

### Revelation 8:1-13

As we come to the eighth chapter of Revelation, we come to the beginning of the most ferocious part of the Great Tribulation. At this point, Jesus Christ breaks the seventh and final seal which contains the most ferocious and final judgments of God.

This seventh seal actually contains the seven trumpet judgments, four of which are found in this very chapter, and it also contains the seven bowl judgments. This seventh seal is the finale of God's wrath in which God will pour out and fill up His final and fierce level of wrath on this God-mocking, Christ-rejecting world.

The first four trumpet judgments occur in chapter 8. The fifth and sixth trumpet judgments occur in chapter 9. There is a parenthesis in chapters 10–11:14. The seventh trumpet judgment occurs in chapter 11 (11:15-19) and it will include the seven bowl judgments.

We may observe that the first four trumpet judgments will be judgments against nature. The fifth and sixth trumpet judgments will be judgments specifically against man, and the seventh trumpet judgment, which includes the seven bowl judgments, are more judgments against both nature and man.

### Revelation 8:1-6

There are five observations we want to make as we come to this seventh seal judgment:

**Observation #1** - The seventh seal is broken by Jesus Christ . **8:1a**

Jesus Christ is controlling and authorizing every one of these terrible Tribulation judgments. He is certainly not portrayed here as the “gentle Jesus”; He is the “judgmental Jesus.”

**Observation #2** - The seventh seal judgment features a half hour of silence . **8:1b**

It is interesting that in all the other seals, once the seal was broken, John saw something or heard something (6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12). However, when this seal is broken the thing that stands out is that John doesn't hear anything for a half hour.

In the Old Testament, there are certain references to the fact that when these events occur there will be moments of unusual silence (Habakkuk 2:20; Zephaniah 1:7; Zechariah 2:13).

The Greek word “silence” is one that literally refers to an absence of all noise. The specific location of the silence is in heaven. Let us keep in our minds that to this point in the Tribulation, heaven has been a place of tremendous action and activity and earth has been a place of roaring wrath. Now there is an eerie silence that occurs after Christ breaks open the seventh seal.

Why the silence for a half hour? We believe there are three main reasons for it:

**(Reason #1)** - This is one last brief moment of grace in which God grants people a brief pause in Tribulation wrath to reflect on their relationship with Him. This especially should cause Israel to think seriously about things in view of what is about to hit her.

**(Reason #2)** - This signals to the whole world that something major is about to hit. People will be forced to wonder what will happen next.

**(Reason #3)** - This is God's final pause before He pours out His final wrath which contains the worst judgments of all.

What is interesting about a half hour silence interval is that time things in the Tribulation are broken down into very specific time intervals. Apparently the Tribulation will be so horrible that even a half hour break would seem to be a reprieve.

**Observation #3** - The seventh seal features seven angels who stand before God and are given seven trumpets. **8:2**

These are seven very special angels who are used to signal this final judgment. We do know from various passages that angels are connected to the judgment program of God (i.e. Matthew 13:40-43). They are each given a trumpet. Trumpets were used in Israel to announce feast days, ceremonial processions, war, and the coming day of the Lord. I believe that these trumpet judgments do have a clear connection, not just to the world, but to national Israel.

There is obviously a very ceremonial approach to this scene. This is very orderly and solemn. Judgment is highly organized at the throne of God. There is no out-of-control action; everything is completely controlled by God.

**Observation #4** - The seventh seal judgment features another angel who draws attention to the prayers of God's people. **8:3-4**

At the opening of the seventh seal, another of the same kind of angel offers up to God **"the prayers of all the saints."** Both nouns "prayers" and "saints" contain an article which grammatically means that these are specific prayers of specific saints.

The most probable interpretation of this is that this is the moment when all of the prayers for God to pour out His wrath in judgment are answered. The saints could refer to the Tribulation saints but also could refer to all saints of the Church Age. This is the moment when God's people realize that all of their prayers pertaining to God's vengeance and wrath are answered.

Four points about prayer may be seen:

- 1) Prayer is very important and sacred to God in the working out of His program.
- 2) God is a God who answers prayers in His time, not our time.
- 3) Just because our prayers are not answered immediately does not mean they will not be answered eventually.
- 4) Prayers concerning judgment are viewed as sacred incense by God (Psalm 141:2).

