

Revelation Pastor Lou DeVizia

Revelation 8:1-13 Fellowship Bible Church; Woodbridge, NJ

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Introduction: This chapter continues the narrative description of the opening of the great scroll. Chapter 7 added some details to the description of the opening of the first six seals of that scroll, and now this chapter recommences that progress with the opening of the seventh.

Though it is difficult to imagine the ferocity of the judgments previously seen being exceeded, that is exactly what happens. As each seal was broken, judgments broke out on the earth that involved, mostly, the direct results of the wickedness of man (war, economic failure, etc.). Now, this seventh seal triggers the sounding of seven trumpets, each one bringing a judgment that is supernatural - divinely initiated and not just a result of natural or man-made dealings. This chapter presents the first four of those trumpets being sounded. The chapter ends with a specific announcement of woe upon the inhabitants of the earth that will result from the last three trumpets, recorded in the ensuing chapters.

It is interesting that seven trumpets were sounded - each signaling a different thing - to initiate the movements of ancient Israel. So here, seven trumpets will be sounded to signal a move of God, a move of His divine judgment. Believe it or not, the intensity of these judgments will be exceeded by those of the bowls in later chapters. But the holy, just wrath of Almighty God is seen in terrible force here, all divinely poured out on the disobedience and hardened unbelief of men.

1. Verses 1-5 - The seventh seal.

- v.1 - silence in heaven... Could be a reference to a hushed awe, could be another pause representing time for the inhabitants of the earth to repent, could be something else.

- v.2 - seven trumpets... Another "layer" of judgments, another set. Things are going to get even worse here!

- vv.3-4 - the prayers of the saints... This is likely a reference to the prayers of the tribulation saints, their cries for vengeance over their persecution and death. (See 6:9-11).

- v.5 - Notice the powerful picture here, the awesome connection between the saints'™ prayers and the judgment of God. The same fire that burned the incense of the saints'™ prayer that they ascended before God is used to fill this censer, which is then cast to earth, causing great turmoil. God here seems to be avenging His martyrs.

NOTE: The thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake are the precursor to the judgments of the trumpets.

2. Verses 6-13 - The first four trumpets.

- v.6 - Each trumpet is sounded by an angel.

NOTE: Some of these judgments are quite reminiscent of the judgments upon Egypt in the Book of Exodus. Those were literal. So are these!

- v.7 - God will divinely send a worldwide storm of fiery hail, causing a great calamity on the earth's vegetation.

- vv.8-9 - great mountain burning with fire... Perhaps a meteor or asteroid, greater in size and effect than the judgment of the sixth seal. The sea becoming blood (1/3) should be taken literally. The effects of this will be global. Ships and sea life will be devastated.

- vv.10-11 - great star... burning like a torch... Could this be a comet? It seems not only be of great size, but whatever it is it pollutes and poisons the water.

- v.12 - Like with the sixth seal, the fourth trumpet will bring cosmic disturbance, only greater here. Light will be affected, so it is reasonable to conclude that temperature will be as well.

- v.13 - As bad as the first four trumpets were, the final three are even worse, bringing direct judgment upon people. Woe, woe, woe... Three woes for three trumpets.