

# *The Rapture as Taught in Revelation*

## **Part Four**

### **The Seventh Seal & The Trumpet Judgments (Revelation 8-9)**

Compiled/Formatted By Tom Stephens

#### **The Righteous Are Sealed**

1) “Then he cried in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause ye them that have charge over the city to draw near, every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. 2) And behold, six men came from the way of the upper gate, which lieth toward the north, every man with his slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man in the midst of them clothed in linen, With a writer’s inkhorn by his side. And they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar. 3) And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon it was, to the threshold of the house: and he called to the man clothed in linen, who hath the writer’s inkhorn by his side. 4) And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. 5) And to the others He said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: Let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: 6) Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.” (Ezekiel 9: 1-6).

God is vacating the Temple as Babylon sees to Jerusalem’s destruction. This is a grievous event! Babylon is attacking and destroying Jerusalem in the physical realm, but by God’s Spirit, Ezekiel sees the glory of the God of Israel which had gone up from its accustomed place between the cherubim over the mercy-seat, now hovering over the threshold of the house—in His glorious chariot—as described in Ezekiel one. The throne of God is no longer a throne of grace but of judgment, for grace has been ignored and God’s holiness defied. God’s chariot appears to hover over the threshold of the Temple in grief of Israel’s sins.

The voice is heard again, and is identified as that of Jehovah Himself. He commands the man clothed in linen, who had the writer's inkhorn, to go through the midst of the city of Jerusalem, and to set a mark upon the foreheads of those who manifested soul sighing and crying because of the many abominations practiced with no guilt. I am reminded of the Church of Jesus Christ, having been sealed by His Spirit—under grace—and the 144,000 out of all the tribes of Israel who are to be sealed in their foreheads just before the great tribulation bursts upon the world in all its terrible fury. And we think today of those who, having turned to God in repentance and trusted the Lord Jesus Christ; sealed by the Holy Spirit during the tribulation—thus marked off from those who are to be Anathema Maranatha—devoted to the judgment of the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

Righteousness, with God, always prevails and just as a remnant of God’s righteous in the days of Babylon was sealed unto divine protection, so is the righteous of the church sealed, along with the 144,000 Israelites, and all those who chose Christ over the antichrist also sealed unto divine protection. Thus, Babylon is a type of the Great Tribulation, in that God ordered His angels to complete this process within the ranks of *each* of God’s righteous ones. Who is left?

Only one group: *those who dwell upon the earth*, who are the true haters of Christ and His people.

#### **The Fate Of The Earth Dwellers**

In continuing this series, I reaffirm my original intentions—to establish the following goals:

- Show the elders as the true church—resurrected/raptured between Church Age and Tribulation.
- Show the true church continuously in heaven during this period, soon to be wed to Christ Jesus.
- Show multitudes left on earth will repent, come to Christ, and be martyred for their testimony.
- The rest of mankind—dwellers of the earth—to receive the mark of the beast unto eternal death.

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<sup>1</sup> Revelation. H.A. Ironside; Pages 143-165; Loizeaux Bros., Neptune, N.J.; ©none; 1920; USA

In this part four, I want to focus on the rest of mankind, *those who dwell on the earth*. Beginning in the eighth chapter of Revelation, we read:

1) "And when He had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2) And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. 3) And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4) And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. 5) And the angel took the censer, and filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thundering, and lightnings, and an earthquake."

John told us the Lamb opened the seventh seal and there was silence in heaven for the space of about half an hour. We might call this space, "the calm before the coming storm"—the most awful storm that shall ever break over this poor world. Some of you have lived in regions where thunderstorms are common, and you have no doubt, noted on a hot summer day the clouds suddenly gathering in the heavens, becoming heavier and darker every moment. You have heard the thunder echoing in the skies with ever increasing intensity. You have observed the lightning flashes striking terror into hearts. Then suddenly all became still; there seemed to be not even a breath of wind to move the leaves upon the trees as you witnessed the storms *eye*; and yet, an overcast, threatening sky, causing the fowls to run for a hiding place, the cattle to move uneasily—all nature awaits, and the windows of the heavens are opened—the storm pouring down in a deluge!

We saw in chapters four and five the saints gathered around the throne of God and of the Lamb, and we noted from the throne proceeded thunder and lightning. As the seals were broken, judgment followed judgment in quick succession upon the world from which God had gathered out His people. But even the crashing under the sixth seal is not the climax. When the last seal is broken it will be clearly manifested then just what side God takes in all the affairs of earth. He will judge according to the holiness of His character and the righteousness of His throne. The seventh seal introduces the trumpet judgments—the final drama of the great tribulation. No wonder there is silence in heaven for half an hour before that seal is broken!

