



Revelation Chapter 8: Verse 1 thru 6, The 7th Seal

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 all 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 fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. ⁶ And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. (Rev 8:1-6)

If the first six days of Creation involved the physical Creation of the Universe and all life, the Seventh Day belonged to the Lord. He is the Lord of the Sabbath. Likewise, the first six seals make reference to those things coming in judgment that originate upon the earth. The Seventh Seal records events more especially originating from on high in Heaven. *And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.* Of course, all judgments originated and follow from our heavenly High Command, but these that follow are particularly so.

The opening of the Seventh Seal begins with a silent rest in Heaven of thirty minutes. For such a period of silence to begin immediately upon the opening of the Seventh Seal signifies the crucial importance of the events that follow. Divine Perfection is symbolized with that number seven just as in the Seven Days of Creation, the Rainbow, the musical Scale, and here, in the seventh Seal. This is a moment for total concentration in Heaven and earth for that which is about to be revealed. Your attention is commanded at the sound of every Trumpet just as those bugle calls to an army in the field.

We have already discussed the Seven Angels of God who stand over the Seven Churches. The Old Testament Hebrew writers believed that there were seven Archangels. Two are overtly identified by name in Holy Scripture – the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. The non-canonical Book of Tobit (considered useful for historical context) names a third Archangel – Raphael, in Tobit 12:15. *I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One.*

In Jewish apocalyptic literature of the post-exilic period, names are given for the Seven Archangels, or Princes:

1. Suruel
2. Raphael
3. Raquel
4. Michael
5. Gabriel
6. Remiel
7. Uriel

(see the apocryphal books of Tobit 12:15, 1 Enoch 20:1-7, 9:1, and 40:9)

Remember, these books are not accepted as Scripture, but solely as historical works. The Angel of the Presence of the Lord is not included among these created beings. He is referred to in Isaiah below:

7 I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses. 8 For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour. 9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. (Isaiah 63:7-9)

Another Angel of His Presence is mentioned in Joshua: **13** *And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? 14* *And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? 15* *And the captain of the Lord'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so. (Josh 5:13-15)* Why would we consider this Captain of the Host to be the Angel of the Presence of the Lord?

When Joshua inquired of His identity, the Personage responded, *Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come.* How did Joshua respond to this comment? *Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?* This is a profound expression of reverence owed only to God. Joshua worship this Figure – men do not worship Angels. This is the same Personage (our Lord Jesus Christ) as John describes in Rev 1:11-20.

Later in Revelation, John attempts to worship an Angel (perhaps believing him to be God) and is rebuked gently: **8** *And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. 9* *Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy*

brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. (Rev 22:8-9)
We bend the knee and worship ONLY God as His Elect people.

Here follows an important reflection on the worship foreshadowed in the Old Testament Tabernacle: *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 all 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. Only One has the authority today to intercede on our behalf – the Lord Jesus Christ. This Angel is separate from the other seven and is by every definition of much greater Presence.*

You will remember that the High Priest alone was allowed to enter the Holy Place to offer up the prayers of the people. In approaching the veil (behind which was the Holy of Holies and the Ark of God and Mercy Seat), the High Priest passed between the seven candlesticks which represented the Light of Christ and His churches, and the Shewbread Table which held the unleavened Bread representing the blessed Redeemers sinless offering for us. Before the Veil of the Holy of Holies stood the Table of Incense where also was observed the sprinkling of blood representing the cleansing of our sins by that same sprinkling of blood of the Lord Jesus Christ symbolized in Holy Baptism. Here the High Priest offered up the prayers of the people illustrated in the rising smoke and sweet savor of the incense burned on the Altar of Incense. In this text, just as the High Priest stood in the figurative place of Christ, so does the Angel stand in the figurative place of the same, and is His excellent Type. The Angel is given much incense since he will symbolically offer up the prayers of ALL of the Saints of God – that includes you and me. The prayers of God's people ALWAYS end in the hands of God. Only this Personage is able to make intercession for us, and we are reminded of the necessity to pray aright – in the Name of Jesus Christ for only He is able to lift them to God the Father.

The Priest could not stand before this Altar of Incense unless he had first made an atonement for sin. Our Lord, as our High Priest today, has made that final offering once-and-for-all for an atonement.

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 thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. What meaning may we glean from this latter passage? This fire of condemnation cast down upon the earth is not for the sin of Adam, for God's people have been absolved of that sin by the blood of Christ. This is the fire of the approaching Last Day cast down to burn with fervent heat the elements of the world, and to destroy all who have rejected that salvation purchased by Christ, and who have taken lightly the prayers of the Altar offered up. This glimpse of a future fiery end does not come with a gradual warning, but all at once with the thrust of the Great Angels censor! *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.* (2 Peter 3:10)

Here follows the benediction to these events and an introduction of other profound events to follow: *And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.* When we read these words, we are witnessing a revelation to us from Heaven. Do we take this to heart that we must hear with clear and understanding ears the trumpet calls of the Seven Angels.