

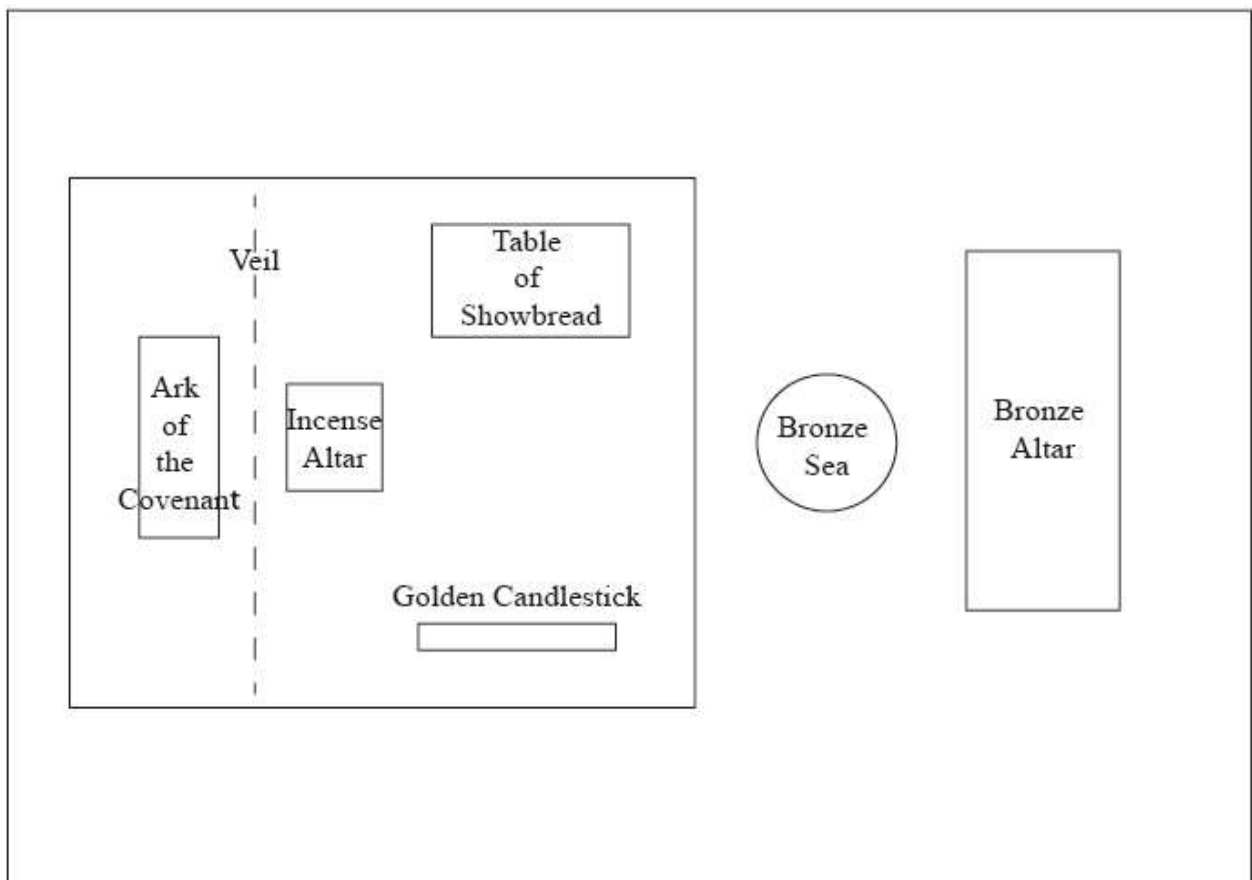
Ministry of Grace

Revelation Chapter 8

The First 4 Trumpet Judgments

Before we get into the Trumpet Judgments, let me ask you a couple of questions. On a scale of one to ten, how important are your prayers to you? Now, on a scale of one to ten, how important do you think our prayers are to God? That's a hard one to evaluate, isn't it? Hang-on to those questions for a few minutes. Now, let's talk about the throne room of God to which John has been transported in the spirit. In order to understand the throne room a little better, it may be helpful to look at the layout of the Tabernacle which the children of Israel carried with them as they wandered in the wilderness. It is the same configuration as the inner temple, later built by Solomon, which contained the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, or Most Holy Place.