### **The Trumpet Judgments**

It is as though all heaven is waiting in breathless expectation. I hear the question: What will the Lamb do next? What will be God's next move toward judging and reclaiming that rebellious world? The verses that follow give the answer. John says:

"And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake " (Ch. 8: 2-5—see also Part Three of this series).

Careful readers of the Bible will connect the seven trumpets with the fall of Jericho: that great city just across the Jordan that barred the progress of the people of Israel into the promised land—the city that fell with the blast of God alone. The priests of Israel were given the trumpets of judgment, and for seven days they marched about the city blowing the trumpets; seven times on the seventh day they did so and at the seventh blast the walls fell down flat. Jericho is a type of this present world in its estrangement from God, with enmity toward the people of God. Jericho fell at the sound of seven trumpets, and the world, as you and I know it, is going to fall at the sound of the seven trumpets of doom, blown by these angels of judgment.

Our present world is a "type" of the ancient city Jericho, slaughtered by righteousness in a very sick age.

The seal is broken, the book is fully unrolled, and the seven angels appear to whom are given seven trumpets. And as these angel messengers stand by, waiting one after the other to herald with a trumpet-blast the coming judgments, John tells us that another angel came and stood to officiate at the golden altar. He is seen offering incense; therefore is an angel-priest. Is this angel-priest our Savior Jesus Christ?

He has a golden censer. Israel will have such an Intercessor in the coming day. We are told that the smoke of the incense is the prayers of the saints—those suffering saints on the earth. The angel took the censer, and filled it with the fire of the altar, and emptied it upon the earth. Here is the answer to the cry of His afflicted ones down in that scene of tribulation. The prayers went up to the Father, and judgment came down, "there were thunderings, lightnings and an earthquake." The final storm breaks!

**Therefore, the first angel sounded, and there followed:**

- Hail and fire mingled with blood, and cast upon the earth;
- And the third part of the trees were burnt up,
- And all the green grass was burnt up.

"The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up" (Rev. 8: 6,7).

I cannot explain the symbol fully, but I think I can see a hint of the awful time that is before the people of Christendom who have refused the gospel. Do you remember that grass is used as a symbol of man (Isaiah 40:6)? Grass trampled beneath the foot is the picture of man in his frailty and weakness. What about the tree? It is another picture of man rising up in his pride and independence of God. Remember how Nebuchadnezzar is compared to a great tree and how the rulers in Israel were spoken of as great cedars. John the Baptist said, "*Now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree that beareth not good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.*" Grass is man in his weakness, man in his littleness; the tree is man in his dignity, in his greatness, in his independence—man lifting himself up against God.

So the first angel's trumpet distinctly indicates a fiery judgment upon that part of the human race that has rejected the gospel now so freely proclaimed. It is an appalling picture, but, remember, the reality is far worse than the picture! So much so that man today cannot imagine the death and destruction, the horrors of destruction will bring to our earth—death due to lack of oxygen and other environmental poisons!

**The second angel sounded, and there followed:**

- A great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea;
- And the third part of the sea became blood;
- And the third part of the living creatures which were in the sea, died;
- And the third part of the ships were destroyed (verses 8, 9).

"And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed" (Rev.8: 8-9).

Jeremiah 51: 25 tells us of a great mountain which was cast into the sea. Every symbol in the Book of the Revelation is explained somewhere else in the Bible. In the Old Testament a great mountain burning with fire is the symbol of Babylon, literal Babylon. In the New Testament this great destroying mountain burning with fire, that is cast into the sea and brought to an end under the judgment of God in this coming day, is evidently spiritual Babylon (antichrist system). Babylon of old was the fountainhead of idolatry. Every idolatrous system has had its root in Babylon. Life in the sea is destroyed by thick bloody waters; one third of all the creatures of the sea died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.

Jesus said there has never been, neither will ever be again, the horrors of the Great Tribulation period!

### The third angel sounded, and there followed:

- A great star fell from heaven, burning as it were a lamp; falling on 1/3 the rivers, and fountains:
- This star is called wormwood:
- Many men died because of the bitter waters. (Rev. 8 10, 11)

"And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters ; and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter" (Rev. 8 10, 11).

Wormwood can sometimes indicate nuclear gases; sometimes, other deadly gases. Can you see the possibility of a world-wide nuclear war here? John is saying that a great number of men are dying during this time of horror. The six seal judgments which began the Great Tribulation in Revelation 6 are, at this time, long past; *but now* we see terrible judgments poured out on evil mankind such as the world has never before witnessed—all life on earth being threatened.

