining.

The Third Trumpet (vs. 10-11)

The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water — the name of the star is

Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.

After these great terrors have fallen upon the land and the seas, the third angel shall sound his trumpet sending yet another meteor crashing down to poison a third of the earth's fresh water supply. The falling star is named Apsinthos (Gk. - translated wormwood). Wormwood is a shrub used to make the bitterly poisonous alcohol called absinthe. This liqueur is so toxic that its production has been banned in many places throughout the world. Now imagine a world where one third of the fresh drinking water is literally poisonous, and the many subsequent deaths that would occur as a result.

Populations can manage to survive during famine and pestilence, but no one can live without drinking water. With a third of the earth's water supply being contaminated, the death toll will be staggering. The people of earth will be faced with such upheaval that rioting will become the norm. It will be a Darwinian struggle in which only the strongest and most ruthless will be able to survive. But the antichrist will promise the world that only he can offer solutions to these mounting crises. Many who are desperate for relief will place their faith in him rather than repent and turn to God for forgiveness.

The Fourth Trumpet (vs. 12)

The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, 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 turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.

When the fourth trumpet sounds, all the light from the heavenly bodies (i.e. sun, moon, and stars) are reduced by one third. The temperature on earth would drop dramatically as a result. This would produce catastrophic storms and have a devastating effect on the remaining survivors from the first three trumpets judgments. In short, the world will become a dark hopeless place. Death and devastation will abound. Reminding me of the verse in Hebrews, "**It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**" (**Hebrews.10:30b**).

The people of this earth who have long preferred the darkness of sin over the light of truth will find themselves enveloped by physical darkness as well. Lack of adequate sunlight causes depression and anxiety in humanity. This will come in addition to the drastic drop in temperature as much of the warming light of the sun is blocked from view and the people struggle to survive the cold. The days will be shorter and the nights far longer. And these are simply the beginning of sorrows that shall befall those who have so long denied the truth of our LORD and His gospel.

The Eagle Flies (vs. 13)

As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!"

At the conclusion of the devastating effects of the first four trumpets, an eagle (KJV translates this word as "angel" but eagle is actually the correct translation) flies throughout the earth proclaiming "Woe! Woe! Woe to those who live on the earth." It is a threescore proclamation foreshadowing the three final trumpets during which days the worst is yet to come. The horrors contained in the first four trumpets will pale in comparison to what is to follow afterwards. Remember the prophetic words spoken by the people of earth after the sixth seal was opened? For the great day of their (God and the Lamb) wrath has come, and who can stand? (**Revelation 6:17**) But Christian take heart, for our God has promised us that we have not been appointed for wrath. So let us warn all who will listen, that they too may come to Christ and be saved from the wrath of these terrible plagues. For no sinner will be able to withstand the judgment of a Holy and Righteous God.

And let all those who are resting in Him say... TRUTH!!