

The Revelation

Lesson 8

The breaking of the seventh seal immediately brought 30 minutes of rest and silence in heaven. The first horse of seal one brought about an attempt to capture as much of the world as possible without the use of force. The second horse of seal two saw the actions of the first horse as an opportunity to conquer an undefended population with war. Both actions have consequences and the horse of seal three was the natural and logical result of seals one and two. The population involved began to starve in the famine. With famine comes death and the horse of seal four brought just that. With death comes eternity and the fourth horse was part of that, too, sending all those who died to their eternal rewards with most entering the place of *torment* in Hades. The sadness of this whole movement of humanity is that it sought its own salvation without the Almighty's being involved in any of their precepts. The 30 minutes of silence in heaven were probably for John's benefit to allow him time to write down all he had seen up to this point.

D. The Trumpets in Heaven (8:2-5)

1. Seven Angels with Trumpets (8:2)

Rev 8:2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

As the vision resumed in heaven, John made a most revealing statement, **“And I saw the seven angels who stand before God.”** Here we come to a statement we have waited for in our past lessons. Here John tells us that **“the seven angels who stand before God”** were given **“seven trumpets.”** To this point in the story, John has not specifically mentioned seven angels at the throne of God. Yet, he has mentioned in different terms seven spirits that are before God's throne by different names. He first called them **“seven spirits”** (1:4; 3:1), then the **“seven lamps of fire burning before the throne,”** (4:5). He then associated them with the Lamb of God and called them the **“seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God,”** (5:6). Zechariah agreed with John's statement and said, **“the seven eyes of the LORD that range throughout the earth”** (4:10). At this point in the story we discover that they are **“the seven angels who stand before God,”** (8:2). These seven *spirits-lamps-eyes-angels* were given seven trumpets to blow in heaven when signaled by the Lamb of God.

2. Angel with Golden Censer (8:3-4)

a) Prayers of the Saints (8:3)

Rev 8:3 Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne.

When John says, **“Another angel,”** he means an angel who was not one of the seven angels who had just been given one of the seven trumpets. We might better define the **“golden censer”** as a golden fire-pan like those Moses had replicated at the foot of Mount Sinai for worship in the Tabernacle. For the best picture, think of a large saucepan that has small holes in its side to allow air to enter the pan. It also has a lid containing holes to allow

the smoke of the burning incense to escape as the coals and incense are being consumed. First the pan would be filled with hot coals from the altar of God. Then, incense was sprinkled on top of the hot coals and the lid was put upon it. The smoke would then escape through the holes in the lid and rise to fill the room with the distinct odor of that specific incense. The exact formula for this incense is given in Exodus.

Exodus 30:34 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Take for yourself spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, spices with pure frankincense; there shall be an equal part of each. ³⁵ With it you shall make incense, a perfume, the work of a perfumer, salted, pure, and holy. ³⁶ You shall beat some of it very fine, and put part of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting where I will meet with you; it shall be most holy to you. ³⁷ The incense which you shall make, you shall not make in the same proportions for yourselves; it shall be holy to you for the LORD. ³⁸ Whoever shall make *any* like it, to use as perfume, shall be cut off from his people.”

b) Prayers to God (8:4)

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.

As the smoke rises before God the Father, the smoke contains all the prayers of the saints. We must address this point here; the smoke does not contain the prayers of the Jews or the prayers of the Gentiles who have failed to accept the LORD as Savior. These prayers are specifically the “**prayers of the saints**” which require a personal relationship with the LORD. Prayers do not go away; they are always before the LORD. Therefore, these are the prayers of all the saints of all the ages from the Day of Pentecost until the saints of the Church were snatched away to be with the LORD. One important point we must remember, the prayers of the saints of all the Church age have been the same concerning the Second Coming of the LORD and the LORD has saved them for use at this moment. He is about to fulfill His prophecy that the Church has prayed for for hundreds and hundreds of years ... “Even so, Lord Jesus come!”

3. Censer Thrown to Earth (8:5)

Rev 8:5 Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

Down to the ground on the earth the censer was thrown and the fury that surrounds the throne of God pealed out in the heavens and an earthquake occurred. Some associate this earthquake with the one mentioned in the sixth seal, but it cannot be so. It was a new quake on earth that inaugurated the authority given to the seven angels to blow the trumpets. It takes some extreme juggling of the Scripture to justify the two as one and it is not needed. The LORD Himself warned of the repetition of earthquakes as well as wars and rumors of wars in the beginning of the pageantry leading to His Second Coming. It does no good and makes no sense to expect one earthquake to fill that bill.

