

Institute 10/6/20

Revelation 8+9

Opening the Seventh Seal (~AD 20xx-30xx) Nx Wk Rev 10-11

Outline:

John's vision now opens the seventh Seal with its seven angelic trumpet blasts. Even though John sped through the other six Seals, the seventh Seal takes three chapters to open (with a tangential chapter thrown in—chapter 10). When this last seal is opened, seven angels pour seven plagues onto the earth. The plagues show the awful fate of those not sealed to the Lord. Those sealed have made covenants with God and have received His forgiveness and robes of righteousness.

Chps 8-9: Open 7th Seal (six of the seven angels/servants sound their trumpets, and * First Woe)

Chp 10: Explanation of John's call (eating the book)

Chp 11: Continued 7th Seal (Two Witnesses in Jerusalem, Second Woe Finished, and 7th Angel sounds a trumpet)

The Seventh Seal (Rev 8:1-5)

Rev 8:1 “When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour” (NIV) The interlude is over, and we return to the opening of the last seal (following chapter 6). When Christ opens the seventh seal “silence” follows. Similarly, God rested on the seventh day in His creation periods. Thus, again there is silence for a period after the seventh thousand year (D&C 77:12; see the same prophecy in D&C 88:95; 38:11-12). Interestingly, the silence is in heaven—not on earth! Many theories or interpretations have been purported, including:

- Is the silence a lack of revelation?
- Is the silence because heaven is listening to the prayers of the faithful?
- Is it a lack of destruction of the wicked?
- Is it a “painful silence” of anticipation before God unleashes His wrath? (Draper, Rhodes, *BYU NTC: Revelation*, 305). See Zephaniah 1:7; Zechariah 2:13; Habakkuk 2:20.
- Is it just like the creation, a period before everything comes to pass physically?

I see too much revelation in my life and those around me to agree with the first! Fortunately, D&C 38:11-12 explains that the “silence” comes from corruption, so the “powers of darkness prevail.” I see this as a period when heaven waits for the righteous to prepare themselves with the sealings of the Lord (Rev 7). We must gather Israel (or those who will accept the Lord's will), before the coming destruction. Like Jesus' parable in Mt 13:30, the wheat will be separated from the tares as D&C 38:11-12 describes.

Timing

With each seal approximately 1,000 years of history (D&C 77:6-7), or a dispensation (as others interpret it), we cannot necessarily assume that John shared Peter's timeline: “a day is like a thousand years” (2 Peter 3:8, NIV, also see Abr 3:4). Some have combined these two definitions to assume that the silence is literally, “30-minutes,” when factored is 21 years.—**But I do not think that is what the Apocalypse meant**—No man knoweth the time . . . neither the angels” (D&C 49:7).

In the ancient world, time was measured with sundials, or water clocks, so thirty-minutes was just an approximate length of time. Peter even records, “about 1,000,” which was their largest unit. All we know for sure about the timing is that we live in the last days, so this refers to our future. As the silence is in heaven, it may refer to a silence of revelation or the Spirit. During the silence, angels are waiting to gather Israel (or gather the wheat to burn the tares). This time is needed to complete the sanctification, judgment, redemption, and the putting of God's power in place through the sealing of His elect prior to His Second Coming.

Rev 8:2 “And I saw the seven angels which stand before God, and they were given seven trumpets” (NR) The sounding of the seven trumpets (a *shofar* or war horn) announces or signals the last preparations before God finishes His work (D&C 77:12). These trumpets also announce the beginning of God's judgment. Each trumpet calls another calamity. In the OT, seven priests blew trumpets before the battle of Jericho, and important events (Josh 6:1-20; 1Chr 15:24).

We can see the need for our time to prepare personally and to share the gospel, as our prophet, Russel M. Nelson's Oct 4, 2020 Conference Report declared, “Gathering Israel . . . is the most important work in the world.”

D&C 77:12

Q. What are we to understand by the sounding of the trumpets, mentioned in the 8th chapter of Revelation?

A. “We are to understand that as God made the world in six days, and on the seventh day he finished his work, and sanctified it, and also formed man out of the dust of the earth, even so, in the beginning of the seventh thousand years will the Lord God sanctify the earth, and complete the salvation of man, and judge all things, and shall redeem all things, except that which he hath not put into his power, when he shall have sealed all things, unto the end of all things; and the sounding of the trumpets of the seven angels are the preparing and finishing of his work, in the beginning of the seventh thousand years—the preparing of the way before the time of his coming.”

The positioning of the angels before God, speaks of their importance. They serve God under His priesthood power. Because there are seven angels, it may refer to a figurative whole or perfect group of all angels in the heavenly host.

