

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 21ST–22ND, 2024 // REVELATION

A DRAMATIC PAUSE (REVELATION 8:1–5) WE RETURN TO THE SEALS

Ch. 7 shows us what is happening with the church during the time of the first six seals. Ch. 8 takes us back to a heavenly perspective and shows how God is trying to get people to repent through extraordinary measures.

- Before the 7th seal, there is a dramatic pause in heaven for “about half an hour.”

SILENCE AFTER THE LAST SEAL

We've read on several occasions about the magnitude of the praise and community in heaven, but now, and possibly for the first time ever, heaven pauses in anticipation of something huge after the 7th seal.

- We have no reason to believe the “half hour” is not literal.

REMEMBER THE POSSIBLE ORDER OF EVENTS?

The sequence of 6 seals, 6 trumpets, 6 bowls, then one final 7th event seems plausible, but here it gets cloudy. The 7th seal seems to set up the trumpets, though the 7th seal is exactly like the 7th trumpet and 7th bowl.

- Regardless of where it takes place, it must have mesmerized John.

“THEN I SAW SEVEN ANGELS...”

This is the first mention of these angels. Jewish and Christian traditions have names for them, though they aren't in the Bible (except Michael and Gabriel). Each angel has a trumpet like one used to signal war.

- An eighth angel was also present and held a golden incense burner.

RESPONDING TO THE MARTYRS

The eighth angel approached the altar from ch. 6 that housed the martyrs. The angel adds the “prayers of all the saints” to the cries of the martyrs before the throne.

- The incense (the prayers of the saints and cries of the martyrs) is accepted by God and now He will respond to them.

THE WAIT IS ABOUT TO BE OVER

The martyrs' wait for justice is ending. Fire (anger?) from the altar is mixed with the incense (prayers) and hurled at Earth, and “peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake” take place.

- This terminology and severity make some believe this is the end (7th event the same).

ANOTHER INTERESTING PERSPECTIVE

David Pawson believes the 7th seal is broken and the pause before the trumpets is a figurative amount of time where the other events (trumpets and bowls) take place. This would coincide with Revelation 19 and 20.

- This would be the calm before it all ends and Christ comes back.
- **6 Seals — interlude (chapter 7) — 7th Seal broken but not enacted — Silence** where 6 Trumpets and 6 Bowls happen — **The 7th Seal is enacted along with the 7th event in all series — Jesus returns**

THE TRUMPETS BEGIN (REVELATION 8:6–11)

AN INTERESTING PRE-TRIBULATION TAKE

Some pre-trib scholars believe the 7 years of the Great Tribulation start with the 7 trumpets. V. 6 (“prepared”) would be referring to the time from the crucifixion until the 7 years begin.

- If one believes this, they would think the 7 seals have been happening for thousands of years.

TRUMPET #1: HAIL, FIRE, AND BLOOD

The first trumpet is global ecological catastrophe. It says, “a third of the earth was burned up,” meaning 1/3 of all vegetation is destroyed. This could be fallout from the 6th seal.

- Joel 2:30–32 prophesied this but says, “**everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**”

THE FIRST TRUMPET ISN'T FATAL...YET

It doesn't directly kill people and animals, but life cannot survive long without healthy vegetation. **This event is to be a divine warning of worse things to come.**

- If scientists believe earth cannot exist with just mild ecological variations, what will society make of these events?

MORE INFO ON THE FIRST THREE TRUMPETS

Though we aren't sure of the mechanism for this destruction, it is easy in our age to see how this is possible. Also, God has struck vegetation before due to sin (Genesis 3:17–18).

- **John is not concerned about the mechanism, just that God is doing it to get mankind's attention.**

TRUMPET #2: THE GREAT MOUNTAIN

The “great mountain ablaze” is interpreted to either be a large meteorite or a volcano. The sea that it falls into is more than likely the Mediterranean Sea because it extends to all oceans and has been the focus of the Romans, Greeks, and Middle East for centuries.

TURNED TO BLOOD?

The “great mountain” that was “hurled into the sea” will contaminate 1/3 of the water on earth. It will not literally turn to blood, but the color may change due to the contamination from a volcano or meteorite.