There are three groups spoken of during these final days prior to the 1,000 year Millennial Reign of Christ:

1. The righteous who are *raptured prior* to the Great Tribulation.
2. Those justified *and sealed* by the blood of Jesus *during* the Great Tribulation (Eph 1:13; Rev. 12:12).
3. *The rest are the dwellers on earth and are the eternally condemned.* (Revelation 12:12).

The *only* people left on earth are those who are *dwellers of the earth*—the condemned! (Rev. 12:11-12).

### The fourth angel sounded, and there followed

- The third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and a third part of the stars;
- The third part of them all were darkened, and the day and night shone for a third part.
- I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, **Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth** by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound. (Rev. 8:12-13).

"And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound" (verses 12, 13).

What does it mean? You know what the Lord Jesus says to the individual, "*If the light that is in thee be darkened, how great is that darkness.*" (Mat. 6:23). "Light obeyed increaseth light—light resisted bringeth night." "*God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who obeyed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness*" (2 Thess. 2: 11, 12).

The thirteenth verse introduces the three trumpets yet to follow, which are distinguished from the four we have already commented upon, as "woe" trumpets. They speak of *a more intensified form of judgment* than any previously portrayed.

I want to call your attention to the expression, "the inhabitants of the earth." A similar term we find frequently in this book, "Them that dwell upon the earth." Upon *these* are the heaviest judgments. They are not merely they that live here upon earth, but they form a distinctive class: *They are the people who have rejected the heavenly calling for their lives.* When God offered them full and free salvation through the death of His beloved Son, they turned away from Him, because to have closed in with Christ would

have meant to give up their worldly desires and love of sin, therefore they become the "dwellers on the earth." (See also part two of this series)

**The fifth angel sounded, and there followed:** (Rev. 9:1-12)—**(this is the first woe)**

- "I saw a star fallen from heaven":
- To this angel was given the key to the bottomless pit (abyss).
- He opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of it, as if from a huge furnace;
- The sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke from the pit.
- Empowered locusts came out of the smoke; they have power approved from on high.
- They were ordered to *not* harm the grass, earth, all green things, and trees;
- They could hurt only those men who did not have the seal of God in their foreheads.
- To them it was given that they must not kill the men who were not sealed, but...
- They should be tormented for five months:
- Their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.
- In this, men will seek to find death, and will not find it; they will want to die, but it will flee..
- The shapes of the locusts were as horses prepared for battle; on their heads were crowns of gold.
- Their faces were like those of men.
- Their hair was like a woman's, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.
- They wore breastplates of iron; and wings sounded like chariots and many horses running to war.
- Their tails were like those of scorpions, and the sting was in their tails, hurting men for 5 months.
- Their king was the angel of the abyss, the name in Hebrew was Abaddon; but in Greek, Apollyon.
- One woe is past; and, behold, two more woes are coming (verses 1-12)

"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key to the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit" (Revelation 9: 1,2).

*Awesome and radical!* Although the entire book of Revelation is based on heavy demonic activity, we now see a huge gathering of the most evil entities ever felt by modern man! Don't see it? Read the fifth angel again and see for yourself the judgments of God carried out by evil demons. Yes, God is still in charge. He is the director of this gigantic play—yet not just a play—but the most awesome court of justice ever noted previously by man. God can use any method or entity to do His own calling; and if you cannot see judgment in the Great Tribulation, you should reassess your thinking by asking the assistance of the Holy Spirit in your interpretation of the Word of God.

**Woe 2: The sixth angel sounded, and there followed:** (Rev. 9: 13-21)

- I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,
- Saying to the angel with the trumpet, Loose the four angels bound in the River Euphrates.
- And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month and a year, for to slay the third part of men. (Read Revelation 9: 13-19).
- The number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred million; and they were very loud.
- John saw these horses in his vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire,
- And of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of lions;
- Out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.
- By these three was a third of men killed, by the fire, and smoke, and brimstone, issued out of their mouths.

13) "And 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 which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. 15) And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day and a month and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

These plagues were more than terrifying. I cannot believe there are words to describe the torment and death. In 1:9-12, John uses the images of the Pit, or abyss, seven times to describe hell (vs. 1,2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; and 20:1, 3). Each time this pit is closely associated with demonic activity; also associated with the lost (Rom. 10:7). This image of hell may also imply darkness and imprisonment since pits were often used as prisons in ancient cultures, such as when John the Baptist was imprisoned by King Herod.

If you have trouble believing God could ever make a hell, remember it was prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). Those who end up in hell are in essence choosing to spend eternity with their father, the devil rather than with Christ. (Gen. 2:17; Revelation 9:1-12; cf. Luke 16:23-25).

