

Chapter 8

1 When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

Starting from the end of chapter 6, we are at the time of Constantine. Complete amnesty and freedom were attained with the Edict of Milan in 313 AD by which Christians were guaranteed the fullest liberty in the practice of their religion. In addition to removing the ban from the Christians, Constantine ordered that the property of which they had been deprived during the persecutions by seizure or confiscation should be returned to them at the expense of the State. Christians were allowed to worship freely and peace was enjoyed for 24 years until his death. See the Roman coin issued in 322 - "Beata Tranquillitas" meaning Blessed Tranquility. About half an hour would be the 24 years from 313 – 327 AD

2 Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. 3 And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, 4 and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. 5 Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

2) Trumpets are used to usher in troops for a war, from Strong's: 4536 *sálpigks* – "properly, a war-trumpet" (WS, 797) *that boldly announces God's victory (the vanquishing of His enemies)*.

3) The word translated "together" is usually translated "moreover" in the New Testament, which should read "the smoke of the incense, moreover, the prayers of the saints," showing that the smoke of incense is the prayers of the saints that goes before God. The prayers of the saints, Christians, have their place in heaven just as the prayers of the priests went before God in Malachi 1:11 and Luke 1:10-11.

3-5) Biblehub.com - Joseph Benson commentary: *"And the smoke of the incense ascended before God — In an odoriferous cloud, with the prayers of the saints — A testimony of God's gracious acceptance, both of the intercession of the great High-Priest, and of the prayers of his believing people, proceeding from devout hearts; and consequently of the continuance of his protection and blessing to his faithful worshippers. And when the angel had performed this office, in order to show the awful manner in which God would avenge the injury which his praying people upon earth had received from its tyrannical and oppressive powers, he took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar — Not of the golden altar, upon which there was no fire, (except that which was in the censer, and which burned the incense,) but from the brazen altar of burnt-offerings; and cast it into the earth — To denote the judgments about to be executed upon the earth, as in Ezekiel 10:2 coals of fire are taken from between the cherubim and scattered over Jerusalem, to denote the judgments of God about to be executed upon that city;"*

3-5) *Holocaust in Greek means "burnt offering." Martyrs in all forms are the "burnt offerings" that God is avenging. Consider also that Jesus was the lamb that was slain on Passover. Any part of the lamb that was left to the next day was burned by fire, he is also part of the coals on the brazen altar. His name (character) is being desecrated, changing his name to Iesous Kristus, and his identity to an incarnate God. The prayers of those faithful to the Word rose to God, and He is sending His judgements.*

3-5) More from Wikipedia "List of book-burning events": *The books of Arius and his followers, after the first Council of Nicaea (325 C.E.), were burned for heresy by the Roman emperors Constantine, Honorius, and Theodosius I, who published a decree commanding that, "the doctrine of the Trinity should be embraced by those who would be called Catholics; that all others should bear the infamous name of heretics".*

5) Thunder is the noise, or voice, that precedes the storm. It is given as a warning. Starting with the debates of the Ante-Nicaean Fathers and the conflict of the Arian Controversy, The Council of Nicaea (325 AD) put Christianity on a trajectory that wasn't decided peacefully. The church in Ephesus in chapter 2 coincides with these verses. Lightning is a quick bolt of judgement that strikes, but all see it (Matthew 24:27). Here's the fulfillment from wikipedia "Cecropius of Nicomedia" *In 358 Constantius had proposed to hold an ecumenical council in the cathedral of Nicomedia; however days before the Council was to be held an earthquake struck the city, destroying the venue. The earthquake struck on 24 August 358AD and the city of Nicomedia was devastated. The cathedral was destroyed. Cecropius of Nicomedia was killed in the earthquake. Sozomen held that only Cecropius and an unnamed Bishop of Bosphorus were killed. Philostorgius claimed the number killed was fifteen. Opponents of Arianism held the earthquake to be divine judgment and that fifteen bishops who had arrived for the Council were killed.* Another note, Nicomedia was the capital city chosen by Diocletian.

5) Hebrews 10:26 *For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. 29 How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

5) The Papacy starting with the leadership of Constantine, is the little horn in Daniel 7: *and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings. 25He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law;* God has a problem with the way the Roman Church twists the His Word. One example, instead of honoring Passover (Jesus said, do this in memory of me), the Councils institute Easter, a holy day to Ishtar, the queen of heaven. This is the same "trinity" diety worshipped in the Old Testament under Baal, Ashtorah and Tammuz. The Jews paid a terrible price for thinking to worship this perversion resulting in the destruction of the land and the exile in Babylon. There is a penalty for perverting the true word, whether done by an individual (Revelation 22:18-19) or by an entire church. The warnings in verses 1-5 were not heeded, therefore the trumpets of judgement were to begin.