Rev 8:3-4 “Another angel came and stood at the altar having a gold incense burner; and he was given a great quantity of incense, to offer for the prayers of all the saints upon the gold altar that was before the throne. And the smoke . . . arose from the hand of the angel before God” (NR) A different angel received another divine assignment as God directs His work on earth. (Often in Revelation, we see the passive voice for divine action, *ibid.*, 313). Through the OT and much of the NT, incense is symbolic of prayer because it ascends heavenward as a sweet fragrance. In the Israelite tabernacle and temples, the incense altar in the Holy Place was gold (unlike the brass sacrificial altar outside the sanctuary). It was supposed to constantly burn to represent constant prayers ascending to God (Ex 30:6-8). In this model, the amount of incense given may correlate with the many prayers offered by the righteous saints. Perhaps it represents angelic assignments to fulfill the saints’ request made in prayers.

The location before the throne is consistent with the incense altar in the temple just before the veil. The prayers were made symbolically from the incense altar directly in front of the Holy of Holies or throne of God. In modern temples, prayers are also offered right in front of the veil where one prepares to enter into the Lord’s presence. The pattern of earthly temples are taken from the heaven temple. Don Parry, *Temples in the Ancient World* (SLC, UT: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 443.

Rev 8:5 “The angel took the incense burner, and filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth, and there were peals of thunder and rumblings and lightnings flashes and an earthquake” (NR) When heavenly fire is cast onto the earth, the quiet time is over. The martyrs’ prayer of “How long, Lord” will be answered soon (Rev 6:10). Three forms of natural calamities may describe God’s intentional signs. (The KJV word “voices,” is better translated “noises” NKJV.) The thunder, lightening and earthquakes act as a testimony from the planet against the wicked according to D&C 88:89-92:

After your testimony cometh the testimony of earthquakes, that shall cause groanings in the midst of her, and men shall fall upon the ground and shall not be able to stand. **90** And also cometh the testimony of the voice of thunderings, and the voice of lightnings, and the voice of tempests, and the voice of the waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds. **91** And all things shall be in commotion, and surely, men’s hearts shall fail them; for fear shall come upon all people. **92** And angels shall fly through the midst of heaven, crying with a loud voice, sounding the trump of God, saying: Prepare ye, prepare ye, O inhabitants of the earth; for the judgment of our God is come. Behold, and lo, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

The Bridegroom is our Savior, Jesus Christ, and His church is His bride (Rev 19:7).

Meaning for “A Third”

- * A limited portion—God sets bounds to destruction.
- * Portion who followed Satan premortally—the first estate.
- * From three degrees of glory the telestial are cleansed.

Rev 8:6-12 “The seven angels who held the seven trumpets got ready to blow them” (NR) Each of these seven angels from the seventh seal, have a specific assignment before the Second Coming of Christ. They each alert the world of change, and bring different plagues as “a last-ditch effort to soften the hearts of the wicked” (Alonzo Gaskill, *Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, 104). The earth will soon be in constant turmoil. Much of the turmoil is described symbolically.

Angel #1 =Rev 8:7—*Hail and fire mingled with blood, burn 1/3 of vegetation, leaving famine*

Angel #2 =Rev 8:8-9—*Fiery mountain falls into the sea, sea turns into blood, kills 1/3 of sea life, ships / commerce / the god of worldliness*

Angel #3 =Rev 8:10-11—*A falling star poisons fresh waters, “wormwood” or bitter, 1/3 of the water supply contaminated*

Angel #4 =Rev 8:12-13—*The sun, moon, and stars darkened, 1/3 less light seen*

Angel #5 =Rev 9:1-5—*Satan’s bottomless pit opened, darkness from smoke, smoke brings locusts, like scorpions who torture humans 5 months—but not the vegetation, nor those who have been sealed*

Angel #6 =Rev 9:13-19—*Four angels loosed in the Euphrates / bottomless pit (JST), for a time when 1/3 humans killed*

Later

Angel #7 =Rev 11:15-19 *The kingdoms of the world become the Kingdoms of God, but not until after Armageddon*

Rev 16:17-21 *Largest earthquake, islands and mountains move, nations collapsed, a plague of hail.*

The plagues have at least three purposes:

1. Begin to cleanse the earth
2. Motivate those willing to repent
3. Expose false gods

The latter was also significant in the plagues the Lord directed Moses to use against the Egyptian gods.

Parallel Plagues from Moses and Last Days

The plagues echo some of Moses' plagues in Egypt. The plagues were to encourage repentance in both cases. We see at least five plagues that overlap.

