

## Revelation #3

### What We've Learned Thus Far

1. Revelation denotes the idea of unveiling and/or disclosing something previously unknown. It's the pulling off of a lid.
2. The best way to approach the material of Revelation is to read the prophetic contents of it in layers, or multiple fulfillments in history.
3. Chapters 1-3 provide the foundation of the prophecy. It's given by Jesus through John to the church. Each church addressed has direct application to that particular body in history. But the 7 churches as a whole foreshadow the future of the church to the present age (i.e., Ephesus – Age of the Apostles; Laodicea – The Present Age).
4. Chapters 4-7 form a single unit and deal with 6 out of 7 seals disclosed by Jesus from heaven. Read together, they mirror Jesus' message to the disciples in the Olivet Discourse (there will be wars and rumors of wars, etc.). Chapter 7 functions as this section's reprieve, just before the 7<sup>th</sup> seal is opened. Important here is that you have elements of the church being removed before the final eschatological war takes place. Jesus said as much, also, in the Olivet Discourse (days cut short). What's surprising is that the "saints" here are removed by their deaths/martyrdom. That lets you know how bad the final war will be.

### Introducing the Seventh Seal

1. The contents of the seventh seal take us from Revelation 8 all the way to the end of Revelation 19. Thus, there are 4 major sections in Revelation: (1-3 – from Jesus to the Church); (4-7 – 1<sup>st</sup> 6 seals); (8-19 – 7<sup>th</sup> Seal); (20-21 – Beginning Again/New Eden).
2. In the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal, God's wrath in the final eschatological war is finally poured out after being delayed since the rebellion in heaven. As such, much like the plagues, His wrath increases progressively. It's signaled by 7 trumpets and 7 bowls.
3. It will help you to think about the contents of the seventh seal like this:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (Seals)  
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (Trumpets)  
        1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (Bowls)  
            Satan/Anti-Christ Defeated

### How The Seventh Seal Is Introduced (8:1-5)

#### 1 Silence in Heaven

*When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour (8:1)*

- **Driving Idea:** Why would there be silence? Think of it this way: there is applause and rejoicing in heaven when one sinner repents because there is still time to repent. But in this scene, there is silence before time has run out. The Bible tells us that God is "slow" to anger, and he is "patient." Now, however, all of heaven knows God's wrath is about to unfold.

#### 2. The Result of Answered Prayers (for Justice)

*<sup>2</sup>And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. <sup>3</sup>Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God's people, on the golden altar in front of the throne. <sup>4</sup>The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God's people, went up before God from the angel's hand.<sup>5</sup> Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake. (8:2-5)*

- **Driving Idea:** Wrath is poured out here at the request of the saints (who have been killed for their faith). Paul implores not to seek revenge because "vengeance is mine, thus saith the Lord." He does it in the 7<sup>th</sup> seal.

### The Trumpets of the Seventh Seal

\*\* The seven trumpets are the contents of the seventh seal of judgment. Important to remember is that the church has faced persecution, death, etc just as Jesus said they would. However, as we learned, their "days would be cut short" and be spared from the worst of the tribulation (Jesus says as much in the Olivet Discourse). These trumpets, or the worst of God's judgment, occur after the church has been spared (thus mid-trib.)

- **The First Trumpet:** When the angel sounds the trumpet, the world experiences "*hail and fire mixed with blood*" (8:7). This bears resemblance to the 7<sup>th</sup> plague in Egypt. But here one third of the world's trees are burned up and all of the grass is consumed.

- **The Second Trumpet:** Here the imagery is that of a *burning mountain thrown into the sea* (8:8). A third of the sea turns to blood, a third of the ships sink, and a third of the ocean life dies (8:9). It bears some resemblance to the first plague in Egypt. But important here is the connection to the Roman/Greek World, where sea fairing people, as both were, literally “ruled the world.” Not anymore.
- **The Third Trumpet:** Here, the contents of the second extends to the third. God’s judgment here now moves from saltwater (oceans) to freshwater lakes and rivers. A *great star, blazing like a torch* falls from the sky and poisons the water supply (8:1). The star is given the name *Wormwood*. Wormwood is a plant is extremely bitter and poisonous. Fresh water was life in the ancient world, just as it is now. But here, life is being cut off.
- **The Fourth Trumpet—** The fourth trumpet moves from the waters to the heavens, drawing imagery of creation and as well as the 9<sup>th</sup> plague of darkness. John tells us *“a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.”* Now you have a reversal of creation. God says “let there be darkness” instead of light.
- **The Woe:** Following the 4<sup>th</sup> trumpet, John tells us a special warning comes from an eagle flying through the air, telling the inhabitants *“Woe! Woe. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels* (8:13). That’s why we refer to the final 3 trumpets as the 3 woes.
- **The Fifth Trumpet** — Demonic locusts (again plague terminology) attack and torture the unsaved for 5 months (9:1-11). It begins with a *star falling from heaven*, an obvious reference to the fallen angel of fallen angels and is given *the key to the shaft of the Abyss* (9:1). He opens it and unleashes the demons. These locusts have a king angel in charge of the Abyss. His name translates to “Destroyer.” It only gets darker. But the key idea is that Satan is now permitted by God to unleash his evil on the world.
- **The Sixth Trumpet** — Now another demonic horde is unleashed that results in a cry from the altar of God for the release of *the four angels who are bound at the great river* (9:12-21). This isn’t what you think though. These are wicked angels. And they release a calvary to kill a third of humanity. The bad thing here is that the people on earth still refuse to repent. They continue in their idolatry, murder, sorcery, sexual immorality, and theft (9:20-21).
- **The Seventh Trumpet** — Is radically different: *The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever”* (Rev 11:15). The elders says *the time has come for...destroying those who destroy the earth* (11:18). Important here is this begins the bowls of wrath (also a series of seven), where the Messiah and his angels begin to execute judgment. In the trumpets the demonic has been permitted. But in the bowls, Jesus and his angels dispense it.

### 7 Bowls of Judgment Brought By 7 Angels (ch 16)

\*\*This is part of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet. The angels in this stand inside the now-open temple, ready to step forward to bring the final judgments on the earth.

\*\*Important here is these angels unveil judgment on those who inflicted evil on the world as outlined in the trumpets. As a result, it is the “great day of God’s wrath” where God judges the Anti-Christ (the Destroyer, etc.) and his kingdom.

- **First Bowl:** Sores break out on people who have the mark of the beast.
- **Second Bowl:** The sea turns to blood, killing everything in it.
- **Third Bowl:** Rivers and springs turn to blood.
- **Fourth Bowl:** The sun scorches people with fire.
- **Fifth Bowl:** the kingdom of the beast is plunged into darkness.
- **Sixth Bowl:** the Euphrates River dries up.
- **Seventh Bowl:** An earthquake and giant hailstones destroy the earth.

### **Satan Defeated (17-19)**

We will get into the imagery of this next week.