

EP64 Revelation 8 verses 1-5

Revelation 8

Overview: The Opening of the Seventh Seal and the First Four Trumpet Judgments.

The Number 7

Given that according to the **Code**, the number 7 is the number of completions, with the opening of this 7th seal we should expect to see the completion of the “seal judgments” and beginning of something new, the trumpet judgments.

Revelation 8:1-4

And when he broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. And another angel came and stood at the altar, now holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.

Silence in Heaven

The first thing John notices is that when He, the Lamb, opened the seventh seal there was silence in heaven for about a half an hour. It is as if everyone understood the gravity of what was about to happen and the weight of it all was so fearfully intense that they chose to not even utter a word.¹ They just stood there in deepest silence. The scene has a scary ominous feel yet one that is filled with anticipation.

This also makes sense why prayer is what follows: people tend to pray when trouble looms.

7-Angels Given 7 Trumpets

Next, we are introduced to a new set of players that have not been described to us before and that is the seven angels who stand before God. The **Codex** reveals the identity of one of these seven angles when the angel Gabriel speaks to Zacharias (John the Baptist's father) and says: *“I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God.”*²

As far as material outside of the **Codex**, the Book of Enoch gives us the names of seven holy angels who are known as the watchers: Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Saraqael, Gabriel and Remiel. We are

¹ “there was silence” is rendered in the *aorist middle indicative*

² **Luke 1:19**

not sure but if Enoch got it right, perhaps these are the seven angels who stand in the presence of God.

The Altar of Incense

Each of these angels is given a trumpet, but suddenly this other angel comes and stands at the altar with a golden censer. We can look at the earthly counterpart to this altar to understand the image.

It is from this altar in heaven that the golden altar of incense was fashioned—the altar which stood in the holy place of the Tabernacle in front of the curtain that separated the holy place from the most holy place, the “holy of holies.” When the priest would enter the Temple or the Tabernacle to burn incense on the golden altar, a group of people would be gathered outside praying.³ Hence, this image of incense and prayers rising together before the Lord from the altar.

A couple of things to note. This passage is primarily rendered in the *aorist* tense, but when it gets to this angel with the censer, we are told that it is something that he is **now** having in his possession.⁴ This angel has been prepared for this specific time and even **now** he has this censer.

The incense and the prayers rose before God (it is something that was done, rendered in the *aorist active indicative*). But interestingly, the Spirit rendered in the *future* tense the bit about the angel offering up to God the prayers of the saints along with the incense. Perhaps the Spirit wants us to know that coming on the end of the time of silence, the pending judgment prepped by the incense and prayers will quickly come, and when it does, prayer will be the appropriate response as this signifies the beginning of the intense invasion of the spiritual into the physical realm of man.

Prayer

This cojoining of imagery (prayer preceding pending judgment) is intended to help us understand that the purpose of prayer is to help us choose to align our will with the will of our Father in heaven. Prayer is not about our trying to get **Yahweh** to bend His will to ours. Rather, prayer is about our choosing to bend our will to His will and thereby mentally and emotionally come into alignment with His plans and His purposes for our lives. It is how we prepare ourselves to walk through all that He has prepared.

Properly understood, prayer functions as a tool of alignment, for when we are in alignment we tend to not fight and wrestle with God so much over the affairs of our lives. Hence, we are to pray, “Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. **Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**”⁵

Fire from the Altar

Revelation 8:5

Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

³ *Luke 1:10*

⁴ “having” is rendered in the *present active participle*

⁵ *Matthew 6:9-10*

There is a small, unusual **Time Sequence** that is captured here, and it goes along with the earlier comment John made about the angel who is now holding the censer in his hand. The “*angel took the censer*” is rendered in the *perfect* tense; thus, it takes us back in time to when this angel was first given this assignment and equipped to do his job. Since that time, he has been holding it prepared for the time when he will (future) add the prayers of the saints to the incense from his censer.

With that said, try to picture this awesome scene. The angel fills the censer with fire from the golden altar before the throne and he cast it into the earth with a violent thrust, and the impact is massive.⁶ The ominous silence in heaven is broken and suddenly there were thundering and voices and lightening and an earthquake. It is as if God has heard and received the prayers of the saints and answers with intensity and might. They are ready and are in alignment with His will; thus, He is ready.

