

OBSERVATION STUDY SERIES

REVELATION

THE SEVENTH SEAL

8:1-6

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Revelation 8:1-6

The LAMB Breaks the Seventh Seal

Have you ever been some place where there was absolute silence? I don't know if it would even be possible to find such a place, but if it were, wouldn't it be frightening? At the very least you could probably still hear your heart pounding in fear because you could sense that something was wrong... very, very wrong... you could feel in your being that something was about to happen... and whatever it was—was going to be terrifying...

The interlude is over and John is about to direct our attention back to the breaking of the seals. The seventh seal is still to come, and there will be silence in heaven for about half an hour when the Lamb breaks it.

When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. Revelation 8:1

From the beginning of John's vision of heaven there has been loud, continuous praise around the throne. Now there will be silence in heaven... bone-chilling silence... terrifying silence... every last corner of heaven will be silent...

[Before I go on, have you noticed where the songs have been? Remember, I told you about a neat little pattern? In chapters 4 and 5 there were songs. What came in chapter 6? The breaking of the seals or judgment. Then there was an interlude which included songs. And now the judgment is going to be seen again. This same pattern of songs before judgment will be seen again later in Revelation. Be sure and watch for it.]

The silence is very interesting, to say the least. When we get further along and are observing the bowls I will show you something pretty cool. But for now, let's "listen" to the silence in Revelation 8.

Why do you think there might be silence? What is about to happen? The Lamb breaks the seventh seal and then suddenly there is silence. Have you ever heard of "the calm before the storm"? I don't know where that phrase came from but it definitely fits in this situation. There is a calmness, or contemplation, of what is about to happen. Could the silence possibly suggest an anticipation that the sealed judgments were going to be greater or of more intensity? Perhaps the silence indicated that whatever was coming was going to be even worse than what had already happened. Whatever the silence suggests, the coming judgments will, nonetheless, be much worse than the previous ones.

And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. Revelation 8:2

What exactly is the seventh seal? The seventh seal is thirty minutes of silence and... the seven angels who stand before God and their seven trumpets of judgment.

One of the main patterns in Revelation is very simple. If you can remember this as we continue to observe the rest of the book of Revelation it will help you. The pattern looks something like this:

(Seals)1 2 3 4 5 6 7=(Trumpets)1 2 3 4 5 6 7=(Bowls)1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The first seven numbers represent the seven seals. That's what the book is called. The book is never called "the scrolls", it is never called "the scroll of the seals and the trumpets", nor is it called "the scroll of the seals and the bowls". It is always called "the scroll of the seven seals".

There is an interlude right before the seventh seal. Then the seventh seal is broken and there is thirty minutes of silence. The silence anticipates even more judgment to come.

At the time of the thirty minutes of silence, seven angels receive seven trumpets. The seven trumpets *are* the seventh seal. The six seals on the scroll are broken one by one and six judgments happen. When the seventh seal is broken, it unleashes the seventh judgment which is broken up into seven more judgments, so to speak.

All seven of these trumpets could be seen as the "package" of the seventh seal. When the Lamb breaks the seventh seal he unleashes the seven trumpets because they *are* the seventh seal. The same pattern will take place when the seventh trumpet is sounded which will unleash the seven final judgments—the seven bowls. But keep in mind that the seven bowls are really the seventh trumpet... and the seven trumpets are really the seventh seal... and the seven seals are really the entire set of judgments! Got it? Good!

Now, what we're going to see next is the angels giving an overview or a summary of what is about to happen.

And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. Another angel came and stood at the altar, 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. Revelation 8:2-3

There are seven angels who stand before God and they receive seven trumpets. Then, another angel comes and stands at the altar. This last angel makes eight, right?

The eighth angel holds a golden censer (a container that incense is put into). He stands at the altar holding the golden censer and much incense is given to him so that he can add it to the prayers of all the saints which are already on the golden altar. This golden altar is before the throne of God.

Wow! This is such amazing information that we are being given! First of all, we need to realize that this is the *heavenly* temple, the real one—this is not referring to the temple on earth in Jerusalem. I wish I had space to teach you all about the format of the temple and how it was made after the pattern of the real dwelling place of God in heaven—but our goal in observing Revelation is to see the main and plain things, so I will leave that for another time. Or you could check out Event 9 in ***HIS*Story: From Event To Event The Bible Is One Story—HIS Story!** which gives you a good overview of the subject. For now, let me just tell you that the altar of incense was located directly in front of the mercy seat upon which the presence of God was manifest (although a veil separated the two).

The angel has the censer and there are already prayers of the saints in it. (According to the text, the prayers of the saints and the incense are synonymous which lines up perfectly with what we see elsewhere in the Word of God.) The angel is given much more incense to add to those prayers—so more prayers of the saints are going to be answered!

This is interesting. If the first ones were prayers being answered, and they were... and now we have more prayers being added, and they are... what do you think the prayers are about? What are the saints praying for? Think for a moment—what is happening? Judgments! Honestly, how often do you ask God to come and judge? How often do you ask God to come and vindicate His righteousness and His holiness before His creation? These are the prayers that are going into the censer which is given to God in the seventh seal. And He is about to answer them, beginning with the first trumpet...

And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. Revelation 8:4

Right out of the angel's hand, the smoke of the incense and the prayers of the saints go up before God. God loves the "smell" of prayers. The aroma of His people acknowledging Him as God, acknowledging Him as the only One Who can do a thing about their situation... is pleasing to Him.

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. Revelation 8:5

First the incense was burning on top of fire in the censer. Now the angel fills the censer with the fire of the altar and then throws the whole thing to the earth. Why? Because God is answering the prayers contained in the censer! What is His answer? Well... what

follows? Peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake. The answer to the prayers of God's saints crying out for judgment is a resounding, "Yes!!!"

And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them. Revelation 8:6

The seven angels take up their seven trumpets... They are ready to sound them... The judgments of God are about to resume...