

38. The Book of Revelation—7:11-8:6

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(4-21-21)

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We are currently in Chapter 7 of the Book of Revelation—which is a pause or parenthesis before Jesus breaks the 7th Seal (8:1) which unleashes the 7 Trumpet Judgments.

Revelation 7:9-12 (NKJV)

⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" ¹¹ All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, *Be* to our God forever and ever. Amen."

Here we see, all of heaven, consisting of angelic beings and redeemed humanity, standing around the Throne of God singing praises with joy inexpressible and full of glory. However, on the earth the rebels are reaping what they have sown—

Hebrews 12:25-29 (NKJV)

²⁵ See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more *shall we not escape* if we turn away from Him who *speaks* from heaven, ²⁶ whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "*Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.*" ²⁷ Now this, "*Yet once more,*" indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. ²⁸ Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. ²⁹ For our God *is* a consuming fire.

1 John 2:15-17 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that *is* in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Revelation 7:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³ Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" ¹⁴ And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

So, as we saw last time, these people are Tribulation saints—they're wearing white robes which represent that they are clothed with the righteousness of Christ—the only way anyone can enter into heaven!

As opposed to the 'filthy rags' of self-righteousness that all unbelievers clothe themselves in in their efforts to earn heaven (Isaiah 64:6).

Verse 14 is literally—“**the tribulation, the great one**” (second half of the 7-year tribulation period)—signifying that the martyrdom of all these Tribulation saints is taking place during the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation Period known as the Great Tribulation:

Matthew 24:15-18, 21 (NKJV)

¹⁵ "Therefore when you see the '*abomination of desolation*,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. ¹⁸ And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes...

²¹ For then there will be **great tribulation**, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

The time between Matthew 24:15 and verse 21 will be a time when the Antichrist will demand allegiance and loyalty by forcing people to take his mark and if they don't—he will kill them by the hundreds of thousands and no doubt millions.

"These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (verse 14)

John Walvoord—

"Some believe that the majority of saints in the tribulation will die as martyrs. But many will be killed by earthquakes, war, and pestilence. Others will be the object of special persecution by the world ruler (Antichrist). They will be hounded to death much as the Jews were in World War II. Because they will not worship the beast, they will be under a death sentence (Revelation 13:15). Those who accept Christ in that time may be faced with the solemn alternative of either renouncing their faith in Christ and worshiping the beast or being slain. The result will be multiplied thousands of martyrs."

Now, those who hold to a Pre-Wrath Rapture view (and possibly others) believe this group represents the Church.

They believe that this group in Revelation 7:9—“**a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands**”—are Church saints who had been raptured out of the Great Tribulation.

Those in the Pre-Wrath Rapture camp believe the Church will go into the Tribulation Period and be raptured sometime after the midpoint during what the Bible calls “the Great Tribulation” portion of those final 7-years.

As I have been saying, I staunchly believe the Church will be raptured *before* the 7-year Tribulation Period even begins (the Pre-Tribulation Rapture position). But with regard to these people holding palm branches in heaven being the Church—if that is true, why doesn't John recognize any of them?

I mean, John was an elder in the Church, if this group *is* the Church which has just been raptured out of the *grave* (which would include 1st century saints) and the *Tribulation Period*—it is very strange that he doesn't recognize any of them.

Once again, that is because these are not *Church* saints, they are Tribulation saints—Church saints (including John) were raptured to heaven at the start of Chapter 4.

Author Mark Hitchcock said with regard to this group—

"This group of believers is not the church, as some suppose. The church of Jesus Christ will be raptured to heaven before the outpouring of God's wrath on the earth (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9; Revelation 3:10). The

multitude in Revelation 7 is comprised of Gentiles who trust Christ after the rapture and are martyred for their faith during the Great Tribulation. They are Tribulation saints. They are part of the final harvest of souls during the Tribulation. This means there will be great revival during the Great Tribulation.”

