

Revelation Chapter 8.

The seventh seal opened.

And when he opened the seventh seal there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven Angels which stood before God and to them were given seven trumpets.

The Lamb loosed the seventh and final seal and that act is followed by complete silence in heaven for the space of about half an hour. This constitutes a massive contrast to the sound of worship, praise and adoration that came from the concourse of the redeemed mankind, the hosts of Angels and the four Creatures that filled John's ears up to now. We need not read any symbolic significance about the time frame on the opening of the sixth Seal, but the scenes revealed by that opening, showed the terrors, and horrors of the last days of judgement that no doubt horrified heaven into silence. This silence is the silence of awesome expectation and wonderment foretold by Zephaniah 1; 7, 15, 17, 18.

Hold your peace at the presence of the Lord God, for the day of the Lord is at hand. 15. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness. 17. And I will bring distress upon men that they shall walk like blind men because they have sinned against the Lord and their blood shall be poured out as dust and their flesh as the dung. 18. Neither their Silver nor their Gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy; for He shall make even a speedy riddance of all them who dwell in the land.

It would appear that the vision shown when the seventh seal was opened was so horrific, so frightening that the hosts of heaven watched in stunned silence as the pictures of the very last days unfolded. The Lord said He would bring darkness for men to walk in, He would bring days of clouds and thick darkness, and He will bring so much distress that men shall walk like the blind walk, because they have sinned against the Lord. How many times has the sinner been told to mend his ways from Sunday school onwards man comes up against the gospel in many different ways and each time the Lord is rejected?

I guess a lot of readers are saying hold on! God is a God of love, He said He so loved the world that He gave His only Son, why all this war and fighting and horrible things just before I go to bed? Yes that's right but if we read all that verse it says ... **For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life**, and those are the words the world reject... believing in Jesus, giving and committing their lives to Him, following His way of life and not our own, is too much to give away. When men walk their own way and do their own thing we end up with crooked sportsmen, cheating bank managers, bad law enforcement officers, unkind selfish neighbours, liars, cheats and so on that fill our newspapers and Television screens every day. So when we rebel against God He does not like it and promises to bring it all to an end, an end that is not very nice at all. But He does give us a way of escape if we want it. He says if we accept Him as our Saviour He will give us eternal life.

Verse 2

And I saw the seven Angels which stood before God and to them were given seven Trumpets.

The Greek text says "the seven Angels from the presence of the Lord" In Luke 1:19. An Angel introduces himself as Gabriel, he was the same Angel who visited Daniel (8:16) with a special message from the Lord, and again would visit Mary (Luke 1: 26). Gabriel also stands in the presence of the Lord to do His bidding and carry out that which God requires. These seven Angels were given seven trumpets to blast at the introduction of each judgment.

But just before they blow their trumpets we are introduced to another Angel,

Verse 3

Another Angel comes and stands before the Altar having a Golden Censer and there was given unto him much incense that he should offer it with the prayers of all Saints upon the Golden Altar which was before the Throne.

This Angel held in his hands a Golden Censer in which are the prayers of the Saints of God, those who have given their lives to Jesus and accepted His as their Saviour. The incense was not given to the Angel by the Saints it was given to him by the Lord, Christ alone is our mediator through whom and to whom prayer is offered. The Angel was told to add the incense which he was given with the prayers of all the Saints.

The smoke of the Incense which is a sweet smelling heavenly aroma not known here on earth mingled with the prayers of the Saints to make them presentable to the Father. However imperfect our prayers may be they are precious in the sight of God, He longs to hear you call on His name, He, like any good Father wants to share your excitement, your joy and even your heartaches.

Prayer filled censers thrown from heaven to the earth.

Verse 4

And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the Saints ascended up before God out of the Angel's hand.

Knowing our prayers come 'up before God' we must do our best to pray according to His will and to be inspired to a greater and more concentrated prayer life.

Verse 5

And the Angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the Alter and cast it into the earth and there were voices and thunderings and lightnings and an earthquake.

