

## The Book Of Revelation

### Study 40

*Revelation 8:1-5 (NKJV)*

<sup>1</sup> *When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.*

<sup>2</sup> *And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.*

<sup>3</sup> *Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.*

<sup>4</sup> *And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.*

<sup>5</sup> *Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.*

The future Day of the Lord will be the climactic time of judgment that ends man's day and Satan's rule on earth.

During that time, God will take back the earth in a final holocaust of wholesale destruction.

The first five seals (false peace, war, famine, death, and vengeance) describe the preliminary judgments leading to the full outpouring of divine wrath during the Day of the Lord.

As horrifying as those preliminary judgments are, they pale before the terrors of the sixth seal, which marks the beginning of the Day of the Lord.

So terrifying are the judgments of the sixth seal that the people are finally forced to acknowledge God as the source of the calamities.

As we read;

*Revelation 6:16-17 (NKJV)*

<sup>16</sup> *and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!*

<sup>17</sup> *For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*

When the Lamb opens the seventh and last seal on the little scroll that was the title deed to the earth (5:1), the judgments of the Day of the Lord will intensify and expand dramatically.

This final seal contains within it the full sweep of the remaining divine judgments of the time of the Great Tribulation, including the trumpet and bowl judgments.

Now there are those who believe that the events of the trumpet and bowl judgments happen simultaneously with those of the sixth seal, it seems better to understand them as telescoping out of each other sequentially.

That the seventh seal contains the seven trumpet judgments seems clear, since there is no description of judgment in the seventh seal, but an anticipation of severe judgment followed immediately in the text by the seven trumpet judgments.

In a similar manner, the seventh trumpet does not describe a judgment but rather contains the anticipation of heavenly rejoicing over the judgment to come, which will lead to the final destruction of Satan and establishment of the rule of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Revelation 10:7 (NKJV)*

<sup>7</sup> *but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.*

*Revelation 11:15-17 (NKJV)*

<sup>15</sup> *Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"*

<sup>16</sup> *And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God,*

<sup>17</sup> *saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned.*

As 10:7 indicates, the seventh trumpet is the "finish".

*Revelation 15:1 (NKJV)*

<sup>1</sup> *Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.*

This verse makes clear that the seventh trumpet, which finishes the work of judgment contains the final fury of God's wrath, which the pouring out of seven plague judgments pictures.

Look at chapter 16:1;

*Revelation 16:1 (NKJV)*

<sup>1</sup> *Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth."*

This verse identifies these seven plagues as "seven bowls of the wrath of God"

Then they are described in detail in verses 2-21;

*Revelation 16:2-21 (NKJV)*

<sup>2</sup> *So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.*

<sup>3</sup> *Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died.*

<sup>4</sup> *Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.*

<sup>5</sup> *And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things.*

<sup>6</sup> *For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due."*

<sup>7</sup> *And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."*

<sup>8</sup> *Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire.*

<sup>9</sup> *And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.*

<sup>10</sup> *Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain.*

<sup>11</sup> *They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.*

<sup>12</sup> *Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that*

*the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.*

<sup>13</sup> *And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.*

<sup>14</sup> *For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*

<sup>15</sup> *"Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."*

<sup>16</sup> *And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.*

<sup>17</sup> *Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"*

<sup>18</sup> *And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.*

<sup>19</sup> *Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.*

<sup>20</sup> *Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.*

<sup>21</sup> *And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.*

The progressive judgments within the seventh seal will take place over an indefinite period of time; The effects of the fifth trumpet for instance, will last for five months.

*Revelation 9:10 (NKJV)*

<sup>10</sup> *They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months.*

Now the exact timetable for the trumpet and bowl judgments is not revealed, their escalating devastation indicates that they all occur during the last half of the Tribulation.

Therefore the seventh seal encompasses all of God's final wrath up to the triumphant return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory.

There are **four key words** used to describe the events associated with the opening of the seventh seal:

1. **Silence**
2. **Sounding**
3. **Supplication**
4. **Storm**

So Let's look at the first one:

## **SILENCE**

*Revelation 8:1 (NKJV)*

<sup>1</sup> *When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.*

As the rightful heir to the universe, **the Lamb** took the scroll (the title deed to the earth) from the father's hand (5:7). As He unrolled it and broke the first six seals, divine judgments were poured out on the earth.

But when He **broke the seventh seal** a unique response occurred:

*"there was silence in heaven for about half an hour."*

A review of the visions up to this point makes it clear that John had heard a good deal of noise in heaven. Emanating from God's throne were sounds and peals of thunder (4:5). The four living creatures did not cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come" (4:8), while twenty-four elders added their song of praise, (4:11).

John heard a "strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?"

In response to the Lamb taking the title deed to the earth (5:5-7), first the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders (5:9-10), then an innumerable hosts of angels (5:11-12), and finally all of creation (5:13) joined in praising God.

When the Lamb opened the first seal, John "heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come" (6:1) as he would when the second (6:3), third (6:5), and fourth (6:7) seals were opened.

