

Link to Lonnie Woodruff's *Revelation for Christians Today*, online:

<http://www.abiblecommentary.com/howtounderstandthebookofrevelation.htm>

A Study of Revelation 8

I. Outline.

1. Silence in heaven for about 30 minutes after opening of 7th Seal (Revelation 8:1).
2. John sees 7 angels with 7 trumpets (2).
3. Another angel mingles prayers of saints with incense (3-4).
4. The angel casts down the censer to the earth, producing voices, thundering, lightnings, and an earthquake (5).
5. The first four angels sound their trumpets (7-12).
6. A flying angel (or eagle) warns about the three trumpets yet to sound (13).

II. Summary.

Now comes the time for opening of the seventh seal. At its opening there is SILENCE in heaven for about half an hour. Thirty minutes is not a very long time, **unless** you are waiting for something. Think about how long that thirty minutes must have seemed to John. That thirty minutes of silence would have been a strong contrast to the loud singing of praises with which the previous chapter ended (7:9-10ff). John saw seven angels standing before God who were given seven trumpets. Before any of the trumpets are sounded, another angel is seen at the golden altar with a golden censer. Here much incense is offered with the prayers of the saints. These ascended to God from the angel's hand. Then the angel takes the censer, filled with fire from the altar, and casts it down to the earth, resulting in voices, thundering, lightnings, and an earthquake. What seems to be symbolized here is that when Christians pray, God does hear and heaven is pleased. Next comes the sounding of the first four trumpets. Verses 7-12 tell of the sounding of these four trumpets. Frighteningly, verse 13 pronounces a 3-fold WOE, regarding that which is yet to come at the sounding of the other three trumpets!

III. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: The Period of the Church.

If you are not familiar with the 15 Bible Periods, please click here:

<https://maplehillchurchofchrist.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/15bibleperiods.pdf>

IV. Words/Phrases to Study

- **Looking Ahead through Chapter 16...** “Many striking parallels exist between the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls. Each of the sevens is made up of a grouping of four and three; in each series, the first four signs are closely related and the last three more varied. ‘All three accounts cover substantially the same ground, containing information which is often similar, and sometimes almost identical.’ Further, all close with similar words that emphasize the power of God (8:5; 11:19; 16:18-21). These similarities do not mean the three sections are identical in every respect and are therefore redundant. ‘Each of these series ... has its own individual theme’ and emphasis. The sections progress logically. Their progression can be expressed in this way:
 1. Seals are broken: revelation.
 2. Trumpets are blown: warning.
 3. Bowls of wrath are poured out: punishment

The basic message of each series remains the same: God is in control, and He will make everything turn out right” [David Roper, *Revelation 1-11*, Truth for Today Commentary, p. 324-325, emphasis mine, DRL].

- 8:1... **...THERE WAS SILENCE IN HEAVEN ABOUT THE SPACE OF HALF AN HOUR**—“The dramatic silence just before the storm emphasizes the impact of the judgments about to be revealed” [Shelly, *The Lamb and his Enemies*, p. 59].
- 8:4... **AND THE SMOKE OF THE INCENSE, WHICH CAME WITH THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS**—“We should not let the discussion of the altar and the incense detract from the point being made: When Christians pray, heaven is pleased. In the language of the Old Testament, the incense was sweet in the nostrils of God. A phrase found repeatedly in the Old Testament relating to sacrifices is ‘sweet savour’ (KJV), ... (see Gen 8:21; Ex 29:18; Lev 1:9; Num 15:7). ...in the first part of Revelation 8, a specific kind of prayer was evidently being offered by the saints—a petition similar to that voiced by those underneath the altar ... who had been slain ... How long O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth? (6:9-10)” [Roper, p. 332].
- 8:11... **AND THE THIRD PART OF THE WATERS BECAME WORMWOOD; AND MANY MEN DIED OF THE WATERS, BECAUSE THEY WERE MADE BITTER**—“Here the term wormwood sounds ominous. It evokes images of rotten timber riddled with termite holes. Actually, wormwood has nothing to do with either worms or wood. Instead, it is a rather nondescript-looking plant. ‘Wormwood’ is the general name for a class of plants known as *Artemisia absinthium*, which is characterized by bitterness of taste. Many varieties grew in Palestine. The plant was used by inspired writers to refer to the bitter fruit of disobedience (Deut 29:17-18; Prov 5:4; Jer 9:14-15; 23:15; Lam 3:15, 19; Amos 5:7; 6:12). The plant wormwood is not poisonous, but in John’s vision, it not only made the water undrinkable, but also deadly” [Roper, p. 342].
- 8:13... **AND I BEHELD, AND HEARD AN ANGEL**—Whether the word here is ANGEL or EAGLE depends upon which textual base is used by the translation. If it is the eclectic text, it will be EAGLE, if it is the *Textus Receptus*, or majority text of the KJV and NKJV, it will have ANGEL.