5) The prophetic fulfillment of the earthquake was the splitting of the Roman Empire to east and west, in 395 AD.

6 Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them. 7 The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

A third of the earth speaks to a third of the Roman Empire. The 3 parts of the "earth" are Western Europe, Eastern Europe, (both the western Roman Empire) and the Byzantine Empire/Eastern Roman Empire. We see the first four trumpets affecting the eastern portion of the western empire, which would be the third of the earth. As part of the Gothic War of 376–382, the battle is often considered the start of the events which led to the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century. The Visigoths were the eastern branch of the "pagan" or "barbarian" Goth tribes. They were actually Arian Christians, who were considered heretics according to the Nicene papal Catholic Church.

HISTORICAL CONNECTION: Disaster At Hadrianople

7) Hail seen in Job 38:22-23, Isaiah 28:2 and is mixed with fire in Psalm 18:12 *Out of the brightness before him hailstones and coals of fire broke through his clouds. 13 The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered his voice, hailstones and coals of fire.* Hail would be similar to the attack of arrows, and the Goths were proficient at the bow and arrow. The military tactics of the Goths also included burning fields and pastures to smoke out the Roman army. The Roman Army suffered substantial casualties in 378 AD, 10-20,000 men, or estimates of 2/3 of the army. *"The whole field was one dark pool of blood and [the survivors] could see nothing but heaps of slain wherever they turned their eyes," wrote Ammianus Marcellinus. "At last a moonless night brought an end to these irreparable losses, which cost Rome so dear."*

7) Prophetically, trees are considered leaders, Psalm 1, Ezekiel 17:23 and most notably the prophecy in 2 Baruch. The trees would have been leaders of towns or provinces, but not as high ranking as the sun, moon or stars. Grass is the food for an animal, and can be considered like the farm workers out tending the fields or just commoners, see Psalm 90:5-6. This shows attacks primarily in the countryside.

HISTORICAL CONNECTION: Alaric I: The Sack of Rome That Shook the Empire (YouTube video)

8 The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. 9 A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

In 401 AD, Alaric I would plunder Italy, and besiege its cities and towns. They reached Rome in 410 and imposed a strict blockade, with no bloodshed at this time. He tried using hunger as a force for negotiations to surrender, but that did not succeed and he sacked Rome. Since Alaric was mostly looking for valuable things to plunder, the churches were relatively safe from harm.

8) Babylon, the city, is a mountain in Jeremiah 51:24, just as Rome is the main city of the mighty empire. The water is a multitude of people as defined in Revelation 17:15. The sea creatures are the towns and settlements along the Mediterranean Sea which were conquered by the Vandals.

The unmovable mighty mountain of Rome was already burning from the sack from the Visigoths in 410 AD, it was again attacked by the Vandals in 455 led by King Gaiseric. They looted the city for 2 weeks after assassinating Emperor Valentinian III. The Vandal Kingdom was a confederation of Vandals and Alans, which was a barbarian kingdom established under Gaiseric, a Vandalic warlord. It ruled parts of North Africa and the Mediterranean for 99 years from 435 to 534 AD. Gaiseric was also known as "The Tyrant of the Seas" and attacked the Mediterranean coastline of the Roman Empire. They eventually sacked Rome, and the western Roman Empire declined significantly. During the Battle of Cape Bon (468), over 100 Roman ships were sunk, and after the Vandal War (461 - 468) they conquered the coastlands of northern Africa and the islands between there and Italy.

- 8) This is similar terminology of the fall of Babylon, the great city, in Revelation 18:21. Here is a mountain, in chapter 18, a great millstone.

HISTORICAL CONNECTION: Vandal War

10 The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. 11 The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter.

A great star and not sun shows that the next attacking force would not be from an empire, but not in leadership, so an offspring or general will attack, and will have the blessing of God. The next mighty force against Rome would be Attila, a nephew to the leaders of the Huns that stretched from modern-day China to Eastern Europe. Attila is also commonly known as the "scourge of God." The Huns attack Eastern Europe following the path of the many rivers in that area. See the Wikipedia page "Attila" to view the map.

10) See Young's literal translation: *And the third messenger did sound, and there fell out of the heaven a great star, **burning as a lamp**, and it did fall upon the third of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters.* The lamp is a clay lamp like the 10 virgins were carrying in the parable in Matthew 25. Here is more imagery of the blessing over the Huns against the Roman Empire. In 431 the Council of Ephesus declared Mary as the *Mother of God*. The Council of Chalcedon in 450 decided that Jesus had 2 natures, instead of a man being indwelt by the Spirit of God. The scourge from Attila came in the 450s.