Layout of the Tabernacle & the Temple



Inside the temple building, we see the Ark of the Covenant, which is covered by the Mercy Seat. This is where God (the father) is said to reside. We also see the Table of Showbread, which represents Jesus, the Bread of Life. And – we see the Golden Candlestick with its seven burning lamps ([Revelation 4:5](#)), representing the Holy Spirit.

This is also a representation of the Throne Room of God, where Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are present, with the Golden Incense Altar in the middle of them. Here's how John described them.

God, the Father;

At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald. (Revelation 4:2-3)

God, the Son;

And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals." And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, ... (Revelation 5:5-6a)

God, the Holy Spirit;

From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, (Revelation 4:5)

And in the midst of these three, we see the Golden Incense Altar. Also notice that in Revelation 14:18, the angel who has power over fire is said to come "out of" this altar. We also know from verse five of the current chapter that this altar contains fire. In the Old Testament description of the temple, there were two altars: the bronze altar, on which the sacrifices were burned, and the golden incense altar inside the Holy place. In this heavenly scene there is no bronze altar because there is no more need for sacrifice, since Jesus Christ has offered Himself once for all (Romans 6:10; Hebrews 7:27, 9:12, 10:10). In the Old Testament, the golden incense altar stood before the veil of the temple which separated the Holy place from the Holy of Holies. There is no veil in God's Throne Room because Jesus' blood opened the way to access the Father. Now, here's a description of this incense altar.

You shall make an altar on which to burn incense; you shall make it of acacia wood. A cubit shall be its length, and a cubit its breadth. It shall be square, and two cubits shall be its height. Its horns shall be of one piece with it. You shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and around its sides and its horns. And you shall make a molding of gold around it. And you shall make two golden rings for it. Under its molding on two opposite sides of it you shall make them, and they shall be holders for poles with which to carry it. You shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. And you shall put it in front of the veil that is before the ark of the testimony, in front of the mercy seat that is above the testimony, where I will meet with you. And Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it. Every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall burn it, and when Aaron sets up the lamps at twilight, he shall burn it, a regular incense offering before the LORD throughout your generations. (Exodus 30:1-8)

In the Old Testament we are told that the priests were to take the hot coals from the bronze altar, carry them into the Holy place using a censer, and combine them with incense on the golden altar of incense. Note also, that this was precisely the service that Zacharias was performing when Gabriel, the presence angel, appeared to him:

Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. (Luke 1:8-11)

While the people stood outside praying, Zacharias burned the incense on the altar of incense, the smoke of which represented the prayers of the people. Time and time again we are told that the incense represents,

or is present with, the prayers of the saints. If we stop and think about this, we see how important our prayers are. And now, back to Revelation.

The Trumpet Judgments

Chapter six revealed to us the first of God’s judgments against the permanent earth dwellers. The little lambkin began opening the seals to the title deed of the earth and with each seal a new judgment was levied against mankind. The first four seals brought forth the four horsemen of the apocalypse, false peace, war, famine, and death. As a result, we witnessed the killing of ¼ of the population of the earth. We noted previously that since Hades was working with death, it appears that the deaths were all unsaved earth dwellers. This makes sense since Christians were removed from the earth in the rapture just before these judgments began. In the fifth seal judgment we were introduced to the martyrs who cried out for vengeance against those who killed them. They were told to rest a little longer until the remainder of the martyrs were added to their numbers. Then, with the opening of the sixth seal there was a large earthquake and fearsome signs in the sky.

Chapter seven provided us with a pause in the judgments from the little lambkin. In chapter seven we were told about the cessation of all of the winds of the earth, producing an eerie stillness. During this lull in the winds, we learned that God had his 144,000 Jewish witnesses sealed in their foreheads, 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. Then, we were taken forward in time to the latter part of the tribulation where we saw an uncountable number of saints who had been saved as a result of the testimony of these 144,000 witnesses.

