

Rev. 8:1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

The immediate impact regarding the 7th seal is in heaven; there is silence for half an hour. Although I don't think it matters, this appears to be a definite time period that John recognizes and expects his readers to recognize. Why the silence? I think it is because the hosts of heaven realize the terrible things that will occur as a result of the coming judgments on planet earth. Even as I think about it now, I wonder what I can do to help rescue more people from this coming judgment, yet knowing that the time will come upon millions and millions no matter how God is able to use me.

I just thought about the sudden change in the atmosphere--from one of great celebration to complete silence. This celebration and time of silence involves millions and millions of beings. This in itself must have seemed a miracle to John.

Rev. 8:2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

Rev. 8:3 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.

Rev. 8:4 And the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

Rev. 8:5 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.

After the silence John sees seven angels standing before God and each is given a trumpet. Another angel comes to the altar, and yet another angel then comes before the altar carrying a golden censer, a vessel for burning incense. He is given much incense, a fragrant powder that releases a sweet aroma when burned. This incense is offered with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar before the throne. When I think of an altar, I think of sacrifice. I believe that the incense being offered represents the sweet smell of obedience to the Lord, sacrifices that were made in obedience to God—especially the sacrifice of His Son. We were told in Rev. 5:8 that the prayers of the saints were odours. The word for odours is the same word for incense—*thumiama*. Prayer is also a sweet smell of obedience to the Lord.

1Thessalonians 5:17-18 Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Note from Pastor Bob: "The altar is where we are altered."

The smoke from the combined incense ascends up before God from the censer in the angel's hand. Then he takes the censer and fills it with fire from the altar. Sacrifices made at the altar were representative of judgment for sin. Now the fire from the heavenly altar is being cast to the earth in judgment.

Joseph Seiss had a thought-provoking quote that is worth considering here: "This angel has a censer of gold, an implement belonging to the Holy of Holies, and used only by the High Priest, which would seem to indicate our great High Priest that has passed into the heavens—Jesus, the Son of God.... This angel offers the prayers of all the saints, and renders them savoury before God. Such an office is nowhere in the Scriptures assigned to angels proper, but is everywhere assigned to the Lord Jesus Christ."

The people on earth experience:

- 1) Voices – noises, sounds, voices are all possibilities
- 2) Thunderings – to roar
- 3) Lightnings – lightning, glare, bright shining
- 4) an earthquake – a commotion, rock to and fro, agitation, shaking

I hadn't really seen it in this light before, but this is the judgment associated with the 7th seal. Are the voices in some way associated with our prayers? Are the voices understandable? Where is the center of this activity? Is it worldwide? From my perspective, the thunderings and lightnings aren't as frightening as the earthquake—but I'm not sure but what the voices would be the cause of greatest fear.

Again, the specific answers to my questions aren't what is important. What is important is that God is trying to get the attention of those on planet earth. To get as many to call on Him for deliverance as will.

***Joel 2:30–32** "And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that **whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered:** for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call."*

Rev. 8:6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

Dixie had a good question: "What do you suppose the angels do 'to prepare?'"

When I looked at the Greek, the word *prepare* referred to "making ready, internal fitness, by implication to construct, create, build, make, ordain." My simple logic tells me that they are making ready to perform their part like actors in a play or athlete's in a competition. They have probably been looking forward to the restoration of the Kingdom and the defeat of the forces of evil with great anticipation. They are eager to perform their part in the fulfillment of God's plan.

There are some that teach that the seal, trumpet and vial judgments are just one series of judgments presented in increasing detail; I cannot accept that. Each

series of judgments is unique and is presented as impacting planet earth with increasing severity and devastation.

Rev. 8:7 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 trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

Now begin the trumpet judgments. Although no time frame is given, the 7th seal and the first four trumpet judgments seem to happen in fairly rapid sequence as did the first four seals.

The first trumpet judgment results in a great hailstorm mixed with fire and blood. The major impact to planet earth is to burn up a third of the trees and all the green grass. This judgment clearly seems to be worldwide.

Note from Dixie: “This judgment affects many things, including economy and air quality. Oxygen production capabilities will be lessened considerably and the smoke and ash of the burning trees and grass will greatly pollute the air. This also means no food for many animals because of the loss of pasture.”

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;

Rev. 8:9 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.

The second trumpet judgment John has to describe the best he can. It looks to him like a big mountain of fire is cast into the sea (a meteor?). The result—a third of the sea became blood; it doesn't say as blood; it says blood. A third of the creatures (created living things) in the sea die. A third of the ships in the sea are destroyed.

As I begin to think about it more, this judgment could represent a specific third of the earth's seas/oceans (salt waters) since the mountain will hit in a specific location. (the Mediterranean?) Since the word “sea” is singular, maybe this judgment only affects a specific area such as the Mediterranean Sea, Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, etc.

Rev. 8:10 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;

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.

The word for *star* used here is reference to an actual star in the heavens—not an angel or messenger (another meteor?). When the third trumpet is blown, a great star that is burning like a lamp falls upon a third of the rivers and fountains of waters (fresh waters). Again, this appears to refer to a specific section of planet

earth. The star is called Wormwood (calamity, bitterness). Many men die because of the bitter / acrid waters. They are evidently poisonous.

Is this the time that Jeremiah was speaking of in chapter 9?

***Jeremiah 9:15** Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.*

As I contemplate the possibility of meteors, it brings to mind the teaching of science that if a “great star” were to hit planet earth, it would pretty much destroy life as we know it. Of course, we really don’t know the size of it when it hits—just that it appears to be big as it is headed for earth. Maybe God causes it to splinter into smaller pieces to affect 1 / 3 of the fresh waters.

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; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

Once the fourth angel sounds his trumpet a third of the sun, the moon and the stars are darkened to the extent that there is absolutely no light for a third part of the day and a third part of the night. In my mind this fits right in with the fact that darkness in scripture is connected to evil, and evil is running rampant upon the earth.

***John 3:19–20** And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.*

Rev. 8:13 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!

Suddenly John sees an angel flying through the heavens to warn the inhabitants of earth of the coming three judgments. I believe this is again an act of mercy in allowing men to gather their wits and realize that God is trying to get their attention to turn to Him for deliverance. The three woes correspond to trumpets 5-7.