

The Book of Revelation Lesson 11 – Chapter 8

1. God seals his servants.
 - 1.1. The seal is an official mark or writing denoting ownership, and by implication, protection under the authority of the owner (**2 Tim. 2:19**).
 - 1.1.1. The idea is that God knows his own (**2 Timothy 2:19**), and he will protect them from the evils that come.
 - 1.1.2. This does not mean that Christians will be spared from suffering and trials, or even death, but that God will not let them be destroyed spiritually, if they are faithful to him. He will give them the strength to overcome.
 - 1.1.3. They have the assurance that they are God's, and he will be with them every step of the way.
 - 1.1.4. The interests of the faithful, regardless of which covenant they lived under, have always been and will always be represented before the throne of God.
 - 1.2. Chapter 8 brings us to the opening of the seventh seal.
 - 1.2.1. The Trumpets of Judgment Sound.
 - 1.2.1.1. Chapter eight divides into three major sections: all three sections deal with the opening of the seventh seal.
 - 1.2.1.2. The trumpets of judgment are punishing in character. Terrible calamities befall the wicked because of their refusal to obey the gospel and because of the persecution of the saints. The trumpets and seals are synchronous.
 - 1.2.1.3. The trumpets are initial judgments; the bowls of wrath follow and are poured out. The trumpets warn. The trumpets affect a third part of the earth, sea, stars. etc. (These are partial judgments). There is no safe place for the wicked, the entire world is affected. The first four trumpets affect the physical being.
 - 1.2.1.4. The last three touch the mental side of man's nature. God's judgment and power are evidenced by the calamities that befall mankind and through them all God is beseeching man to repent. The trumpet of punishment and a warning voice for all; still man will not repent of his sins. The persecuting world has become the impenitent world. Therefore this impenitence ultimately causes the bowls of wrath to be poured out.
2. **Rev. 8:1 - And when he opened the seventh seal, there followed a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.**
 - 2.1. The "silence in heaven" has been called "the quiet before the storm." "Seven" is a symbolic term used throughout the book. It means perfection, fullness or completion. Thus these seven angels will administer a full and complete judgment on the great enemy.
 - 2.1.1. Silence also adds emphasis when you are waiting in anticipation of an event.
 - 2.1.2. Silence of half an hour was a solemn and impressive moment and focuses attention on what was to come.
 - 2.2. Think of the difference in the scene up to this point where all have been singing and worshipping God, then silence.
3. **Rev. 8:2 - And I saw the seven angels that stand before God; and there were given unto them seven trumpets.**

- 3.1. The seventh seal introduced the seven angels standing before God. Standing before God and serving God mean the same thing. They were each given a trumpet.
- 3.2. Trumpets are used in a variety of ways in the Old Testament. Here they are to warn of God's wrath.
 - 3.2.1. Trumpets were used in ancient times to summon people to meetings, to signal movement of troops and to warn of invading armies (**Num. 10:1-9**).
 - 3.2.2. Here they announce judgments of God poured upon his enemies; here they are to warn of God's wrath.
4. **Rev. 8:3 - And another angel came and stood over the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.**
 - 4.1. Before the angels blew their trumpets, the prayers of the saints were offered.
 - 4.1.1. This was intended to show the importance of saints' prayers (**James 5:16**).
 - 4.2. Another angel appears.
 - 4.2.1. "Another" means another of the same kind.
 - 4.2.2. This angel came to the altar with much incense, which he added to the prayers of the saints.
 - 4.2.3. The angel was pictured as offering the prayers of the saints in much the same way as the priest in the temple would daily take hot coals from the altar of sacrifice and carry them into the holy place to the golden altar of incense (**Exodus 30:1-10; 1 Kings 6:22; Hebrews 9:4**).
 - 4.2.4. The angel added the incense to the prayers of the saints upon the altar before the throne of God.
 - 4.2.5. What was the prayer of the saints?
 - 4.2.5.1. We know part of the prayers come from **Rev. 6:10**: "**How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?**"
5. **Rev. 8:4 - And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.**
 - 5.1. With the sweet-smelling incense are seen the prayers of the saints going "up before God." Once the prayers were incensed, they went to God and were heard.
 - 5.2. As Christians, we should never forget the power of prayer to God.
 - 5.2.1. **James 5:16 - Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.**
 - 5.2.2. **Prov. 15:29 - The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.**
6. **Rev. 8:5-6**
 - 6.1. **Rev. 8:5 - And the angel taketh the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it upon the earth: and there followed thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake.**
 - 6.1.1. The angel understood that his prayers were answered, so he filled the censer with fire and dumped it on the earth.
 - 6.1.2. God has heard the prayers of the saints and the judgments on earth are his answers to them. It is indicated by the thunders, voices, lightnings and earthquake.

