

Revelation- Chapters 8:1-11:19 (The 7 Seal and The Second 7-Fold Vision/The Seven Trumpet Angels)

The 7th Seal- Revelation 8:1-5

- The 7th Seal is opened and there is silence. The silence here is out of awe, fear, respect, and worship of God and the Lamb and their final judgments against the wicked upon the earth and the acts of God's salvation.
- 7 angels standing in presence of God with trumpets- these should be identified as the same angels described earlier in Revelation 2 and 3, the 7 angels of the churches; they are mediating the revelation of God to human beings. Other groups of 7 angels will come again in chapters 11, 15, and 16 who should be identified with these same angels, even though they are described as having different roles. Trumpets are used to announce the coming the Lord in judgment (see Matt. 24:29-31; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16). **REMEMBER THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUMBER 7!**
- Another angel is then described in verses 3-5- He offers incense up to God along with the prayers of the saints (prayers that God would deliver and save His people- see beginning of Exodus as the people cry out to be saved). And he serves to introduce the second 7-fold vision that will again speak of God's judgment and wrath against a fallen and sinful world (fire being thrown on the earth causing "natural disasters").

Beginning of the 2nd 7-Fold Vision/The First 6 Trumpet Angels- Revelation 8:6- 9:21

- The first four angles blow their trumpets and unleash God's judgment in the form of plagues or "natural" calamities. Again the purpose of these terrible plagues is to move sinners to repent of their wickedness and trust in the salvation of God through the Lamb.
- An eagle is mentioned in verse 13, who again warns and calls to repentance. He serves to transition between the "natural" calamities brought by the sounding of the trumpets and the remaining trumpets that will introduce demonic activity.
- The fifth trumpet sounds- the Fallen Star, the angel of the bottomless pit, Abaddon, Apollyon (Hebrew and Greek for Destruction or Destroyer), or otherwise know as the Dragon or Satan is unleashed to torment, destroy, and kill. See also **Isaiah 14:11-15** and **Rev. 12:7-9** for the falling of Satan/Stars/Angels. Satan brings the powers of hell to afflict those not belonging to God through the 'locust creatures' who are his demons. God uses the afflictions caused by Satan to lead unbelievers to repentance not to kill them (see **Ezek. 18:23** and **1 Tim 2:4**)!

- The sixth trumpet sounds- death to unbelievers 1/3 of them, comes about through demonic forces that torment all people. The intent again is *lead people to repentance*, even though they refuse to repent.

Interlude of God Protecting the Church in Mission (Mighty Angel from Heaven)-
Revelation 10:1-11

- A “Mighty Angel” comes down from heaven- a different angel from the 7 angels sent from the presence of God (heaven) down to give a message from God. There is speculation to the identity of this angel, some say that it may be Gabriel which in Hebrew means ‘Mighty One of God’; however the exact identity is a mystery.
- “*Wrapped in a cloud with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire*”- this description of the angel closely identifies him with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; he is one sent from them. The cloud being symbolic of the Father and His glory; the rainbow halo reminds us of God’s covenant of grace with all humanity; face like the sun connects to Jesus Christ who shines in the full brilliance of the sun; and the legs like pillars of fire connects to Jesus and the Father via Exodus 14:19-20 and Daniel 10:4-6 (the Son of Man).
- The opened scroll- it is a prophetic message known already to John, it is opened not sealed. The Mighty Angel is delivering this open scroll to John by God’s command in accordance with God’s mission.
- The angel standing on sea and land- this angel and the mission and message that he represents dominates all the earth; nothing is bigger or more important, nothing will dominate over it. Furthermore the angel takes an oath in God’s name that “the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.”
- *Mystery of God*- in Revelation refers to the coming kingdom of Yahweh (God) and His Messiah (Christ) at the end of the present world (see 11:15).
- John is commanded to eat the scroll, “*it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey.*” John is to receive the message from God and internalize it, meditate on it, and to apply it to his life. The effects of this internalizing are two fold: bitter to the stomach; and sweet to the mouth; in other words *bitter*, because his sinfulness will be revealed by God’s Law and *sweet*, because of the Good News of Jesus Christ. Next John is commanded to proclaim the prophetic message to the nations.

