

Intro:

1. Review of the types of interpretation, overview of what we have covered.
2. Review the first 6 seals. Imagine the damage that was done by them.

I. **Revelation 8:1**, “*When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.*”

1. At this point, we are at the anticipated end. The scroll which had seven seals, which no one could open, and John cried because of this, but then he saw the Lamb that was worthy to open, and one by one the scroll was opened. Now there is just one more left.
2. Noise had been a part of everything so far. John not only saw things, he heard things. The voice of the four living creatures saying come, the announcements, the loud cries of the martyrs. This has been a noisy experience. Just try to envision that noise getting more and more louder with each opening of the seal. Now when the seventh one is opened, everything is quiet. The silence here is not on the earth, but the silence is in heaven. Imagine that scene.
 - a. 24 elders around the throne, the four living creatures, the great multitude that no one could number wearing white robes,, no singing, no praising. Nothing. Just that awesome, fearsome, solemn, deafening silence. And this goes on for a half hour.
3. So what does this silence mean?
 - a. Historicist interpret this to be the short period during which the 144,000 were sealed. It represents the brief interval between the opening of the seventh seal and the first barbarian invasion (or what they interpret to be the barbarian invasion) in vs. 7. This time period is known as the 70 years that intervened Constantine’s victory up until the time when the Arabians invade the Roman Empire in AD 395. This half an hour is scene as being precisely equivalent to seventy years of Roman history.
 - b. Preterist see that this could be interpreted as being the result that the prayers of the saints were heard and that the first 6 seals God brought vindication to His people. They see that a new group of Christians will begin to be persecuted, and then the cries start up again. They then say that what happens in the following verses follows what happened in the Jewish worship rituals where the prayers of the saints are offered to the incense of God. The half hour is the time that was set aside each day for one of the priest to go into the temple and offer the daily incense, and outside it was to be silent while he was inside offering up the incense. (Luke 1:20).
 - c. Most futurist see this as a silence of expectancy, for this is the last seal and its fixing to get bad. They compare it to the silence before a foreman of a jury reads the verdict. For a moment there is silence, and everyone awaits what is fixing to come next.
 - d. Spiritualist see this as just the lull before the storm. They compare this to the fall of Jericho. The people walked around the city for 7 days in silence, then after that the trumpets sound and the judgment of Jericho is complete. They relate this to that story.
4. I think this is a powerful verse. And I don’t get to caught up in trying to figure everything out, because like I said, when you do that you miss the point it’s trying to make. I see this as powerful moment of worship in Heaven. The scroll is completely unrolled, and God’s perfect justice is unveiled. And it is just, but it is hard. I see this as a moment of solemnity.
 - a. And to me it goes with God’s character. God does not delight in destroying His creation. Yet at this point, the time of mercy has past, and it must be done. So I don’t see this as everybody in Heaven with their mouths open in awe thinking “This is going to be bad!” I see them all with their head down bowed, knowing that what is about to take place is terribly awful, but it is just and it must be done. And so to me it speaks volumes about the holiness, the justice, and the grace of God.
 - b. **Zephaniah 1:7** says, “*Be silent before the Sovereign LORD, for the day of the LORD is near.*”

II. **Revelation 8:2**, “*And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.*”

1. In the book of Revelation, there appears to be 3 groups of 7 angels. They are the angels of the seven churches, the angels of the seven trumpets, and the angels of the seven bowls. Some suppose that they are the same group.