6.1.3. The prayer of righteous man offered to God is one of the most powerful forces on earth.

6.1.4. This was a prelude to the seven trumpets of judgment that are about to sound. It is similar to **Ezekiel 10:2-7**.

6.2. Rev. 8:6 - And the seven angels that had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

6.2.1. The seven angels are now ready to sound the seven trumpets of God. Remember that trumpets warn.

6.2.2. The trumpets of judgment, chapters 8-11, indicate a series of happenings, that is, calamities that will occur again and again throughout the Christian Age. They do not symbolize single and separate events, but they refer to woes that may be seen any day of the year in any part of the globe. Hence, the trumpets are synchronous with the seals. Again, these trumpets of judgment are clearly retributive in character. Terrible calamities befall the wicked in order to punish them for their opposition to the cause of Christ and for their persecution of the saints. Yet, even by means of these judgments, God is constantly calling the ungodly to repentance.

6.2.3. These woes do not symbolize God's final and complete displeasure. On the contrary, they indicate his initial judgments. They are charged with serious warnings, not with final doom. Remember, trumpets warn; bowls are poured out. It is for this reason that the trumpets affect a third part - not the whole - of the earth, sea, waters, sun, moon and stars. The very function of the trumpet is to warn.

6.2.4. Observe these trumpets of judgment affect the various parts of the universe: the land, the sea and so forth. Nowhere is there safety for the wicked. Yet, a certain order is evident. The first four trumpets harm the wicked in their physical being, the last three bring spiritual anguish; hell itself is let loose. They resemble the ten plagues of Egypt. They hurt men, not the world. These judgments fall upon the wicked persecuting world, which is spiritually called Egypt. They do not harm believers.

6.2.5. Man needs constant reminder that God is in control and he will deal with those who are disobedient to Him.

7. Rev. 8:7-12

7.1. Rev. 8:7 - And the first sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

7.1.1. The first angel sounded his trumpet and it was similar to the seventh plague on Egypt (**Exodus 7:24**). It afflicted the vegetation, but just a third part.

7.1.2. It was not intended to be the final judgment. They were to warn the wicked that they should repent.

7.1.2.1. These are symbols not to be taken literally. They occur again and again throughout the Christian Age parallel to the seals. These trumpets of warning were to the wicked only.

7.1.3. One-third part was burned up.

7.1.3.1. A terrific storm of blazing brimstone mingled with hail and blood rained down out of the skies. As a result, a third part of the earth was scorched

and swept by forest fires. Partial destruction gives the men the opportunity to repent and turn to God.