Chapter eight now brings us back to the time right after the opening of the sixth seal and we get to witness the opening of the seventh seal. As this seal is opened, there is silence in heaven for one-half hour, which coincides with the calm that is occurring on the earth. This is followed by the sounding of the first four of the seven trumpet judgments. Chapter nine will tell us about the fifth and sixth trumpet judgments and the seventh trumpet judgment will be described in the middle of chapter eleven. Then later, in chapter sixteen, we will be introduced to the seven bowl (vial) judgments. Before we get into the details of the first four trumpet judgments however, notice the similarity of the focus of the trumpet and bowl judgments:

Judgment Focus	Trumpet		Bowl	
The Earth	1 st Trumpet	Revelation 8:1-7	1 st Bowl	Revelation 16:1, 2
The Sea	2 nd Trumpet	Revelation 8:8, 9	2 nd Bowl	Revelation 16:3
The Rivers	3 rd Trumpet	Revelation 8:10, 11	3 rd Bowl	Revelation 16:4-7
The Heavens	4 th Trumpet	Revelation 8:12, 13	4 th Bowl	Revelation 16:8, 9
Torment of Mankind	5 th Trumpet	Revelation 9:1, 2	5 th Bowl	Revelation 16:10, 11
The Euphrates	6 th Trumpet	Revelation 9:13-21	6 th Bowl	Revelation 16:12-16
Lightning, Thunder, Earthquake, and Hail	7 th Trumpet	Revelation 11:15-19	7 th Bowl	Revelation 16:17-21

This similarity in the focus of these judgments has caused some people to conflate the trumpet and bowl judgments, supposing that the trumpet and bowl judgments occur together. However, detailed analysis will show that the first six trumpet judgments occur before any of the bowl judgments and the seventh trumpet judgment appears to contain all of the bowl judgments.

Revelation 8:1 – The 7th Seal Judgment

When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

The seventh seal judgment introduces all of the remaining judgments. As it is opened, there is silence in heaven. Then the angels with the seven trumpets appear and begin to sound their trumpets. The seventh trumpet represents the third woe, which is a reference to the remaining bowl judgments taken as a single entity. We'll get more into this later.

“silence in heaven” Up to this point there have been tremendous sounds in the heavenly scene:

- ✓ Sounds and peals of thunder coming from the throne in heaven – **Revelation 4:5**
- ✓ Loud praise from the elders when the four living ones proclaim the threefold holiness of God – **Revelation 4:8-11**
- ✓ Singing of the elders of the worthiness of the Lamb to open the scroll – **Revelation 5:9, 10**
- ✓ The loud voices of the elders, the 4 living ones, and many angels praising the worthiness of the Lamb with a loud voice – **Revelation 5:11, 12**
- ✓ The thunderous voice of the first living one at the opening of the first seal – **Revelation 6:1**
- ✓ Martyrs under the altar crying out with a loud voice – **Revelation 6:9, 10**
- ✓ The sealing angel arising from the East who cried out with a loud voice – **Revelation 7:2, 3**

Suddenly, with the opening of the seventh seal there is silence in heaven! What a dramatic change! It is reminiscent of the Jewish Temple service where there is singing and praising until the time of the incense offering. In that temple service, the incense offering occurs in silence while the people pray.

Now that the seventh seal has been opened it enables the scroll to be opened up, unleashing the remaining judgments on the inhabitants of the earth. In the shadow of the vociferous praises about the throne for the person and work of the One who sits on the throne and the Lamb, the opening of the scroll and the coming judgments on the earth seem to bring about a silence of abhorrence over what is about to happen to the inhabitants of the earth and, perhaps, a silence of awe at the power and righteous judgments of the Lamb. This silence coincides with the stillness on the earth which resulted from the winds being held back, as we saw in the previous chapter:

“half an hour” – This is translated from *hēmiōrion* which literally translates to “one-half hour.” Whether this half-hour is literal or figurative is unclear, as time in the heavenly realm is not directly correlated with time on earth. In reading the first prophecy of Zephaniah it is easy to see a description of this silence and the trumpet judgments that follow. Notice two of these verses especially. The first is a description of this silence in heaven:

Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated his guests. (**Zephaniah 1:7**)

The day of the LORD referred to here, is a time of God's demonstrated power which begins with the second half of the seven-year Tribulation. The latter part of Zephaniah's prophecy appears to describe the trumpet judgments against the permanent earth dwellers:

a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements. (**Zephaniah 1:16**)

Revelation 8:2

Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

“seven angels who stand before God” – These seven are sometimes referred to as “the presence angels” The word translated “stand” is *estēchasin*, the root of which means “to stand, to continue, or to remain.” It is given here in the perfect tense which signifies a past completed action with an on-going effect where the emphasis is upon the on-going effect.

The word translated “before” is *enōpion*, which literally translates to “in the face of.” The word means “before” or “in the presence of.” Therefore, these are seven angels who are now continually standing in His presence. They appear to be ready to do His bidding in regard to mankind. The angel who appeared to Zacharias, the father of John the baptist, announced himself as Gabriel, one of these “presence” angels:

And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. (Luke 1:19)

Revelation 8:3, 4

And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel.

