

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### Revelation: God's Revelation To His Servants Today On Events About To Occur Part IV: "The Things Which Shall Be Hereafter": Events After The Rapture Of The Church C. The Great Tribulation Period, Revelation 6:1-19:21

#### 3. God's Judgment Of Unrepentant, Persecuting Idolaters In The Great Tribulation (Revelation 8:1-9:21)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Believers in Christ worldwide today often face humanly troubling persecution at the hands of idolaters:

(1) Christians in some lands are being slain by Muslim extremists who heed "Allah," a deity world historian Will Durant in The Story of Civilization, v. IV, p. 160-161 wrote was once the Arab Kuraish tribe's polytheistic Lord of the soil that Muhammad redefined as Islam's monotheistic god (cited in Dave Hunt, The Berean Call, 2/2000, p. 3).

(2) Christians also face Marxist idolaters who take from the rich and give to the poor, promoting covetousness, what Colossians 3:5b calls idolatry, and Marxists persecute Christians, trying to force on them the abolition of eternal truths, the abolition of the family and the abolition of morality. (www.learn-usacom, "Goals, 'Communist Manifesto'")

(3) What intensifies the suffering caused by such idolaters are demonic influences: (a) Alice Bailey (1880-1949), writing under a demon guide, heralded the spread of Marxist type ideologies (Brannon Howse, Religious Trojan Horse, 2012, p. 15-18) and (b) Muhammad received all of the Koran from the alleged angel Gabriel, and the Koran at Sura 4:157 denies the key truth of Scripture that Christ was even crucified! Thus, the "Gabriel" who dictated the Koran to Muhammad was a demon! (Robert Spencer, The Truth About Muhammad, 2006, p. 20, 55)

(4) Such persecution can really unsettle people, what our Church members and even the secular media testify!

Need: So we ask, "*In view of such troubling persecution, how are we to think and to act in an edifying way?!*"

- I. **The 7th seal judgment introduces the 7 trumpet judgments (Rev. 8:1a, 2; B. K. C., N. T., p. 951) that Revelation 9:20-21 reveals come for idolatry, but since following the cross God judges the unsaved only for rejecting Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:19), *this idolatry is for replacing Jesus Christ with false gods!***
- II. **However, believers in John's era were *badly persecuted for not worshiping the emperor* (F. F. Bruce, Jesus & Christ. Origins Outside The N. T., 1974, p. 26), and many since have been persecuted by idolaters, *so God gave Revelation 8:1-6 as edifying insight for Christians on handling idolatrous persecution:***
  - A. The Revelation 8:1 opening of the 7th seal to initiate the trumpet judgments on idolaters sees those judgments **pause before being administered** for the **observance** of about *half an hour of silence in heaven*. We explain:
    1. One half of an entity in Scripture worship settings, as here in the context of the ritual of the golden altar of incense (Revelation 8:3-5), often indicates the entity is divided between 2 parties (cf. Exodus 24:6-8 et al.).
    2. Then, **silence** in the context of **judging idolatry** recalls Habakkuk 1:12-2:20 where Habakkuk learned in *faith silently to wait for God to act to punish idolatrous, harmful Babylon*, B. K. C., O. T., p. 1516, 1507.
    3. Thus, the **first** half-hour of silence, the Rev. 8:3-5 altar of incense ritual in the context of judging idolaters signal *believers' prayers re: idolatrous persecution followed by silent waiting in faith for God to act!*
    4. An angel then **adds** to a censor holding *believers' prayers* [of incense, Rev. 5:8] *much more incense* (Rev. 8:3), the Holy Spirit's Romans 8:26 unutterable groaning intercessions added to believers' prayers to make them effective, and the angel then offers it all on the altar of incense for its smoke to rise to God, Rev. 8:4.
  - B. Signifying **God's answer** to these prayers, in **HIS SECOND-half-hour-part** of the **ritual**, an angel adds fire from heaven's other altar, the altar of sacrifice, to his censor, and casts its contents down onto the earth to produce thunderings, lightnings voices and an earthquake, typifying God's judgments on idolaters! (Rev. 8:5)
  - C. Remarkably, the angels bringing the trumpet judgments **in association with the altar of incense stand in God's presence** (*enopion*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 855; Rev. 8:2a), recalling the Angel Gabriel who *also stood in God's presence* (*enopion*, *Ibid.*, p. 200) and met Zecharias *at the temple altar of incense*, Lk. 1:8-11, 19. Gabriel came in **answer** to Zacharias' **prayer** re: his wife's **unjust reproach** for barrenness (Lk. 1:13, 25), so the trumpet judgment angels stand before God about to judge **idolatrous persecutors in answer to prayer!**
- III. **Thus, fueled by the prayers of God's people given in faith who then restfully wait for Him to handle their concerns on the matter, God's judgments FALL on their idolatrous persecutors, Revelation 8:7-9:19:**
  - A. Each judgment fits the specified pattern for God's judgment on idolatry as outlined in Old Testament passages:
    1. Ezekiel 5:11-13 shows God judging 1/3 of sinners to die by disease, 1/3 by famine and 1/3 by the sword for **REPLACING Him** with *idols*, showing why 1/3 of entities are harmed in God's 7 trumpet judgments.