- 7.1.4. The fiery judgment was "upon the earth." Them "that dwell on the earth" is a favorite expression of John (**Rev. 6:10**), and it speaks not of "men on earth" in general but the ungodly who have no home but earth and want no other home.
- 7.1.5. The saints are but pilgrims and strangers on earth (**1 Pet. 2:11**); their ultimate home is "before the throne of God (where) they serve him day and night in his temple" (**Rev. 7:15**).
- 7.1.6. God used hail and fire as His weapons in the Old Testament
 - 7.1.6.1. **Ex. 9:13-26; Is. 28:2, 17; 30:30; Jer. 7:20**
- 7.1.7. From the time of the flood, God has required blood of those who persecute His people.
 - 7.1.7.1. **Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:12; Num. 35:33; Ps. 79:10; Is. 26:21**
- 7.1.8. As with Egypt of old, there will be a consequence for rebellion.
 - 7.1.8.1. God will avenge His own.
- 7.1.9. 1/3, or partial destruction, leaves room for man to repent. Will he?
- 7.2. **Rev. 8:8 - And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;**
- 7.3. **Rev. 8:9 - and there died the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, [even] they that had life; and the third part of the ships was destroyed.**
 - 7.3.1. The text says, "And something like a great mountain..."
 - 7.3.2. This picture may come from the imagery in **Psalms 46:2, Is. 54:10** and **Ez. 38:20** where great upheaval is depicted.
 - 7.3.3. In the Old Testament, removal of mountains suggested the overthrow of governments and kingdoms.
 - 7.3.3.1. No power on earth can equal the power of God
 - 7.3.3.2. There will be no place to hide from the wrath of God.
 - 7.3.4. 1/3 again allows the opportunity for men to repent
- 7.4. **Rev. 8:10 - And the third angel sounded, and there fell from heaven a great star, burning as a torch, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of the waters;**
- 7.5. **Rev. 8:11 - and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.**
 - 7.5.1. Jeremiah used wormwood as a symbol of suffering which results from wickedness.
 - 7.5.1.1. The star was named Wormwood (**Jeremiah 9:15; 23:15**). Wormwood was the name of a plant with a strong bitter taste, which is also called wormwood. It was used in the Old Testament as a symbol of bitterness and sorrow (**Proverbs 5:3-4; Lamentations 3:19; Jeremiah 9:15**).
 - 7.5.1.2. A third of the fresh water became wormwood and many died. Wormwood is not poisonous, but its bitter taste suggests death as in this verse.
 - 7.5.2. The bitterness of wormwood always stood for the bitterness of the judgment of God on the disobedient.
 - 7.5.3. 1/3 again allows the opportunity for men to repent

7.6. **Rev. 8:12 - And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; that the third part of them should be darkened, and the day should not shine for the third part of it, and the night in like manner.**

7.6.1. "Darkening" of the heavenly bodies has the meaning of judgment.

7.6.1.1. **Joel 2:1-11**

7.6.1.2. **Amos 5:8, 20**

7.6.2. The fourth judgment was upon the sun, moon and stars. This is a major clue in unraveling the cryptic message. The prophets repeatedly use this symbolism for the violent overthrow of rulers and governments.

7.6.2.1. It harkens back to Joseph's dream of the sun, moon and eleven stars bowing before him (**Gen. 37:9-10**). His father immediately asked, "Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee ...?" Similar usage is seen in **Isa. 13:10; 34:4; Joel 2:31; Acts 2:16-21 and Rev. 6:12-17**.

7.6.3. Since only a third part is darkened, this was not the final overthrow, but a warning to cease from their sin and oppressions.

8. **Rev. 8:13 - And I saw, and I heard an eagle, flying in mid heaven, saying with a great voice, Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, who are yet to sound.**

8.1. The King James Version uses angel, but **eagle** is the correct translation.

8.2. "Woe" is an exclamation of grief

8.2.1. The three woes are in reference to the following three trumpets

8.2.2. Meaning: the worst is yet to come

8.3. Birds of prey gather where the carcass is, so the judgment of God will descend upon the corrupt state of humanity.

8.3.1. The eagle was a bird of ill omen. He was well suited to announce the awful woes yet to come.

8.4. The warning is given to all the wicked and in such a way that they can understand and fear God. These are continuous throughout the Christian Age and happen again and again.

9. Summary

9.1. The Lord requires all men to come to repentance.

9.1.1. **2 Pet. 3:9 - The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**

9.2. The first four judgments fall on the earth, the sea, the fresh water and the heavenly bodies. To the ancients this was the sum total of the natural world.

9.3. These are not the judgments which will fall upon the earth at Christ's second coming.

9.4. Those that dwell on the earth refer to the wicked. These plagues are not to fall upon the church, but upon wicked mankind.