

The Book of Revelation

By

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CHAPTER EIGHT

THE TRUMPET JUDGMENTS

"And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in Heaven about the space of half an hour" (Revelation 8:1).

There is the usual life and buzz in the school room. The teacher turns to the blackboard to explain a problem. There is a "smack" as a paper wad splatters about his head. As he turns to face the culprit the room goes suddenly dead. Not a finger moves; not an eyelid twitches. Nothing but breathless silence, a silence of awe, of fear and expectancy.

As the first six seals were broken, the heavens rang with voices. There were the shouts of angels; the thunders of the living creatures; the voices of the elders; the harping of the harpers and the song of the palm bearers. But when the seventh seal is broken there is dead silence in Heaven.

What deep sympathy the heavenly host have in the closing hours of human history; what great interest they have and how they sense the greatness of the occasion. When the other seals were broken, judgment went forth. Now the last seal is broken, the book is open; swift and more awful judgments must quickly fall upon mankind.

These judgments are tempered to give place for repentance. The seventh seal is broken but not all at once does our Lord close up the age. The seven trumpets must bring more sufferings upon earth dwellers, and the seven vials still more suffering and then, when the last soul is in, the end will come.

The Seven Angels

"And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets" (vs 2).

There were **"seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, and which sat the first in the kingdom"** (Esther 1:14).

And so in Heaven. It is a place of order. There are angels and archangels; principalities and powers: principedoms upon principedoms until we reach the highest and most honored order - the seven angels that stand in the presence of GOD.

Only two of these angels are named in the Bible.

Michael is "**one of the chief princes**" (Daniel 10 :13), and Gabriel is another that stands "**in the presence of God**" (Luke 1:19).

Answered Prayers

"And another angel came and stood at 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" (vs. 3).

In chapter 5:8, there were "**golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.**" Here we see these prayers brought forth to meet their answer.

Many are the prayers of GOD's true children that are not yet answered. GOD has a program and events must await their turn. Zacharias, "**thy prayer is heard,**" announced the angel Gabriel as Zacharias stood before the golden altar.

His prayer was heard; but which prayer? Had not Zacharias prayed all his life?

But Zacharias, don't you remember when, in your younger days, you and Elizabeth prayed so earnestly for a baby boy? The time has come, that prayer is heard and soon John the Baptist will be born. And so here. For ages, GOD's children have been praying and longing for "**Thy Kingdom come.**" But events must take their course. "**When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son**" (Galatians 4:4) and when the fulness of the time has come, that Son will bring redemption to the earth.

In the meantime, all the heart cries of "all" the saints are kept in heavenly vessels of gold awaiting the time when they will be brought forth and presented on the highest altar in the universe.

The Incense

But these prayers must be made savory before they can be accepted by a holy GOD. "**Much incense**" was given unto him to offer with the prayers. Incense speaks of the merits of CHRIST. No prayers may reach high Heaven unless approved and endorsed by Him. It is in His name that we are to pray; and it is His name that perfumes our prayers and renders them savory before GOD.

"And the smoke of the incense, that came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand" (vs. 4).

The time has come to answer the prayers of the saints of all ages, who have so long prayed, "**Thy kingdom come.**" The golden vessels are opened; the merits of CHRIST are added, and the smoke arises "**up before God.**" They are accepted and will speedily be answered.

Cornelius had been praying. An angel was sent to inform him that his prayers "**are come up for a memorial before God**" (Acts 10:4), and an immediate answer came.

- So Enoch, who spake of the time when the Lord would come with ten thousands of His saints;
- Abraham who looked for a city which hath foundations;
- David, whose throne will yet be occupied by the Lord of glory;
- Paul, as he labored to fulfill his commission;
- all of these and multiplied others have looked, and longed and prayed for the kingdoms of this world to "**become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.**"

Prayer Brings Judgment

"And the angel took the censer and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake" (vs. 5).

The same fire that wafted the prayers of the saints into the presence of GOD, when turned earthward, brings judgment and the very fire of hell upon unbelievers. All of this is in answer to the prayers of the saints. They may pray "**Thy kingdom come,**" but that will mean judgments, fierce and terrible, for the men that offend must first be gathered out. So here, the prayer of the humble saints will set God and the angels to work to oust the devil and his followers, and bring sore trouble upon blaspheming humanity.

This is the same fire that wafted the prayers into the presence of GOD only now it is turned earthward. And so with every true and sincere child of GOD. He is "**unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life**" (II Corinthians 2:15-16).

The same child of GOD, as he walks the street of his home town, may cast a savour or odor of death to the ungodly but an odor of life to those who love the Lord. He is a kill-joy to a group of filthy jesters and silence reigns until he passes by; while to another Christian, he is an odor of life and encouragement.

Some people even spoil a name and cause it to have an odor of death. A young girl in my congregation, realizing the foul odor of Hollywood and not willing to be connected with even the name of "Shirley" Temple, changed her name to "Loraine."

