**Revelation**

*Lesson 19 – Revelation 8*

* The history of the church has now been laid out for us 2 times. Chapters 1-3 give an earthly perspective of what all churches will face and endure between the comings of Jesus Christ. Chapters 4-7 give a heavenly perspective from the Ascension to the 2nd coming (6th seal). Now we enter a third section that once again covers the time between Christ’s 1st and 2nd Comings. This third section is Chapters 8-11.

*Verses 1-5:* The 7th Seal and Golden Censor

1. The 7th seal is broken in verse 1 and there is silence in heaven. Some commentators take that to mean that the seal is empty of content or a dramatic pause before the 7 trumpet judgments. However, in the Old Testament, silence is frequently the response to God’s judgment.
2. Isaiah 47:5 – “Sit in **silence**, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for you shall no more be called the mistress of kingdoms.”
3. Jeremiah 7:34 – “And I will **silence** in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, for the land shall become a waste.”
4. Lamentations 2:10 – “The elders of the daughter of Zion sit on the ground in **silence**; they have thrown dust on their heads and put on sackcloth;”
5. Zechariah 2:13 – “Be **silent**, all flesh, before the Lord, for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.”
6. Notice that this silence is in heaven. The prayers of the saints and the worship songs of the elders, 4 living creatures, and angels are all silenced as they stand in awe at what has just happened with the 6th seal of judgment – Christ’s 2nd Coming.
7. Verse talks about 7 trumpets being given to 7 angels. The 7th seal leads to 7 trumpets.
8. Further proof that the 7 trumpets and 7 seals are tied together is this description of the prayers of the saints. Back in Revelation 6, we saw the prayers of the “martyrs” under the alter crying out to God to take vengeance. Here in verse 3, we have the prayers of “all the saints on the golden altar before the throne.” Mixed with these saintly prayers is incense.
9. Incense is always associated with sacrifices. Leviticus 4:7 – “And the priest shall put some of the blood on the horns of the **altar of fragrant incense** before the Lord that is in the tent of meeting, and all the **rest of the blood of the bull** he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting.”
10. Ephesians 5:2 – “And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, **a fragrant offering and sacrifice** to God.”
11. William Hendricksen suggests that this incense given to the angel to mix with the prayers of the saints is the intercession of Jesus Christ for His persecuted church on earth. “These saints in persecution and tribulation are praying. But their prayer life is imperfect. It needs to be incensed with the intercession of Christ. Once these prayers have been incensed, the seer notices that the smoke *ascends* to the very presence of God….”
12. Once the censor is emptied of incense, in verse 5, the angel fills it with fire from God’s heavenly alter and throws it on the earth and the result on Earth is thunder, rumblings, lighting, and an earthquake. Now we’ve seen this before.
13. Revelation 4:5 – “From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder…”
14. This harkens us back to Mount Sinai where there were thunders and lightnings but this same phrase of “lighting, rumbling, and peals of thunder” occurs in Revelation 4:5, 11:19, and 16:18 at the end of 7 judgments so this represents God as the source of judgments that He is going to pour out from His heavenly throne room onto the Earth.
15. In response to the prayers of the saints, God sends judgment upon the Earth. This really brings an end to the 7 seals because at the end of the trumpets and bowls we will see this same language of thunder, rumbling, and lightning. So verses 1-5 are the 7th seal including the revealing of trumpets but the trumpets are not started until the 7th seal is finished which is in verse 5. Greg Beale says that this language of thunder, lightning, and rumblings indicates the Final Judgment.

*Verses 6-13:* The First 4 Trumpets

1. So the 7 angels prepare to blow their 7 trumpets in verse 6 and we have a new sequence of divine judgments. The first 4 seals focused on the riders commissioned to bring disasters upon the Earth. The first 4 trumpets will focus on those disasters.

*The First Trumpet*

1. Hail and fire mixed with blood is thrown upon the Earth and 1/3 of the earth and trees are burned up, but all grass is burned up. This first trumpet focuses on land or dry ground but notice only 1/3 of the Earth is affected.
2. In Exodus 9:22-25, God sends hail and fire upon Egypt and this hail/fire strike the land of Egypt, the plants of Egypt and the trees of Egypt which is the same 3-fold division we see here in Revelation. The effect of the plague in Egypt was that food supplies were disrupted. This corresponds to the 3rd seal/horseman where food is scarce because of famine which leads to economic inflation and poverty.
3. When we compare Ezekiel 5:2 which says “a third part you shall burn in the fire in the midst of the city” with Ezekiel 5:12 which says “a third part of you shall die of pestilence and be consumed with famine in your midst” we see that the connection of 1/3 and fire equaling famine.

