



THE SEVENTH SEAL AND THE GOLDEN CENSER THE SEVEN ANGELS WHO STAND BEFORE GOD REVELATION CHAPTER 8 VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY

SUMMARY OF REVELATION CHAPTER 8

Revelation chapter 8 John saw seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. John saw another angel, who had a golden censer with the prayers of all God's people. The angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth.

Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them. The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down on the earth. A third of the earth was burned up and a third of the trees were burned up. The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

After the first four sounded their trumpets, John heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!"

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.

Revelation 8:3 (NIV)



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

Rev 8:2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

“When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.” The seals deal with events in the human earthly realm, and trumpets deal with events in the spiritual realm. The seals and trumpets are not chronological (otherwise it would just be the 14 or 21 seals), but the seals and trumpets overlap each other and occur simultaneously.

The sixth seal begins the day of the Lord from the human perspective. (Revelation 6:16-17; *They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?”*) Here, as the Lamb opens the seventh seal, the day the Lord draws even closer and heaven is silent in great anticipation. The prophet Zephaniah said silence before the Sovereign Lord will occur as the day of the Lord draws near.

Zephaniah 1:7 (NIV)

Be silent before the Sovereign Lord, for the day of the Lord is near. The Lord has prepared a sacrifice; he has consecrated those he has invited.

The Lord Jesus is the High Priest of our church, having a golden censer, and much incense, gives us the picture of his glorious person. The seventh seal begins the day of the Lord, and the seven trumpets in the spiritual realm are complete now as well. Thus, silence in heaven is expressive of the fearful anticipation felt on opening the last seal that was to close both the seals and trumpets (human and demonic events), and to wind up the affairs of the church and the human world.

“And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.” The seven seals showed us events from the human realm, and now the seven trumpets show us events from the spiritual realm, particularly the demonic spiritual realm. The seven seals concluded with the day of the Lord.

We are not told the identity of the seven angels. They appear to be seven specific angels (some think archangels such as Michael, Gabriel or Raphael) distinguished among the legions of angels standing round the throne of God. There is an interesting passage that speaks of specific angels allowed to stand in the presence of God both from the non-canon apocryphal book of Tobit, as well as in Luke.

Tobit 12:15 (GNT)

“I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who stand in the glorious presence of the Lord, ready to serve him.”

Luke 1:19 (NIV)

“I am Gabriel,” the angel answered. “I stand in the presence of God, who sent me to speak to you and tell you this good news.”

Rev 8:3 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.

"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." The altar is the spiritual altar in heaven. In Revelation, all references to the temple are spiritual. This is an analogy of the earthly temple service, but in heaven, the first angel brings in his golden censer fire from the brazen altar of sacrifice, and now *"He was given much incense to offer"*, by another angel, incense to burn at the golden altar of incense. The comparison of prayer with incense is in accordance with Old Testament language. *"May my prayer be set before you like incense"* (Psalm 141:1-2).

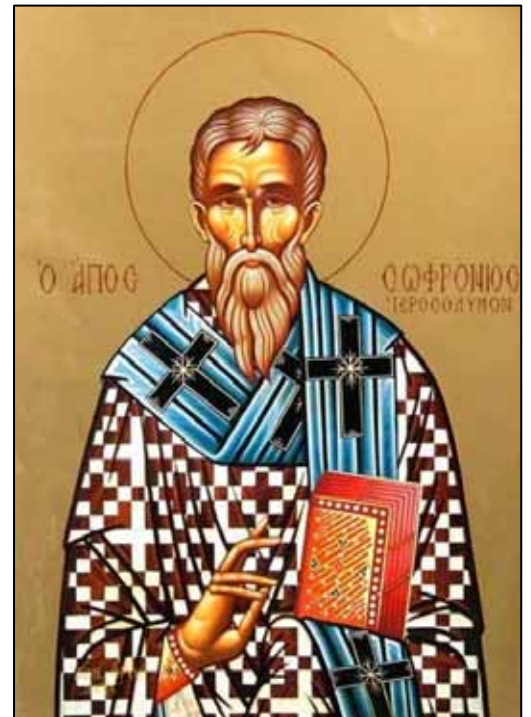
Psalm 141:1-2 (NIV)

I call to you, Lord, come quickly to me; hear me when I call to you. May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.