**Observation #5** - The seventh seal features an angelic reaction to the saint's prayers. **8:5-6**

What we may observe here is that angels may be used in close connection with answering the prayers of God's people. There are two immediate reactions of angels:

**(Reaction #1)** - One angel is angered in heaven and powerfully demonstrates it on earth.  
**8:5**

This particular angel is so moved by the prayers of God's people that even before the final judgment begins, He emotionally responds and fills the earth with evidence of pending judgment which includes thunder and sounds and lightning and an earthquake.

This happens after the one half hour break, so people on earth obviously know there is new action on the way.

**(Reaction #2)** - Seven angels prepare for action. **8:6**

The seven angels with the seven trumpets prepare to blow them. William Newell believes that these trumpet blasts will actually be heard on earth. By this point in the Tribulation, everyone on earth realizes this judgment is coming right out of heaven and it is very possible that when each angel blows his trumpet, people on earth will hear it. The fact is, every time the people on earth hear one of these trumpet blasts, they will experience total terror.

### **Revelation 8:7-13**

As we read through these verses, we may observe that the number "one third" shows up some thirteen times (**8:7, 7, 8, 9, 9, 10, 10, 11, 12, 12, 12, 12, 12**). The number three is the number of God, specifically the number of the Trinity. This is a number that is closely connected to the finale of the wrath of the entire Godhead.

We know that only one third of Israel will be saved when the Tribulation is done (Zechariah 13:9). We know that when these first four trumpet judgments are over, there are three "woe" judgments yet to occur (**Revelation 8:13**).

The trumpet judgments break down this way: **Judgments 1-4** are judgments against nature found in Revelation 8:7-13; **Judgments 5-6** are judgments against men found in Revelation 9; **Judgment 7**, which includes the bowl judgments, starts in Revelation 11:15 and is aimed at Israel, nature and men.

**TRUMPET JUDGMENT #1** – The judgment against vegetation. **8:7**

The first trumpet judgment is a botanical judgment. It is a judgment aimed at the vegetation which includes the green grass and trees. In this judgment, hail and fire are sent by God to destroy one third of the earth's vegetation.

Now the hail and fire are mixed with blood. The language would indicate that there will be a bloody substance with this hail and fire, which would certainly remind those left on earth of the martyrs that they killed.

Plant life and vegetation was originally created by God (Genesis 1:11) and now at this judgment one third of it will be destroyed by God. The effect of this will be devastating, for it will mean that all the contributions that plant life makes to life, such as shade and food for animals, will be gone. Fresh vegetations will disappear and much of the world will be turned into a vast desert.

**TRUMPET JUDGMENT #2** – The judgment against the ocean. **8:8-9**

The second trumpet judgment is a judgment against the sea. This is an oceanographical judgment. A huge burning substance, like a mountain, is cast from heaven into the sea and destroys one third of all marine life and one third of all ships. God predicts that He will do this very thing in Zephaniah 1:2-3.

This substance will be some “mountain-like mass of meteoric chunk ablaze with fire.” The destruction will be against all the seas, not just one. One writer observed, when one considers this judgment and thinks about all of the advancements that man has made in science, nothing even begins to compare with what God will do here (Robert Thomas, *Revelation*, Vol. 2, p. 19).

This judgment will not only affect the water, but all ships including cruise ships, cargo ships, oil ships. One third of all marine life will die by this one judgment. This was done by God on a much smaller scale in Egypt in Exodus 7:21 and the result was terrible stench and death.

**TRUMPET JUDGMENT #3** – The judgment against fresh water. **8:10-11**

The third trumpet judgment will be a judgment against fresh water. The third angel releases a great star, which has a fiery look about it, which hits key areas for getting drinking water. The rivers and springs of water are turned into very bitter water and in this one judgment one third of the world's drinking water is destroyed.

Now the star is named “the Wormwood.” This is the only place in the New Testament where this word is used. It is used in the O.T. in Jeremiah 9:15; 23:15; Lamentations 3:15, 19. This “wormwood” was the bitterest shrub known in the Middle East. It was found in Palestine and in Syria and it has a very putrid smell to it.

In Exodus 15:22-25, God turned bitter water into sweet water for His people, but here He turns sweet water into bitter water as a judgment on the whole world. The noun “wormwood” refers to a very bitter substance that apparently was malignant or poisonous because it had the ability to kill people who drank it.

To this point in the trumpet judgments, we have one third of all vegetation gone, one third of the oceans destroyed, and one third of the world’s drinking water destroyed. Obviously just from this the world will be a very desperate place.

