

Revelation 8 PART 1



((Rev 8:1-13))

I. Preliminary Considerations

-The seventh seal contains (or unleashes) seven angels sounding seven trumpets and the events they represent. (1-2, 6).

-The fact that this chapter begins with the breaking of the seventh (and final) seal indicates to us that the events represented in the sounding of the trumpets are to be seen in immediate historical sequence to the events found in chapters 6 and 7 (the breaking of the seals and interlude).

-The seven trumpets are concerned (again) w/ the Jews/Jerusalem (8:2-6—where they prepare to sound them trumpets is in the same place the fire in the censer is thrown—“the earth” (τῆς γῆς) (lit.) the land---i.e. Israel/the land of the Jews.

-The seven angels w/ the sounding trumpets represent the same events as the seven angels w/the seven bowls of wrath and are therefore parallel accounts¹.

Compare= (2nd: sea) 8:8-9 w/16:3; (3rd: rivers/springs) 8:10 w/16:4-7 (consider how these words also connect this to the Jews based on what we have already seen!—see again 19:1-2); (6th: armies over the Euphrates) 8:13-16 w/ 16:12.

¹Though not all that is communicated between the events of the trumpets and bowls is exactly the same, it is not necessary to establish them as parallel accounts (ex. The Gospels). In respect to parallel accounts, only contradictions (sequential or otherwise) create a problem. And in this respect, none seem to exist.

-The seven angels and sounding trumpets therefore represent the completion of God’s wrath (begun in the breaking of the 1st seal). (15:1)

-(In light of the previous considerations), **the events represented in the seven trumpets =The last five months of the Jewish War and final siege of Jerusalem (APR/70AD – SEPT/70AD).**

-Where this places Titus and his Roman armies = Directly upon the walls of Jerusalem, no longer allowing anyone to come out of the city to freedom (or even slavery or death) but instead holding her remaining residents captive inside, while at the same time bombarding her through Roman heavy weaponry, machinery and ramps.

II. Contextual Interpretation

CHAPTERS 8 THROUGH 11 REPRESENT THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THE FINAL FIVE MONTH SIEGE OF JERUSALEM BY THE ROMANS LEADING TO HER COMPLETE DESTRUCTION IN SEPTEMBER OF 70 AD.

Scriptural support:

-(8:8 w/ Mat 21:18-21, Jer 51:25, 42; 9:10; 9:13-14; 10:7 w/Mat 24:2,14, Col 1:6, 23; 11:1-2,8; 11:18 w/6:9-11, Luk 18:1-7)

“Titus began the (final) siege of Jerusalem in April of 70. The defenders held out desperately for five months...” –F.F. Bruce

VERSES 1-6 (OF CHAPTER 8) REVEAL THAT SUCH EVENTS ARE THE RESULT OF HEAVENLY WORSHIP.

(1-4) = verses 2-4 take place during the moment of silence and describe an important the time of worship at the Temple: the time of intercession and offering on behalf of God’s people (Exo 30:1-10; Lev 16:12-13; Luk 1:8-10; Psa 141:2)

*Slowly the incensing priest and his assistants ascended the steps to the Holy Place, preceded by the two priests who had formerly dressed the altar and the candlestick, and who now removed the vessels they had left behind, and, worshipping, withdrew. Next, one of the assistants reverently spread the coals on the golden altar; the other arranged the incense; and then the chief officiating priest was left alone within the Holy Place, to await the signal of the president before burning the incense. It was probably (during this time) that the angel Gabriel appeared to Zecharias (Luk 1:8-11). As the president gave the word of the command, which marked that the time of incense had come, the whole multitude of the people without withdrew from the inner court, and fell down before the Lord, spreading their hands in silent prayer. It is this most solemn period, when throughout the vast Temple buildings deep silence rested on the worshipping multitude, while within the sanctuary itself the priest laid the incense on the golden altar and the cloud of odours rose up before the Lord.” Alfred Edersheim (*The Temple and Its Religious Services*)*

“The half hour would be about the length of time necessary for a priest to enter the Temple and offer incense and return.” --David Chilton

“The incense was a symbol of intercession proceeding up to God.” –Darrell Bock

(1-2) seventh...seven...seven = the number of perfection, completion or fullness. This holds true for all the other examples of seven in the book—EXAMPLES: 7 spirits/lamps (1:4, 4:5) = perfect spirit (i.e. God the Holy Spirit) 7 churches/lampstands, stars (1:4, 12, 16) = a complete message for the church (in the sense that every type of church is dealt w/); 7 plagues (15:1) = the full package of God’s earthly wrath--- which is also (again) what this seventh seal and these coming seven trumpet blasts represent. At the end, God will have accomplished His perfect, complete and full destruction of the Jews and Jerusalem making it clear to the whole world that they are no longer His people, nation or the place where His kingdom and spirit dwells. Seven trumpets were also a part of the liturgy in worship (Neh 12:41).

(3-4) = These verses reveal why the events to follow are the result of a worship service in Heaven: b/c the time has come for the prayers of the saints (for vengeance) to be answered! (Rev 6:9-11; Luk 18:7; 2Co 1:11; Psa 141:2; this is why we read what we do at the end of the book—Rev 19:1-3)

(5) censer...filled it w/ the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth =condemnation (Num 16:17-35); there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake =God as judge and avenger (Rev 4:4; Exo 19:1-17, 20:1-5; Eze 1:1-5, 22; 2Sa 22:14-15; Psa 18:13-14; Zec 9:12-16; Job 36:30-31; Mat 24:27).

(6) = This “And” (Καί .) which begins this verse makes it clear that the angels’ preparation is the result of what has just transpired (by way of declared condemnation and judgment as answer to the saints worship before God). Like the trumpeters of Jericho, each angel is prepared to signal what will ultimately be God’s work in bringing down the walls of the city (not of Jericho—but Jerusalem. This is not only highly ironic but also gives new meaning to “all Scripture being God-breathed and profitable for instruction” or “the Law and the Prophets all prophesied”—since it is now clear that the unique process of destruction by God at Jericho was ultimately carried out as prophetic imagery for the very nation who carried it out (i.e. the Jews)! (Consider the number of trumpets/trumpeters, and the fact that the ark shows up in the final blast: Jos 6:4)—hardly could this be coincidence— or the fact that those serving Joshua (i.e. Jesus) are the ones blowing the trumpets and on the “winning side”.

“Before the Jews’ rebellion...so great alight shone around the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be daytime (though it was night). (The) light lasted for half an hour. This light seemed to be a good sign to the unskillful...but the men of learning understood it, that the security of their holy house was dissolved of its own accord. so these publicly declared, that this signal foreshadowed the desolation that was coming upon them. Besides these, a few days after that...at the feast we call Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner court of the temple, as their custom was to perform their sacred duties, they said that, they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, ‘Let us remove hence.’...(However) the miserable people persuaded by (the) deceivers...(did not) give credit to the signs that were so evident and did so plainly foretell their future desolation.” --Josephus (Wars 6.5.3)

***WHAT NOT TO MISS: IT IS WORSHIP! God expects us to worship Him for His judgments as much as for His mercy.**