What might these people of God have been praying about? This is just a guess, but most likely that which concerns them most: safety, protection, and provision. After all, the first 3.5-year period, and the time leading up to it, will be difficult. Jesus said:

Matthew 24:9-13

Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. Many False Prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love {*agape*} will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

John 16:2-3

They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God. These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me.

Hot Coals

The fire or hot coals being added to the censer may be alluding to a vision in **Ezekiel** where an angel, imaged as a man clothed in linen, is commanded to go between whirling wheels under the cherubim (which supports God's mobile throne) and fill his hands with coals of fire and scatter them over the city as a sign of the coming destruction.⁷ Hence, the censer being thrown to the earth with the coals or fire from the altar also serves this same purpose and speaks of the coming trumpet judgments.

Thunder, Lightning, Earthquake

As for the peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake, we first see this

⁶ The Greek word *ballo*, translated as “threw” or “cast” indicates it is tossed with violence and intensity

⁷ **Ezekiel 10:1-2**

same combination of events when **Yahweh** descended upon Mount Sinai immediately before pronouncing the ten commandments. The mountain was on fire and there was smoke all about (like the incense that rose before **Yahweh**), and the mountain quaked violently and there was thunder and lightning flashes.⁸ The whole scene was so powerful and terrifying that even Moses said, *"I am full of fear and trembling."*⁹ Apparently, this event on Mount Sinai was considered to be the first **shaking** of things in heaven and on earth, as the Spirit referred to it when He addressed the shaking associated with the **End Times** and quoted the Old Testament prophet **Haggai** in the book of **Hebrews**.

Hebrews 12:26-28

And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN." This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.¹⁰

In our first view of the throne of heaven in **Revelation 4**, we were told that out of the throne **comes** flashes of lightening and sounds and peals of thunder (there was no earthquake).¹¹ And it was all rendered in the *present* tense. Thus, the presence of God, whether on the mountain or on His throne, is clearly an ominous sight and one not to be taken lightly, for from His throne comes some amazing displays of might. Then in **Revelation 6**, with the opening of the 6th seal, there was a great earthquake, and we saw the disruption of all the structures of mankind in which man places their hope and searches for security. And now there are the peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake all emanating from **Yahweh's** throne. Again, He is shaking things up.

We will see this same dynamic again with the blowing of the 7th trumpet and the removal of the church from the earth preparing the residents of the earth for the time of **Yahweh's** wrath (symbolized by the addition of a great hailstorm to the mix of emanations). *"And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm."*¹²

And the final presentation of these emanations occurs upon the opening of the 7th bowl of wrath as a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne saying, *"It is done."*¹³ But in this final display, there was a great earthquake, mighty, unlike anything that has ever occurred on the earth.

Thus, it seems that when God is going to bring down judgment, that His throne loudly proclaims the ensuing action with flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And in this case, He seals it with an earthquake, so the people of the earth know they have been **WARNED**.

⁸ **Exodus 19:16-18**

⁹ **Hebrews 12:18-21**

¹⁰ See **Haggai 2:6, 21**

¹¹ **Revelation 4:5**

¹² **Revelation 11:19**

¹³ **Revelation 16:17-18**

The Supernatural Invasion of the Natural Realms (Trumpets 1-4)

Revelation 8:6-13

And the seven angels who are now having the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them.

The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, having been mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

The second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain now having been caused to be burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood, and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and are now having life, died; and a third of the ships were caused to be thoroughly rotted.

The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, that is even now caused to be burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters. The name of the star is even now being called Wormwood; and a third of the waters chose to and became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.

The fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck (or literally flattened or pounded), so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way.

Then I looked, and I heard an eagle now flying in midheaven, now saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to those who are now dwelling on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are now being about to now sound!"

With just these first 4 trumpet judgments, there is a big shift in the narrative in that the supernatural realm begins to actively invade the physical realms, hence the **WARNING** with flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake.