The countless prayers of the Saints of God, many for the Salvation of friends and family, others repenting the sinful state of our nations, some in sorrow for bad decisions made in His name and so on were all placed in the censer and the Angel threw the prayer filled censer to earth. With the Salvation of the Cross being rejected by earth the Judgement of the cross will now commence with *thunders and voices and lightning and earthquake* and the justification of the shed blood of the martyrs crying out from under the Altar "How long O Lord Holy and True" (Chapter 6.v 9-11). This is a cry for far more than for revenge it is a heartfelt cry for the end of sin and shame by those who have come to know the Truth. The throwing of the censer to earth released the Judgement of God upon the earth, Judgement that the world had never known or seen before.

So the Seven Angels who had the seven Trumpets made themselves ready to announce the first trumpet blast.

The First Angel introducing the first Trumpet judgment

Verse 7

The first Angel sounded and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood and they were cast upon the earth and the third part of trees was burnt up and all green grass was burnt up.

The first Trumpet blast brought the first Trumpet Judgment; this is a literal fulfilment of Joel 2:30.

And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.

Can you imagine the terror and the fear of people on their way to work, enjoying their holiday, planning a marriage, even cleaning the car in the driveway when suddenly fire, and hail mixed with blood comes falling down on everything and everyone. Just like the plagues that were sent upon Egypt they too were working, playing with their children cleaning their chariots in the driveway, when hail and blood were sent upon them.(Ex. 7:14) compounded by a plague of locusts resulted in no green thing remaining. (Ex. 10:15).

“All green grass was burnt up” presents some difficulty for some, as verse Rev 9; 4 states the prohibiting of the locusts from damaging the grass of the earth. We note from Rev 8; 8 below the judgment of the first four trumpet blasts are limited to a third part of the earth, third part of the trees, third part of the sea, third part of the waters and the heavenly bodies, it is reasonable to believe the “all green grass” that is scorched is also a third part of the earth.

The Second Angel Trumpet Judgment

Verse 8

And the second Angel sounded the trumpet and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood. 9. And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died, and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

If we refer to our Bibles and our history books we read of such devastation in Exodus 9:14-21 and Psalms 78: 44 Psalms 105: 29. Where the Lord turned water into blood, slew the fish, He sent flies, frogs, caterpillars, hail and a whole lot more against Egypt. Could it not happen again? Could not the God who created the universe send a great meteor to come crashing into the sea to poison the waters? Could not the planets become darkened here as they did in Egypt, could not our God do just as He wills?

The Third Angel Trumpet Judgment

Verse 10

And the third Angel sounded and there fell a great star from heaven burning as it were a lamp and it fell upon the third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of waters. And the name of the star is called Wormwood.

This flaming star is called Wormwood because of its bitterness, and where this star fell it caused the waters to become bitter and undrinkable. This star fell to one third of the earth’s rivers and fountains causing death from poisoning conceivably taking hundreds of millions of lives. Once again this terminology has close association not only with Judgment but the wilderness and rebellious experience of the Children of Israel. In Jeremiah 9:12 the question is asked “Why is this land ruined and laid waste like a wilderness? And the Lord answered;

Jeremiah 9: 12

Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, or walked in accord with it, but have stubbornly followed their own hearts and have gone after Baal as their fathers taught them. Therefore thus says the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: Behold I will feed this people with wormwood and give them poisonous water to drink.

Also Jeremiah 23: 14/15

I have seen also in the Prophets of Jerusalem a horrible thing, they commit adultery and walk lies; they strengthen also the hands of evildoers that none does return from his wickedness; they are all of them unto Me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah. 15. Therefore thus says the Lord of Hosts Behold I will feed them with wormwood and make them drink gall: for from the Prophets of Jerusalem is Profaneness gone forth into all the land.

While no doubt immorality was rampant, idolatry was even worse; the worship of idols replaced the worship of God and was called spiritual idolatry. Guilt was laid at the door of the Prophets for their own idolatry and lack of example and proper teaching to Israel and God likened them to Sodom and Gomorrah. There could be no worse a testimony.

Times have not changed from the days of the Children of Israel; they chased after foreign gods, went their own way and forsook the laws of God. The nations of the world have forsaken God and as the Bible says *all we like sheep have gone astray we have turned everyone to his own way*. This rebellion and disobedience to God cannot go on, there has to be a time of reckoning, a time of accountability towards Him who gave His only Son to die in our place, and He tells us about that time here in the Book of Revelations.