**TRUMPET JUDGMENT #4 – The judgment against the heavenly planets . 8:12-13**

The heavenly planets have been created by God for us to look at because it so displays His power and glory (Genesis 1:14). This trumpet judgment is against one third of the sun, moon and stars. This judgment will affect every place in the world because part of it is in the daytime and will see the judgment against the sun, and part of the world is at nighttime and will see the judgment against the moon and the stars.

It is hard to know what it will mean when one third of the light is gone. The world will obviously be eerie and scary.

Now before we look at **verse 13**, let us recap the Tribulation to this point:

- 1) All Christians have disappeared at the Rapture.
- 2) Several Antichrists have surfaced. 6:1-2
- 3) There have been major outbreaks of war, both civil and national. 6:3-4
- 4) There has been a terrible worldwide famine. 6:5-6
- 5) There has been a terrible plague of death of one fourth of the world’s population. 6:7-8
- 6) There have been terrible cosmological disasters. 6:12-17
- 7) There was a strange moment of one half hour of silence.
- 8) There has been a destruction of one third of the earth’s vegetation.
- 9) There has been a destruction of one third of the oceans.
- 10) There has been a destruction of one third of fresh drinking water.
- 11) There has been a destruction of one third of the sun, moon and stars.

After all this we come to **Revelation 8:13** in which God sends an eagle to fly through the air saying with a loud voice - “Woe, woe, woe,” because you have not seen anything yet. These final three trumpet judgments about to hit the world will be the worst of all. The angels are about to blast their trumpets and the final three blasts are “woe” (ουαι) judgments which are the worst and most ferocious judgments of all.

The word for eagle is just that - eagle. If man can make a parrot talk, God is certainly able to send an eagle rocketing through the sky shouting this to humanity.

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### Revelation 9:1-21

As we come to the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter in Revelation, we come to the fifth and sixth trumpet judgments and in these judgments we learn a lot about demons. In fact, if ever you want to learn a lot about demonic activity, **Revelation 9** is a great chapter to study.

In the fifth trumpet judgment of the Tribulation people on earth are physically tortured, and in the sixth trumpet judgment people on earth are physically killed.

#### 9:1-12 (TRUMPET JUDGMENT #5)

There are six observations we want to make about this fifth trumpet judgment:

**Observation #1** - The fifth trumpet judgment is the first “woe” judgment. 8:13

As bad as this judgment is, this is only the first of the three “woe” judgments and these judgments, like all judgment in the book of Revelation, go from bad to worse.

By identifying these as “woe” (ουαι) judgments we know that these final three judgments will be especially severe. It seems that one reason why it is called a “woe” judgment is because it brings terrible calamity at an unusual level against people. In other words, people become the specific targets or objects of the wrath of God.

**Observation #2** - The fifth trumpet judgment is inaugurated by an angel. 9:1a

This judgment will be one that authorizes demons to do some very evil things, and what we want to see here is that Satan and his forces are not able to do anything without Divine permission and sanction by God.

Some people miss this critical theological point. People should not spend their lives fearing Satan and demons, but fearing the God who controls the angelic world.

**Observation #3** - The fifth trumpet judgment features a “star” that has fallen from heaven to the earth. 9:1b

Now we already know from this book of Revelation that “star” is sometimes specifically identified as a reference to a heavenly “angel.” For example in Revelation 1:20, seven stars are identified as seven angels. From this context, we may observe for facts about this star:

**(Fact #1)** - This star is given a key to the bottomless pit (9:1b);

**(Fact #2)** - This star is given personal pronouns “him” and “he”, not “it” (9:1-2 / 8:10);

**(Fact #3)** - This star acts in a personal way - “he opened” the pit (9:2);

**(Fact #4)** - This star is identified with a specific name, “Abaddon” or “Apollyon” (9:11).

Based on this data, we would conclude that this star is a leading angel in Satan's army. He is some demon of exalted rank (9:11). The participle "which had fallen to the earth" is perfect tense which means this state of him being a fallen angel occurred at some point in the past and continues in the present.

The thing to see here is that God knows every fallen angel by name and He uses them for His purposes. Satan and his demons are known by God and controlled by God.

**Observation #4** - The fifth trumpet judgment features a demonic angel opening the bottomless pit. 9:1-2

We need to clearly see that this angel is given a key that enables him to open the pit. He cannot just open it whenever he wants. Whatever this demon does, he does by Divine permission.

