

Revelation 8:1-13
“The silence of the Lamb”

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I. Intro

The 7th chapter dealt with the question of those on earth seeking to flee from the wrath of the Lamb as they asked, “*Who is able to stand*”. *The initial wrath was seen in the natural consequences of a world without the preserving influence of the Holy Spirit, but this was suspended until this chapter (8) where the opening of the seals continues with the 7th seal which will introduce seven trumpets.* As brief as this chapter is it nonetheless contains some revealing information concerning the nature of the Lord with respect to His judgment upon those who reject His love and truth.

In the little three-chapter book of Habakkuk (*One who embraces*) the prophet wrote to the nation of Judah who was on its deathbed because of its hard heartedness. For this reason, God told the Prophet that He was going to use the Babylonians to discipline them, which breaks Habakkuk’s heart. In brokenness Habakkuk, true to his name, *chooses to embrace the Lord* even though he can’t fully grasp what the Lord is doing. In chapter 3:2 he prays, “*O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy.” It is this remembrance of mercy in the midst of His wrath that balances His Love with His Holiness that is visible in this passage.*

II. Vs. 1-6 Preparation for judgment

Vs. 1 In the 7th chapter praise was offered for the redeemer but here we see silence at the coming of wrath! ***What is remarkable is that the silence is NOT from the inhabitation of earth but rather from heaven.*** What we see is, ***praise is offered at salvation, but silence is what is noticed with the coming of wrath in heaven, even though it is just.*** In Ezekiel 33:11 the Lord warns Israel by saying, “*As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn; turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?’*” In Hebrews we are told that “*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son*”. ***What are the words spoken through the Son to mankind?*** John answered this in his gospel in 1:14 where we read that Jesus was “***full of grace and truth.***” Paul foresaw a time when even those in the church would no longer listen as “*they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap-up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables.*” (2 Tim 4:3-4) ***God has not ceased speaking to the world even during the tribulation but the worlds rejection of the gospel has forced Him to speak with actions instead of words.***

God will always use the least means possible to speak to us and it will be the hardness of our hearts that directs His intensity! Yet another reason for us to pray that God keep our hearts broken and pliable in His hands!

Vs. 2 So in preparation to God’s judgment we first read of silence and now in this verse the angelic kingdom are prepared. We cannot be sure of who these seven angels are, but an interesting verse comes to mind with reverence to one of them as we are told in Luke 1:19 “***I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God,*** and was sent to speak to you and bring you these

glad tidings.” **They are given trumpets but why trumpets?** The answer to that is found in Numbers 10:1-10 where we find that **trumpets were used for three things in Jewish life:**

- a. Vs. 2-8 “for calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps.”

First, we see that they were to be **used to call the people together specifically for moving.** It is clear **by the silence that God is calling His people together especially as we see the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar.**

- b. Vs. 9 “When you go to war in your land against the enemy who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets”: **To announce a pending war as an alarm. Clearly God is announcing war against those who oppress the truth.**

- c. Vs. 10 “Also in the day of your gladness, in your appointed feasts, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be a memorial for you before your God:” **To announce special times of blessings.** How could this be described as a time of special blessing? **It is only when we read through this chapter to chapter 11:15 where there is nothing but God’s judgment upon the earth but until at the end we read the 7th angel proclaims, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”** The **“special time”** is NOT the judgment but **what follows it**, a time when the **“kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord”**.

Vs. 3-4 Much effort has been made to identify this angel or messenger some even try to make it Jesus, the reason for this is we are told in Heb 7:25 that “He always lives to make intercession for them” and here we do see this angel offering the prayers of all the saints before the throne. I’m

not ready to make that interpretation as John has been very forthright in this unveiling to identify Jesus and this would be very obscure.

What we do see is the prayers of all the saints by offered with “***much incense***” and the smoke of that “***incense***” ascending before God. In the O.T. the priest would take incense and offer it upon the “***altar of incense***” and the smoke would fill the temple going into the Holy of Holies where it would cover the Arch of the Covenant where the mercy seat was. **The Jews understood this to mean that God heard and answered the prayer of the people based upon His mercy.** The vision offered by the prayers of all the saints was that “***His kingdom come***” and **it is this that is the fulfillment of those prayers is at hand!** (11:15) What a comfort it is to realize that ***the cries of our heart are a fragrant incense before He who sits upon the throne!*** So often we are reluctant to pray, we feel as though our prayers are not important to bring to our Lord, but He desires them and sees them as a sweet-smelling aroma.

Vs. 5-6 The preparation is not over, and ***God is ready to speak through His actions.*** We are told in scripture that God speaks four ways:

- His creation
- Through our conscience
- Through the witness of His people
- Through His Word

But there is another way in, which ***He will speak and that is through His judgments*** and here they are supernatural. ***These judgments will intensify and then give way to the bowl judgments of chapter 16.***

III. Vs. 7-13 Judging what we worship

Vs. 7 In this section, we are given the first four trumpets and their effect is upon the environment. In **Rom. 1:18-23** we are told that God's attributes were clearly revealed through His creation but instead of worshiping the creator mankind choose to worship the creation. It is for this reason we are told in Rom. 1:18 that *"the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness"*. The similarity between this trumpet and the 7th plague of Exodus 9:18-26 "hail and fire" is the same. We are also reminded of the prophecy of **Joel in 2:30** where we are told that God *"will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke."* The target of this trumpet is the vegetation of the earth as 1/3 of it is burned up which would further affect the food supply as we already saw famine, that was because of economic greed in 6:5-6. This remind us of Gen. 2:15 where we are told that *"God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it"*. Since mankind failed in his "stewardship" God use that which he has chosen to worship to judge mankind.

Vs. 8-9 It does not say that this trumpet unleashed a "great mountain burning with fire", only that it was **like that**. This too reminds us of the plagues of Exodus but this deals with the 2nd plague of 7:19-21 of water turning into blood. The target here is the seas and we are told that it will

impact three areas:

- a. Vs. 8b *"And a third of the sea became blood"*: Perhaps this is because of the 2nd part of this as 1/3 of living creatures in the sea die?
- b. Vs. 9a *"And a third of the living creatures in the sea died"*: The ecological balance that is brought forth by the sea and its life would be tremendous.

- c. Vs. 9b “*And a third of the ships were destroyed*”: Three fourths of the world’s surface is water much of this is sea. In 1981 there were 24,867 merchant ships carrying their cargo all over the world now imagine 8, 289 of these ships destroyed and the effect this would have upon the world.

Vs. 10-11 The third trumpet strikes the water again only this time its effects the fresh drinking water supply. The word “*Wormwood*” means **undrinkable or bitter waters**. The National Geographic lists around 100 principal rivers in the world and the U.S. department of geology lists 30 principal rivers in the United States. But most of us get our water from underground wells that tap into the water table. But imagine the effects of 1/3 of them being so polluted as to become undrinkable?

Vs. 12-13 Up to this 4th trumpet the effects of the blasts from the trumpets only effected 1/3 of the world at a time where the entire world will realize its effects. This reminds us of the 9th plague of Exodus 10:21-23 of darkness over the world. The severity of the next three judgments is noted by the sending of an angel to proclaim three woes over the earth. There are always three responses to such things as this by mankind:

- a. 2 Peter 3:4 **Unbelief**
- b. 2 Thess. 3:13 and Heb. 10:24-25 **Indifference**
- c. 2 Peter 3:11-14 **Anticipation**