*The Second Trumpet*

1. This trumpet affects the seas so that they become like blood which recalls the 1st plague on Egypt in Exodus 7:20-25.
2. The imagery of “something like a mountain” has OT background in what God is going to do to Babylon. In Jeremiah 51:25, Babylon is called a “destroying mountain” that God will make a “burned out mountain.” Later, Jeremiah speaks of Babylon being tied to a stone and thrown into a river so that Babylon sinks never to rise again (Jer. 51:63-64). So this burning mountain cast into a sea is God’s judgment upon wicked kingdoms so that their maritime commerce and war vessels are destroyed and there is an accompanying famine.

*The Third Trumpet*

1. This trumpet depicts a great star falling from heaven, on fire, falling on 1/3 of the rivers and springs of water. This star is called Wormwood and makes the waters bitter leading to the death of many people.
2. Lamentations 3:19 – “Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall!”
3. Isaiah 14:12 – “How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! [Babylon] How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!”
4. This means bitter sorrow are going to fill the hearts of all those who follow after ungodly systems, both inside and outside the church. Ungodly, worldly systems are a pollutant even among God’s people.

*The Fourth Trumpet*

1. The fourth trumpet affects those things in the skies which give off light – sun, moon, and stars – so that light is diminished and darkness increases. This is very similar to the 6th seal which talked about the moon as blood, stars falling from the sky, and the sun being darkened. But again it’s only 1/3 so this is a partial judgment as God’s still restraining Himself until the Final judgment.
2. “The darkness is probably not literal but refers to all those divinely ordained events intended to remind the idolatrous persecutors that their idolatry is folly and that they are separated from the living God.” –Greg Beale
3. Luke 21:25-28 – “And there will be **signs in sun and moon and stars**, and on the earth **distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world.** For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”
4. Jude 13 says false teachers are “wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.” Darkness is a symbolic depiction of unbelievers as separated from God.

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| **Trumpet** | **Plague** | **Parallel to Exodus** |
| First | Hail and Fire | 7th plague – Ex. 9:22-25 |
| Second | Blood | 1st plague – Ex. 7:20-25 |
| Third | Bitter Water | Side effect of 1st plague |
| Fourth | Darkness | 9th plague – Ex. 10:21-23 |

1. “All 4 trumpets are concerned with sufferings imposed on the ungodly that indicate their separation from God and the beginning of their judgment.” –Greg Beale
2. But if you think that’s bad, verse 13, pronounces a tri-fold “woe” upon “those who dwell on earth” because the remaining 3 trumpets are going to be even worse.

**Message for Us**

1. “Persecuted children of God, remember that your Savior sees your tears and is not unmindful of your afflictions. Nowhere will the wicked persecutors find real rest or lasting enjoyment. Not only the land and the sea but even the fountains and the rivers, throughout this age, will be turned against evildoers.” –William Hendricksen
2. God says “we are to view our prayers as included in the eternal decrees of God. God has not only decreed from all eternity what will happen, but has also decreed that our prayers should be a means by which these things happen. In ways that we don’t fully understand, God uses the prayers of His saints to carry out His eternal decrees.” –Joel Beeke
3. “It is encouraging to know that Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us (Heb. 7:25). He is our Great High Priest, who has more than enough incense to absorb all the faults of our prayers. Christ mingles His intercession with our intercession to cover the taint, selfishness, and earthiness of our prayers, and then He transforms them into that which is acceptable to His Father and presents our poor prayers to Him, washed in His own blood-purchased merits. He makes something big out of something small; something beautiful out of something homely.” –Joel Beeke
4. “The world has not yet been destroyed, even though it has been nearly two thousand years since the time of John’s vision. That tells us our God is patient. God’s patience is amazing, but it is also a mystery to us. When an earthquake levels a city or a tsunami kills thousands of people, we tend to ask, “Why did God allow this disaster to happen?” The real question is why God allows us to go on unscathed. Why does He allow the world to continue despite its outrageous sinfulness against Him? Why doesn’t He destroy it now, just as He once destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah? Are we less sinful than the people of those cities?” –Joel Beeke