“another angel” – Some have identified this angel with Christ, the Angel of the Lord; however, there are several reasons why this does not ring true. This angel appears to be separate from the Lamb who is already present in this scene (He is the one who just opened the seventh seal). Also, the word translated “another” is the Greek word *allos*, signifying “another of the same kind” as opposed to “another of a different kind,” which would be the Greek word *heteros*. Therefore, this angel is an angel in the same way as the seven presence angels. Finally, every time that Jesus is introduced in the book of Revelation He is specifically identified:

- Revelation 1:5 – the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth
- Revelation 1:13 – the son of man
- Revelation 1:17 – the first and the last
- Revelation 1:18 – the living One
- Revelation 2:18 – the Son of God
- Revelation 3:7 – He who is holy, who is true
- Revelation 3:14 – the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God
- Revelation 5:5 – the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David
- Revelation 6:1, 16; 7:17; 8:1 – the Lamb
- Revelation 19:11 – Faithful and True
- Revelation 19:3 – the Word of God
- Revelation 19:16 – King of Kings, and Lord of Lords

In this verse, the angel is simply introduced as “another angel,” corroborating the fact that this is not Jesus Christ.

“with a golden censer” – “censer” is a translation of the Greek word *libanōtos*. This is a form of the noun *libanōn*, the Greek word for “frankincense.” Therefore, this literally means “a frankincenser,” or a device for carrying frankincense. This was a golden pan suspended by golden chains into which coals of fire were placed and onto which frankincense was added.

“came and stood at the altar” – This altar is described in Revelation 9:13 as being a golden altar. This is the incense altar that stands between the three persons of the Godhead. In the current verse we see that the incense that is given to the angel is offered with the coals from the heavenly incense altar along with the prayers of all saints.

“the golden altar before the throne” Just as the incense altar stood in front of the veil (in front of the Ark), in God’s throne room, the incense altar stands before the throne.

Revelation 8:5, 6

Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake. Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

“Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth” – This angel, after placing the incense on the golden altar of incense, took coals from this altar and cast them to the earth. With this action the one-half hour of silence in heaven is shattered as there are “peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.” This is a representation of God’s answer to the prayers of all the saints for vengeance against the foes of the godly throughout all ages as described in the fifth seal judgment (**Revelation 6:9-11**). This may also be the point in time when the four mighty angels release the four winds (**Revelation 7:1**).

“and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.” – By virtue of the fact that an earthquake is listed along with the thunder and lightning, these must be earthly occurrences rather than heavenly ones.

Apparently, after the stillness of having no wind blowing for some time, the inhabitants of the earth now experience thunder and lightning out of the calm, clear blue sky, accompanied by another earthquake.

Revelation 8:7 – The 1st Trumpet Judgment

The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

“and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood.” This appears to be the earthly perspective of what was just described in the heavenly scene. In the heavenly scene, the angel cast the coals from the golden altar of incense to the earth. Now, the earth dwellers experience the effect of this fire, which results in one third of all the trees of the earth being burned up and all the green grass of the earth being burned up.

Is this, perhaps, the result of the earth traveling through the tail of a comet or a comet getting too close to the earth and being broken-up by the gravitational effect of the earth? It has been recently discovered that comets are often made up of clusters of frozen methane, water, nickel and iron. Huge ice balls of methane could very well break up upon entering the earth’s atmosphere and fall to earth as flaming hail. The presence of iron and ice could form a red liquid appearing like blood.

It is also possible, and quite likely, that this is a divine judgment that has no natural earthly explanation. Quite possibly God will cause actual hail and fire to fall from the sky mixed with actual blood in a manner that has no natural explanation. This will certainly confound the unbelieving earth dwellers who will have to expend great effort to explain away these phenomena in order to maintain their stance that there is no God.

“all green grass was burned up” – The word translated “green” is *chloros*, which is the word used to describe the color of fresh, new grass, but it is also used to describe the pale color of grass that is dried up. We noted earlier that the same word is used in extra-Biblical writing to refer to the color of honey, the color of sand, and the pale color of a person in mortal sickness or death. This is the same word that was used to describe the “pale horse” of the 4th seal judgment back in **Revelation 6:8**. So, it is very likely that it is not the “green” grass that is burned up, but the yellowish, dry grass.