V. Lessons & Applications.

01. **...THERE WAS SILENCE IN HEAVEN ABOUT THE SPACE OF HALF AN HOUR** (8.1)—Read Habakkuk 2:20. Brother Roper writes: “If there must periodically be silence in heaven, how much more do we sometimes need silence on earth! The times we live in are filled with appointments and schedules. We rush from one place to another, rarely taking a solitary moment just to think” [Roper, p. 347].
02. **AND TO THEM WERE GIVEN SEVEN TRUMPETS** (Rev 8:2). “The trumpet has a particular significance in the Old Testament. It is used not only in connection with warning, but also in connection with the time of judgment (Joel 2:1ff). It is a sign of God’s intervention in this world’s affairs (Ex 19:16, 19). In fact, we read in the New Testament of ‘the last trumpet’ which shall accompany the coming of the Lord again (1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thes 4:16). These seven trumpets are trumpets of warning and judgment”[Frank Pack, *Revelation*, Part I, Austin, TX:R.B. Sweet Co., p. 73]. If we are wise, we will be sure to take heed to all of Scripture’s warnings and keep ourselves in a continual state of preparedness (cf., Matthew 25:1-13).
03. **AND THE SMOKE OF THE INCENSE, WHICH CAME WITH THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS, ASCENDED UP BEFORE GOD OUT OF THE ANGEL’S HAND** (Rev 8:4). In verses three 3-5 there is obvious symbolism regarding the prayers of the saints. How vitally important it is to be IN CHRIST! Only IN CHRIST do we have the marvelous spiritual blessing of prayer available (Eph 1:3). This text ought to be a great encouragement to all Christians, including those members of the seven churches of Asia. From David Roper’s commentary I found these remarks—“What John is saying to troubled readers, then or now, is that their prayers are heard in heaven and will have their answer. The God of mercy and of judgment is neither dead nor deaf nor indifferent. The marvelous truth that God listens to His people is taught throughout the Bible.” Then Roper lists these passages: Proverbs 15:29; 1 Kings 9:3; 2 Kings 20:5; 1 Peter 3:12; 1 John 5:14

04. **Verses 7-12.** “When these disasters are considered alongside the thought that a primary reason for the trumpets was to warn men, a startling conclusion is reached: God uses natural disasters to try to bring men to repentance. ... He wants us to understand the far-reaching effects of sin. When Adam sinned, God told him, ‘Cursed is the ground because of you’ (Gen 3:17). The consequences of that curse remain in effect. The categories of nature in this study declare that the earth beneath us, the sky above us, and the things around us have been tainted by sin. ... In addition, God would remind us that this world is not our home. ... Above all, God would have us learn that He is our only refuge. ... God is trying to do what most of us as parents try to do: use every means available to influence our children to do right. ... The trumpets have a lesson for us. When trouble drives us to our knees, we are where God wants us to be: we are in the perfect position to cry unto Him, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner’ (Lk 18:13)” [Roper, p. 349-50].