E. Sounding of the Trumps in Heaven (8:6-15:4)

1. Trump One – Hail, Fire and Blood on Earth (8:6-7)

Rev 8:6 And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them. ⁷ The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

In this rehearsal for the future, permission was granted by the LORD and the first trumpet had been blown. John saw **“hail and fire, mixed with blood, ... thrown to the earth.”** The LORD used this same plague in Egypt (Exodus 9:18-24). The hail and the fire rained down on the earth. The hail and the fire came from the clouds, the first in the form of ice, the second in the form of lightning that caused fires on the earth. The mixing of the hail and fire **“with blood”** occurred on earth with the deaths of animals and humans who were not protected when Moses warned everyone to bring their cattle and servants into shelters. The same should be understood here. In the future, when the first trumpet blows and the hail from the clouds begins to fall and the lightning causes fires on the earth, humans and cattle will die. With those fires, one-third of the earth, the trees, and the green grass will be burned up. Whether or not the effects of this event will last a day, a week or a month really does not matter. Within a year, the destruction of that vegetation will begin to recover and be greener and better than that of the old growth; it is just the natural way of nature.

Can the world survive with a third of the vegetation destroyed? Scientists tell us that through the harvesting of trees and crops each year in the United States, the remaining vegetation of this nation produces only 60% of the oxygen needed for the population of its citizens. If that is the case, the answer is yes. Furthermore, we can thank the LORD for the four angels that control the winds of the earth for the import of the rest of the oxygen we need to survive.

Nevertheless, with one-third of the vegetation destroyed, it will necessitate a realigning of government relationship for nations to survive. That being the case, realignment of trade among governments will establish new relationships – enemies will become friends and friends will become enemies in trade agreements – this would include Israel and its traditional enemies. This trumpet will be given time to work to have its desired effect. The second trumpet which is ready to blast at the nod of the LORD will have to wait. This seemingly natural disaster, directed by the LORD, begins the troubles that will lead man to fall in line with the LORD’s plan to squeeze Israel to bow its knee and call Him *Messiah*.

2. Trump Two – Mountain Thrown in the Sea on Earth (8:8-9)

Rev 8:8 The second angel sounded, and *something* like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood, ⁹ and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.

With new national relationships established, the time will come for the LORD to grant permission for the second angel to blow his trumpet. With that, another natural disaster will seem to occur. It is **“like a great mountain burning with fire ... thrown into the sea.”** John does not say it is a mountain; he says it looks **“like a”** mountain. The best interpretation of this **“mountain”** would be that this is a space rock of some kind that enters

the earth's atmosphere and begins to burn as it passes through the skies. It is so large that it is not consumed in the short distance from the outer atmosphere to the surface and it causes great destruction on earth.

Here, John tells us that it **“was thrown into the sea.”** It was not thrown into the *oceans*. Had it been thrown into the oceans, John would have said so; that word was available to him in his language. This **“great mountain”** was thrown into the only sea John was familiar with, the *Great Sea* which is now called the *Mediterranean Sea*. Therefore, the death of a third of the seas' creatures occurred at its impact, crushing them when it hit and filling the sea with their blood. One-third of the ships in the *Mediterranean Sea* would fall victim to the collision of this **“great mountain.”** This devastation would seriously affect the nations that border the *Mediterranean Sea*. It will require those nations, which rely so heavily on the sea, to make new allies. This, too, will take time, but perhaps not as much time as will be needed for the effects of the first trump. With this second trump, the LORD is squeezing ten nations around the *Mediterranean Sea* to consider uniting for survival. These are the nations of the remains of the two legs of the fallen Roman Empire.

3. Trump Three – Star Fell to the Earth (8:10-11)

Rev 8:10 The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters. ¹¹ The name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.

This **“great star fell from heaven”** at the blast of the third trumpet. It was not one of those stars that fell in the sixth seal, this was a new and different star. The name of this star is **“Wormwood”** which in the Old Testament is translated *hemlock* – a poison, fresh water that was pure, clean and clear for the people to drink the day before was clear but deadly when this star struck the rivers and streams. It is reasonable that this star fell on a third of the fresh water rivers and springs that feed the *Mediterranean Sea*, but even if it fell on all the rivers and springs of the world, it does not matter. With the disaster in the *Mediterranean Sea* and the disaster of one-third of the fresh water rivers and springs, the LORD made it increasingly difficult for independent countries to survive without the help of neighboring countries. This, too, caused a realignment of nations – regionally. By the time of the start of the seven years of *Tribulation*, at least four rulers are recognized in the Scripture, the four kings identified from the north, south, east and west.