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| 1. Rev 8:7, Hail fire | = Moses' 7 th plague |
| 2. Rev 8:9-10, Sea to blood | = Moses' 1 st plague |
| 3. Rev 8:12 Darkness, dims sun and sky | = Moses' 9 th plague |
| 4. Rev 9:2 Dark smoke brings locusts with pain | = Moses' 8 th plague |
| 5. Rev 9:13-19—1/3 Humanity killed | = Moses' 10 th plague |

Rev 8:13 “I heard an eagle as it flew in the midst of the sky crying with a loud voice” (NR) The KJV speaks of an “angel” flying, but most of the Greek manuscripts use “eagle / *etos* / bird of prey” (Strong’s #105). The eagle / angel’s message is a divine warning, “it is going to get worse!” The wicked who remain are so hardened that God will send His full indignation (D&C 101:11). This is in preparation for the Battle of Armageddon.

“Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth because of the remaining trumpet blasts of the three angels” (NR) A “woe” is a cry of anguish denoting “great hardship, distress, or agony ... it connotes disaster, calamity” (Draper, *Rev*, 349).

The Fifth Angel’s Trumpet Call (Rev 9:1-2)

Rev 9:1 “The fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to the angel was given the key of the bottomless pit” (JST *italicized*). Satan is the fallen star. He was divine before he fell, “Lucifer / *helel* / a shining one” (Strong’s #1966), and a “son of the morning” (Isaiah 14:12, 2 Nephi 14:12; D&C 76:26). In a sermon, the Prophet Joseph Smith explained, “When Lucifer was hurled from Heaven the decree was that he should not obtain a tabernacle and not those that were with him.” (*josephsmith papers.org*, "Discourse, 21 May 1843, as Reported by Howard Coray," p. [42]).

The JST clarifies that God allows the angel to use the key to hell—but God is still in control. The “bottomless pit” means it has no foundation, and in Greek reads, “the unfathomably deep, shaft of the abyss” (Strong’s #12). More is said about Satan’s fall in Rev 12.

Rev 9:2 “he opened the abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke” The metaphor of the mists of darkness arising from hell may represent spiritual blindness as Satan and his devils are allowed to tempt mankind. The smoke of darkness or temptation blinds the judgment and hearts of humans (1 Nephi 12:7). At this time, the devils’ “realm is now unleashed upon those whose lives have made a hell of the earth” (Draper, *Rev*, 335).

The Locusts (Rev 9:3-11)

Rev 9:3 “out of the smoke, locusts descended on the earth, and they were given power like that of the scorpions” (BSB) Out of this smoke from hell comes a plague worse than the Egyptians’ locusts because these attacked humans not plants.

The locust plague is symbolic, or else it would eat vegetation. This may leave a spiritual famine in its wake. A scorpion’s excruciating pain attacks the nervous system. The hordes these evil things are compared to armies.

This a religious war may include a physical war. Either way, in God’s plan, all of the plagues have their limits (Job 2:6). God hopes to encourage repentance. The locusts torture those people who have not yet been sealed on their foreheads to serve God (Rev 7).

Moses’ 10 Plagues and Egyptian God

1. Turn water to blood (Ex 7:14-24) —*Khnum, Hapi, Osiris*
2. Frogs (Ex 8:2-15) —*Hapi, Heqt*
3. Lice or gnats (Ex 8:16-19) —*Seb*
4. Swarms of flies (Ex 8:21-32) —*Uatchit*
5. Pestilence of livestock (Ex 9:1-7) —*Ptah, Hathor, Amon,*
6. Boils people/animals (Ex 9:8-12) —*Sekhmet, Serapis, Imh*
7. Thunderstorm hail+fire (Ex9:22-6)—*Nut, Isis, Seth, Shu*
8. Locust (Ex 10:1-20) —*Serapia*
9. Darkness 3 days (Ex 10:21-29) —*Re, Horus, Thoth, Atn*
10. Death of firstborn (Ex11:1-12:36)—*Pharaoh lineage*

D&C 77:13

Q. When are the things to be accomplished, which are written in the 9th chapter of Revelation?
A. They are to be accomplished after the opening of the seventh seal, before the coming of Christ.

Scorpion Bite Symptoms

Difficulty breathing, muscle twitching or thrashing, unusual head, neck and eye movements, drooling, sweating, nausea and vomiting, high blood pressure, accelerated heart rate, restlessness or excitability.