VI. Questions.

True or False

- 01. _____ Seven trumpets sounded in this chapter.
- 02. _____ Hail was one of the things that came after the first trumpet sounded.
- 03. _____ This chapter tells the name of a star.
- 04. _____ The direction smoke of the incense spread was DOWN.
- 05. _____ There was no “quiet time” in this chapter.

MATCHING

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| A. Not revealed in this chapter | F. 1/3 of waters became wormwood |
| B. Silence in heaven 30 minutes | G. Seven angels were given trumpets |
| C. 1/3 of sun was smitten | H. Censer was filled with fire of the altar |
| D. Prayers of saints ascended | I. There came an earthquake |
| E. 1/3 of trees were burnt up | J. 1/3 of the sea became blood |
- 06. _____ When the first angel sounded...
 - 07. _____ When the second angel sounded...
 - 08. _____ When the third angel sounded...
 - 09. _____ When the fourth angel sounded...
 - 10. _____ When the seventh angel sounded...

How Many?

- 11. _____ Angels?
- 12. _____ Trumpets?
- 13. _____ Trumpets sounded in this chapter?
- 14. _____ Moons smitten?
- 15. _____ Woes?

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week’s handout

ANSWERS to Revelation 7 Questions... **01**—True (7.5-8); **02**—True (6); **03**—True (14); **04**—False (1); **05**—False (17); **06**—d (4); **07**—a (9); **08**—f (16); **09**—h (8); **10**—c (12); **11**—The Great Multitude (10); **12**—A Fifth Angel (2); **13**—One of the Elders (13); **14**—The Lamb (17); **15**—The Great Multitude (15).

Questions on Chapter 8,

Revelation for Christians Today, by Lonnie Woodruff--page 146-47 [Answers by DRL]...

1. What is the purpose of the sounding of a trumpet? (Ezekiel 33:1-6).

A trumpet is used many times in the Bible to announce GREAT EVENTS which are about to occur and also to WARN OF IMPENDING DANGER. Read Ezekiel 33:1-6. Here is a good example of the trumpet being used as a WARNING. **Ezekiel 33:3... If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people.** Both announcing and warning should be applied to these seven trumpets. They announce great events which are to take place during this Christian Age and warn of their dangers. -137.

2. What is the symbolic meaning of the sounding of the seven trumpets in Revelation?

It helps explain one difference between THIS VISION and the previous vision of the seven seals. A seal signifies events that are absolutely certain to take place, but a trumpet warns of events which we can prepare ourselves against in order to avoid their consequences. We have no control over the events described by the seals, BUT we can and must prepare ourselves to avoid the consequences of the trumpets because **WE HAVE BEEN WARNED!** --137

3. What events took place with the sounding of the first trumpet? (8:7)

Hail and fire mingled with blood came forth and they were cast upon the earth and the third part of trees was burnt up and all green grass was burnt up.

4. What is the symbolic meaning of the THIRD PART of any person?

Many of the numbers in Revelation are symbolic and not intended to have a specific numerical value. In 9:4 the locusts out of the pit were commanded not to hurt the grass or trees or "*any green thing*," but only those men who did not have the seal of God in their foreheads. In other words, the locusts could only harm NON-Christians. Thus, the color GREEN seems to have correlation with CHRISTIAN. This symbolism is taken from nature itself. Almost any plant which is alive and growing must be colored GREEN. The LIFE which Christians have and non-Christian sinners do not have is: SPIRITUAL LIFE. Those who are SPIRITUALLY ALIVE and growing in Christ would be symbolically: *any green thing*. Now, if we apply this symbolic meaning to 8:7, we have the third part of all Christians being **destroyed** by the events of this first trumpet. That simply does not make sense, so we must search for that which does. The answer, suggests brother Woodruff, comes in comparing this THIRD PART with the FOURTH PART mentioned in 6:8. There the rider of the pale horse had power to take man's PHYSICAL LIFE, or FOURTH PART, but not his spiritual life. Thus, we can say that the THIRD PART of man is different from the fourth part (physical life) and would be rather his spiritual life. Man has two parts: physical life and spiritual life. Revelation uses the number 4 to describe physical things; it uses the number 3 to describe spiritual matters. Normally, if we identify a part of something we use fractions. Thus, we understand that the physical part of any man would be described by the fraction $\frac{1}{4}$, and the spiritual part would be described by the fraction $\frac{1}{3}$. This THIRD PART of man is used throughout the trumpet series of visions. Woodruff concludes, therefore, that the warnings which are sounded by these trumpets are to prepare man so he will not lose his spiritual part. To do so would condemn one's soul to hell. They describe events taking place all during the Christian Age which affect the spiritual part of man. -137-38

