



Revelation 8

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Tape #8247
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Let's turn to Revelation chapter eight as we continue our journey through the Bible in the last book, moving now through the last book of the Bible, Revelation chapter eight.

We had in chapter six the opening of the first six seals of the scroll. After the opening of the sixth seal, we have the seventh chapter, which is sort of parenthetical. It gives you further information of the events that took place in the opening of the six seals. As we get into chapters eight and nine, we will be looking at the trumpet judgments, the seven trumpet judgments. So you have the six seals. Or actually we'll be looking at six of the seven. You have the six seals and then you have the explanation. Then you will have the six trumpet judgments and then comes another chapter ten, parenthetical explanation. And then you will have there in a few chapters of the parenthetical explanations and it will take the seventh trumpet and then out of the seven come the seven personages. But it follows this pattern through the book. Taking six of the sevens and after the sixth ones, giving sort of a summary of the events and amplifying some of the aspects of it. And then goes on to the seventh and what comes out of the seventh. We now come to the seventh seal in verse one.

When he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour (8:1).

Silence can sometimes be a very awesome thing especially in a large group of people. And in heaven, there will be hundreds of millions and to think of silence for the space of about a half-hour is sort of an awesome kind of a thing. We had silence for about the space of ten seconds. And you get a feeling of what it will be like to have silence for the space of a half-hour. It is sort of the quiet before the storm. The silence that precedes these cataclysmic judgments that will come with the seven trumpet sounds. And so it is one of those moments where there is that awful quietness and silence before the tornado hit. And they say that when there is a tornado, that before it hits, there just seems to be an eerie kind of a silence and quietness, calmness. But then the tremendous force. So that is what the silence will be like in heaven for the space of about a half an hour. And then John said,

I saw the seven angels, which stood before God (8:2);

We know that surrounding the throne of God are the four cherubim and they are described for us in Ezekiel chapter one and Ezekiel chapter ten and identified as cherubim in chapter ten. John describes them in the fourth chapter here of the Book of Revelation. They are there saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which is, which was, and which is to come" (Revelation 4:8). But there are also seven angels that stand before God. The Bible names, I believe, two of them.

In the book of the Apocrypha there are five others named. Gabriel is one of them. You remember when he came to the father of John the Baptist, Zacharias. He said, "I am Gabriel, I stand in the presence of God" (Luke 1:19). So he is one of the present angels. And so John "saw the seven angels which stood before God,"

and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel (8:2,3).

Not one of the seven but another angel,

came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all of the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne (8:3).

The Book of Revelation is interesting in that it is sort of a compilation of the Old Testament and parts of the New Testament. Not much in the Book of Revelation had not already been revealed. And you need a background and understanding of the Old Testament to really understand fully the New. When you get into the heavenly scene, it is good to have a background and understanding of the earthly tabernacle because the earthly tabernacle was actually an earthly model of heaven. And the Lord, when He commanded Moses to build the tabernacle, He said, Now be careful that you build it just as it was ordered. And the reason for the carefulness is that you do have in the earthly tabernacle a model of heaven and the throne of God. And so if you want to get an idea of heaven and the throne of God, then you need to go back and study the tabernacle.

And we know that in the tabernacle, there was the holy place with the table of showbread, with the altar of incense and with the seven candlesticks on the single base, and between the Holy Place and the holiest of all, or the Holy of Holies, there was this thick curtain, a veil. And it was to keep people from going into the holy of holies. That was to be entered only one day out of the year, the Day of Atonement, and by only one man, the high priest. And when he entered into the holy of holies, he did so to make intercession before God for the people of Israel.

Within the Holy of Holies, there was the golden ark of the covenant. It was covered by a golden lid called the mercy seat. Above that there were the four cherubim that are the cherubim that are about the throne of God. And thus you have the model of God's throne there in the holy of holies where the priest would enter into the very presence of God. Now as he would enter into the Holy of Holies, he was to have the golden censer and he would take the live coals off of the altar or the glowing red hot coals, put them in this golden censer, and in his right hand, he would have this incense that was ground into powder. And as they would pull back the veil to allow him to enter into the Holy of Holies, with the little censer with the chain holding it, he would take the handful of incense and put it on the hot coals and of course, it would dissolve immediately into a thick smoke. A fragrant smoke, the incense, very fragrant. And this thick smoke would cover the mercy seat. It says that the high priest not die.

He came in with the incense, the smoke, which was figurative of the prayers of God's people. He was entering in before the Lord now with the prayers of God's people. Back in chapter five when Jesus steps forth to take the scroll out of the right hand of the Father, we read that the cherubim and the twenty-four elders have their golden censers full of the odours, which are the prayers of the saints. And so the smoke of the incense, the fragrance of that incense, was figurative of the prayers of God's people.