11) Read Jeremiah 9. Here are some of the descriptions Jeremiah gives to the "church" or the land of Judah, the city of Zion, God's holy hill: adulterers, treacherous, falsehood, deceiver, slanderer, tongues that speak lies, tongue is a deadly arrow, and a mouth that speaks peace while the heart plans an ambush. The judgement for these spiritual leaders is shown in verse 15, that God will fill their mouth with bitter food and poisonous water. After that they would be scattered and the sword will consume them, so much death that the dead bodies would fall like dung upon the open field with none to gather them.

There is a Catholic version of events that make Pope Leo I look like he could call on angels, or call on Peter and Paul to defend his position against Attila. Keep in mind where God is taking this conversation. He is judging the church for having a mouth of poison, and in that judgement poisons the waters of the rivers with death, the areas along the river where people lived. It's likely that not only did the Roman church lie about theology, but lied after to make themselves look spiritual. Pope Leo I was crucial for the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD. He sent a letter that validated the Council of Nicaea and further stated that Jesus had 2 natures, earthly and divine. If Jesus had a divine nature, he wouldn't need to be full of God's spirit. The "fully god/fully man" and "Incarnation" is treacherous, false, deceiving, slandering and speaking lies. If being indwelt by God's spirit makes Jesus fully god, are we gods as well when we receive the spirit? Were the prophets gods when the spirit of God had come upon them?

11) See Luke 4:1, Acts 10:38, Matthew 3:16-17, Matthew 12:28, John 3:34, and Isaiah 11:2 for a start.

11) See the similar verse in Revelation 16:4-6 *And the third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and springs of water, and they turned to blood* which took place after the rise of the Holy Roman Empire, which established itself in this area, who attacked the saints during the Inquisitions and the Reformation. The Holy Roman Empire was not yet a ruling power, but instead was where the Hapsburgs ruled after the fall of Rome.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGlbRkXg5k8> "The Origins of Papacy and the Road to Power" to see the application of Arianism vs Catholicism in the first 5 minutes of the video.

Attila retreated from Rome, leaving the fourth trumpet to blow. There is a legend that the Hungarians were direct descendants of Attila, and there is a strong connection to their name as being Arian Christians.

12 The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night.

There is a final conquest of Rome and Italy by Odoacer, and later jointly by him and Theodoric from 476 – 490 AD where the sun and moon is struck. The sun, Romulus Augustus, was deposed in 476 AD by Odoacer. He took control of Italy and the Roman Senate had little real authority, and declined in their influence. Concerning the stars, that their light might not shine would be the conflict between the Roman and Byzantine churches. The popes of Rome and the bishops of Byzantine created a controversy which culminated to the Acacian Schism in 484 AD. The conflict was between the single-nature of Jesus or the divine nature of Jesus. In 551AD at the Council of Chalcedon, the head of the church in Constantinople was declared to be the head of the Eastern branch of the church, equal in authority to the Pope. This effectively was the start of the division of the church into the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic branches. The popes in Rome were kept from shining and were darkened in the Byzantine Empire (Eastern Roman Empire). The story of the Roman popes continues in chapter 11 with the Inquisitions.

13 Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!"

The Roman eagle, or aquila, was a powerful symbol of the Roman Empire, representing military might, imperial authority, honor, and divine favor from Jupiter, the king of gods. It served as the sacred standard for each legion, carried by a revered soldier (the aquilifer) and acting as a rallying point and source of morale, with its loss considered a catastrophic disgrace. The eagle embodied the legion's spirit and Rome itself, inspiring loyalty, duty, and immense courage. The eagle is crying Woe which means impending judgment is coming, and total devastation to the empire.

Daniel 11:45 Young's Literal Translation *and he planteth the tents of his palace between the seas and the holy desirable mountain, and hath come unto his end, and there is no helper to him.* The "palace of the tents" along with the "holy desirable mountain" was Rome, on land that was planted between the seas, meaning a see on both sides of the land. The reign of Rome had come to an end and there is no helper to him. Justinian will try, but will receive plagues and attacks until Constantinople is fallen.

From worldatlas.com - Origin of the Papal States

In the 4th century, the bishops of Rome and the Catholic Church acquired lands around the city and governed them as the Patrimony of St Peter. In the early 5th century, the Roman Western Empire collapsed, and the Eastern Empire was weakened such that it could not control the entire territory. The population turned to the Catholic Church and the popes for protection and aid. Immigrants began settling on the land acquired by the church around Rome because it was much safer compared to other parts of the Roman Empire. In the 8th century, the Roman Eastern Empire could no longer protect Italy from invaders prompting Pope Gregory II to break ranks with the empire. Pope Gregory III succeeded the former and established a self-control rule in all lands owned by the Catholic Church thus creating the Papal States.