

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 22ND, 2024 // REVELATION

DRAMATIC PAUSE (REVELATION 8:1-5) BACK TO THE SEALS

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

- Before the 7th seal is broken, heaven has a dramatic pause for "about half an hour."

DEAFENING SILENCE AFTER THE LAST SEAL

We have now read several times about the volume and scope of the praise and community in heaven. But now, and possibly for the first time ever, everything pauses in heaven in anticipation of something too great to imagine after the 7th seal is broken.

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

REMEMBER THE POSSIBLE ORDER OF EVENTS?

It makes sense to believe the sequence is 6 seals, 6 trumpets, 6 bowls, and then one final earthquake, but here it gets cloudy. The 7th seal seems to set up the trumpets, though the 7th seal is exactly like the other 7th trumpet and 7th bowl.

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

"THEN I SAW SEVEN ANGELS..."

These are angels we have not read about until here. Jewish and Christian tradition has names for these angels, though they aren't biblical (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.

THE 8TH ANGEL STOOD BY THE ALTAR IN HEAVEN

The eighth angel approached the same altar we read about in chapter 6 that housed the martyrs of Christ. 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 He will answer them now.

THE WAIT IS ABOUT TO BE OVER

In ch. 6, the martyrs are told to wait for justice. Here, justice begins. Fire from the altar is mixed with the incense and hurled at the earth, and "peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake" take place.

- This terminology and severity make many believe this is the end (7th of all series are the same).

AN INTERESTING PERSPECTIVE

Some believe the 7th seal is broken, and the pause is a symbolic amount of time where other events take place, and the saints essentially pray, "Your Kingdom come." They believe this to be the calm right before it ends and Christ returns.

THE FIRST THREE TRUMPETS (REVELATION 8:6-11)

TRUMPET 1: HAIL, FIRE, AND BLOOD

The first trumpet marks an ecological catastrophe that takes place worldwide. It says, "a third of the earth was burned up," meaning a third of the vegetation on Earth is destroyed. This could be fallout from the sixth seal.

THE FIRST TRUMPET IS NOT FATAL...YET

It does not directly kill people and animals, but because we cannot live long without healthy vegetation, it sets up for fatality later. **This event is to be a divine warning of worse things to come.**

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

SOME POINTS ABOUT THE FIRST 3 TRUMPETS

Though we don't know the mechanism for this destruction, it is easy to see how this is possible in our nuclear age.

- 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 humanity's attention.**

TRUMPET 2: THE GREAT MOUNTAIN

The "great mountain ablaze" is interpreted to be either a large meteorite or a volcano. The sea it falls into is 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 a third of the water on Earth. It will not literally turn to blood, but the color of the water may change due to the contamination from the volcano or meteorite.

- Now we see a death toll. A third of the "creatures in the sea" and a third of the ships will be destroyed.

TRUMPET 3: A "GREAT STAR" FALLS

This is 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 they affect.

"THE NAME OF THE STAR IS WORMWOOD"

Wormwood is a highly bitter but medicinal plant. Though it is not poisonous, if one were to drink 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.

A WARNING CRY (REVELATION 8:12-13)

THE FOCUS TURNS TO THE SKY

John has already witnessed the destruction of a third 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.

- There is a possibility that the effects in the sky are due to what has already happened on Earth.

IT COULD VERY WELL BE A 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 a third darker, as will the night sky.

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

WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO ENDURE THIS

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

- **God is dismantling the earth and the sky above it to bring people to a place of repentance.**

"I LOOKED AND HEARD AN EAGLE"

The eagle that John sees is an angel flying "high overhead," warning people of the coming judgments of God.

- The word woe means *catastrophe*. The remaining trumpets will be even more severe than the previous four, and this angel is sent to warn anyone who will listen.

HOW THEY HAPPEN IS IRRELEVANT

Though we don't know exactly how each trumpet will come to fruition, **we do know that 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.**

CATASTROPHE

- Ch. 8 shows us the beginning of God's dismantling of the land, sea, and even the sky to get our attention.
- The will of God is that "none perish." So, **God will go to extraordinary lengths to provoke people to repentance.**

BREAKING DOWN TO BUILD UP

- God will tear all creation down to build back perfection.
- If we are to be what we have the potential to be, God must also break us down to build us up to look more like Him. **To find our lives, we must first lose them.**

ARE WE PAYING ATTENTION?

- The question is, have we become too hardened to be molded? Are we too distracted to hear the warning cries? Are we so self-centered that we miss God trying to get our attention? **Has God sent an "eagle" to our skies, but we are not looking up?**