

The Church of the Servant King

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PROPHECY SERIES

(Proph21I_Revelation_chp8_The Seventh Seal & Trumpets 1-4)

THE SEVENTH SEAL: PRELUDE TO THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

And when He broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God; and seven trumpets were given to them. 3 And another angel came and stood at the altar holding a golden censer and much incense was given to him, that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. 5 And the angel took the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake. 6 And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them. (Rev 8:1-6)

Up until this point, heaven was filled with the sound of praises to God being made by the creatures in heaven (Rev 4:8). However, now, they cease for "about a half an hour." This is extremely significant to note. All of heaven, certainly at God's command, is silent in order to hear the prayers of the persecuted and suffering believers of the Tribulation era. God is on the verge of responding to the prayers of His persecuted believers on earth and all heaven pauses in silence – much like the calm before a storm (cf. Lu 18:2-8).

Verse	Phrase	Explanation
1	"...silence in heaven..."	The purpose of the silence is to prepare all observers for what is to occur. When one in authority is silent, it has a way of heightening expectation – in this case it heightens the expectations of the judgments to follow (cf. Hab 2:20; 3:3; Zeph 1:7-8, 15, 17-18; Zech 2:13).
1	"...about a half an hour."	This is most likely a literal 30 minutes since there are no contradictions in Revelation, i.e. there are no indications in Revelation that this should be interpreted figuratively.
2	"...seven trumpets..."	Trumpets were very prominent in God's dealings with Israel. They played a part in ceremonial processions; announced the assembly of Israel for war, for journeys and special feasts; and they warned of the coming day of the Lord (cf. Exod. 19:16; 20:18; Josh. 6:1, 13-16; 1 Kings 1:34, 39; 1 Chron. 15:24; Num. 10:9-10; 29:1; Isa. 27:13; Jer. 4:5; Joel 2:1; Zeph. 1:16; Zech. 1:14-16; Matt. 24:31; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:16).
3-4	"...another angel came and stood at the altar holding a golden censer and much incense... the golden altar which was before the throne...and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints..."	<p>The angel is apparently serving in a priestly function or role in heaven and performing duties very similar to those of the priests of Israel within the Tabernacle and later, the Temple in Jerusalem. (See Appendix A).</p> <p>The prayers of believers are viewed as ascending to God from the smoke of a censer containing burning coals. To this was added more incense. The incense may represent the prayers of the Tribulation saints that are joined to the prayers of other believers who cry to God for justice (cf. Psa 28:4; 141:1-2).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Requite them according to their work and according to the evil of their practices; Requite them according to the deeds of their hands; repay them their recompense. (Psa</p>

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		28:4) O Lord, I call upon Thee; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to Thee! May my prayer be counted as incense before Thee; the lifting up of my hands as the evening offering. (Psa 141:1-2)
5	"...he filled it with the fire of the altar and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake..."	The coals of fire are symbolic of judgment and when cast to the earth, they produce symbols of catastrophe. This verse describes judgment by God in response to the cries for justice by His saints who have suffered injustice.
6	"...the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves..."	All of the trumpet judgments proceed from this seventh seal being opened. When the Lamb (Jesus Christ) opened the seventh seal on the scroll that He received in Revelation 5, John saw a complete series of judgments, not just one judgment. Later, the seven bowl judgments will proceed out of the seventh trumpet judgment in the same manner.

FIRST TRUMPET: VEGETATION IS DECIMATED

7 And the first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

Verse	Phrase	Explanation
7	"...hail and fire, mixed with blood..."	The "fire" could be lightening of an extraordinary nature. The word "blood" could be a reference to the effect of the hailstones when they hit people and animals.
7	"...a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up..."	Later in Revelation, grass is mentioned again (see 9:4). It is possible that there is sufficient enough lapse of time between the judgment of the first trumpet in our passage (v. 7) and the fifth trumpet (9:4) to allow the grass to grow back.

SECOND TRUMPET: THE SEAS ARE AFFECTED

8 And the second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood; 9 and a third of the creatures, which were in the sea had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.

Verse	Phrase	Explanation
8	"...something like a great mountain was thrown into the sea..."	The most logical and natural understanding of this phrase is that it is referring to a meteor or a comet that strikes the ocean.
8	"...a third of the sea became blood..."	Whether the sea became blood, a substance like blood, or looked like blood is difficult to determine.
9	"...a third of the creatures, which were in the sea...died...and a third of the ships were destroyed"	Nevertheless, the effect of this meteor-like phenomenon is that one-third of the sea creatures are destroyed and one-third of the ships are destroyed. ¹

¹ In 2005, more than 6 billion tons of cargo was transported by merchant shipping. According to the 2005 CIA World Factbook, the world total number of merchant ships of 1,000

THIRD TRUMPET: THE WATERS ARE MADE BITTER

10 And the third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters; 11 and the name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood; and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.