5. What is the symbolic meaning of the hail and fire mingled with blood? (8:7)

The hail and fire mingled with blood represents the TRIALS and PERSECUTIONS of this life which Christians must overcome daily. To be mingled with blood shows the severity of these persecutions. Some may even be so severe as to cause one to lose his/her physical life. We must keep a constant watch for our souls. There are all manner of temptations and persecutions in the world today which can cause Christians to lose their spiritual life. This is the WARNING sounded by this first trumpet. -140

6. Who do the trees and green grass represent? (8:7)

A TREE represents Christians who are strong and deeply rooted in the faith. The GRASS represents Christians who are shallow-rooted and, therefore, more susceptible to these persecutions. This is

why we see all green grass being burned. It represents those who are not strong enough to overcome these persecutions. --140

7. Using the above information, briefly explain the meaning of the first trumpet.

Keeping in mind that the *THIRD PART* represents the spiritual aspect of people, the lesson presented here is that even *STRONG* Christians (trees) are possible candidates for losing their spiritual life because of the terrible persecutions they may have to suffer. The weak, spiritually (green grass), represent those not strong enough to overcome these persecutions. If I am to benefit personally from this vision, I must examine myself (2Cor 13:5), if I find that I am weak spiritually, I need to work toward gaining strength to avoid the consequences pictured in this vision. --140

8. What events took place with the sounding of the second trumpet? (8:8)

A great mountain burning with fire is cast into the sea and the third part of the sea became blood.

9. What is the symbolic meaning of the great mountain burning with fire? (8:8)

In 17:1, 15, the symbol *MANY WATERS* is defined as “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” Further, Isaiah 60:5... Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. Thus, the *SEA* symbolically represents the masses of people on this earth. In this verse, a great mountain burning with fire, is cast into the sea of people which causes their *THIRD PART* (spiritual part) to become as blood, or *TO DIE*. --140

10. What is the symbolic meaning of the sea? (8:8)

The sea symbolically represents the masses of people on this earth. --140

11. What is represented by the sea turning to blood? (8:8)

The *THIRD* part of the sea is that which turned to blood. This evidently refers to the *DEATH* of the spiritual part. --140

12. Give the meaning of the second trumpet.

This trumpet is *WARNING* people of all ages not to lose their spiritual life by giving in to persecutions from any source (even government), regardless of how severe those persecutions might be or become. --141

13. What events took place with the sounding of the third trumpet? (8:10-11)

A great star fell from heaven, burning like a lamp. It fell upon the third part of the rivers and fountains of waters. This star had a name: *WORMWOOD*. The third part of the waters became wormwood and many men died of the waters because they were made bitter.

14. Define rivers and fountains of waters. (8:10)

Likely they are symbols and not to be taken literally. The fraction *THIRD PART* is used to describe these waters. We have already concluded that the *THIRD PART* has to do with one's spiritual life. Rivers and waters have no spiritual part. By comparing Jeremiah 2:13 and John 7:38, we might conclude that they represent the abundant teachings of those who attempt to direct the spiritual life of people on this earth. --143

15. What is wormwood? (8:11)

This star appeared to be a lamp, or a spiritual light, but, in actuality, must have been deceptive teachings from Satan. Read 2 Corinthians 11:14. Proverbs 5:4 defines wormwood as something bitter. As this star of deceptive teachings from Satan, named Wormwood, falls upon the spiritual rivers or fountains of waters of this world, their teachings become *BITTER*. Many died spiritually because of this teaching. People who listen to these false teachings believe and follow them. The result of this is that they turn from the *TRUE* teaching of the Bible and they lose their spiritual life. --143

16. What does the great star burning as a lamp represent? (8:10)

False teaching from Satan. --143

17. What happens to the rivers and fountains of waters when the star named Wormwood falls upon them? (8:11)

They became *BITTER*.