Interlude of God Protecting the Church in Mission (Temple Measured and Two Witnesses)- Revelation 11:1-14

- John is given a measuring rod and told to measure the temple- this parallels Ezekiel 40:1-5, where Ezekiel is also told to measure the temple. In Ezekiel this was a promise that the temple would be rebuilt and the glory of Yahweh would return; Zechariah 2:1-5 tells of a heavenly figure with a measuring line, symbolizing that God would protect the city of Jerusalem and be its glory. So here in Revelation we should interpret the measuring of the temple and its dwellers that *God will protect His people*, His holy dwelling, as they carry out the mission to proclaim the Gospel.
- While the inside will be measured, thus protected by God, the outer area is not to be measured- it is given over to the nations- it is not protected. This indicates that God's people, the Church, will face persecution while they are carrying out the mission. The holy city will be trampled for a time- but the temple is protected.
- 42 months or 1,260 days- this is the time of the trampling and the time of the two witnesses (about the same amount of time if using a lunar month of 30 days, just stated differently). This period of time refers *the days starting a Jesus' Passion continuing on until He returns at the end. This is the period of tribulation* and suffering of God's people, **but also the time of mission.**
- The Two Witnesses- these are God's people the Church carrying out God's mission to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They are called two olive trees and two lamp stands, which was OT imagery for God's people Zechariah 4 (prophetic ministry and royal priesthood aka Joshua and Zerubabel). Olive trees = God through His anointed prophets and ministers edifies and nourishes the Church as she witness to the world. Lamp Stands = the churches priestly royal, prophetic witness of the message of Jesus Christ to the world. Deuteronomy 19:15 explains why there are Two Witnesses.
- The witnesses have power to do extraordinary things as the OT prophets, as Jesus did, and as Jesus gives His disciples authority so to do. Nothing will prevent their witness. Yet when the witness is given and complete, God will allow the enemy to come against them. Christians are killed for Christ; they are mocked and ridiculed and insulted just as Christ Jesus our Lord was. The death of the witnesses by the enemy is the silence of the prophetic voice in that time period and location- they may never get another call to repentance and faith.
- The witnesses come back to life- the witness of the Church to Christ may be silenced for a time, but God brings back the witness! God raises the Church as God raised Christ! Ultimately God will raise all His Church all His people

in a final witness of praise to God at the Resurrection and a witness of shame to the unbeliever.

The Seventh Trumpeting Angel- Revelation 11:15-19

- “*The kingdom the world has become the kingdom of our Lord (i.e. Yahweh) and His Christ (i.e. Jesus, the Anointed One), and He shall reign forever and ever*”- Through Jesus Christ, God the Father has acted to save and restore His creation that fell into sin and rebellion. The blowing of the seventh trumpet marks the time when Christ Jesus shall return to the earth and our great end time hope that we pray for in the Lord’s Prayer will be completed: Let Your Name be made holy on the earth as in heaven, Let Your Kingdom come on the earth as in heaven, let Your Will be done on the earth as in heaven. God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ just bring this to completion even as He has acted already to save us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. All creation, the entire world will be restored to God and rebellion will cease! All that was lost in the Fall, will be undone!
- Read Psalm 2:4-9 and Zechariah 14:9 for the OT promise of Yahweh acting to reign through His Anointed One.
- The 24 Elders (remember from Revelation 4) fall down in praise and worship and take up a new song in verses 17 and 18- the song praise Lord God Almighty (Yahweh) for His acting to reestablish His reign over the world; for punishing the evil and wicked; and for rewarding the people of God.
- Now that God has reestablished His reign over all the world through Christ Jesus and the dead are raised in Christ, we Christians the Holy Ones of God through Jesus Christ will see the Glory of Yahweh face to face as never before “the ark of the covenant was seen within His temple.” This then ends the 2nd 7-Fold Vision in Revelation.
- Next in Revelation before the 3rd 7-Fold Vision in Chapters 12-14 we will read not another interlude, but an Interregnum (a longer pause). This period will deal with the overarching cosmic battle between God and those who are opposing Him. It is the description of things from these coming chapters that has captured the thoughts, imaginations, and speculations of many over the ages and especially in our own time (i.e. The Left Behind Series etc.); this is the where Michael battles the dragon, the dragon is thrown down, the first beast comes, then the second beast comes, the number of the beast being 666, and a return to the 144,000.