To be consistent in the interpretation of this book, this **“great star”** had to be a heavenly creature sent to poison one-third of the fresh waters. If this had been some space object, such as a real star or rock of some sort, the poison would have affected the waters, vegetation and the land. It did not. It was a surgical strike on just one-third of the fresh rivers and springs; therefore, it seems only logical that this star was a heavenly creature sent with the specific job of poisoning a specific target on earth – rivers and springs around the *Mediterranean Sea*.

4. Trump Four – Darkening of Sun, Moon and Stars (8:12-13)

Rev 8:12 The fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way.

With the nod of the LORD, the fourth angel blasted the sound of his trumpet and the lights of the great heavens visible from earth were reduced to one-third of their normal radiance. Here, we see *stars* mentioned again. We have recognized *stars* as heavenly creatures because of John's descriptions of them as to how they fell from heaven like the falling *stars* he had seen during his life. But in this passage, John does not say that these *stars* fell from heaven; rather, they remained in the heavens along with the sun and the moon. They did not leave their places in the visible heavens where they had stood at their posts to shine since they were created on the fourth day. Because these stars are still in their place in the visible heavens coupled with the sun and the moon, there is no reason to consider them heavenly creatures, but rather exactly what they were, the stars that even we can see in the sky.

a) **Eagle Flying in the Sky (8:13a)**

Rev 8:13a Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice,

With the darkening of the light from the sun, moon and stars to one-third of their normal brilliance, John saw **“an eagle flying in midheaven.”** First, where is **“midheaven?”** This term is found only in the REVELATION and it means *the zenith*, which is the highest point in the earth's atmosphere that can be traversed by flying creatures such as bird and insects. The Bible does present a concept of three heavens. Our atmosphere is the first, outer space is the second and God's home is the third. In this concept, the midheaven would compare to *outer space* where no earthly creatures, such as eagles, can fly. Therefore, John was using the ancient definition that indicates this *eagle* was flying in the *zenith* of our atmosphere where they naturally fly.

The *eagle* is not an angel. Almost every manuscript available to the Church scholars renders the Greek as **“an eagle flying.”** With that said, there are a few newer copies of the Scripture that have altered the text to say *an angel flying* but these have not been viewed as authoritative by the scholars of the Church since their production.

There is no reason to presume any symbolic reason in this passage but to take it literally as it is on the four corners of the page – an *actual* eagle flying.

But this eagle is able to speak! Now, do we have a reason to wonder about this creature? I think not! If the LORD can cause a donkey to speak to Balaam, how hard can it be for the LORD to cause an eagle to speak understandable words. Frankly, most birds have the ability to parrot speech to some degree. From a human perspective, the miracle with the donkey would have been much more difficult than causing a bird to speak Greek. But from the LORD's perspective, nothing is impossible with God.

b) **Woe to the Earth (8:13b)**

Rev 8:13b "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

This **“eagle flying in the midheaven”** was, without a doubt, divinely appointed to speak the words in this verse. No normal earth-bound eagle could have known that three trumpets were still set to sound in heaven. With its cry, we learn that each trumpet blast was a **“woe”**

which is *an expression of grief or denunciation*. In other words, extreme trouble was about to come upon the earth.

5. Trump Five – Woe One - Star Falls to Earth (9:1-12)

a) Key to Bottomless Pit (9:1)

Rev 9:1 Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him.

The permission for the fifth trumpet to blow was given and John saw a star being given **“the key of the bottomless pit.”** We must notice that John did not see this star fall with the sound of the trumpet; the star was one that **“had fallen.”** The only other stars that John had seen falling from heaven to this point in the story were those in seal six (6:3) and the one called Wormwood (8:10). This star most likely was one from the group found in seal six. Physical stars are balls of flaming gas; this star was not that, it was a heavenly creature, an angel. We know of only two classes of angels found in the Bible, cherubs and seraphs. The stars mentioned here and in the sixth seal were most likely seraphs because they were the flaming angels.