Verse	Phrase	Explanation
10	"...a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch..."	Again, the most logical explanation of this phrase is that it is referring to a meteor or a comet that strikes the fresh water.
10	"...and it fell upon a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters..."	A third of the fresh water of the earth is affected.
11	"and the name of the star is called Wormwood..."	"Wormwood" means "bitter" (cf. Deut. 29:18, et al.). It was the name of a bitter herb that was fatally poisonous to some people and was a symbol of divine punishment (Jer. 3:15; 9:15; 23:15; Lam. 3:15, 19; Amos 5:7). This judgment recalls the bitter water that God gave the rebellious Israelites to drink in the wilderness, which the tree cast in turned sweet (Exod. 15:23-25), as well as the first Egyptian plague (Exod. 7:21).

FOURTH TRUMPET: THE HEAVENS ARE SMITTEN

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were smitten, so that a third of them might be darkened and the day might not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way.

Darkness is a common symbol of judgment in Scripture, especially Hebrew Scripture. The "day of the Lord" was frequently referred to as a time of darkness (Amos 5:18; cf. Isa. 13:10; Joel 2:2; Mark 13:24).

The darkening of the heavenly bodies that is predicted in this verse warns of more judgment to come. In some manner, God will reduce light from the sun, moon, and stars from the earth by one-third (cf. Exod 10:21-23; Matt 27:45). This could be accomplished in perhaps a variety of ways, but the use of a partial eclipse of the sun combined with pollution in the atmosphere from all of the other events could accomplish this phenomenon. A prolonged reduction in light could have other devastating effects as well – e.g. a reduction in temperature. So much for global warming.

WARNING CONCERNING THE FINAL THREE TRUMPETS

13 And I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe, to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

Verse	Phrase	Explanation
13	"...an eagle flying in midheaven..."	There are at least two different views of the eagle: 1) representative of an angel; or 2) a literal eagle. There are several points to note about this eagle and eagles in Scripture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Greek word is <i>aetou</i> (Gr. αετου) and is sometimes translated <i>vulture</i> in Scripture (Matt 24:28; Lu 17:37) and are signs of disaster

Gross Register Tons or over was 30,936. (Source: Wikipedia.com). Imagine the impact of having over 10,000 expensive merchant ships destroyed!

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God has given animal creatures the ability to communicate in the past (Gen 3:1-5; Num 22:28-30) • In our passage, the eagle serves as a herald of God's judgment to come <p>"Mid-heaven" is the position of the sun at noon, so when the eagle is flying in mid-heaven, everyone can see the eagle.</p>
"Woe, woe, woe, to those who dwell on the earth..."	The three "woes" announce the last three trumpet judgments. They are especially "woeful" since they have as their object the dwellers upon the earth who are unbelievers. (Remember the protection against the judgments that is afforded at least the 144,000 Jewish evangelists of Revelation 7:1ff).

Appendix A – Earthly Mirrors of Heavenly Realities

The Tabernacle and, later, the Temple on earth were only copies or reflections of the realities of heavenly worship. We see more details revealed in the book of Revelation in regard to the heavenly realities of worship around the throne room of God than anywhere else in Scripture. As we have previously observed, Moses was admonished by God (when he was about to construct the Tabernacle) to insure that he made all things according to the pattern showed him on the mountain.

Now if He [*Jesus Christ*] were [*still*] on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "See," He says, "that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain." (Heb 8:4-5) Notes in [*brackets*] are inserted for clarification.

David was similarly warned by God when he received the plans and pattern for the Temple from God. Solomon would execute these plans since David was prohibited by God from doing so because of David's extensive involvement in military campaigns (1 Chron 28:3).

Then David gave to his son Solomon the plan of the porch of the temple, its buildings, its storehouses, its upper rooms, its inner rooms, and the room for the mercy seat; and the plan of all that he had in mind, for the courts of the house of the Lord, and for all the surrounding rooms, for the storehouses of the house of god, and for the storehouses of the dedicated things; also for the divisions of the priests and the Levites and for all the work of the service of the house of the Lord and for all the utensils of service in the house of the Lord. (1 Chron 28:11-13)

"All this," said David, "the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, all the details of this pattern." (1 Chron 28:19)

The golden altar is described in Revelation 8:3 as "before the throne." It was "before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony [ark of the covenant], before the mercy seat that is over the testimony [ark of the covenant]." (See Exodus 30:6; 40:5, 26).

"And you shall put this altar in front of the veil that is near the ark of the testimony, in front of the mercy seat that is over the ark of the testimony, where I will meet with you." (Ex 30:6)

"Moreover, you shall set the gold altar of incense before the ark of the testimony, and set up the veil for the doorway to the tabernacle." (Ex 40:5)

Then he placed the gold altar in the tent of meeting in front of the veil. (Ex 40:26)