

Wednesday Evening Bible Study
The Book of Revelation
Chapter 8
Lesson 15

- Chapter 8 picks up where chapter 6 ends, with the opening of the 7th seal
- Remember, the Great Tribulation focuses on the opening of 7 seals, the sounding of 7 trumpets, and the pouring out of 7 bowls of wrath
- But these are NOT 3 separate judgement events
- The seals are THE judgments, and the 7th seal is comprised of 7 trumpets, and the 7th trumpet is the 7 bowls
- The first 6 seals were devastating, but the 7th seal completes the outpouring of God's wrath (which makes sense, since the number 7 represents that which is total and complete)
- In essence, the first 6 seals are all described in chapter 6, but the 7th seal is so vast in it's scope that it requires chapters 8 – 18 to describe it all
- TRANS: So let's begin our examination of what will happen when the 7th seal is opened by the Lamb

1) The 7th Seal

- a) v. 1 tells us that when the 7th seal is opened something unusual happens
 - 1) "When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour."
 - 2) When the first 4 seals were opened, "horsemen" appeared, when the fifth seal was opened we heard cries coming from under the altar in heaven, and when the sixth seal was opened, we see the sky falling down and we hear the cries of those who remain saying to the rocks and the mountains, "fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"
 - 3) But when the 7th seal is loosed, we hear nothing! "there was silence in heaven for about half an hour."
 - 4) David Jeremiah says, "Before the next series of plagues is described, there is a dramatic pause. The conductor's baton is raised and the orchestra is waiting for his signal to begin the overture."
 - 5) Another interesting note is the length of time the silence lasts . . . "for about half an hour"
 - 6) When the 7th seal is opened, 7 angels appear with 7 trumpets
 - 7) Throughout the Bible, a trumpet is sounded to announce the entrance of some great person or the eminence of some great event
- b) v. 3 tells us that an 8th angel appears, "having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar."
 - 1) There's some debate about "who" the identity of this angel
 - 2) Some commentators say the angel should be looked upon symbolically as Jesus
 - 3) Others say this is simply an angel, to whom has been entrusted great authority
 - 4) I understand the arguments on both sides, and I don't see that either view compromises or validates the text anymore than the other

- 5) What's more important is the activity, not the identity of the angel. V. 3 continues, "He (8th angel) was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne."
- 6) This is a reference back to 5:8, where we find the saints in offering prayers to God with "golden bowls of incense"
- c) v. 5, notice now what this 8th angel does with his censer
 - 1) "Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and **threw** it to the earth"
 - 2) The result was, "noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake."
 - 3) When this angel takes the censer of fire and throws it to the earth, then the silence is broken!
 - 4) Why is there such an emphasis upon the silence, and then the breaking of the silence in heaven?
 - 5) What has everyone in heaven been doing up to this point?
 - 6) Praising and worshipping the Lamb, but now . . . a "holy hush" falls upon the multitude, for the 7th seal is about to be opened!
 - 7) People often ask, "Do my loved ones in heaven know what I am thinking and doing here on earth?"
 - 8) My opinion is, "I don't know for sure, but I don't think so." I believe that when we get to heaven we, as the multitudes we've seen already in Revelation, will be involved in continual praise and worship of God!
 - 9) However, the day is coming that when the Lamb prepares to open the final seal of judgment upon the world that there will be a moment of silence until the "angel" steps forward with the censer
 - 10) Why? Out of sorrow for the sins of the world . . . maybe
 - 11) Why? Out of joy that the world is about to be purged of its sin . . . maybe
 - 12) Why? I think out of reverence for the eternal plan and will of God as it is being brought to its fruition . . . for man's journey is almost over
 - 13) Ever been on an airplane when it's been a rough/turbulent ride? (maybe through a storm)
 - 14) People talk, laugh, and move around during the flight . . . but when the plane is just about to land . . . it gets very quiet, for the journey is almost over!
 - 15) For after the events of the 7th seal (remember this includes the trumpets and bowls) Jesus will establish His millennial kingdom on earth, and then the New Jerusalem will descend and we will literally experience heaven on earth!
- d) v. 6, Now we see the 7 angels, trumpets in hand, raised to their mouths, ready to sound the song of judgement/wrath
- e) TRANS: Let's spend the remainder of our time examining the first 4 trumpets and the wrath that they announce upon the earth
 - As we begin to examine these trumpets, I want you to know that I will be looking at them literally, not symbolically
 - Scholars divide along these lines
 - Dr. Ironsides, Ray Summers, and George Eldon Ladd take symbolic approaches
 - The problem is that no one agrees on exactly what is symbolized in these events!
 - Walvoord, Dr. M.R. DeHann, Larkin, Lehman Strauss, and Wiersbe all take literal approaches