Here we have a mistranslation in the text. The **“bottomless pit”** in the original Greek should have been rendered here as *the key of the pit of the abyss*. The same original words are correctly translated in the context of this same subject line below in Revelation 9:11 as **“the angel of the abyss.”** Therefore, the term **“bottomless pit”** should be translated **“abyss pit”** in all uses in the REVELATION.

b) Key to the Great Furnace (9:2)

Rev 9:2 He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.

The heavenly creature with the key to the *abyss pit* used it to open its door. Upon its opening, **“smoke”** belched forth from its bowels, passed through the water and saturated the breathable **“air,”** causing it to turn dark.

c) Key to the Locust (9:3-12)

(1) Power of the Locust (9:3)

Rev 9:3 Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

Out of that cloud of smoky air, John saw locusts pour out from the *abyss pit*. He calls them **“locusts”** because they looked like *locusts* to him. But these *locusts* had power **“as the scorpions of the earth have power.”** We know *locusts* as grasshoppers. They eat vegetation which means they can bite but they do not sting. Scorpions do sting and John places on these *locusts* that come out of the *abyss pit* the same ability to do what scorpions do – sting! Stings of scorpions can be deadly and John implies the same results from the stings of these *locusts*. But even if the torment of these *locusts* was from their biting of humans, as with some of the species found in Africa, the stings could be quite irritating. For that reason, these *locust* from the *abyss pit* must have had some sort of poisonous stinger like a scorpion.

(2) Warning to the Locust (9:4-5)

Rev 9:4 They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.⁵ And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man.

Locusts were created by God to eat green vegetation. These *locusts* were not instructed to harm vegetation; they were directed to a different target – **“men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.”** That means that these *locusts* did not have the authority to sting any of the 144,000 Israelites that had been sealed with the name of God on their foreheads (7:4-8). That means that these *locusts* had carte blanche freedom to aggravate, but not kill, every Gentile and unsealed Jew alive on earth for five months. This five-month warning begins the countdown of a time clock to a specific event – the release of the four evil angels at the Euphrates River.

(3) Prey of the Locust (9:6)

Rev 9:6 And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.

The aggravation of the stings of these *locusts* will take their victims to the point of despair, to the point of thinking that death is better than life, but the LORD will not let them die.

(4) Description of the Locust (9:7-8)

Rev 9:7 The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men.
⁸ They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like *the teeth* of lions.
⁹ They had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle. ¹⁰ They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months.

Finally, John returns to the *locusts* to describe what they looked like to him. First, the **“appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle.”** John saw them lined up as if by rank and file, row after row, line after line, battalion after battalion, squad after squad, unit after unit. Second, John saw what looked like *gold crowns* on their heads which, third, drew his attention to their faces which looked like they had **“the faces of men.”** Fourth, it seemed to John that they had the flowing **“hair of women,”** fifth, the **“teeth of a lion,”** sixth, **“breastplates of iron,”** and seventh, **“wings”** that sounded to John like the beating of the horse’s hoofs as they ran into battle. But eighth, John saw their tails, and, in their tails, they had stingers. These were not normal *locusts* ever before seen on earth. Although they seemed armed for destruction, they were limited in their power for they could **“hurt men for five months”** but they were not allowed to kill. To restrict the *locusts* even more, the 144,000 sealed Jews were off limits to them.

(5) King of the Locust (9:11-12)

Rev 9:11 They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon. ¹² The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.

These *locusts* had a leader, their king was an angel. He was “**the angel of the abyss.**” To be absolutely sure that we would know exactly who this angel was, John gave his name in the Old Testament language and the New. The first was “**Abaddon**” and the second was “**Apollyon.**” The Old Testament mentions “**Abaddon**” six times (Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Psalm 88:11; Proverbs 15:11; 27:20). The name means *destruction*. In the Old Testament passages, “**Abaddon**” is coupled with *the grave, death and Sheol*. The name “**Abaddon**” implies the destruction of this life that leads to *the grave, death and Sheol*. The same name in the New Testament is “**Apollyon**” and it is mentioned only here. The name means *destruction* or *destroyer*. Because John makes the two names synonymous, there is no reason to interpret the New Testament word different from the Old. Therefore, *Abaddon/Apollyon* is the name of the angel who rules over *the grave, death and Sheol*. With the unlocking of the *abyss pit*, the restrictions hereto on the destroyer have been partially removed.