With the opening of the fifth seal came the cries of the martyrs for vengeance (6:9-10), while the breaking of the sixth seal brought the loud roar of a powerful earthquake (6:12).

In the interlude between the sixth and seventh seals, an angel "cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, "do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bondservants of our God on their foreheads." (7:2-3).

Later in that interlude John saw;

*Revelation 7:9-13 (NKJV)*

<sup>9</sup> *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,*

<sup>10</sup> *and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"*

<sup>11</sup> *All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,*

<sup>12</sup> *saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen."*

<sup>13</sup> *Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"*

But after all this loudness, as the full fury of the final judgments are about to be released, **silence** falls on the heavenly scene.

The implication is that when the judgment about to happen becomes visible as the seventh seal is broken and the scroll unrolled, both the redeemed and the angels are reduced to silence in anticipation of the grim reality of the destruction they see written on the scroll.

The **half an hour** of silence is calm before the storm. It is the silence of foreboding, of intense expectation, of awe at what God is about to do.

And silence is the only proper response to such divine judgment.

The Psalmist wrote:

*Psalms 76:8-9 (NKJV)*

<sup>8</sup> *You caused judgment to be heard from heaven; The earth feared and was still,*

<sup>9</sup> *When God arose to judgment, To deliver all the oppressed of the earth. Selah*

Habakkuk declared;

*Habakkuk 2:20 (NKJV)*

<sup>20</sup> *But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him."*

Zephaniah said:

*Zephaniah 1:7 (NKJV)*

<sup>7</sup> *Be silent in the presence of the Lord God; For the day of the Lord is at hand, For the Lord has prepared a sacrifice; He has invited His guests.*

Zachariah commands:

*Zechariah 2:13 (NKJV)*

<sup>13</sup> *Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!"*

While eternal heaven has no time, the apostle John who is seeing the vision does. Each minute of that half hour of silence must have increased the sense of agonizing suspense for John.

Heaven which had resounded with loud praises from the vast crowd of redeemed people and angels, became deathly still.

The hour of God's final judgment had come, the hour when the saints will be vindicated, sin punished, Satan vanquished, and Christ exalted.

The greatest event since the Fall is about to take place and all heaven is seen waiting in suspenseful expectancy.

## SOUNDING

*Revelation 8:2 (NKJV)*

<sup>2</sup> *And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.*

Following the half hour of heaven's silence, John experienced a new feature of the seventh seal, namely **the seven angels who stand before God.**

The use of the definite article appears to set them apart as a unique group, which some have called the "presence angels."

The verb translated **stand** is in the perfect tense, which indicates that they were in the presence of God and had been there for a time.

Scripture describes various ranks and orders of angels such as archangels

*1 Thessalonians 4:16 (NKJV)*

*<sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.*

*Jude 1:9 (NKJV)*

*<sup>9</sup> Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"*

There were the thrones, dominions, rulers, authorities, powers:

*Colossians 1:16 (NKJV)*

*<sup>16</sup> For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.*

*Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV)*

*<sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

These seven appear to be one such order of high-ranking angels.

Gabriel, who appeared to Zacharias and Mary, may have been one of them, since he identified himself to Zacharias as "*Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God*" *Luke 1:19*

As John watched, **seven trumpets were given to** these angels, in preparation for the trumpet judgments that will shortly follow.

As they did in the seal judgments (6:1, 3, 5, 6, 7) and will in the bowl judgments (16:2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 17) angels participate in there trumpet judgments.

That involvement is consistent with the teaching of Jesus that angels will play an important role in God's eschatological judgments (*Matt 13:39-41, 49-50; 16:27; 25:31*).

**Trumpets** are the most significant musical instruments in Scripture, being associated with many different events.

In the Old Testament,

- 1. Trumpets were used to summon the congregation of Israel** (*Num 10:2*)
- 2. Trumpets were used to sound the alarm in time of war** (*Num 10:9; 2 Chron 13:12; Ezek 33:3*)
- 3. Trumpets were used in the feasts** (*Num 10:10; Psa 81:3*)
- 4. Trumpets were used to announce news** (*1 Sam 13:3*)
- 5. Trumpets were used to acclaim new kings** (*1 Kings 1:34, 39*)
- 6. Trumpets were used in worship** (*1 Chron 16:6, 42; 2 Chron 5:12-13*)

Zephaniah associates trumpets with the Day of the Lord (*Zeph. 1:14-16*)

The New Testament teaches that a trumpet will announce the Rapture (*1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16*)  
And this chapter associates them with the judgments of that day the Day of the Lord. (8:6)

Each of the seven trumpets unleashes a specific judgment of greater intensity than the first six seals, but not as destructive as the seven bowls (16:1-21)

The first four trumpets destroy the earth's ecology (8:6-12)

The next two produce demonic destruction of humanity (8:13; 9:1-11, 13-19)

And the seventh trumpet introduces the final outpouring of God's wrath contained in the seven bowl judgments.

Having been introduced and given their trumpets, the seven angels did not immediately blow them. They had to wait for other important events to transpire.

Next study we will look at the key words "**supplication,**" and "**storm**"