God loves to have you fellowship with Him. Your prayers are like a sweet fragrance unto the Lord. How He loves to have communion with you and spend time with you. And your prayers are as a sweet fragrance unto Him. And so even as in the earthly model, so it is in heaven. John sees the seven angels, which are given the seven trumpets and then the other angel who comes forth having this golden censer. There is much incense given unto him, and it's interesting the high priest was to come with much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

Have you ever prayed for justice? For righteousness upon the earth? Have you ever prayed that God would bring His righteous judgment upon the evil, wicked men? In the sixth chapter, in the opening of the fifth seal, John saw the souls that were under the altar clothed in white robes saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, before You avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?" They had been killed, martyred for their witness of Jesus Christ, for their failure to worship the antiChrist. Their failure to get with

his program. Now they are asking, Lord, how long before you avenge our blood against our adversaries on the earth?

So the prayers of the saints, being offered at this time before God pours out His judgment in the seven trumpets upon the earth.

The smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel then took the censer, and he filled it with fire from the altar, and he cast it to the earth (8:4,5):

Now he used it first to put the incense, the prayers offered to God. But now he's filled the censer again with fiery coals from the altar there, and he cast it to the earth.

and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake (8:5).

The silence is now over. The judgments are ready to begin. An awesome scene, there in heaven as we watch this whole event now unfolding.

The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up (8:7).

The first of the judgments strike the first of God's creation upon the earth. When God separated the waters and created the dry land, God also created the plants and the trees upon the earth at that time. They are the first of God's creation on the earth and they are the first to experience the judgment of God as God destroys a third of the trees and all the grass of the earth, a tremendous fire! Can you imagine what that will do to the atmosphere? No, you can't. And we can't imagine what it will be like when a third part of all of the trees, a third part of the grass of the earth is burnt up, it will be a horrible catastrophe.

It is interesting that today as the pagan religions have invaded the United States. And as the eastern religions, the worship of Mother Earth, the Gaea, as they have taken hold, we have the worship of the earth, the worship of the forest, the trees, the tree huggers, and all of these environmentalists who are so concerned with the environment of the earth. And it's a legitimate concern. But it is interesting to me that with all of their concern of what man is doing to the ecology, to the destroying of the rainforests and the creating of an imbalance in nature and all of the dire consequences that are being proposed that will come as we destroy the rainforest in South America and all, they are predicting all of these dire consequences and there is this tremendous effort to create environmental laws to protect our environment.

I'm not opposed to rational protection. I am opposed to the religious protection that people have. And of course, we have seen that man in his wisdom is not always so wise. And that in trying to protect the little gnat catchers, we lost millions of dollars worth of homes in Laguna Beach just a few years ago. Man trying to control nature. We can't. But man is trying to control the thing. But it's going to be out of control when God sends this first trumpet judgment, the "fire mingled with blood, cast upon the earth: a third part of the trees burnt up, and all of the green grass was burnt up." Wiping out a third part of the trees and the grass!

The second angel sounded, and as it were (8:8).

And notice, "as it were." There are people who say that the Book of Revelation is all symbolic. And thus, you shouldn't waste your time trying to read it because it is symbolic and we don't always understand the symbols. But symbols are always representing something that is real and here is John in his day, almost two thousand years ago, here is John having a vision of things that have not yet come to pass. Looking far into the future.

Now if you were living in that day of John, where the fastest mode of transportation would be a horse, and if you had a vision of what would be taking place 1950 years later, or 1900 years later because it's been just about 1900 years since John wrote the book of Revelation, just a little over 1900 years; how would you describe, say, if in the vision God showed you a helicopter? How would you describe it? If He showed you missiles. If He showed you tanks firing their cannon, how would you describe that? And so here is John having a vision of things of the future and thus he has to describe them with things that are familiar to him, using words that are familiar to him. And thus when John describes some of these things, when they are just a description, it is interesting that John tells you that they were "as it were." In other words, it wasn't but it was "as it were." As he looked at it, as he saw it, it looked like a great mountain of fire. It was "as it were a great mountain," it wasn't a great mountain of fire but it was "as it were a great mountain of fire." So you envision in your mind as looking like,

a great mountain of fire cast into the sea; and a third part of the sea became blood; And a third part of the creatures which were in the sea, that had life, died; and a third part of the ships were destroyed (8:8,9).

Can you imagine the devastation in this second trumpet judgment as God now strikes the sea with this, what looks like a great mountain of fire, burning fire that is cast into the sea, polluting the sea so that a third part of the creatures within the sea die? A third part of the ships sink. And the third part becomes as blood when the third trumpet sounds. And it's interesting that this is happening in thirds.

The third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood or bitter; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter (8:10,11).

