

Silence in Heaven: Opening the 7th Seal

Rev. 8

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The first thing to revisit is that what we are studying is “the things which shall be hereafter”. The “born again” need not be overcome by the severe judgments that are being placed upon the earth because at this time frame we will be in heaven. Now let us consider these judgments in an overview. We have looked at the opening of six seals and now will look at the opening of the 7th. This final seal opened will include within it the things which will happen during the sounding of the “trumpets” and the pouring out of the “vials” which will extend down to the ushering in of the Millennium.

The seven seals, the seven trumpets, the seven personalities, and the seven vials, or bowls of wrath, all concern the same period, but from different angles. In the seven seals we see the judgment of God which is the result of man’s willful activity. We have looked at the “riding of the horses”. We saw a false peace because there is no real peace without the Prince of Peace. We saw war riding throughout the land. War is in the heart of mankind. We have people currently who, for whatever motive, think the removal of all guns in America will stop crime and more specifically the violence which often is resulting in death. The fact of the matter is the problem is not in the gun put in the heart of mankind. Remove all guns and people will use whatever they can, including their hands, to take away life. In the trumpets which we will be looking into in this study we find the judgments which are the direct activity of God. When we come to the seven personalities we will see the judgement which is the result of Satan’s fight against God. Satan will be brought out in the open at this time. In the seven vials, bowls of wrath, we will see the final judgment of God because of man’s and Satan’s rebellion. God is going to judge both in a dramatic manner.

II Pet. 1:20: “Knowing this first that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation”. Revelation is not to be standing alone. There are 65 other books of which find their final destination within this final prophecy.

The rule of understanding the Bible is ‘when the plain sense makes good sense there is no need to seek another sense for in so doing you will arrive at nonsense.’ The reason for this discussion is that there is written so many attempts to ‘spiritualize’ or adapt the language of Revelation to something that is not being said. Unless it specifically says that this is a type of something we must take it as it is written to mean. The events often remind us of the plagues of Egypt. When we study those we take them as they are written, or we should, and we must do the same with the events of Revelation.

V1. "Silence in heaven about the space of half an hour": This silence followed the breaking of the 7th seal. This is an amazing event. The four and twenty elders cease their harp playing, the angels became silent, and the Cherubim and Seraphim became silent. The suspense of the half hour of silence in Heaven was intense. The question is why this silence? The answer is that was a period of silent preparation for the awful judgments that were to burst forth in the earth under the "trumpets" and "vials". We could describe it as 'the lull before the storm'.

V2-5. "Golden censer.. golden altar": Before the first angel blows the first trumpet we have the assurance from God that in spite of all the dire judgments which are about to fall, God has not forgotten His people, and their prayers, though long delayed, will be answered by Him. Since the returning of Christ to heaven the Christians have been praying "thy kingdom come and thy will be done". All the wrongs that have been done to God's people from the beginning of this earth to the last "Tribulation Saint" who is killed will be given the justice of God against them.

V6. "Seven angels...seven trumpets...prepare": These seven angels are given specific instructions. Throughout the Bible trumpets were used for specific reasons. They called the Israelites to worship and to battle. The blowing of a trumpet allowed the Israelites to watch the walls of Jericho fall. We will see that God has a specific plan of action. My hope is that we will understand the extreme harshness of these actions and warn those who may be in the midst of this before it is too late.

V7. This is a direct judgment from God. Judgment falls upon plant life from the grass to the great trees. The Flood was used in the first global judgment; but now it going to be fire. There is no need to spiritualize this. It means just what it says. These things happened before why not again? It is the fulfillment of Joel 2:30-31, where the Lord says that in the "latter days" He will—"Shew 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." The Lord is going to repeat the plagues of Egypt. They were literal, why not the trumpet and vial judgments? The literalness of these judgments will give us the key to the literalness of the book of Revelation. No less than 5 of the 9 plagues of Egypt are to be repeated during the Tribulation Period. This plague is the same as the 7th Egyptian plague. "And the Lord said unto Moses, stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt." And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both men and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field and brake every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen where the children of Israel were, was there no hail." Exod. 9:22-26. The difference between the Egyptian plague and the plague of the 1st trumpet is that the situation will be reversed. Then the

children of Israel escaped now they will suffer. The judgments of Egypt were directed toward Pharaoh while the judgments of the Tribulation Period will be directed toward Israel.

We are clearly taught that 1/3 of the trees and all the grass was burnt up. This will be catastrophic. These judgments, we must understand will be mounting one upon another. The turmoil upon this world will be described to us in great detail. We should be shaken by the magnitude of them. We should be begging the Lord to give us a burden for those will be in the midst of this unless are saved.

V8-9. We cannot keep this judgment from coming to earth, but we can get the Word of God out and reduce the population that will be left on the earth so that fewer people will go through that terrible time.

We are seeing that “the sea” is the next affected. Water (oceans) makes up most of the earth’s surface. This will be a direct judgment affecting them. It is interesting to note that plant life was the first which appeared on this earth during the creation and then the separation of the land and sea occurred on the same day. Gen. 1:9-10.

Here is an example of noting what is being said. John does not say that it is a mountain cast into the sea but as a mountain. The language is saying that he witnesses a great mass of fire falling “as if” were a great mountain burning with fire. This literal mass falls into the literal sea (oceans) and 1/3 becomes actual blood and 1/3 of all the creatures in the oceans die as a result. It is clearly teaching that 1/3 of all ships are destroyed when this 2nd trumpet is sounded.

V.10-11 This 3rd trumpet judgment is foretold by the Prophet Jeremiah. “Therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, because they have forsaken my law, ‘Behold I will feed them, even this people (Israel), with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.” The name “wormwood” is used to describe the bitterness of the water. Wormwood is a perennial herb which is very bitter and unusable by itself. Our bodies are made up largely of water. We must have water to replenish ourselves to sustain life and health. Today we live in a world where a lot of people have very limited access to any kind of water fit for consumption. We regularly purchase bottled water which was unknown during the begging of our life span. Pure water is already very rare and getting more and more expensive to obtain. In this judgment we find an attack directed upon the fresh water supply resulting in what is remaining of good water being reduced by 1/3 in this world. The result will be “many” will die attempting to survive by drinking this “bitter” poisonous water. These calamities will continue to abound and “stack-up” one upon another as God’s wrath is released upon rebellious sinful mankind. Ordinary things will become nonexistent during this time of trouble. Mankind will not be able to ignore God and His power.

V12. The 4th trumpet is spoken of by Christ in Luke 21:25-28. Many has been the time that as I was speaking to an audience I have brought up the fact that no one got up that morning and told the sun to rise again or went in the evening and told the sun to fall. The meaning is God is in control of His universe and it runs like a "clock". Everything about the sun, moon, and stars has always operated exactly as He designed them to. During this time of trouble this part of His creation will begin to show the signs of change and bring change upon this earth. These are the prophetic happenings coming to pass just before Jesus will make His 2ndcoming which will be at the end of the Tribulation Period.

V13. Some believe that the original here should be Eagle instead of Angel. It doesn't change what is being said or the ability of God to use whatever He chooses to tell it. As these judgments fall upon this earth, as bad as they already are, we are told here that the next three will up the intensity in a dramatic way.

Woe is defined as a condition of deep suffering from misfortune, affliction, or grief. This word is repeated three times signifying the last trumpets yet to sound and what there effect will be upon this earth. This time of "Jacob's Trouble" is such a time of suffering which creation has never endured nor will ever again.