- a. Very interesting that the Jewish tradition that the early church came out of taught that there were 7 angles known as the “Angels of the presence” who stood in the presence of God. Now it’s interesting that in the book of Revelation, that these are the only angles said to be standing before God. The book of I Enoch 20:2-8 list them as being: Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Saraqael, Gabriel, and Remiel.
 - i. Luke 1:19 Gabriel identifies himself to Zacharias as “Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God”
 - b. In the book of Tobit, Raphael is identified as “one of the seven holy angels who present the prayers of the saints and enter into the presence of the glory of the Holy One (Tobit 12:15). This is interesting because the action of the seventh seal focuses on the prayers of the saints.
 - c. I think this is a powerful image that if there are “7 Angels of the Presence”, these are high ranking angels. then I think that it means so much that God entrusts these angels (not just any) but these to do these 7 trumpets of His wrath.
2. The role of a Trumpet was prevalent in pronouncing God’s judgment.

III. Revelation 8:3-5 *“Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. ⁴ The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.”* (Ref. Revelation 5:8)

1. This is likely the heavenly counterpart to the incense offering in the temple at Jerusalem. Specifically, the Day of Atonement celebration. Each day, a priest offered up the morning and evening offering. It was the first and last act of the daily office in the temple. This is what John the Baptist’ dad was doing when he got the word about his wife being pregnant. Usually the priest was to take a silver censer and about half a pound of incense.
2. But on the Day of Atonement, he used a golden censer and took all the incense he could possibly carry. The priest would then climb the stairs up to the large altar of the sacrifice outside the temple where the sacrificial fire always burned. There he filled the cense with coals from that fire, and then he would take it to the sanctuary to the golden altar of incense, which was the closest thing located to the Holy of Holies. And when it did, it would fill everything with a pleasant aroma.
3. Now it doesn’t say what the prayers were for, but we kind of gather that it relates to the “How Long O’ Lord until You vindicate us” prayer in Revelation. 6:10. So they are praying for God’s justice, for God to bring an end to the evil in the world.
4. And those prayers are about to be answered. Now a few things I think are important here.
 - a. Are prayers are going up to Heaven.
 - b. Are prayers result in action. **James 5:16** says, *“The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”*
5. Now from a futurist point of view, these relate to the prayers of the Tribulation saints, and they are added to the other saints. But I think that it also applies to every prayer we offer up to God, especially in whatever tribulation we are experiencing.
6. The immediate response is the peals of thunder, the flashes of lightning, and the earthquake. Contrast that with the silence.

IV. Revelation 8:6-7, *“Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them. ⁷ The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.”*

1. The trumpets follow the pattern of the Exodus plaques on Egypt. This one corresponds with Exodus 9:23
2. Some see this, because of course we want to know what this is, as the result of the earthquake mentioned in the previous verse, and volcanic eruptions take place causing it spew the hot lava skyward, which would be red, and the masses of water vapor that would be blown from this

skyward would cause horrific thunderstorms that would bring about giant hail, and possibly the vapor could mix with the gasses giving them a reddish tint. (Others say it will be a comet that hits the earth. Yet others see it as a nuclear war.)

3. But notice the destruction, 1/3rd. That's how precise God's judgment will be. He want be off by an inch.

V. Revelation 8:8-9, *“The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, ⁹ a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.”*

1. This is believed by most to be a huge meteor or asteroid hurled to the earth. (Discuss Discovery Channel special on this)
2. The cascading destruction of this. The sea turned to blood, 1/3 fish died, and 1/3 ships destroyed.

VI. Rev 8:10-11, *“The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water-- ¹¹ the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.”*

1. Some see this as a body from Heaven, like a comet or something, that is hurled to the earth and breaks apart giving it that torch look, and with precision, hits the fresh water supplies.
2. Wormwood is a shrub whose leaves are used in the manufacture of absinthe, so toxic it is banned in most countries. Wormwood is used 8 times in the OT, and refers to bitterness and poison. And think about the damage if a third of the water was undrinkable.
3. Now remember all these things are piggy-backed on each other. So all the chaos from the first 6 seals are still being felt. These add to the woes.

VII. Revelation 8:12, *“The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.”*

1. Eclipse possibly, or some compare it to a nuclear winter.

VIII. Revelation 8:13, *“As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: “Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!”*

1. **If you think this is bad, it's fixing to get worse!**