We are not told what types of prayers, but they certainly include the tribulation coming from false Islamic doctrine and attacks about Jesus. The incense was to be mingled with the prayers of the saints. The incense was added to give a fragrance to the prayers of the saints and cause them to be acceptable before God. The prayers are about to be answered.

An example of prayer would be from Sophronius, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, when it was conquered in 638 AD by the Islamic caliph Umar. Sophronius wrote: *"The godless Saracens entered the holy city of Christ our Lord, Jerusalem, with the permission of God and in punishment for our negligence, which is considerable, and immediately proceeded in haste to the place which is called the Capitol. They took with them men, some by force, others by their own will, in order to clean that place and to build that cursed thing, intended for their prayer and which they call a mosque."*

Sophronius gave this prayer:



Holy City of God,

Home of the most valiant saints,

Great Jerusalem,

What kind of lament should I offer you?

Children of the blessed Christians,

Come to mourn high-crested Jerusalem

Rev 8:4 The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God's people, went up before God from the angel's hand.

"The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God's people, went up before God from the angel's hand." The anxiety of the church about the events which were about to occur would naturally lead to much prayer. The 200,000,000 or more demons would soon be released from the Abyss.

The Bible tells us about similar actions of Moses before Pharaoh, when he took ashes of the furnace and sprinkled it towards heaven, but it descended towards earth, as a symbol of the plague about to fall upon the land (Exodus 9:8-10). The hot ashes are the tokens of the coming Divine judgments. The Revelation prophecy is like the vision of Ezekiel concerning the burning coals (Ezekiel 10:2).

Ezekiel 10:2 (NIV)

The Lord said to the man clothed in linen, "Go in among the wheels beneath the cherubim. Fill your hands with burning coals from among the cherubim and scatter them over the city." And as I watched, he went in.



Rev 8:5 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

"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." The prayers of the saints are answered, and the fire of God's wrath is hurled to earth. This is the answer to the prayers of the saints in the fifth seal of human realm events in Revelation 6:9-11.

Revelation 6:9-11 (NIV)

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.

The tribulation, ongoing since the time of the Apostles, requires patience on behalf of the saints. However, God will surely judge those that have rejected his word and rejected the atoning sacrifice of Christ, the Son of God.

Rev 8:6 Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them.

“Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them.” In Revelation, the “sea” is the spiritual world. Now with the seven trumpets, we can see what happened in the demonic spiritual world—the sea. The sixth and seventh seals are humans on the Day of the Lord, the end of time as we know it. Now with the seven trumpets the “prophetic clock” resets itself, and we can observe the demonic spiritual realm events that gave rise to the seals-the human actions.



In Revelation, the seven seals are events in the human earthly realm. The demons caused this.

SEAL	BIBLE TEXT	HUMAN WORLD EVENT
First	Rev 6:1-2	Rider on White Horse; Mohammad
Second	Rev 6:3-4	Rider on Red Horse; Abu Bakr
Third	Rev 6:5-6	Rider on Black Horse; Umar
Fourth	Rev 6:7-8	Rider on Pale Green Horse; Uthman
Fifth	Rev 6:9-11	Christians killed by Islam and others
Sixth	Rev 6:12-17	Humans Left on Earth Fear the Day of the Lord
Seventh	Rev 8:1-4	The Day of the Lord

The seven trumpets are corresponding events in the demonic spiritual world. The trumpets are not in chronological order after the seals. Many prophecy writers try to make seals, trumpets and bowls occur in chronological order. If they were strictly chronological there would just be 21 seals. They are given different groupings (seals, trumpets and bowls) because they are in different realms. The trumpets occur at the same time of the seals. The trumpets are the actual demonic spiritual world events that caused humans (Mohammad, Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman) to take the actions described in the seals. **Strictly speaking, the trumpets actually occur before the seals.**

Rev 8:7 The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down on the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

“The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down on the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.” The demonic angels (hail and fire mixed with blood) were hurled to the earth. They take one third of all souls with the false teaching of Mohammad. Likewise, the first bowl judgement (Revelation 16:2) comes upon all those that take the mark (say the Islamic Shahada) and pray to the image (pray to the Kaaba in Mecca) put in place by Mohammad.