Revelation 8:8, 9 – The 2nd Trumpet Judgment

The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

“something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea.” This resulted in one-third of the sea becoming blood, killing one-third of the animal life in the sea, and destroying one-third of the ships.

Again, this seems to be the earthly perspective of what happened when the angel threw the censer full of burning coals to the earth. From a cosmological perspective, this could also be the effect of a collision with a comet or other heavenly body which would burn as it passed through the earth’s atmosphere. If the 1st trumpet judgment was the result of the earth passing through the tail of a comet, it is possible that this close encounter caused the comet to break-up and this judgment is caused by part of the comet falling into the sea. The resultant shock wave from impact with the ocean could very easily kill sea animals for hundreds or even thousands of miles and the resulting tsunami would likely destroy most of the ships throughout the coastlands of the ocean into which this heavenly body fell. The sea becoming blood could be a result of the dead sea animals or, more likely, the sea could turn blood red as a result of the composition of the heavenly body landing there.

Or, again, as we mentioned concerning the first trumpet judgment, this could be a supernatural phenomenon arranged by God to clearly demonstrate to the inhabitants of the earth that He is God and is dwelling on high.

Revelation 8:10, 11 – The 3rd Trumpet Judgment

The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter.

“a great star fell from heaven blazing like a torch. ” This resulted in one-third of the fresh water becoming deadly to mankind with many people dying as a result of drinking this water.

“star” – This is translated from *aster*, which refers to “any luminous body in the sky resembling a star.” Therefore, this could be an asteroid, a comet, or any other form of meteorite that burns its way through the atmosphere and strikes the earth. If the second trumpet judgment was the result of a comet breaking apart, this could be another chunk of that same comet.

“torch” – This is the Greek word *lampas*, which refers to a shining light. It is used primarily to refer to “a lamp or torch” used outdoors and used in war. There is a different Greek word *luchnos*, which refers to “a candle or lamp” used to provide light indoors. The use of this particular term here could have reference to the fact that the flaming object (comet) breaks up as it passes through the earth’s atmosphere causing multiple flames much as the flame of a torch breaks up and separates as it burns, whereas a candle or indoor lamp is a steady single flame.

This would also explain how this particular heavenly body fell upon the rivers and springs. Instead of a single meteorite falling and impacting a single location, this heavenly body (comet) apparently falls in many pieces affecting one-third of the rivers and water sources on earth.

“springs” – This is from *pēgas*, meaning “a fountain or spring” in the sense of being the source of water. This could also refer to snowpack and glaciers as the source of rivers and springs.

“wormwood” – This is a translation of the Greek word *apsinthos* from which we get our English word “absinthe.” Wormwood is a shrub whose leaves are used in the manufacture of absinthe, a green liqueur with a bitter anise or licorice flavor and a high alcohol content, which if consumed in excess is so toxic that it causes death. This flaming heavenly body is the only one named in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 8:12 – The 4th Trumpet Judgment

The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night.

In this judgment one-third of the sun and one-third of the moon and one-third of the stars are struck. The result is that one-third of each of them is darkened and one-third of the day not shining and one-third of the night not appearing.

“struck” – This is from the Greek word *plēssō*, from which we get our English word “plague.” It means “to inflict or to strike.”

“darkened” – From the Greek *skotidzō*, which means “to darken or to obscure.” This verse says two different things. First it says that one-third of the sun, the moon, and the stars are to be darkened. This implies that they will only shine two-thirds as bright as they do currently. The text does not tell us whether this is permanent or temporary. The end of the verse, however, tells us that the day and the night are shortened so that they only last two-thirds as long as they currently do. This implies that the solar day will be shortened from 24 hours to 16 hours. This is quite possibly what our Lord meant in His Olivet discourse in Matthew 24 when He said:

For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. (Matthew 24:21, 22)

If this is what happens, then the first part of the current verse could simply be saying that one-third of the sun, moon, and stars are obscured because they only appear for two-thirds of the time that they currently shine. However, it could also mean that there is so much smoke and particulate material in the atmosphere that it partially obscures the amount of light coming from the sun and other heavenly bodies.

Consider, if the first three trumpet judgments were the result of a close fly-by or impact of a huge comet, it could also cause the speed with which the earth rotates around its axis to be increased, resulting in the normal twenty-four-hour day being decreased from 24 to 16 hours.

Revelation 8:13

Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!"

