The Book of Revelation

Zanesville, OH | Wednesday/Sunday Bible Study

**Chapter 8**

* **8:1-5– Seventh Seal: The Angel and The Seven Trumpets**
  + Following the interlude in chapter 7, The Lamb now breaks the seventh seal revealing the execution of God’s will on human history both for redemptive and punitive purposes. The breaking of the seventh seal denotes that the content of the scroll is now revealed to be conveyed in the remainder of the book.
  + **Verse 1**– As the seventh seal is broken, John observes that there was silence for a half hour. This silence is likely a dramatic effect preparing us for what is to come but it also reverts us back to the execution of God’s judgments in the OT (Psa. 31:17; 115:17; Isa. 47:5; Lam. 2:10-11; Ezek. 27:32).
  + God is pictured in the OT in Heaven as preparing to execute judgment against His enemies and all are to keep silent before Him (Hab. 2:20; Zeph. 1:7-8; Zech. 2:13). Following on the heels of the sixth seal, it would be appropriate that the seventh seal climaxes in this manner.
  + **Verse 2**– John also sees seven angels before God and they are each given a trumpet. This scene serves as one of preparedness for the wrath to come. When each angel sounds their trumpet, the judgment will come forth (cf. Num. 10:5-6; Josh. 6; Hos. 5:8-9; Zeph. 1:14-16).
  + **Verses 3-4**– Another angel is observed in this scene and his job is to bring the prayers of the saints before God. The altar here is the same one in the fifth seal (6:10 cf. Ex. 30:1-8) and it correlates since the saints are crying out to God for justice. Their plea will continue to be answered in the breaking of the seventh seal and the sounding of the seven trumpets.
  + Their prayers ascend to God out of the angel’s hand along with the incense. The incense is indicative of the OT imagery of prayers and sacrifices being acceptable to God (Lev. 16:11-19; Psa. 141:1-2; Eph. 5:2). Their prayers ascend and are acceptable since the have remained faithful to Him.
  + **Verse 5**– Following the offering of the prayers, the angel now fills the censer with fire and throws it down to the earth. This is followed by cosmic judgments similar to 6:12-17 (cf. Psa. 18:13; Ezek. 10:2-7). This implies God has favorably accepted the prayers of the saints (6:10) and is now answering them (cf. Ex. 19:16-18).
* **8:6-7– First Trumpet: Hail and Fire**
* **Verse 6**– The seven angels pictured in v. 2 are getting ready to blow the trumpets they have been given. God’s wrath is about to revealed unto His enemies and the enemies of His people and the angels are the messengers carrying out His will.
* **Verse 7**­­– As the first trumpet is sounded, hail and fire mixed with blood were thrown down to the earth. This reminds us of the seventh plague in Egypt (Ex. 9:13-35). Nature experiences the consequences of this first trumpet which would roll over to humanity as well. The judgment although great, is limited (cf. Zech. 13:8-9).
* **8:8-9– Second Trumpet: The Mountain and The Sea**
* **Verses 8-9**– The second trumpet unleashes a burning mountain which is then thrown into the sea killing a third of the creatures in it and a third of the ships on it. This reminds us of the first plague in Egypt (Ex. 7:14-24). Once again the judgment is limited.
* **8:10-11– Third Trumpet: The Star called Wormwood**
* **Verses 10-11**– Very similar to the second trumpet, the third trumpet is judgment on regards to waters but this time those that are inland. This again reminds us of the first plague in Egypt (Ex. 7:14-24). A star called wormwood falls from heaven to a third of the rivers and springs.
* The star is called wormwood because of the effect it has on the water (cf. Jer. 9:15; 23:15). The bitterness and poison make it impossible for eating and drinking and those who do partake die from it.
* **8:12-13– Fourth Trumpet: Disrupted Cosmos and The Three Woes**
* **Verse 12**– As the fourth trumpet is sounded, a third of the sun, moon and stars are all struck so that they would be darkened and day and night would be completely in the dark for a third of it respectively. This reminds us on the ninth plague in Egypt (Ex. 10:21-29).
* Darkness is commonly associated with divine wrath in the OT (Isa. 13:10; Joel 2:2; Amos 5:18) and would be a metaphor to speak of the consequences of sin (Matt. 25:41; Col. 1:13). That this is grouped among the judgments of God is not uncommon.
* **Verse 13**– The final verse in this chapter prepares us for the next three trumpets to come. They are no longer called trumpets but instead they are referred to as woes which heighten the severity of the proceeding trumpets. An eagle in midheaven sounds the warning (19:17).
* The picture of an eagle is one that is commonly associated with destruction in the OT (Deut. 28:49; Jer. 4:13; 48:40; Lam. 4:19; Ezek. 17:3; Hos. 8:1). Eagles were also the birds that would eat the dead bodies of those God judged in the OT (Deut. 28:26; Jer. 7:33-34).
* The eagle announces that those who dwell on the earth should be overwhelmed and extremely fearful because of the woes that are about to come upon them. This again refers to the earth-dwellers who are synonymous with the idolatrous enemies of God (13:8, 14).