So here the same fire turned upward means answered prayer, while turned earthward it means judgment, fearful and sore.

The Seven Trumpets

"And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound" (vs. 6).

If the mighty sons of GOD are interested in the events of this book; if the seven highest angels are called into action; if all Heaven stands mute and spellbound; if our Lord promises blessings to those who will read and keep this book, then certainly it stands us in hand to read and study its pages and draw comfort and admonition from its message.

"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 the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up" (vs. 7).

Fearful Storms

The storms were held up until the one hundred and forty-four thousand were sealed. But that done, the heavens gather blackness; the wind twists and breaks the trees; while hail and fierce lightnings destroy and char one-third of the trees and all the grass.

How this will affect the food supply. Wheat and barley are already at a premium, but now one-third of all the fruit is gone; large portions of earth's surface are charred; towns and cities are in ashes; farms, fields and meadows are stripped of shade; crops are ruined; grass and hay are burnt, while milk and beef become almost a thing of the past.

This is the third and last time that GOD is bringing Israel to the homeland. Palestine belongs to the Jew - the deed is written in Heaven. Under Moses and Joshua a few millions returned, under Ezra and Nehemiah a few thousand returned; but now He is bringing them home from every nation under Heaven, where they have been strangers for so many long and weary centuries.

When He brought them out of Egypt, **"the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire ran along upon the ground... and the hail smote every herb of the field, and break every tree of the field"** (Exodus 9). God visited some of the same judgments upon Egypt that He is so soon to visit upon the nations of the entire world as He thus brings His people to their homeland.

A Burning Mountain

"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. 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" (vs. 8, 9).

Some judgments seem to be world wide and some are local upon the revived Roman empire. Here a great volcano may burst with such force as to cast a burning molten mountain into the sea. "The" sea may have special reference to the sea about which all prophecy centers, namely the Mediterranean. Some of the Egyptian plagues did not fall upon Goshen, where Israel dwelt.

Or it may indeed mean that one-third of all whales, fish and sea life and shipping equipment will be destroyed. As we walk along the ocean and see the sea gulls darting about, we little realize their worth, but one time I visited a portion of the shore of Lake Erie, where there were no gulls and the stench of dead and decaying fish was bad indeed. But here one-third of all sea life is destroyed and washed ashore to rot and decay and fill the land with such a stench that only those who experience it can know.

The Burning Star

"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. And the third part of the waters became wormwood and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter" (vs. 10,11).

Here a great comet blazes through the heavens, bringing a stifling bitter gas to be absorbed by one-third of the water supply. If this judgment is local to the kingdom of the anti-christ, this meteor or comet may fall upon the Alps mountains where so many springs and rivers receive their supply of water.

This flashing flaming mass will turn the waters into wormwood. The rivers are still flowing; the springs are still bubbling, but the water has turned yellow and bitter. Thirst is a terrible thing. Men on the battlefield even drink from pools of water that are covered with blood of their fellowmen. So here, the terrible thirst will drive men to drink of the bitter nauseating waters even though they well know it will produce convulsion, paralysis and death.

The Sun and Moon Smitten

"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, so as a third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise" (vs. 12).

In Egypt, there fell a darkness so dense it could be felt. GOD is now putting on His judgments with mercy; there is a rainbow about that throne. He is giving every man opportunity to repent and turn from sin.

Here only one-third of the sun and moon are smitten. CHRIST said, **"The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light"** (Matthew 24:29). Truly, if He who made that sun has kept it shining since that far off day of creation, He is able to again stretch forth His hand and reduce its power at will.

Our sun is a marvelous ball of fire and light. It is so tempered and so stationed that a slight change will affect the seasons of earth. When one-third of the light is cut off, it will hinder the rainfall; change the currents of the air; slow up the ripening of the fruit and grain; fill the world with a coolness, a chilliness and a sickening gloom.

Announcing the Woes

"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!" (vs. 13).

In our present age things are stable. The sun shines and the wind blows; the seasons come and go and angels are only beings to be thought about. But during the time of judgment angels will be everywhere bringing judgment, giving warning, and helping in the administration of the closing scenes of earth.

Conditions of the Times

We might think the first four trumpets might fill up all the possibilities of frightfulness. The food supply has been greatly affected; fruit trees have been struck with lightning; hail has battered the earth: all grass and hay have been destroyed; milk and beef are almost a thing of the past; the source of drinking water has been corrupted: the ripening of what grain there is, has been hindered by the darkening sun; the earth is cool, dusk and chilly. But alas, the worst is yet to come - Woe, Woe, Woe.

GOD is putting on judgments with mercy and is giving mankind an opportunity to repent. A warning now goes out to all men everywhere that three more fearful and horrifying judgments are to follow. Surely mankind everywhere will repent and escape these sorrows, but alas, the heart of fallen man is "**deceitful above all things**" and his imaginations are only evil continually.

~ end of chapter 8 ~

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