Revelation 16:2 (NIV)

The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land, and ugly, festering sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.

The physical skin of the non-believers that pray to the Kaaba will also have festering sores as well, but the soul is most important. The first trumpet explains one third of the human souls taken and destroyed by Islam with the false gospel of the Qur’an. Since the seals and trumpets occur during the tribulation since the time of Mohammad, only one third of the earth was “burned up” and taken by Islam, since believers and other non-Islamic false religions (Hindu, atheists, Buddhists, etc) are also in the world. With the first bowl (after the rapture of believers), all left on earth will have the sores, because believers are no subject to the wrath of God.

In the first trumpet, hail and fire mixed with blood was hurled down on the earth. In Revelation, hail represents angels. In the first trumpet, the hail is symbolic of Satanic angels thrown out of heaven down to earth. In the first bowl, all people left on earth after the rapture receive the festering sores on their souls. The false gospel of the Qur’an does not save anyone. The Qur’an denies the Jesus is the Son of God. The Qur’an denies that Jesus was crucified.



“And all the green grass was burned up.” After 610 AD (Mohammad’s first visit from the demonic spirit, and ongoing until his death in 632 AD) the church, out of fear and ignorance, stopped sending the Gospel (the green grass of truth) to the lands of Islam controlled by the dark cloud of demons released from the Abyss. The followers of Jesus should do the things he did so that they can be a blessing to those around them, but here the church failed to spread the Good News. Just as Revelation 8:7 predicted in prophecy. The Bible in Mark 6:39, Psalm 23:1-3 and Ezekiel 34:14-15 tells us that green grass is associated with the love of Jesus and His truth. In the land of Islam, the green grass of evangelism for Jesus was burned up and ceased.

Mark 6:39 (NIV)

Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass.

Psalm 23:1-3 (NIV)

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake.

Ezekiel 34:14-15 (NIV)

I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord.

The lack of green grass of Gospel evangelism lasted about 1,260 years from the death of Mohammad in 632 AD until Samuel Zwemer (April 12, 1867 – April 2, 1952), nicknamed **“The Apostle to Islam”**, went to Arabia in the 1890s. Zwemer was the first serious Christian missionary to Muslims. He started at Bahrein, and at other locations in Arabia from 1891 to 1905. He also was a member of the Arabian Mission during 1890–1913), and Zwemer served in Egypt from 1913 to 1929. Zwemer had a passion to understand their culture and give them the Good News of the Gospel. Zwemer could not understand why the church was so reluctant to follow the Great Commission.

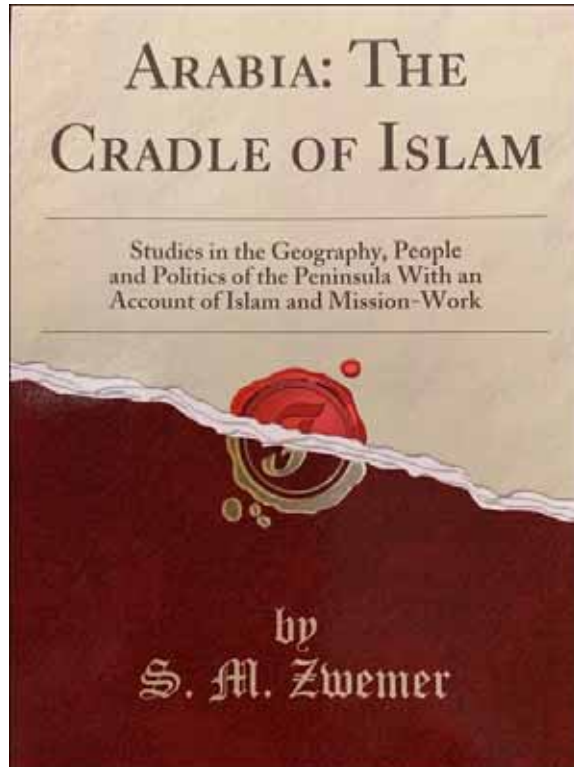
“So little did the church of God feel its responsibility towards the tens of millions walking in darkness after the false prophet.”