- W.A. Criswell and John Phillips present both (for they believe there is truth in both views, and I agree with much of what they say)
- For the sake of our study, I want to examine these from a literal perspective

2) The First Trumpet

- a) v. 7, “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”
- b) Some scholars wonder if the hail will be red, like blood, or if this is a statement telling us that the hail will be so large, and hard, that men and women will be killed by it, and there blood will “mingle” with the hail causing it to turn red.
- c) “Where” does the fire come from?
- d) Is the hail on fire as it falls . . . some think so
- e) I believe that there will be so much lightning in this storm that fires will be started on a scale never imagined
- f) Some scholars try to explain this event away, and read into these events symbols of divine discipline, and not a literal event.
- g) Remember, God is the same yesterday, today, and for always, and God has already acted in this fashion once in biblical history
- h) We find a parallel to this event in Exodus 9:18-26 (turn and read)
- i) Remember, God has indeed poured out wrath in this fashion before, and He has promised He will do so again!

3) The Second Trumpet

- a) v. 8, “And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood.”
- b) “What” is this “great mountain”?
- c) Some believe that the mountain is symbolic of some great government that will fall in those days
- d) But you have to read a lot into the text to come to any conclusion from that Perspective
- e) I believe that a “great mountain” somewhere on this planet is literally “thrown into the sea.” The idea that the mountain is, “burning with fire” makes me think that it’s a volcano, but we just don’t know for sure.
- f) Walvoord says, “Though all questions cannot be answered, the unmistakable implication of these judgments is that God is dealing in righteous wrath with the wicked earth.” (Walvoord. The Revelation of Jesus Christ. p. 155)
- g) Because of this great turmoil in the sea, “a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.”
- h) Some believe that things on land will get so bad that many will try to escape God’s wrath by going to sea . . . but they will find that there is no place to run to and no where to hide from the wrath of God!
- i) Remember, this is part of the 7th seal . . . God’s wrath will be fully poured out on the earth!

4) The Third Trumpet

- a) v. 10, “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.”

- b) Again, some wrangle over the “identity” of this star for v. 11 says it is given the name **“wormwood.”**
- c) I have read that some think this star is Satan, but how he got back into heaven in order to be cast out of heaven again is beyond me, for the Greek clearly indicates that this object is in the heavens at that moment. (But wait until chapter 9, and we’ll see a different implication from the Greek tense)
- d) Others say that this is the picture of atomic warfare, or some other nuclear catastrophe.
- e) Others claim that this is a picture of the fall of the Anti-Christ, but that doesn’t come until later in the book.
- f) If you try to give every item in this verse a symbolic meaning, there’s no end to where you might go with this verse.
- g) Again, let’s look at it literally. I believe that some great “star” be it a meteor or something else will fall out of heaven and reek havoc on the earth’s ecology
- h) If we look back to Exodus 15:23-25 we see that God has plagued the earth in a similar fashion before. (TURN and READ)
- i) At Marah, the tree cast into the bitter waters made them sweet. Here, the wormwood cast into the sweet waters (what sweet waters remain after the 2nd trumpet) bitter.
- j) Walvoord says, “Such also is the contrast between Christ on the cross atoning for sin and making that which is bitter sweet and Christ coming in judgement which turns the vain hopes and ambitions of men into bitterness and despair.”

5) The Fourth Trumpet

- a) v. 12, “And a third of the **sun** was struck, and 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.”
- b) God has afflicted the land, and all its plants and animals, the seas, and all their fish, so now He afflicts the sun, moon, and stars! All to warn the people of earth that the great afflictions and sufferings are coming!
- c) I believe that this trumpet, though a judgment in itself, is sounded to inform the earth that the next 3 trumpets will signal the beginning of the end!
- d) Notice how v. 13 concludes this chapter, “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.”
- e) Some translations say an “eagle” brings this message, others say an “angel” brings the message. The emphasis is not upon the messenger, but the message!
- f) With all that has already taken place, this angel is in essence saying, “Watch out, the worst is yet to come!”
- g) Walvoord says, “Though it is difficult in this day of grace to imagine such catastrophic judgments, the Word of God is plain, and men are called everywhere to avail themselves of grace before it is too late.”
- h) To which I say, “Amen!”