- Rev 9:4 “They were told not to harm the grass . . . only the people who did not have the seal of God”** (NR) We can hope that this is the case with the previous four plagues, as it was in Egypt for the Hebrews in Goshen, but we are not told. The protecting seal refers back to Rev 7. God spares His people who have His seal on their foreheads. We learn that the Holy Spirit of Promise will seal those who make and keep their covenants (Eph 1:13; D&C 76:53; 132:7, 18, 26). In contrast we read in Morm 2:14 of those who would prefer to “curse God and . . . die” rather than repent.
- Rev 9:5-6 “They were not permitted to kill them, but to torture them for five months . . . people will seek for death and will not find it”** (NR) The locusts have power to torment people for a set time. Five months is the life span of a locust, so it may represent a life span. The pain of a scorpion bite is horrific, and may represent spiritual torment (which is more eternally damaging than physical pain). The scorpion is used to represent danger and pain (also see verse 10).
- Rev 9:7-8 “The locusts looked like horses ready for battle, and on their heads they seemed to have crowns of gold, and their faces were like human faces. . . hair like a woman . . . teeth were like a lion’s”** (NR) The agents of Satan or “locusts” are fighting a grievous war for the souls of humanity. Satan’s sinister motives are destructive and painful. His aim is to conquer and claim strength, beauty, and destructive intents. The crowns are the type received in athletic or military victories, not royalty (ibid., 346). This is the only place where they are given for a short time to the wicked.
- Rev 9:9-11 “They had breastplates like . . . iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. They had tails with stingers . . . to torment people for five months. They had as king . . . whose name . . . is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer)”** (NIV) These locusts are far more destructive than the Egyptians’ locusts, as they have greater armor and power (wings are the power to act, D&C 77:4). Not surprising, the king of the locusts is Satan. The armor sounds like fighter aircraft, or bombs, or flame throwers, or missiles, but they are worse—Satan will psychologically terrorize humans. The torment probably includes physical, mental, and spiritual suffering. I fear Satan’s war also uses subtle means to conquer, such as with pride, selfishness, pornography, addictions, greed, anger, and the love of materialism. Satan’s noise and distractions also drowns out the soft whisperings of the Spirit.

The Sixth Angel’s Trumpet Call (Rev 9:12-19)

- Rev 9:12 “One woe is past; but there are still two woes coming”** (NR) The first woe is mentioned in Rev 8:13. This entire, miserable, locust-scorpion war made up only the first of the three woes. Alonzo Gaskill sees symbolism in these numbers: “The #4 implies everyone will be affected. The #3 implies that this is being sent by God as a punishment or warning. The #7 suggests that these plagues are a fullness of God’s wrath and a completion of the day of repentance” (Gaskill, *Rev*, 114).
- Rev 9:13-15 “The sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar”** When the sixth angel sounds an alarm, John hears voices associated with the temple altar. The horns of the altar represent God’s cleansing power where the atoning blood of sacrifice are sprinkled. They are also, a place of asylum (1 King 2:28-35). The specific day, month, and year, may represent God’s omniscience. He knows the timing of each event, even though we walk by faith.
- Loose the four angels which are bound in the *bottomless pit*. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour . . . a year, for to slay the third part of men”** (JST italicized). Four represents the earth’s cardinal direction or the fullness of the earth. These four angels who fill the earth are not from the “Euphrates” (KJV), but from “the bottomless pit” (JST). God appointed time carefully. The Jerusalem Bible reads, “this hour, of this day of this month of this year.” They have prepared to become destroying angels and attack a portion (a third) of humanity.
- Rev 9:16 “The number of cavalry troops was two hundred million”** (NR) The number in Greek is, “two myriads of myriads” indicating an incomprehensible number. (In comparison to 200 million warriors, there were 70 million combined Allied and Axis forces in WWII.) This number might represent demons or even epidemics or other pestilences that the devilish army brings. Note JST changes “heard” to “saw.”
- Rev 9:17 “I saw the horses in the vision and their riders, who had breastplates the color of fire and sapphire and sulfur, and the horses’ heads were like lions, and out of their mouths came fire, and smoke, and sulfur”** (NR) The warriors with lion-like heads, horse-like bodies, and snake-like tails had armor empowered to destroy, akin to fire and brimstone. John describes their diabolical ferocious intents inflicting misery—just as Satan’s domain. Perhaps the 1/3 refers to that part who followed him in our “first estate” (Abr 3:26, 28).
- Rev 9:18-19 “From these three plagues, a third of mankind was killed, by the fire . . . smoke . . . sulfur . . . For the power . . . was in their mouths and . . . tails”** (NR) These three plagues kill a portion of “mankind” (NIV). Both ends of the demonic destruction were violent and lethal. This may refer to human’s spiritual, not physical, death.
- Rev 9:20-21 “The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands . . . idols of gold . . . murders, magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts”** (NIV). This is the greatest tragedy. The wicked who are not killed, continue to seek material possessions, personal gain and pleasure—which is the idolatry of today. John includes that they are guilty of breaking five of the Ten Commandments. “Sorcery” (KJV) or “witchcraft” (NR) is: “*pharmakos* / a poisoner” also refers to drug users (Draper, *Rev*, 359). The “adultery / *porneia*,” refers to all forms of “sexual immorality,” including pornography. Happily, those who worship God will be spared from these plagues. This nightmare of trauma can be avoided by coming unto Christ, repenting, and being perfected through His atonement.