The adjective "bottomless" (αβυσσος), transliterated in English "abyss," is the Greek word which literally means bottomless or boundless. The word "pit" refers to a well. **Apparently this is a prison place for housing demons and there are several demons who are incarcerated in this place at the present time.**

The Bible speaks of this place as being a place where certain demons live and are confined (Luke 8:31; II Peter 2:4; Jude 6). Certain demons have been bound in this place since the flood. This is a place that demons hate, and once they are sentenced to this "bottomless pit" they cannot get out unless God sovereignly permits it (Revelation 20:1-3). **Obviously, at this point in the Tribulation, God is going to release the vilest demons who ever existed.**

**Observation #5** - The fifth trumpet judgment will feature a very visible cosmic sign. 9:2b-3a

When this angel opens this pit, "smoke," like that of a great furnace, rises and the sun and the air are darkened. This moment was specifically predicted by the Apostle Peter who uses the same word for "smoke" in his prediction of judgment that would lead to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:19).

The phrase "smoke of a great furnace" (9:2) means that this is a hellish place of fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:10; 21:8). This is a very literal place where beings do really burn. The idea that hell is some Shangri-La party place where friends meet is nowhere seen in the Bible. It is a place where people burn.

Notice carefully that when this judgment occurs, it does not come from above but from below. The emphasis here is not on the use of heavenly forces in the Tribulation, but on the use of hellish forces. We may also observe that when these satanic forces invade, things are darkened and light is lost. Things are not seen clearly when satanic forces are at work.

**Observation #6** - The fifth trumpet judgment features a demonic invasion of locusts . **9:3-11**

Throughout the O.T., the locust is used by God as a very destructive judgment. For example, God used locusts as a plague in Egypt (Exodus 10:14). Albert Barnes said that locusts present the most striking symbol of all of a devouring army. Joel predicts that God will use locusts in judgment as the Day of the LORD is near (Joel 1:4, 15).

According to Dr. Fritz Rienecker, in his *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, locusts could travel in a column of 100 feet deep and up to 4 miles in length (Vol. 2, p. 486). They move into a cultivated area and strip the land bare of all of its vegetation.

We learn from **verse 3**, that these locusts had the power of scorpions . The scorpion is a lobster-type creature of about four to five inches long. It has a claw on the end of its tail that secretes a poison which gives intense pain. Children can die from a scorpion sting, but most adults do not die. Those who are stung by a scorpion experience the following:

- 1) The place of the sting becomes inflamed;
- 2) The skin hardens and becomes red;
- 3) Intense pain follows;
- 4) People experience chills, a burning sensation that includes sweating and shivering;
- 5) A sensation of being pricked by needles.

Now there are two facts brought out in these verses about these demonic scorpions:

**(Fact #1)** - These locusts have limitations . **9:4-5**

Notice how **verse 4** begins, “and they were told.” God is telling them what they can and cannot do. These demons are controlled by God and God places six limitations on them:

**Limitation #1** - They cannot hurt the grass of the earth. **9:4a**

**Limitation #2** - They cannot hurt any green vegetation on the earth. **9:4b**

**Limitation #3** - They cannot hurt any tree . **9:4c**

Now these three things are typically what locusts do hurt and do destroy. God will not permit these locusts to do what they normally would do.

Now the first trumpet judgment already demolished one third of trees, vegetation and grass (8:7). This fifth trumpet judgment will feature demons who are required to do unnatural things.



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**Limitation #4** - They can only hurt those who **do not have** the seal of God on their foreheads. **9:4d**

We know from Revelation 7:3 and 14:1 that this would include the 144,000 Jews. It is also probable that this could include any believer. This is based on Ephesians 1:13 and II Timothy 2:19 which teach that every believer is sealed by God.

What we learn here is that Satan can only attack his own people in this judgment. Satan and his demonic forces are against the people who are on his side. This is a very important point to see. **Satan is not a friend of sinners; he is their enemy. Satan does not want what is best for people; he is after the worst. Satan is not loving and kind; he is a hateful liar who does not want people enjoying heaven, but he wants them burning in hell.**

**Limitation #5** - They can only torment people and not kill them. **9:5a**

The word “torment” has to do with actual torture. These demons would like nothing more at this point in time than to fill hell with people, but they are not permitted to do so. They are only permitted to torture people. Remember these demons have come out of the pit of hell and that is where they want everyone to go, but God does not permit them to send people there. **Fact is, according to verse 6, people will actually want to die but can’t because of the Sovereignty of God. They would actually rather die and go to hell than repent and go to heaven.**

We do see a very important point about Satan here; he tortures people. He does not produce one thing positive in anyone’s life.

