

REVELATION Chapter 8

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In chapter 5, we saw the Lamb worthy to open the sealed Book, in chapter 6 we saw the opening of the first six seals, and in chapter 7 there was an interlude. Now in chapter 8, we continue with the sealed Book, and the opening of the 7th Seal.

I. THE LAMB OPENS THE SEVENTH SEAL, 8:1-6

A. When the seal is opened, there is ***silence in heaven*** for about half an hour, v. 1

1. The judgment of God was about to be executed, and it was a time for *reverence, attention, and solemn reflection*.
2. Compare Habakkuk 2:20; Isaiah 41:1; Zechariah 1:7-12; 2:8-13.

B. Seven angels and seven trumpets, v. 2

1. These are before the throne of God (see 1:20).
2. The sound of the trumpet was the ***alarm of war*** (Isaiah 58:1; Ezekiel 33:3-6; Zechariah 9:14; Joel 2:1; Jeremiah 4:19-20; note the fourfold use of trumpets in Numbers 10:1-10: to call the congregation, to journey to the camps, to go to war, to sound an alarm)
3. The **seven stars** are the seven angels: the character of the seven churches (congregations).
4. God was telling how it was with the churches, and what it will be like when God's judgment falls.

The picture here: ***Danger ahead: War is coming! It is the wrath of the Lamb!***

C. God's saints cry for help, vv. 3-5

1. Another angel makes his appearance with incense, standing over the altar, having a golden censer.
 - a. There was given this angel much incense to offer with the prayers of the saints (see Hebrews 10:18 ff.).
 - b. This golden altar is the true tabernacle, before which Jesus is High Priest (Hebrews 7:25 – 8:5).
3. The smoke went up before God: the prayers of the saints (compare Rev. 6:10-11; Romans 8:26, 27, 34; 1 John 2:1-2; Acts 10:4).
4. The angel fills the censer with fire from the altar and casts it into the earth.
 - a. God hears – and those on earth will be vindicated.
 - b. The voices, thundering, lightening, earthquake are the *coming wrath of God against the ungodly!*

II. THE FIRST FOUR ANGELS SOUND THEIR ALARMS, 8:7-13

A. **FIRST TRUMPET WARNING:** Land (natural) disaster, v. 7

1. Fire and hail mingled with blood is cast upon earth: great destruction.
2. Hail often symbolized the implements of war (see Joel 1:15-20; Exodus 9:18).
3. The effect = *one-third part of trees and all green grass burnt up* (the four winds, formerly restrained according to 7:3, were now beginning to release their fury).

B. **SECOND TRUMPET WARNING:** Sea disaster, vv. 8-9

1. Destruction in the sea – a great burning mountain cast into it.
2. “Mountains” = symbolic of *world governmental powers* (see Isaiah 2:2-4; 42:15; Jeremiah 51:25; Amos 6:1; Micah 6:1-2).
3. A great sea battle in which world powers are destroyed: 1/3 part of sea became blood; 1/3 part of the creatures died; 1/3 part of the ships destroyed.
(compare Exodus 7:17-18).

C. **THIRD TRUMPET WARNING:** Freshwater disaster, vv. 10-11

1. A great star fell from heaven:
 - a. “falling stars”: often symbolized the fall of some great dignitary or notable one (see Isaiah 14:12-15; Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:25; Luke 21:25).
 - b. Fell into the rivers (compare Revelation 17:15).
 - c. The star’s name was “Wormwood” (meaning “bitterness”).
2. The picture here: *a notable leader’s fall would cause bitterness, because many would die*; these were “bitter waters” (see Deuteronomy 19:18; Jeremiah 9:13-16; 23:25; Lamentations 3:15, 19; Amos 5:7).

D. **FOURTH TRUMPET WARNING:** Cosmic disaster, v. 12

1. Heavenly bodies fall and fail to shine (sun, moon, stars).
 - a. The sun, moon, and stars are symbols of light upon earth.
 - b. In the Old Testament, the loss of light from these three sources is symbolic of God’s light going out upon a nation (compare Isaiah 13:9-11; Jeremiah 15:9; Ezekiel 32:4-8; Joel 2:1-12; 3:15; Amos 8:9).
3. This is a *partial warning* of judgment coming; the whole will be given later.

CONCLUSION to the chapter, verse 13

-- a *PREVIEW* of what is to come!