“Only two Christian missionaries were sent to the lands of Islam from 632 until 1892.”

The church did little to help him, thinking evangelism to Muslims was fruitless, dangerous, and a waste of time and resources. In fact, Zwemer was famously turned down by the American Missionary Society, which resulted in him going overseas alone, even though he was married. Yet he founded and edited the publication “The Moslem World” for 35 years. He was also influential in mobilizing many Christians to go into missionary work in Islamic countries.



SAMUEL ZWEMER



ARABIA: THE CRADLE OF ISLAM

“LESS THAN A DOZEN CONVERTS”

It was difficult to replant the green grass that was burned up. Zwemer worked very hard for four decades, but the demonic forces blocked his efforts many times. According to Ruth A. Tucker, Ph.D., Samuel Zwemer's converts were “probably less than a dozen during his nearly forty years of service” and his “greatest contribution to missions was that of stirring Christians to the need for evangelism among Muslims”.

“THE PROPHET AND HIS BOOK”

Zwemer wrote in *Arabia: The Cradle of Islam* the following:

“First of all, the Mohammedan conception of Allah [God] is purely negative. Allah [God] is unique and has no relations to any creature that partake of resemblance. He cannot be defined in terms other than negative. Absolute sovereignty and ruthless omnipotence are his chief attributes while his character is impersonal—that of a monad. The ideas of fatherhood, love, impartial justice and unselfishness are absent. The Christian truth “God is love” is to the learned, blasphemy and to the ignorant an enigma.”

“By the New Testament law of Jesus Christ, the Arabian final prophet stands self-condemned. The most cursory examination of his biography proves that he broke repeatedly every sacred precept of the Sermon on the Mount. And the Qur’an itself proves that the Spirit of Jesus was entirely absent from the mind of Mohammed.” Zwemer prayed “*That at the name of Jesus every ‘Mohammedan’ knee should bow and every ‘Moslem’ tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.*”

Rev 8:8 The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood,

Rev 8:9 a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

The second trumpet (Revelation 8:8-9) and second bowl (Revelation 16:3) deal with the “sea.” In Revelation the “sea” is the spiritual world. With the second trumpet, one third of the angels in the “sea” were “killed” by taking sides with the dragon and the beast. In the second bowl (Revelation 16:3), all the creatures in the sea die as God punishes the full demonic spiritual world on the day of the Lord. Jesus said in Matthew 25:41; *“the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”*

Matthew 25:41 (NIV)

Then he will say to those on his left, “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Revelation 16:3 (NIV)

The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it turned into blood like that of a dead person, and every living thing in the sea died.

On the day of the Lord, God withdraws His Spirit and angels leaving the “sea” completely controlled by the dragon and beast. Thus, all of the sea “dies” in the second bowl, whereas in the second trumpet only one third of the sea dies. The sea dies spiritually—which is the worst form of death. Recall that the trumpets point to the spiritual damage done to human hearts by the presence and preaching of false doctrine—the Qur’an. The angels aligned with God are not harmed, as they are in a different spiritual realm as part of the *“armies of heaven”* on the day of the Lord.

Revelation 19:13-14 (NIV)

He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.