John wrote the following two verses at the end of Revelation nine. Notice he stated, “**All** the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not...” 20) “*And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: 21) Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornications, nor of their thefts.*” (see Rev. 22:10, 11).

**Woe 3: The seventh angel sounded, and there followed:** (Revelation 11:15-19)

- Great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.
- The four and twenty elders, sitting before God on their thrones, fell on their faces in worship.
- saying, we give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and was and are to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.
- The nations were angry, for His wrath has come; and time for judgment of the dead; and thou should give rewards to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, both small and great; *and should destroy them which destroy the earth.*
- The temple was opened in heaven, and his ark of the testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

<sup>15</sup> And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. <sup>16</sup> And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, <sup>17</sup> Saying, We give thee thanks, O LORD God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. <sup>18</sup> And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. <sup>19</sup> And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail. (Revelation 11:15-19 KJV)

Some believe that since verse 15 states the kingdoms of the world has become God's Kingdoms; but this doctrine is only theory and is not scriptural because **1)** there are still more judgments (Bowl). **2)** the Marriage Supper of the Lamb will take place immediately before Jesus returns—with His Bride—to earth in the destruction of those who  *dwell on the whole earth* (Dan. 2:44), and **3)** This 7th trumpet brings forth truth that Jesus, at a *time* which involves other *events extending to Christ's return*, will begin His reign over all the earth. His judgments are being issued against all evil during this time frame and will continue until Revelation 20 at the binding of satan and his cohorts. The sound of the 7th trumpet is followed by a parenthetical passage revealing more events related to the tribulation period (12:1-15:4).

The 24 elders prophesy what will happen at the coming of Christ. The nations will be enraged (vs. 18), the dead will be judged (vs. 18), and God will destroy those who destroy the earth—all those who are evil and refuse to come to Christ during time allotted (19:20-21).

Verse 19—During the power of antichrist, the temple of God seemed to be closed, and was in some degree, but now it is opened. We see The Ark of God's Testament—the most Holy Place, or Holy of Holies, where the tables of God's law were kept. As before Josiah's time the law of God had been lost, but was found, so in the antichrist's reign, God's law was hidden—being made void by traditions and decrees; Now they are open for all to view—a wonderful privilege brought to men. The Ark of the Testament was a token of His presence before the nations; and His favor towards those who are in Christ Jesus, who is the propitiation of our salvation.

The lightnings, voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail: *This temple is in heaven, and not on earth*; and The ark of God here is not the one mentioned in verses 1-2 for the same reason. The ark mentioned is representative of God's power, presence, leadership and protection over His people, Israel in the wilderness (Num. 10:33-36) and in the Promised Land. The ark here may represent similar blessings related to the New Covenant and Christ's return (Heb. 9:1,4,11;23-28). In a nutshell, we can see the ever-wonderful characteristics of love and favor for His own in our Savior Jesus Christ.

At this point, I have yet to see one single indication the church of Jesus Christ *dwells on the earth* during the Great Tribulation period. In contradiction to this theory, John states firmly the truth the church should be manifestly following after during these last days—just prior to the rapture of the church, and revealing of the antichrist.

**Closure:** See what John says about "*those who dwell upon the earth*" during the Great Tribulation:

- They will slay one another with a great sword (6:3,4).
- They are the ones who murder the *Tribulation believers* (saved during GT—6:9, 10; and 7:9-17).
- The wrath of God within the judgments called "three woes" specifically fall upon them (8:13).
- They will murder the two prophets of God (Moses and Elijah?) and rejoice over their deaths (11:10).
- The message given by these two prophets will torment them (11:10).
- They will worship the Antichrist, and their names are not in the Lamb's book of life (13:8, 12).
- They will be deceived by the miracles of the False Prophet (13:14).
- They will be intoxicated and blinded by the false one-world religious system (17:2).
- They will worship the beast and they will accept his mark (20:4).

***The Word of God has never spoken highly of those who dwell on the whole earth.<sup>2</sup>***

From this survey we can easily see why God is going to have an hour of testing for this group. It is to so demonstrate the hard, evil hearts of "*those who dwell upon the earth*" that God's judgment of them will be shown as totally just; and because it is totally just, many within that group will make decisions for Christ.

There is also a very important contrast in Revelation between "*those who dwell upon the earth*" and another special group called "*those who dwell in heaven.*" (you tell the difference—Revelation 12:11-12)

—Tom Stephens—

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<sup>2</sup> In doubt? Go to Gateway search (KJV). Type "Those who inhabit earth", "Dwell", and "Dwellers" of earth. The O.T. is not too dogmatic; but the New Testament is very strong throughout. Blessings.