Revelation 7:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ **Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.**

There are significant differences between *Church* saints and these *Tribulation* saints—for example, these saints are *before* the throne of God and *serve* Him day and night—we as Church saints *sit* on thrones and *reign* with Jesus as His Bride.

Revelation 1:6 (NKJV)

⁶ and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

2 Timothy 2:12 (NKJV)

¹² If we endure, We shall also reign with Him...

Revelation 20:6 (NKJV)

⁶ Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

It seems that these Tribulation saints will be “**before the throne of God**”, serving Him “**day and night**”—during the Millennial Kingdom.

Some commentators have interpreted this to mean that these people are *before God’s throne and serve Him day and night*—in the new creation (2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21:1). But according to Revelation 21:22 and 21:25—there is no *temple* or *night* in the new heavens and earth after God destroys the existing creation and replaces it with the new creation.

So, Revelation 7:15 has to be a reference to these saints serving God during the Millennial Kingdom.

Revelation 7:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ **They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat...**

This becomes all the more significant when you remember that these people came out of the Great Tribulation—they didn’t take the mark of the beast, which means they couldn’t buy or sell.

That meant that many of them probably starved to death.

As they suffered the horrors of **the Great Tribulation**—these redeemed people of God had endured—*hunger, thirst, and scorching heat* (a phenomenon which will occur in the Great Tribulation as the sun possibly goes into a nova like condition).

But for all the physical torment and mental pain of fearing for their lives and the lives of their loved ones—it’s all over now!

- They will never shed another tear for all eternity!

- They will never again feel hunger or thirst.
- They will never experience pain or heartache or depression or sorrow or death—ever again!

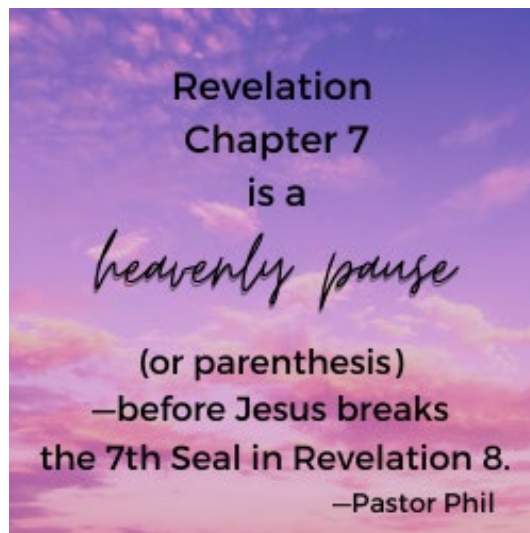
Revelation 7:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ **for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."**

Revelation 21:4 (NKJV)

⁴ **And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."**

I didn't live through the horrors of Nazi Germany during the second world war...(Elaborate)



CHAPTER 8

Revelation 8:1 (NKJV)

¹ **When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.**

Think of all the angels, the elders, the cherubim and seraphim we have been introduced to already in Chapters 4 and 5.

Think of all of the voices in heaven up until this point—the billions upon billions upon billions of beings both angelic and glorified humanity singing and praising God. Not to mention the continual praising and exalting of God by the 4 living creatures who proclaim without rest, **“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty...”**—suddenly it all stops in a deafening silence that lasts for about a half an hour!

Talk about a dramatic pause!

Author Mark Hitchcock—

“Everything is on hold, pausing for what comes next. The next kingly move occurs when seven angels are given seven trumpets to sound. The response is breathless anticipation of what’s coming—a holy hush in heaven before all hell breaks loose on earth.”

Another well-known pastor comments—

“After all that loudness, as the full fury of the final judgments are about to be released, silence falls on the heavenly scene. The implication is that when the judgment about to happen becomes visible as the seventh seal is broken and the scroll unrolled, both the redeemed and the angels are reduced to silence in anticipation of the grim reality of the destruction they see written on the scroll. The half an hour of silence is the calm before the storm. It is the silence of foreboding, of intense expectation, of awe at what God is about to do.”