Problems, Problems, Problems

The challenge with each of these trumpet judgments is whether we take them literally, figuratively, or a combination of both. However, there are some serious textual problems that arise when one tries to take a literal approach to these events. And as hard as I have tried to see it that way (literally, that is), it simply **DOES NOT MAKE SENSE**. For example:

- Nothing is damaged or pulverized by the hail, so why include it.
- Fire and ice, an unlikely combination; yet only the fire causes damage. Whereas the first time this combination took place in the **Exodus** narrative, the hail caused the bulk of the damage for it shattered every tree and damaged every plant.¹⁴
- Likewise, the blood seems to be irrelevant in terms of the impact. And how prey-tell does blood

¹⁴ **Exodus 9:23-26**

come to be mingled with hail and fire. Did the lightening (the fire) strike and kill a bunch of birds such that blood rained down with the hail?

- There is no mention of the dry brown grass all around the earth, which would easily and quickly catch on fire and burn.
- The trees and the grass are impacted, but there is no mention of impact to green vegetation and plants. In the 7th judgment of Egypt, the **Codex** is specific about the damage that was done in Egypt, and it included the vegetation as God destroyed the crops of Egypt with the hail and fire. *"Nothing green was left on tree or plant of the field."*¹⁵
- A third of the earth was burned up, which by the way would include grass and trees, so is the reference to the earth inclusive of the damage to the grass and trees? Or is it a separate third, the third that only has green grass and not brown grass?
- In **9:5** certain demonic creatures are told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree. But if **all** the green grass was burned up, why the restraint on these demons?
- That would have to be one big mountain to cause a third of the creatures in the sea to not just die, but to apparently open every vein, artery, and capillary causing each beast to spew out all their blood such that 1/3 of the sea became blood.
- However, to turn a third of the sea into blood requires more blood than sea creatures even have in their bodies. It is estimated that a third of the sea is equal to 444,000,000 cubic kilometers of water or 102,564,000,000 gallons of water. Moreover, blood volume in fish, as in most living creatures, is only 8-10% of their body mass, except for whales which is between 10-20%. Regardless, much more than a third of the sea creatures would have to die and spew out their blood to turn a third of the sea into blood.
- A third of the creatures in the sea that had life died, as opposed to what, all the creatures in the sea that were already dead?
- According to the Greek, the ships are not destroyed but literally corrupted or rotted thoroughly, and not suddenly destroyed by the mountain crashing into the water. This imagery of rot denotes time and not suddenness.
- A star, a meteor, a comet, or whatever celestial mass does not impact the sea, but only strategically hits a third of the rivers and springs of water. Wow, that is amazingly lucky. Is that referring only to a regional impact? Are the rivers of the world even consolidated geographically such that one celestial rock could somehow touch enough of them to damage a third?
- How did the star impact the waters that were under the earth—the springs?
- And how did the star turn the rivers bitter? The thing about rivers is that they are flowing such that if you throw poison in them, the poison will eventually flow out to the oceans and once

¹⁵ *Exodus 10:15*

again the rivers would be clean, so to speak.

- Did this star only impact 3rd world nations that do not have sophisticated water filtering?
- How did a third of the waters choose to and became wormwood? I did not realize that waters were sentient beings with the power of choice and free will.
- A third of the sun, moon, and stars were pounded or literally flattened out. So that one third of them would be darkened, obscured, or without light. But why would that make a third of the day be without light and a third of the night? Having a third of an object darkened does not mean that it only works a third of the time, or does God flip the switch off and shut down the power for a third of the day and night?
- Depending upon whether it is winter or summer, and the part of the earth in which a person lived, for 3-5 hours of the day and night it would be dark. But isn't the night already dark?

If we were to take a **literal** approach, there is so much that **DOES NOT MAKE SENSE** and cannot be reconciled to reality or even to the images themselves.

Moreover, what if these images are meant to be understood as a connected whole? What if these are all variations on a theme and give us varying looks at essentially the same event—progressive for sure, but tied together in one big picture?

What if this depicts the invasion of the supernatural into the natural as God moves the chess pieces to allow room in the souls of men for the arrival of the kingdom of the Beast and his False Prophet?

