

## When God Breaks the Silence

**Revelation 8:1–13 (NKJV)** – Bible passage [my explanatory notes]

### 1. The **Silence** in Heaven (**Rev. 8:1**)

<sup>1</sup> When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

Habakkuk 2:20 - "But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him."

Zephaniah 1:7 - "Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD; For the day of the LORD is at hand..."

### 2. The **Supplication** of the Saints (**Rev. 8:2-5**)

<sup>2</sup> And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

Psalms 141:2 - "Let my prayer be set before You as incense, The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."

Tim LaHaye writes, "It is doubtful that this 'other angel' is the Lord Jesus Christ, even though He is our great High Priest. This is not an act of redemption or propitiation, and nothing is said here about blood being sprinkled on the atonement cover. I suggest two reasons why this is not a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ:

"1) The Lord Jesus, when appearing in the Old Testament to the children of God, is never referred to as 'an angel.' Instead, he is always introduced as 'the angel of the Lord' or 'the angel of God.'

"2) We have no record of the Lord Jesus appearing on earth as an angel after His incarnation and ascension to heaven. Here we view Him in heaven, where He is seen as a member of the triune God. Though He appears as 'the Son of man' and the 'Lamb who was slain,' He is also uniquely, with the other two members of the Trinity, 'in the midst of the throne of God.' It is more likely that this 'other angel' is one more angel besides the seven (Rev. 8:2) who leads in the worship of God before His throne and helps administer His universe."<sup>1</sup>

### 3. The **Sound** of the Trumpets (**Rev. 8:6-12**)

<sup>6</sup> So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

*Trumpets play a significant role in Scripture; they were used to:*

- 1) Announce ceremonial processions.
- 2) Assemble Israel for war.
- 3) Proclaim the new year.
- 4) Regather Israel at the second coming of Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Tim LaHaye, *Revelation Unveiled* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 165.

5) *Announce the rapture of the church (1 Thessalonians 4:16: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God.”)*

**NOTE: These trumpets in Revelation, however, herald war—God’s war against planet Earth.**

**A. The first trumpet: vegetation scorched (v.7)**

<sup>7</sup> *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 [in 9:4 there is a command not to touch the green grass. These verses do not contradict. Either new grass has grown from 8:7 to 9:4 or grass that is not green (seasonally) in 8:7 will become green in 9:4. I prefer option 2].*

**B. The second trumpet: seas bloodied (vv.8-9)**

<sup>8</sup> *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.*

<sup>9</sup> *And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.*

A biblical allusion to “the sea” usually refers to the sea that was prominent to the land of Palestine, the Mediterranean Sea. What appeared to John as “a huge mountain” is probably a giant burning meteorite that falls into the Mediterranean Sea, killing one-third of the living creatures and destroying one-third of the ships.<sup>2</sup>

**C. The third trumpet: waters poisoned (vv.10-11)**

<sup>10</sup> *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.*

<sup>11</sup> *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.*

*Astēr (star)* can refer to any celestial body other than the sun and moon. The massive object that smashed into the ocean remained intact, but this object (possibly a comet or a meteor because of its fiery tail) disintegrated as it reached Earth’s atmosphere. The fact that it is described as **burning like a torch** supports that interpretation, since *lampas (torch)* was used in ancient times to describe meteors and comets.<sup>3</sup>

**D. The fourth trumpet: heavens darkened (v. 12)**

<sup>12</sup> *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.*

## 4. The Shout of Warning (Rev. 8:13)

<sup>13</sup> *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 [not *paroikeo* “temporary traveler” but *kataoikeo* “permanent dweller”] of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!”*

The Bible uses two Greek words to describe earth dwellers:

- **Paroikeo** – This word refers to sojourners or travelers. These are people who live on the earth but recognize they are merely passing through. Abraham is described this way in Hebrews 11:9, which says he lived in tents because he was looking forward to a heavenly city.
- **Kataoikeo** – This word refers to those who dwell on the earth and “settle down”. These people have made this world their home and their primary focus. It has less to do with a location and more to do with a mindset and lifestyle. **The judgments in Revelation 8 are aimed at kataoikeo—those who have placed all their hope in this world.** Warren Wiersbe writes, **“Every soul must answer: Is my citizenship in heaven, or do I belong only to this world?”**<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Tim LaHaye, *Revelation Unveiled* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 167.

<sup>3</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., *Revelation 1–11*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 248.

<sup>4</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the New Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1992), 820–821.