18. What happens to men as a result of these waters being made bitter? (8:11)

They die.

19. Since this trumpet is dealing with the third part of man, what part of man died because of these waters?

The spiritual part.

20. Briefly describe the meaning of the third trumpet?

This third trumpet seems to be describing people who have been deceived by false teaching and who have accepted that teaching and thereby have been poisoned to death, in a spiritual sense, by listening to the false teaching rather than following the truth of God's Word. --143

21. Give the symbolic meaning of the sun, moon, and stars. (8:12)

We should not expect a literal fulfillment of this verse. Rather, we should look for a spiritual fulfillment of the fourth trumpet. Sun, moon, and stars must represent someone who is responsible for giving light unto the earth. Since we are dealing with the THIRD part of these objects, this must be referring to SPIRITUAL LIGHTS which shine upon the earth. Those people who preach, teach, and guide people spiritually are the ones who provide spiritual light. If those people cease to SHINE, this would indicate there will be times on this earth when man's spiritual lights will be darkened. No one will be standing up and proclaiming the true light of the gospel. Perhaps this has already happened in history in the period of the Dark Ages. It may even be happening at certain places on this earth today. --144

22. What part of the sun, moon, and stars was smitten by this fourth trumpet? (8:12)

The THIRD part.

23. What is the symbolic meaning of the smiting of the third part of the sun, moon, and stars? (8:12)

It would mean that those providing spiritual light would be darkened—the teaching stops. --144

24. What is the symbolic meaning of the day and night losing their third part? (8:12)

This means there will be times upon this earth when no spirituality will be found day or night because these spiritual lights have ceased to shine. There are places in this world today where little or no spirituality exists among the people. We should not think of this as a worldwide situation, necessarily, although it could happen, but rather, a situation which could take place at ANY TIME when men cease to teach and obey the spiritual light of the gospel. The spiritual thoughts of man will cease to exist day or night, and he will concentrate wholly upon the physical things of this world.--144

25. Briefly describe the meaning of this fourth trumpet.

An important WARNING is being sounded by this trumpet. There will be times when the spiritual lights of man will cease to shine, and this will cause spiritual darkness upon the earth. Men will cease to be interested in spiritual matters. Therefore, there will be no spiritual activities day or night. Christians must heed this warning and always let our lights so shine as to be seen among men (Matthew 5:16). --144

26. Discuss the overall meaning of the first four trumpets, and apply them to the world around us today.

The first four trumpets are WARNINGS that have to do with SPIRITUAL LIFE, the THIRD part of man. The events of these first four trumpets may affect anyone upon this earth who chooses not to heed their warnings. Severe persecutions can arise on this earth which will destroy weak Christians and can even destroy some strong Christians who might be represented by TREES, with strong roots. I need to be concerned about my own spiritual strength. I must continue to love God and His word and continue to grow in it. The second trumpet warns us not to give in to persecution even of the strongest kind. The third trumpet seems to warn about being deceived by false teachers. The fourth warns us there may be times of spiritual darkness. I must follow the instructions of Jesus and let my light shine.

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle. The words may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. -DRL



ALTAR	ANGEL	BECAME	BLOOD	BURNING
BURNT	CAME	CAST	CENSER	DIED
EARTH	FELL	FIRE	GIVEN	GOLDEN
GREAT	HEAVEN	INCENSE	OPENED	PART
PRAYERS	SAINTS	SEVEN	SEVENTH	SOUND
STAR	STOOD	THERE	THIRD	TRUMPET
VOICE	WATERS	WHEN		