The third thing that God attacks in this judgment is the fresh water supply of the earth. Man has done a pretty good job in polluting the rivers, the streams and all. And right now, there's a lot of talk about preparation for the year 2000. The Y2K bug. And they are encouraging you to have a certain amount of fresh water on hand because of the implanted computer chips in the systems that pump the water and things of this nature. Whether or not there will be power outages and all of the supposed and imagined calamities that could come, possibly, when their computer chips are not able to recognize the change of the millennium, when they go to the 00's of the year 2000. And thus there's a lot of speculation of what might happen. And thus they're saying, Just in case. Now we have 80% or 90% taken care of but just in case, it will be a good idea to have a box of oats and it would be a good idea to have some water stored and just in case.

We are living in really an area that is quite arid. It is almost desert. There is not enough rain that falls in Southern California to support the population of Southern California. We depend upon the water that is imported south from the north part of the state and from the water from the Colorado River. But can you imagine what will transpire when God strikes the fresh water of the earth? The fresh water lakes. The fresh water rivers. Turning them poisonous so that they will not be palatable. Can you imagine what will happen on the earth at that time when a third part of the fresh water system is polluted and men will not be able to drink it? As I said, you don't want to be here. And thank God, you don't have to be here. God has provided and will provide for His church the way of escape.

Now there are those that teach that the church will be here and that the rapture takes place at the seventh trumpet. For they try to identify the seventh trumpet with the last trump of First Corinthians 15 when Paul is talking about the rapture of the church. Paul writing to the Corinthians said, "Behold, I show you a mystery; We will not all sleep or die, but we will all be changed, In a moment, in a twinkling of an eye: for this corruption must put on incorruption, this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:51-53). And he associates that change, taking place at the last trump.

And so because there are seven trumpets of judgment, they identify the last trump as the seventh trumpet. And thus they say we'll be here to go through all of these calamities as God's judgment is being poured out upon the earth. But we will show you in subsequent lessons how that there is no relationship at all between the last trump of First Corinthians 15 and the seventh trumpet of the Book of Revelation.

In the Old Testament, the Book of Numbers, they were commanded to "make two silver trumpets; of a whole piece shall you make them: that you may use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps" (Numbers 10:2). At the time when Israel was going through the wilderness, they didn't have loud speaker systems, amplifiers and all, and so the sound that could be heard throughout the area was that of a trumpet, a trumpet blast. And so the trumpets were used when the time came to break camp and to move on, they had a certain, the trumpet would blow twice. And that would signify that they were to move on, the time had come to move on.

"If the trumpet would blow once," in Numbers 10:4, "if they blow but with one trumpet, then the princes, which are the heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves together unto Moses." So the blowing of the trumpet once, was to call together the princes to come together to Moses. That is the kind of trump that will sound to call the church into heaven. As in the fourth chapter of Revelation, John "saw a door open in heaven: the first voice was as of a trumpet saying unto me, Come up hither, I'll show you things which must be after the church things" (Revelation 4:1). So the blowing of the one trumpet, it will be the last trumpet for the church. And that is what the last trump is.

In First Thessalonians as Paul is talking about the rapture of the church, he calls it "the trump of God" as he is writing to the Thessalonians to comfort them concerning the believers who had died (1 Thessalonians 4:16). They had a belief that Jesus was returning immediately and that those who die before Jesus came back unfortunately missed out on the glorious kingdom age. And so they were sorrowing for those who had died like there was no hope for them. So Paul writes to them concerning those that sleep in Christ.

"I write to you," he said, "that you sorrow not, as those who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus both died and rose again, so then those that are sleeping in Jesus will He bring with Him when He comes. For we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord are not going to precede those who asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-16). This is not the trump of God. These are the trumpets that were given to the seven angels. And the angels are the ones that are blowing these trumpets and they are actually the trumpets that declare the judgments of God that are coming upon the earth during this great tribulation period.

So we find a third part of the trees destroyed, we find a third part of the ships in the sea are destroyed, a third part of the living creatures in the sea are destroyed, the fresh water is now destroyed, a third part of it, and you can imagine the calamity and the things that are happening in the hearts of men at this point.

When the fourth angel sounded, and a third part of the sun was smitten, a third part of the moon, third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound (8:12,13)!

In other words, you haven't seen anything yet! It's going to get worse. "Woe, woe, woe." Why? Because there are three trumpets yet to sound. So the woes are for each trumpet.

As we get into chapter nine, we'll find the fifth and sixth trumpet. And then we go into another parenthetical portion of the Book of Revelation. But Jesus, talking about the great tribulation in Matthew 24

said, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken” (Matthew 24:29). Now “the sun not shining for a third part.”