This is going to mark the transition from *tribulation* into great tribulation on the earth. (Matthew 24:21)

It’s going to signify God shifting His wrath into high gear from the *“Day of the Lord”*—to the *“awesome and terrible Day of the Lord”* judgments upon the earth (Malachi 4:5; Acts 2:20) which will take place during the second half of the Tribulation Period.

The Trumpet Judgments which will ultimately give way to the Bowl Judgments—both of which will finally bring an end to this present evil age of man’s rebellion—and will usher in the return of Jesus Christ and the glorious Kingdom Age.

But even during these judgments the Holy Spirit will be at work using these horrific events to bring millions upon millions to Jesus during this time—because *“God is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”* (2 Peter 3:9)

In other words, the Lord doesn’t get any pleasure from sending people to hell and wants to save as many as possible from ultimate eternal judgment—

Ezekiel 18:31-32 (NKJV)

³¹ Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord GOD. "Therefore turn and live!

Habakkuk 3:2 (NKJV)

² O Lord, I have heard your speech *and* was afraid; O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make *it* known; In wrath remember mercy.

Isaiah 9:12-13 (NKJV)

¹² The Syrians before and the Philistines behind; And they shall devour Israel with an open mouth. For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand is stretched out still. ¹³ For the people do not turn to Him who strikes them, Nor do they seek the Lord of hosts.

J. Vernon McGee—*“I want to repeat this: the 144,000 witnesses in the Great Tribulation Period are going to do in seven years what the church up to the present has not done in over nineteen hundred years.”*

Revelation 8:2 (NKJV)

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

All of this apparently happens in rapt silence of the anticipation of all who are in heaven at what they are about to see take place when these 7 angels sound these Trumpet Judgments. During this silence, the seven angels

were given trumpets, significant to John, because he was a Jew and understood the place of trumpets in Israel's national life.

According to Numbers 10, trumpets had three important uses: *they called the people together* (i.e., they *announced an assembly*—Numbers 10:1–8); *they announced war* (Numbers 10:9); and *they announced various special occasions* (Numbers 10:10).

The trumpet sounded at Mount Sinai when the Law was given (Exodus 19:16–19), and trumpets were blown when the king was anointed and enthroned (1 Kings 1:34, 39).

Of course, everyone familiar with the Old Testament would remember the trumpets at the conquest of Jericho (Joshua 6:13–16). → This seems to be what these trumpets represent—war!

God is declaring war on the 'earth-dwellers' (militant, rebellious unbelievers)—using His top angelic officers to be the instruments through which these judgments are poured out upon the earth. It's important for people who only want to focus on the love, mercy, and grace of God to realize that—He is NOT a pacifist!

He is definitely a God of love and mercy—but if rebellious man refuses to repent of his sins—they will come to understand that *"the Lord is a Man of war."*

Isaiah 42:13 (NLT2)

¹³ The LORD will march forth like a mighty hero [Man]; he will come out like a warrior, full of fury. He will shout his battle cry and crush all his enemies.

John says, *"I saw the seven angels who stand before God..."*

Angels & Archangels

It appears that these 7 angels belong to a higher class of angels, an elite group—possibly they are "archangels."

The word "arch" in the Greek means "*first*" or "*ruling*"—and I believe in this context it speaks of a special group of high-ranking angels who are over the other angels of heaven.

- In Ephesians 1 Paul divided the angelic realm into a hierarchy when he classified angels into ranking groups as—"*principalities, powers, thrones and dominions.*"
- These 7 angels are no doubt the strongest the LORD had created, those who stand at His side, in His presence—not to protect God but to instantly obey His orders to go on special missions for the King—special forces angels!

We only know the names of two of these archangels—Michael and Gabriel.