- Now there's a death toll. 1/3 of the ships and the “creatures in the sea” will be destroyed.
- Mount Etna is sliding toward the sea, which could have “devastating consequences,” scientists warn...the giant volcano is edging closer to the Mediterranean Sea...which could result in collapse. Etna is one of the most active volcanoes in the world and is in an almost constant state of activity with a history of violent eruptions. - **New York Post, March 26, 2018**
- INGV reported that activity at Etna's summit craters continued during 14–23 July. Explosive activity at both Voragine Crater and NE Crater began to slowly intensify at around 1500 on 14 July and ash emissions from both craters rapidly dispersed. Infrasound data showed increasing activity at NW Crater at around 1600. - **Smithsonian Institute, July 23, 2024**

TRUMPET #3: A “GREAT STAR” FALLS

This is more than likely a large meteorite that will fall into “a third of the rivers and springs of water.” It does not say exactly which rivers, but the Nile and Amazon make sense because of their size and how many people are affected by them.

“THE NAME OF THE STAR IS WORMWOOD”

Wormwood is an extremely bitter but medicinal plant. Though not poisonous, if one ingested too much, they would get extremely sick. So, now much of the fresh water on earth is contaminated and unfit to drink.

- In Exodus 7, God did something similar to get the attention of the Egyptians.

THE CENTER FOR NEAR EARTH OBJECTS

NASA has an entire team of people working on solutions for a catastrophic impact from a large meteor. They conclude that if a large asteroid were to hit, it would dramatically impact the environment on Earth.

- The point isn't to scare, but to understand that **these events are not far-fetched.**

TRUMPET #4: A WARNING CRY (REVELATION 8:12–13)

THE FOCUS TURNS TO THE SKY

John has already witnessed the destruction of 1/3 of the land's vegetation and animals along with devastating events in the oceans and fresh waters. Now, God will turn His attention to the sky.

- It is possible that the effects in the sky are due to what has happened on earth.

OR, IT COULD BE A LITERAL COSMIC CHANGE

God spoke the universe into existence, and He has the ability to speak it out. Maybe the text is literal when it says the sun will be 1/3 darker and so will the night sky.

- Maybe John was seeing the beginning of the end. Revelation 21 tells us that the heavens will be wiped away.

WE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO ENDURE LONG

If we were to literally lose a third of our light and energy from the sun, we would not be able to survive very long. This signifies that the end would be very near.

- **The reason God is dismantling creation is to hopefully bring people to a place of repentance.**

“I LOOKED AND HEARD AN EAGLE”

The eagle John sees is actually an angel flying “high overhead” warning people of the coming judgments of God.

- *Woe* here means *catastrophe*. The remaining trumpets are going to be even more severe than the previous four, and this angel is sent to warn any who will listen.

HOW THIS HAPPENS IS IRRELEVANT

- Though we don't know exactly how each trumpet will come to fruition, **we do know they will most definitely happen.** These events also seem to be very close together.
- **Remember the overall theme of Revelation: Jesus is coming back, and we must be prepared.**

USING CATASTROPHE TO WAKE US UP

- Ch. 8 and the start of the trumpets show us the beginning of God's dismantling of creation in order to get humanity's attention.
- If God “**is patient...not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance**” (2 Peter 3:9), we can assume that these extraordinary lengths are to wake us up.

BREAKING DOWN IN ORDER TO BUILD UP

- God will dismantle creation in order to reconstruct a perfect creation. This is also an invitation offered to us.
- We're God's most valued creation. **If we're to be saved and refined, we must allow Him to deconstruct our broken self and ideas and reconstruct us into a new creation** (Romans 6:6).

ARE WE PAYING ATTENTION?

- There are many subtle signs in life that God uses to try and turn us toward Him.
- There are also catastrophic events that happen by our hand or maybe even God's, that if we are **humble and paying attention**, can alert us to get back on the proper road to positive and eternal change.

ARE WE POSTURED TO RESPOND?

- We are only able to pick up on these frequencies/signs if our reception/antennae is clear. **Are we positioned to hear/see God?**
- **Unrepentant sin, anger, hubris, selfishness, distraction, and apathy will cloud our ability to see the things of God.** Are we taking steps to address these things in our life?
- Are we repentant, prayerful, gathering wisdom from the Word, and obedient to the principles and teachings of God?
- Where do we turn in times of frustration, hardship, and even catastrophe?
- **Has God sent, or is He sending, “eagles” to our skies but we are missing the lesson?**