Synonymity

In **Genesis**, we are told of a time when Pharaoh had two dreams during the same evening. In the first dream there were plump cows and lean cows. The lean cows ate the plump cows, but they did not gain any weight. Then he saw ears of corn that were plump and good and another set of ears of corn that had been scorched. Then the scorched corn swallowed the plump and good corn. Joseph was called to come and interpret the dreams and he said that although the two dreams use different images, they speak of the same event.¹⁶ This is called “*synonymity*”—different images conveying the same message or concept.

We see this same type of synonymity in our passage with the green grass, the sea creatures that had life, the blood, the rivers, and the springs. Different images that speak of the impact of the same event—**the establishment of the kingdom of the Beast**.

Not Touched: The Chosen!

In **Revelation 7**, the people of God, His true bondservants are **marked**, set apart, so-to-speak, from all others in the world. They alone are safe from the blasts of these first four trumpets! Therefore, we must understand this imagery to be communicating an impact to the people of this world that is separate and distinct from that of His bondservants.

¹⁶ **Genesis 41**

Touched: The Called, Righteous, Accursed

This judgment impacts the *Called*, the *Righteous*, and the *Accursed* – a complete collection of all those who now and continually are making their abode in this world.

The Called: those who were called into the household of God and into the realm of Christianity. The Called were converted (or born-again) but did not subsequently dig down deep in their soul and choose to be a bondservant, they did not choose to become a little child dependent upon **Yahweh** for all things all the time. They are those who will **NOT** inherit the kingdom of heaven.¹⁷ In a euphemistic manner, they left Egypt (symbolic for the world), but Egypt never left them. They never let God remove Egypt out of their souls; therefore, they never purchased from Jesus the gold having been refined in the fire. These are those whose names will be erased from the Lamb's book of life.¹⁸

The Righteous are those who treated the Lord's bondservants, the "*little children*,"¹⁹ with care and compassion, and did not abuse them. Jesus said (speaking to His true followers, those who are like little children in terms of their dependence upon **Yahweh** for all things all the time), "*He who receives you receives me, and He who receives Me receives Him who sent me.*" The Righteous are not the bride of Christ, but they are honored before God and before the Father and will not lose their reward.²⁰ Still, they must refuse to take on the mark of the Beast and endure to the end to be saved.²¹

The Accursed are those whose names were never entered into the Lamb's book of life. These are vessels of wrath prepared for destruction.²²

The Synonymity: An Intricate Composition

What we see is a composite of images that are intimately linked and must be understood using the **Code**. They start with the great apostasy spoken about by Jesus where the hearts of a third of mankind have grown cold, *agape* love is depleted, and the spiritual life of mankind is pulverized, burned up, deadened to the things of God, marked for death by blood.²³

In addition, certain leaders and systems of the earth are burned up or consumed in the same way, thereby making room for the *kingdom* of the Beast to enter the world. This demonic kingdom that is even **now** burning is thrust into the sea of humanity, and out from this sea arises the dreadful Beast.²⁴

One third of humanity is marked for death by blood, including a third of all the people who still had spiritual sensitivity and had not yet gone apostate, they are, at this point-in-time, given over to spiritual death, hence the blood which marks them for ultimate sacrifice and slaughter.

¹⁷ See **Matthew 18:3**

¹⁸ See **Matthew 18:3; Revelation 3:5 and 20:15; Psalm 69:28**

¹⁹ Note: the "little children" refer to those who dug down deep in their soul and made the choice to be a little child in terms of their practical, emotional, and every other way, dependency upon **Yahweh**. They look to Him to be their provision in all things all the time and have learned to love Him with their heart, mind, soul, and strength.

²⁰ See **Matthew 10:40-42, 18:3-6; John 13:19-20**

²¹ **Revelation 14:9-12; Matthew 24:13**

²² See **Romans 9; Revelation 13:8, 17:8** (in contrast see **Revelation 21:22-27**)

²³ **Matthew 24:10-12; 2 Thessalonians 2:3**

²⁴ See **Revelation 13:1**

Many systems of religion and their ministries, symbolized by the ships on the sea, turn and follow the Beast as overtime they have been corrupted and rotted out from within (again, it is not a sudden demise, but a slow rotting).²⁵ And with the arrival of the False Prophet, he brings a certain poison and bitterness to the followers of the Beast. After all he speaks as a dragon, such that he leads these followers to despise God and the Chosen of God, and these same followers are thrust into darkness along with their religious systems, including a third of the churches.²⁶

Numbers

There are **four** judgments, so we know according to the **Code** this judgment spans all of creation, so these “thirds” are likely not a centralized regional occurrence but occur across the globe.