Michael is called an archangel in Jude 9; he is called the "great prince" in Daniel 12:1; he is also called "*one of the chief princes*" in Daniel 10:13 (indicating there are other "chief princes" or archangels in heaven).

In Revelation 12:7 it tells us that he is the commanding officer over a vast heavenly army of angelic beings—along with Gabriel and others.

Gabriel isn't called an *archangel* directly in Scripture—but I think that it's clear he is one.

All we have to do is look at how he identifies himself to Mary in Luke 1 when he said to her—

Luke 1:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.

If you compare that with Revelation 8:2—**“And I saw the seven angels who stand before God...”**—you get the impression that Gabriel is one of God’s top lieutenant angels—one of His archangels.

The other 5 archangels aren’t mentioned by name in the Scriptures—Jewish tradition, quoting from the apocryphal books of Tobit and Enoch, gives the possible names of 4 of them: Raphael, Uriel, Sarakiel, and Raguel.

Revelation 8:3 (NKJV)

³ **Then another angel [i.e., not of the seven], 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.**

Remember we said that there is a Temple in heaven and that the earthly temple was a model of the heavenly one. (Explain where the golden altar of incense sat and its purpose)

What are these prayers?

I believe they are the **‘imprecatory’ prayers** of the Old Testament.; and even the prayers of the Tribulation Saints in Revelation 6:9-11. We see imprecatory prayers quite a bit in the Psalms—they are essentially prayers of judgment upon God’s enemies.

In the New Testament we are commanded not to pray imprecatory prayers (at least not directly) on our enemies but to pray that they would be saved and ultimately blessed by God. However, the Lord Jesus taught us to pray—*“Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come...”* (Matthew 6:9-10)

That is the closest thing to an imprecatory prayer we Christians are commanded to pray.

Remember we said when we looked at Chapter 5 that the prayers we pray never disintegrate or evaporate—they ascend to God’s throne and remain in His “active box” until the time in the plan of God for them to be acted upon.

In that regard, *all* the prayers that have *ever* been prayed by the people of God in both the Old and New Testaments remain in His active box (those that He intends to someday answer—*“For everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven!”*)

Well now that day for these prayers to be acted upon—all the imprecatory prayers that have been prayed over the centuries for God to destroy His enemies and establish His Kingdom—that day has now come!!

→ The Day of the Lord judgments are the fulfillment of all those prayers.

Revelation 6:9-11 (NKJV)

⁹ **When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. ¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" ¹¹ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both *the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.***

Revelation 7:9 (NKJV)

⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, → verse 14

The number of martyred believers mentioned in Revelation 6:11 that had to be fulfilled before God would unleash His judgment upon those who murdered His people during the Tribulation—has now been fulfilled by the time we reach Revelation 7:9.

Revelation 8:4-5 (NKJV)

**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.**

John says the pause in heaven seemed like “**half an hour**”—however it could have been days or even weeks on the earth.

Dr. Henry Morris says that after the events of the sixth seal everything suddenly on earth becomes quite—it seems that it’s all over, the worst has passed:

“After these few terrifying days, the stars stopped falling and the terrible shakings ceased. The survivors emerged from their shelters and began again to rationalize their resistance to God. After all, these awful calamities could be explained scientifically so perhaps they had been too quick to attribute them to God’s wrath. They quickly set about rebuilding their damaged structures and became more resolute than ever in their opposition to the gospel of Christ.”

But after some time when the people of this world begin to think they are safe—then suddenly destruction and devastation come upon them and they will not escape.

Revelation 8:6 (NKJV)

⁶ So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

The first 4 trumpets are judgments against the *earth* followed by the 5th and 6th which are trumpet judgments directed at *mankind*.

The 7th trumpet will unleash the 7 Bowl Judgments which will be against both the earth *and* mankind.

The first 4 seem to be natural disasters which God uses in a supernatural way to bring judgment—like the plagues of Egypt.

We will look at these Trumpet Judgments next time.

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