In the second trumpet, a huge mountain (Baal the beast sent down to Sheol) is sent into the sea—the spiritual realm to gather his demonic angels. A mountain was used in the Old Testament to symbolize Babylon and Baal. The prophet Jeremiah (51:25) says to Babylon; *“I am against you, you destroying mountain, you who destroy the whole earth,” declares the Lord.*”

Jeremiah 51:24-25 (NIV)

“Before your eyes I will repay Babylon and all who live in Babylonia for all the wrong they have done in Zion,” declares the Lord. “I am against you, you destroying mountain, you who destroy the whole earth,” declares the Lord. “I will stretch out my hand against you, roll you off the cliffs, and make you a burned-out mountain.

Those who place the fulfilment of John’s visions in simple chronological time sequence fail to see that the trumpets do not follow the seals in chronological order, but that both are being fulfilled side by side in two realms, the earthly human realm (the seals) and the spiritual realm (the trumpets).

Rev 8:10 The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water—

Rev 8:11 the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.

“The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.” The third trumpet and bowl (Revelation 16:4-6) deal with Satan being thrown to earth (a great star falling into the rivers of springs of fresh water) and his false gospel—the Qur’an was given to Mohammad. In the third trumpet, one third of souls are lost to Islam with the “bitter wormwood” of the false Qur’an. Jesus tells us his Gospel and Holy Spirit are the “living water” in John 7:37-39. Satan and Baal pollute the living water with false stories about Jesus in the Qur’an.

John 7:37-39 (NIV)

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

In Revelation 22, we see in the new heavenly Jerusalem the complete fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy of flowing water of salvation written about in Joel, Zechariah and Ezekiel. The Prophet Joel saw a fountain out of the house of the Lord (Joel 3:17-18). Only those with their name in the Book of Life from the Lamb of God will drink of this heavenly water.

Joel 3:17-18 (NIV)

“Then you will know that I, the Lord your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill. Jerusalem will be holy; never again will foreigners invade her. “In that day the mountains will drip new wine, and the hills will flow with milk; all the ravines of Judah will run with water. A fountain will flow out of the Lord’s house and will water the valley of acacias.

Revelation 22:1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

The bitter false doctrine is about Jesus only being messenger and not crucified. In the third bowl (Revelation 16:4-6) all are lost to the false gospel; none who follow the Qur’an will be saved. On the Day of the Lord during the third bowl, all believers have been previously removed from earth by the rapture, so only Satan’s false gospel (the Qur’an) is seen by those on earth.

Revelation 16:4-6 (NIV)

The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say: “You are just in these judgments, O Holy One, you who are and who were; for they have shed the blood of your holy people and your prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve.”

Rev 8:12 The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, 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 turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.

In the fourth trumpet in the spiritual world, Satan took one third of the angels with him. Their lights went dark. On earth the false doctrine of the Qur'an took one third of souls with the bitter wormwood deceit. One third of angels worked with Baal and Satan, and their lights went dark.

In the fourth bowl (Revelation 16:8-9) all souls left on earth are scorched from the heat accompanying Jesus as He returns to earth. Their souls were seared by the intense heat as they prayed to the false god Allah of the Qur'an. While this is primarily a spiritual war, there is a physical human component as well.

Revelation 16:8-9 (NIV)

The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and the sun was allowed to scorch people with fire. They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him.

Jesus tells us on the day of the Lord all the heavenly bodies will be shaken. On the day of the Lord, it is not one third, but everything is shaken.

Matthew 24:29-31 (NIV)

“Immediately after the distress of those days “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’ “Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Rev 8:13 As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: “Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!”

Though the judgments signified by the four trumpets in the spiritual world have already sounded are very great and dreadful, yet greater judgments still remain to be inflicted on the earth, in the events that are to follow upon sounding the three remaining trumpets.

Next comes the fifth trumpet in Revelation 9:1-2. *“When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss.”* Jesus and the Gospel are the light of the world. The dark smoke coming from the Abyss that darkens the sun is the false teaching of the Qur'an. Some 200,000,000 or more demons would sweep over the Christian world and take one third of souls with their “bitter wormwood” of false doctrine.