There are **eight** thirds implying that those who are touched (according to the **Code**) have a new beginning in their lives, from this point forward their lives will be radically altered as they begin a new life in the kingdom of the Beast, marked by blood, destined for wrath and eternal judgment.

There is **one** whole (100%--all the green grass), which according to the **Code** means there is unity, or uniformity, in the impact to their lives – no variation.

Impact

Things are burned up, turned to blood, made bitter, rotted out, and they become darkened. This is quite the progression of “destruction” which paints the picture of the life of those who harden their hearts toward *agape* love and to the things of God and choose to join the kingdom of the Beast—a kingdom marked by hatred, violence, and slaughter.

The Code

By the way, I will footnote some of these references in terms of their place in the **Codex**, but the more common ones I will just refer to and encourage you to go back to the **Introduction** to the tables (**Toolbox 2 – Key Idioms communicated in Colors, Objects, Phrases, and Numbers**) which lists in detail the **Code** and all the scripture references associated with each key image.

- Hail speaks of that which relentlessly pulverizes and destroys.
- Fire speaks of that which burns up and consumes.
- Blood marks people, sets them apart, sanctifies them (in this case in an unholy manner).²⁷
- Earth speaks of the systems of mankind, all that transpires on the land (separate and distinct from the restless seas of humanity).
- Trees speaks of leaders of men.²⁸
- Grass speaks of the common man. In the **Codex**, descendants of a righteous man are compared to the grass of the earth and evildoers are said to wither like the grass and fade like the green

²⁵ *Psalm 107:23-32*

²⁶ *Revelation 13:11*

²⁷ *Exodus 24:8; Leviticus 8:24, 30*

²⁸ See *Isaiah 2:12-19; Ezekiel 17:11-24; Jeremiah 17:7-8*

herb.²⁹ The generations of men are spoken of as grass which sprouts anew in the morning and toward evening it fades away, for his days are like grass.³⁰ And there is the famous passage which says that “*all flesh is grass and the people are grass*”.³¹

- Green speaks of life, spiritual life.³²
- Mountain speaks of a kingdom (and we know it is in **Code** because the text says, “**something like** a mountain” it does not say “a mountain”).
- Sea speaks of the restless masses of wicked humanity—the constant churning amongst the nations.
- Creatures in the sea that are even now living speaks of people who are active in the tumultuous affairs amongst the nations and still have some measure of spiritual life within their being.
- Ships speaks of ministries, the vessels upon which people go out on the sea to do business and care for the nations of the world.³³
- The Star speaks of an angelic being.
- Rivers and springs of water speaks of the spiritual life of mankind.³⁴
- The Sun, the Moon, and the Stars speaks of the religious systems of Christianity, Islam, and the Angels that are assigned to the churches of God.
- Darkness in the day speaks of hopelessness: hope that is depleted.
- Darkness in the night speaks of utter despair resulting from hopelessness.

With the **Code** providing our framework for interpreting the images, there is a path through this barrage of images that is otherwise lost when one tries to take a literal approach to this text. But let’s keep in mind, it is a synonymy and an intricate composition that communicates the time when the kingdom of the Beast is ushered into this world.

Let’s stop right here and pick up in our next podcast with the 7-trumpet judgments.

²⁹ *Job 5:25; Psalm 37:1-2*

³⁰ *Psalm 90:5; Psalm 103:15*

³¹ *Isaiah 40:6-8*

³² *See Luke 23:31; Jeremiah 11:16; Isaiah 15:6; Proverbs 11:28; Psalm 92:12-14*

³³ *Psalm 107:23-30; Revelation 18:17-18*

³⁴ *See Jeremiah 17:7-8*