**Limitation #6** - They can only torment people for a restricted time. **9:5b**

They are only permitted to hurt people for five months or about 150 days. For five months people will lie in total agony. This agony and torment is coming directly from the hand of God as a judgment.

**(Fact #2)** - These locusts have a specific description. **9:7-11**

We may notice that **verse 7** uses the word “appearance” which is a Greek word that means a likeness or image of similar resemblance. What is described here is that these locusts looked similar to a locust but not like normal locusts. The word “like” is a comparative, which means these are not exactly locusts, they are like locusts. This is actually a description not about locusts but about a demonic army. There are nine specific descriptions:

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**Description #1** - They are like horses prepared for battle. **9:7a**

A battle horse is one who charges into war and knows no fear (Job 39:19-25). This demonic force is fearless and well-organized and well-fitted (Proverbs 21:31).

**Description #2** - They have crowns of gold on their heads. **9:7b**

The word “crown” (στέφανος) is the crown of victory not royalty. This demonic army will have pure (gold) victory in carrying out this judgment.

**Description #3** - They have faces like men. **9:7c**

We are dealing with a unique force who can take on a form of the appearance of man.

**Description #4** - They have hair like women. **9:8a**

Most military forces have short hair. Warriors for the most part, even in ancient times, kept their hair short. This hair will have a feminine pretty flow to it. It will be kind of silky hair. Albert Barnes said although they are warriors, they have someone of an effeminate look to them. Here is an important principle to see - satanic things may have a pleasing look to them but they are devastating.

**Description #5** - They have teeth like lions. **9:8b**

This demonic force may be nice to look at but they are dangerous. They have a gentle appearance but they have teeth that are vicious, ready to devour and rip to shreds.

**Description #6** - They have breastplates of iron. **9:9a**

These demons are well-protected. The breastplates are impenetrable and no one can stop them or destroy them.

**Description #7** - They make sounds like chariots. **9:9b**

They have wings and they move their wings and the sound is numerous and impressive.

**Description #8** - They have a sting in their tail. **9:10**

They have a poison tail which can inflict severe pain. The word “sting” was used of an ox goad that was a very sharp instrument that could prod the animal. The sting of this demonic locust will be sharp and piercing and will leave men in severe pain for five months. The word “hurt” is different from the word “torment” (v. 5). This means to hurt people in a criminal way, to injure people as a wicked criminal. These will be criminal acts of demons controlled by God.

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**Description #9** - They have a demonic leader . **9:11**

The name of this leader in Hebrew is Abaddon (Αβαδδων) and the name of this leader in Greek is Apollyon (Απολλυων). **Both of these names mean “ destruction ” or one who “ destroys .”** Some believe these are names for Satan and some believe these are names of a key high-ranking satanic demonic angel. Whoever it is, it is a high-ranked being in the satanic world.

When we look carefully at **verse 6**, we see that the response of men on earth who are hit by this demonic force is that they want to commit suicide. They do not want to repent, but they do want to commit suicide. The desire to kill self is not the work of God; it is the work of Satan and his forces. What we do learn from this text is that God determines who succeeds in suicide and who doesn't. People who dabble around in satanic and demonic things often would rather kill themselves than repent and turn to God. That certainly will be the case here in the Tribulation.

**9:13-21**  
**(TRUMPET JUDGMENT #6)**

This sixth trumpet judgment is a military slaughter which is at such a level that it has never been seen before anywhere in history, from Rome to Germany to Viet Nam to Iraq, nothing is comparable to this.

There are five main observations we want to make:

**Observation #1** - This sixth trumpet judgment is another “ woe ” Tribulation judgment. **9:12**

This makes this judgment the worst category type of judgment.

**Observation #2** - This sixth trumpet judgment is completely controlled by and authorized by God . **9:13**

The sixth trumpet features another of God's angels and comes directly from the throne of God. The four horns of the golden altar indicate that this judgment is connected to the prayers of all the saints (8:3-4). God wants this “woe” judgment to be understood as being connected to His people's prayers. Ferocious things that He is doing against the earth are connected to records He has kept concerning the treatment and prayers of His people.

**Observation #3** - This sixth trumpet judgment features the use of four specific angels .  
**9:14-15**

There are three important facts we learn about these angels: