

When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ² And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. ³ Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴ And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw *it* to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. ⁶ So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. ⁷ The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up. ⁸ Then the second angel sounded: And *something* like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. ⁹ And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. ¹⁰ Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹ The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter. ¹² Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night. ¹³ And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. ² And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. ³ Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. ⁴ They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵ And they were not given *authority* to kill them, but to torment them *for* five months. Their torment *was* like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. ⁶ In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them. ⁷ The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces *were* like the faces of men. ⁸ They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' *teeth*. ⁹ And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings *was* like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. ¹⁰ They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power *was* to hurt men five months. ¹¹ And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew *is* Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon. ¹² One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things. ¹³ Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, ¹⁴ saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." ¹⁵ So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. ¹⁶ Now the number of the army of the horsemen *was* two hundred million; I heard the number of them. ¹⁷ And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses *were* like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. ¹⁸ By these three *plagues* a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. ¹⁹ For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails *are* like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm. ²⁰ But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. ²¹ And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Introduction

I am grouping Chapter 8 with Chapter 9 in order to provide continuity of the trumpet judgements. As we will discover, the fifth and sixth trumpet judgement are very bad but we can't miss them out because of their severity.

1. The Power of silence – v. 1-2.

The first thing we are told in chapter 8 is that when Jesus opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

It was probably a silence of AWE before the outpouring of the Trumpet judgements mention in Chapter 8 and 9.

Also the Bowl judgements in chapter 16.

You will notice that this is the last seal to be opened.

Everybody know knows what is going to happen.

The key to understanding the 30 min. silence is to note the words that proceed this silence.

The words are “when He opened the seventh seal.”

The silence came after the contents of the sealed information was revealed.

The seven Trumpet Judgements and the Bowl Judgements were so awful that the whole congregation of heaven were silent for half an hour. (30 mins.)

Now half an hour might not seem very long, but in the context of the situation, it might well have seemed a long time.

Imagine if I stopped speaking NOW for 5 mins. It would seem like a very long time.

If I stopped speaking for 15 minutes, then that would seem even longer.

The seriousness of the judgements made people speechless.

I have discovered that when something serious happens like an unexpected death of a personal friend or a loved one, then words are totally inadequate.

You are so shocked that you can't think of anything to say.

There was silence in Heaven because nobody knew what to say.

Finally, the Judgement of God had come and there was nothing they could do, except stand in silence.

2. The Precious Prayers of the Saints – v. 3-4.

We are told in verses 3-4 that another Angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the golden altar.

The Angel was given a lot of incense so that he could offer it to God with the prayers of all the saints.

The smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.

It is very fitting that before the outpouring of God's judgement, there should be a prayer meeting.

An American writer by the name of Torrance said this;

“More potent, more powerful than all the dark and mighty powers let loose in the world, more powerful than anything else, is the power of prayer, set ablaze by the fire of God and cast upon the earth.”

If you knew that very soon a disaster like the judgements we are about to encounter was going to happen, here in Japan, I expect you would call a prayer meeting.

In fact, that would be the best thing to do.

Whatever we think about the subject of prayer, one thing is sure, the best thing we can do in any given situation is to pray.

As Christians we should always be “Prayerful People”.

It was the famous Charles Wesley that God used to bring Revival to the U.K. many years ago who said;

“God does nothing, except in answer to prayer”

What he meant by that is that if we want God to act we need to pray.

We don't always understand how prayer works but we know it works, so let us all be prayerful people.

3. The Six Trumpet Judgements – 8: v.7 – 9: v.21.

We now come to the six trumpet judgements from Chapter 8: v.7 through to Chapter 9: v.21.

If you know your Bibles well you will notice a similarity between the plagues of Egypt and these judgements.

The plagues of Egypt were a judgement by God against the Egyptian people and their gods.

However, these judgements are directed to the whole world.

The first four judgements are quite simple and will need only a little explanation.

First Trumpet - After the sounding of the first trumpet a third of the trees and the green grass on the earth were all burned up. The disaster was caused by hail and fire, mingled with blood.

For a parallel judgement we need to turn to the 7th plague of Egypt.

Exodus Chapter 9: v.13-18 and verses 23-24.

¹³ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me, ¹⁴ for at this time I will send all My plagues to your very heart, and on your servants and on your people, that you may know that *there is none like Me in all the earth.* ¹⁵ Now if I had stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, then you would have been cut off from the earth. ¹⁶ But indeed for this *purpose* I have raised you up, that I may show My power *in* you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth. ¹⁷ As yet you exalt yourself against My people in that you will not let them go. ¹⁸ Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause very heavy hail to rain down, such as has not been in Egypt since its founding until now.

²³ And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. ²⁴ So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

At the time of the plagues in Egypt, the country was the centre of a godless world system. Therefore, it is logical that God would repeat the judgement, except this time it would be on a world-wide scale.

You will notice that there are 13 references to 'the third part' in Revelation 8 and 9.

Some Bible Scholars believe that this "third part" of the world is where the "Anti-Christ" will be ruling at the time.

This is possible but the main issue is that the judgement will be confined to a third of the world.

Second Trumpet - In this judgement 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.

This judgement parallels the first plague in Egypt.

We need not look up the reference but it is Exodus 7: v. 19-21.

Third Trumpet - In this judgement a third of the rivers and springs of water were polluted. The damage was caused by a star called "**Wormwood**". (Hebrew word means to curse)

There are herb plants that grow today which are all part of the "wormwood" family. All these herbs are bitter and some are very dangerous.

So everybody who lived in this part of the world would be unable to drink the water.

We need now to turn to Jeremiah Chapter 9: v. 14-15.

¹⁴ but they have walked according to the dictates of their own hearts and after the Baals, which their fathers taught them," ¹⁵ therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will feed them, this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.

Jeremiah prophesied that one day Israel would have to drink the bitter waters.

It is amazing how much of Old Testament prophecy connects with Revelation.

God works in His own way according to His own time scale, but He always warns people of His impending judgement.

Fourth Trumpet - The fourth judgement was upon the moon , the stars and the sun. This meant that a third of the day was dark and a third of the night did not have stars and was completely dark. This fourth trumpet judgement is a fulfilment of a prophecy made by Jesus Christ. Turn with me to Luke Chapter 21: v. 25-26.

²⁵“And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; ²⁶men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Also quote Amos Chapter 8: v. 9.

⁹“And it shall come to pass in that day,” says the Lord GOD, “That I will make the sun go down at noon, And I will darken the earth in broad daylight;

We now come to an awful part of the book of Revelation.

It is introduced for us by an Angel in Chapter 8: v. 13.

The Angel pronounces three woes to the inhabitants of the earth. Another way to translate the word “woe” could be “terror”.

In other words, the terror that was about to come was so bad, it needed a triple warning.

It seems that we are now approaching the middle of the “Tribulation” at which time critical events will take place.

Fifth Trumpet - The fifth judgement takes up 12 verses.

This is important because it gives us more information about the judgement.

In v. 1 the first thing we notice is that John saw a “star” which had already fallen from Heaven.

So we are told that sometime in the past, a person described as “a star fell from Heaven.” That person was given the key to the bottomless pit.

Now the word “Lucifer” means brightness or morning star.

Lucifer is another word for Satan and the devil.

If we turn to Isaiah Chapter 14 and read v.12-15 we will discover the origin of Lucifer.

¹²“How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *How* you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! ¹³For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’ ¹⁵Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.

By turning to Ezekiel Chapter 28: v. 11b – 19 we have the picture completed.

¹¹Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ¹²“Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “You *were* the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. ¹³You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone *was* your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created. ¹⁴“You *were* the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. ¹⁵You *were* perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you. ¹⁶“By the abundance of your trading You became filled with violence within, And you sinned; Therefore I cast you as a profane thing Out of the mountain of God; And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the fiery stones. ¹⁷“Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, That they might gaze at you. ¹⁸“You defiled your sanctuaries By the multitude of your iniquities, By the iniquity of your trading; Therefore I brought fire from your midst; It devoured you, And I turned you to ashes upon the earth In the

sight of all who saw you. ¹⁹ All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; You have become a horror, And *shall be* no more forever.””

So what we have here is Lucifer cast out of Heaven and God giving him the key to the bottomless pit.

What is the bottomless pit?

Let us turn to Luke Chapter 8: v. 26-31.

²⁶ Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷ And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!” ²⁹ For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. ³⁰ Jesus asked him, saying, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” because many demons had entered him. ³¹ And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.

The hundreds of demons who controlled this demon possessed man dreaded going to the bottomless pit. The word “bottomless pit” in Revelation and the “Abyss” in Luke are exactly the same words.

So the bottomless pit is not hell, but a place where evil spirits are confined.

We are told that Lucifer was given the key to the bottomless pit and he opened it up.

After he opened it up, a large amount of smoke came out which caused the sun and the air to be darkened.

This reminds us of one of the plagues of Egypt.

Turn with me to Exodus Chapter 10: v. 21

²¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness *which* may even be felt.”

It is now clear to us that nothing but evil is going to come out of the bottomless pit.

In v. 3 we discover that some form of locust came out of the pit and they were to be given power like scorpions.

We need to understand something about scorpions and locusts.

(Slide of a Locust and Scorpion here please)

Both of these creatures are native to Israel.

A Scorpion can grow to a length of 6 inches. (20c.m.)

Their main weapon is the sting at the end of their tail.

They are used in the Bible to describe painful judgement.

(Deut. 28: v. 38, 42, 1 Kings 12: v. 11-14)

Now the locusts were well known in Israel.

Although Locusts are not much larger than a grasshopper their power is in their numbers and ability to totally destroy whole fields of vegetation within a small amount of time.

They can swarm upon vegetation in numbers of between 40 and 80 million. All that in under a square kilometre.

However, these special demonic locusts were not going to destroy the vegetation of the earth, they were going to bring harm to everybody on this earth who did not have the seal of God upon them.

Remember last week, God sealed 144,000 people who could not be harmed during the tribulation.

The infliction of pain upon people was going to be so bad that they would rather die. (v.6)

However, we are told that everybody had to endure a five- month torment.

Five months is the life-cycle of a normal locust, so I guess that there may be a connection here.

There is a parallel between this judgement and the 8th plague in Egypt in Exodus chapter 10.

Finally, we come to the sixth “Trumpet Judgement.” - v. 13-21.

In this judgement one third of mankind was killed. (v.18)

We are told all sorts of interesting things about the horsemen involved in these killings, and about their number.

But the main thing is that one third of mankind is to be killed.

Going on the estimated population of the world today, we are talking about 2.5 billion people killed.

To put that number in the context of Japan, you are talking about the population of Japan times 24.

That is a lot of people.

This will be the worst slaughter in world history.

The surprising thing comes in v. 20-21.

We are told that the rest of mankind who were not killed did not repent.

They carried on with their lives in rebellion to God.

We are given a picture of what life was like for these people.

It is a picture that we are slowly moving forward towards today.

The picture includes a massive amount of idol worship.

Demonic worship will be widespread.

There will be widespread sexual immorality, murders and thefts.

It is interesting to notice the word “sorceries” here in v. 21.

In the Greek translation of our New Testament the word is

“pharmakeia”, this is the root for the English word “pharmacist”.

This means having to do with drugs.

The same word is translated “witchcraft” in Galatians 5: v. 20.

The fact that witchcraft and sorcerers use drugs and potions in their demonic activity shows the connection between these words.

John is suggesting that there will be a revival of witchcraft and an increase in the use of drugs in the last days.

It might surprise you to know that “witchcraft” is the fastest growing religion in America today.

There are 200,000 registered witches and an estimated 8 million unregistered.

It is estimated that in the not too distant future witchcraft will be the 3rd largest religion in America.

We are not too far away from the reality of the book of Revelation.

As the world gets more evil, people will get more and more angry against the God of the Bible.

As we move towards the second coming of Jesus and the time of tribulation mentioned in these chapters, people will mainly worship satan and hate everything that is good.

It is no wonder that a Holy God will bring such severe judgements upon mankind.

We have only heard bad news this morning from the book of Revelation.

Now we need to hear some good news before we close.

The good news is that during this awful period in history, God has sealed his 144,000 evangelists who are totally protected from any destruction.

We learnt about these people last week.

They will be operating during the events of Chapter 8 and 9.

Their message will be a message of love and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

People can still be saved from God’s wrath and know the blessing of heaven for the future.

It seems that many people did not want to hear the gospel message at this time.

However, God still wanted to give them the opportunity and it appears some took that opportunity.

Maybe today, you would like to take the opportunity of getting right with God in your own life and putting your faith and trust in Jesus.

Jesus said;

“Behold I stand at the door and knock. If ANYONE hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and dine with him, and he with Me.”

Q. Is God knocking at the door of your heart today?

Q. Are you hearing God’s voice speak to you today?

Well the handle to the door of your heart is on your side.

You will need to pray with someone today and open up your heart to God.

I encourage you to do this while there is still time.

Time eventually runs out and then God steps in with His judgement.

There is an old song that people used to sing in the U.K. and the U.S. it goes like this.

- 1 Be in time! Be in time!
While the voice of Jesus calls you,
Be in time!
If in sin you longer wait,
You may find no open gate,
And your cry be just too late:
Be in time!
- 2 Fairest flowers soon decay,
Youth and beauty pass away;
O you have not long to stay,
Be in time!
While God’s Spirit bids you come,
Sinner, do not longer roam,
Lest you seal your hopeless doom,
Be in time!
- 3 Time is gliding swiftly by,
Death and judgment draweth nigh,
To the arms of Jesus fly,
Be in time!
O I pray you count the cost!
Ere the fatal line be crossed,
And your soul in hell be lost,
Be in time!
- 4 Sinner, heed the warning voice,
Make the Lord your final choice,
Then all heaven will rejoice,
Be in time!
Come from darkness into light;
Come, let Jesus make you right;
Come, receive His life tonight,
Be in time!