You remember the Desert Storm warfare as the Iraqis were leaving Kuwait, they set on fire the oil wells. They turned the valves on and struck a match and the smoke was so thick, so heavy, you perhaps saw pictures of it on the news. Where at midday, it was dark. You could barely see the sun. They had to drive with their headlights. It is possible that when the forest and all of the fields are burned that it will create such a smoke shield around the world that the light of the sun will be darkened for a third part. The same with the moon and the same with the stars that it will sort of envelope the earth.

There was a volcano back, when did Krakatau explode? In the 1800s sometime. And the explosion of this volcano in the South Pacific was so great that for over a year, the sunsets were colored around the world with the dust that was still in the atmosphere as the result of that volcano exploding. The sound of the explosion was so tremendous it was heard a thousand miles away. Just a little foretaste of what’s coming! “The sun darkened, the stars, the moon for a third part.”

When the sun is darkened on an eclipse and sort of at midday there is this darkness. I’ve never seen a total eclipse but I’ve seen partial eclipse and there is something that is sort of eerie when the sun is darkened. When daylight isn’t really light as we usually think of it. Awesome! The judgments of God as they proceed. But this is just the start of it. Worse things are coming as we move through the Book of Revelation. So much so that you don’t want to be here. I thank God, I won’t be here.

Jesus said, “Pray always, that you’ll be accounted worthy to escape these things that are coming to pass upon the earth and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:36). That’s my prayer and I know God hears me when I pray.

Now Jesus is directing these judgments. He’s in charge. He has taken the scroll. He has begun to break the seals. He’s the One that is ordering the events. He’s completely in charge of this judgment. Jesus said, “For the Father judges no man, but He has committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. And he that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which has sent Him” (John 5:22,23).

In Acts 10:42, “He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of those that are alive and those that are dead.” Paul writing to the Romans said, “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Romans 2:16). Acts 17:31, Paul in testifying said, “Because He has appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, that He hath raised Him from the dead. So Jesus will be in charge of the judgments that are coming upon the earth.

Again, that would preclude His judging His church. He said to His disciples, “I no longer call you servants, but I call you friends; because a servant doesn’t know what his lord is doing” (John 15:15). If He calls us friends and then He exposes us to these things, that’s not a very good friend. But because we are His bride, He takes us out of the earth before He begins to destroy the earth and destroy men who have been guilty of destroying the earth.

So next week we move on the first two “woes” as we look at the fifth and the sixth trumpet judgments of God that are coming upon the earth. Next week all hell breaks forth on the earth literally as you get into that sixth trumpet, the hordes of demonic spirits are released upon the earth with horrible consequences. You don’t want to be here. Believe me.

Father, we thank You that You have given fair warning. You've been so slow to anger, so patient with man, with rebellious, blasphemous man. Lord, we see how the world today is in total rebellion against Your righteous law. We see, Lord, how men are flaunting their evil practices. Demanding that they be accepted and that they even have special privileges because of their evil practices. Lord, we realize that You're going to bring Your judgment. And we realize, Lord, that the world is ripe for judgment. Even as You have declared that the cup of the indignation of Your wrath is going to overflow. We see, Lord, the cup full, ready to overflow. Surely, Lord, the judgment is righteous. The world deserves Your judgment. We thank You, Lord, that You've not appointed us to wrath, but that You have provided a way for Your church to escape the things that will be coming to pass upon the earth. Lord, may we be as the wise virgins prepared for Your return so that we will not be left to face the day of judgment that is coming. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

Do you have the assurance that you're ready? You see, there will be no time to get ready when the trumpets sounds for the church. That whole event, our metamorphosis, this "corruption putting on incorruption, this mortal putting on immortality," is going to take place in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye. In just a moment, it will be over. There'll be no opportunity at that time to make up for your lack of preparation. The Bible exhorts us to the now, to the present, to the immediacy. Important that we be ready so that, that day does not catch us, as the scripture said, unaware or unprepared. If you're not certain about your salvation, your relationship with the Lord, it's time to get down to business with God. The pastors are down here at the front to pray with you. And I'd encourage you as soon as we're dismissed, come forward. Let them pray with you. I wouldn't leave this place tonight until I was sure that should the Lord come for His church tonight, I was ready to go.

All of the signs are out. The coming of the Lord is soon. Just how soon, nobody knows. But the important thing is to be ready. Because you know not the day or the hour or the moment that the Lord is coming for His church. As Paul said, "Knowing the time, it's high time that we awake from our sleep. For now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed." We know that we're one day closer to the return of Jesus Christ. We know He's going to return. Just when, we're not sure. Just like you can look at a girl who is expecting and you know that she's going to have a child. The signs are out. You just don't know exactly when the moment is going to take place. But you can't deny it. The signs are there. It's important to be ready.