“eagle” – Some translations say “angel” instead of “eagle.” This is because the texts from which these translations are taken disagree on this word. Some have *angelou*, meaning “angel” while others have *aitou*, which means “an eagle or vulture, a species of rapacious birds represented as preying on dead bodies.” It may be, perhaps, that this is one of the four living ones, the one which looks “like a flying eagle” (Revelation 4:7) in which case John could have described it as either an angel or an eagle.

“woe, woe, woe” – Apparently indicates the severity of the three remaining trumpet blasts. This clearly implies that the woes come upon those who are not saved (permanent earth dwellers) and those woes

come directly from the sounding of the three remaining trumpets. The last trumpet judgment (**Revelation 11:15-19**) produces praise in heaven as if the judgments of the earth are complete. This, coupled with the woes proclaimed in the current verse, lends credence to the notion that the seventh trumpet actually contains the seven bowl judgments.

“those who dwell on the earth” – This is translated from the Greek words *katoikousin epi tē gēs*. This phrase refers to the permanent earth dwellers.

“blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow” – There are three more angels yet to sound their trumpet blasts. Two of these are described in Revelation chapter nine and the seventh trumpet blast is briefly described in chapter eleven.

So What?

Back in chapter 6, as the 5th seal was opened, we met the Martyrs who had been killed for their faith. When these current judgments are unleashed from the first four trumpets, I’m convinced that those same martyrs will be praising God for finally beginning to exact payment against the earth dwellers who had opposed His rule over them. But, did you notice what these martyrs were doing when we were first introduced to them?

They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

They were praying! If you think that prayer is not that big a thing to God, then why is it so important to have the golden incense altar, which represents the prayers of the saints, in the midst of the Trinity in God’s throne room?

We tend to think of prayer as asking God to do something for us. But that’s only one kind of prayer. It’s called supplication. The other type of prayer that we often practice is intercession, praying for God to help someone else. But, more important than either of these is our prayer of confession, we need this in order to restore our fellowship with God. And, even more important than confession, is our prayer of thanksgiving. But, the most important kind of prayer is our prayer of praise.

If we were to take stock of how much we practice each of these kinds of prayer, we would probably find them in this order (from most to least):

- Supplication (asking for ourselves)
- Intercession (asking for others)
- Confession (admitting our sins)
- Thanksgiving (for what He has already done for us)
- Praise (for who He is)

The problem with this is that it is completely upside down. If we consciously consider who it is we are praying to, how amazing He is, how much He loves us, how much He has already done for us, and the promises that He has made to us, then we can’t help but praise Him for who He is and what He has done. The writer of Hebrews put it this way:

Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. (**Hebrews 13:15**)

Only slightly less important than praising God for who He is and what He’s done, is giving Him thanks. In his first letter to the church at Thessalonica, Paul said:

give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (**1 Thessalonians 5:18**)

When we sin, we don't lose our salvation. Legally, God has declared all Christians as righteous (that means sinless) and He says that He won't ever take that back. But, when we sin, it breaks our fellowship with Him. Have you ever made someone really mad at you, someone you love dearly, so mad that they don't want to be with you or even talk to you? Well, God doesn't get mad at us when we sin, and He will never leave us or forsake us. But – when we sin, God can't have that intimate relationship with us because He abhors sin. That's why confession is so important (to our loved ones and to God). Remember that confession doesn't mean saying you're sorry, it means admitting that what you did is a sin. That restores your fellowship with Him. I remember a question that I heard when I was a very new Christian that kind of gets to this point.

“Does God seem far away? Who do you think moved?”

Without confession, intercession and supplication are useless. There are Christians who I know who spend a lot more time in confession to God than I do and I know that God listens to their prayers. It's important to pray for others, but if our heart is not right with God, if we have unconfessed sin in our lives, intercession is an exercise in futility, in fact, it's an arrogant exercise in futility. Our prayers for others are worthless if we have unconfessed sin in our lives.

Finally, remember that Jesus, as our High Priest, has already offered the necessary sacrifice to pay for all of our sins. This High Priest is like no other. He understands our struggles. Here's what the writer of Hebrews said about Him:

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16)

Let's all of us commit this week to spending more time in prayer. I don't mean praying longer when we pray. I mean praying more often, throughout the day. We can start off with praise, then give Him thanks, confess our sins, and pray for others. Only then can we effectively pray for our own needs.

Let's Pray!

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