The Fourth Trumpet Judgment

Verse 12

And the fourth Angel sounded his trumpet blast and the third part of the sun was smitten and the third part of the moon and a third part of the stars, so as the third part of them was darkened and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

We must emphasize the fact that these judgments are not symbolic they are literal! In Luke 21: 25/26 Jesus confirms His Word by saying.

There shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and the stars, and upon the Earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring and men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the Earth.

When my wife and I were courting we often lay on the beach all day reading and sleeping. We got brown and sometimes a bit burnt but felt good and healthy. Today our doctors tell us we must not sit in the sun longer than an hour before covering up and we must put on sun protection cream factor 30 or more to be properly protected, in our young days we only had factor 8 or 10 now we can buy cream up to factor 50!. Those who ignore this advice can end up with skin cancer and all manner of deceases to the body. We are beginning to see, in our day the seas roaring and the terrifying waves that do so much damage. I live by the sea; I can go down to the beach and look in wonder at the power of the waves and feel the shaking of the ground as they crash onto the promenade. There is no stopping them; there is a power that is loosed in the waves that is quite terrifying. Now the waves of the sea encroach into our towns and villages, across our fields and country lanes, they destroy everything in their path and we are warned that what we see today may well be the pattern for years to come. As we have discussed earlier in our study, in recent years the waters have risen from the flooded fountains of the deep and ruined the farmer's crops, flooded people's homes, shops and businesses and before the floods and waters have receded down comes another terrifying storm with more wind and rain.

People on Television tell us how desperate they are with their homes destroyed and with nowhere to live, businesses in pieces and farmers unable reap this year's produce or to prepare for next year's crops.

In the USA tornadoes bigger than ever seen before have gouged pathways through counties and flattened great areas through towns and cities. Under the Judgment of God all this will get much worse and affect a much greater area. This is just the beginning. What will people say when interviewed on Television when they describe the poison waters of the Wormwood? When hail falls that is 100 pound in weight, when they see signs never seen before in the sun and the moon? The book of Amos says

On that day says the Lord God I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad day light'

Mathew 24: 4-7

In the New Testament the Disciples asked the Lord what will be the signs of His coming and He told them; *many shall come in My name saying I am Christ, and shall deceive many, and you shall hear of wars and rumours of wars see that you be not troubled for all these things must come to pass but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation and Kingdom against Kingdom and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in divers places.*

By turning away from God who is the source of all light, men who wilfully choose darkness rather than light when the Light of the world has come they will live in real darkness forever.

God warns us in the verse above *there will be distress of nations* why? Because clever men cannot do anything about it, it will all be beyond them they will be running, hiding, some praying, some screaming to God for help, some swearing to God in blame. As the verse above says men's hearts failing them for fear as they see these things coming upon the Earth.

There is a saying "you aint seen nothing yet" do you know that things are going to get much worse according to the Book of Revelations. But we don't have to see anything more like we have described here if we as nations turn to Christ in repentance. God warns us in His Word and tells us the way He wants us to live; most people know the difference between right and wrong, good and evil but carry on in their own way of life that is displeasing to our creator. And those who think I am full of woe and negative thinking just remember there were those who thought that of Ezekiel, Isaiah and all the prophets of God who warned the people of what was coming upon the earth at that time. We've talked about Pompeii and how suddenly its destruction upon people who were busy with their own way of life but leaving God out, how suddenly the Angel of death came to Egypt's firstborn, brought judgment unstoppable from the very hand of God. As soon as it arrives it is too late to say sorry and although God is merciful He will not change His mind you must change yours!

Verse 13

And I beheld and heard an Angel flying through the midst of heaven saying with a loud voice Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three Angels which are yet to sound.

In the middle of all this supernatural activity we are told an Angel will fly through the sky saying loudly Woe, Woe, Woe, note his message is addressed to the peoples of the Earth. So once again degenerate man is given another chance to repent before God and change his ways. In the days and time of this event it is quite possible this Angel could be seen on television, God will leave nothing out in showing His grace and love, even to those who have turned their backs on Him.

I hope you will agree I have done my best to keep as close to the scriptures as possible. As I write there is still time to get right with God. We are so close to the end times who knows by the time you are able to read this the Rapture may have happened and you will be too late. You cannot take any more chances with your eternal destiny. Choose Him today and I will see you around the Throne.

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Be blessed

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