2. Zephaniah 1:2-3 predicts God will destroy the idolaters with their stumblingblocks, namely, their idols, showing why the Revelation 8-9 trumpet judgments destructions occur on both idolaters and other objects!
- B. The first four trumpet judgments are leveled against pagan idolatry in general in Revelation 8:7-13 as follows:
1. The first trumpet judgment of hail, fire and blood destroys 1/3 of the trees and all the green grass, Rev. 8:7.
  2. The second trumpet judgment brings a great mountain burning with fire that is cast into the sea to destroy 1/3 of the sea creatures and 1/3 of the ships of the sea, items men had worshipped, Revelation 8:8-9.
  3. The third trumpet judgment involves a fiery comet crashing onto 1/3 of the rivers and fountains of waters, poisoning them so that many died drinking from these items they had worshipped, Revelation 8:10-11.
  4. The fourth trumpet judgment brings the loss of 1/3 of the stellar bodies and daylight, Revelation 8:12.
- C. The last 3 trumpet judgments, even more devastating, bring the warning of 3 coming "woes" (Rev. 8:13), and when those last trumpets sound, God will judge men for replacing Christ in the realm of demons, Rev. 9:1-19:
1. The 5th trumpet judgment yields a demonic plague since men try to curb demons in idolatry, Rev. 9:1-12:
    - a. The Rev. 9:1-10 description of the "locusts" that rise from the abyss with supernatural power to torment men fit that of an Assyrian demon, Z. P. E. B., v. Two, p. 94! Pagans held such demons were highly troublesome, so they used omens, charms and incantations to try to restrict them versus trusting God, *Ibid.*
    - b. For seeking false crutches instead of God, He will send demons to torment men for 5 months, a literal locust's lifespan (D. Guthrie & J. A. Motyer, eds., The New Bib. Com.: Rev., 1970, p. 1292), Rev. 9:5-10) The demons' leader is Satan, who falls to earth as a star and is given a key to release the demons from the abyss as Abaddon, Apollyon, i. e., "Destroyer" (*Ibid.*, B. K. C., N. T., p. 952-953; Rev. 9:1, 11 with 12:9).
    - c. God will limit the damage these demons can do, that they only hurt men who are not sealed by God on their foreheads, but that damage will still lead men to seek death and not be able to find it, Rev. 9:4-6.
  2. The 6th trumpet judgment brings the release of 4 strong demons who are bound at the Euphrates River to cause 200 million demons to kill 1/3 of men by fire, smoke and brimstone, items picturing God's eternal vengeance, Rev. 9:13-19 with Jude 7; Gen. 19:24, 28. Even the demons' armor colors reflect the fire, smoke and brimstone of hell (Moult. & Mill., The Voc. of the Grk N. T., p. 647; Rev. 9:17 NIV. [We know the 4 bound demons lead the 200 million demons due to Mark 5:8-13: as Jesus first addressed one demon only to have it reveal it represented many more, so the 4 strong demons at the Euphrates who slay 1/3 of men (Rev. 9:13-15) represent many more demons, 200 million in all, who kill that same 1/3!]) Some idolaters do not try to limit, but even *rely* on demons, so God will judge them to be slain by such demons!
  3. [The call to loose the 4 strong demons in the 6th trumpet judgment instructs us: (a) if a call for judgment rises from a place other than God's throne in Scripture, it signals His **will** on an injustice done in relation to that place (cf. Gen. 4:10). In this case, the injustice is idolatrous persecution against believers whose prayers rise from the altar of incense. (b) The call comes from this altar's **horns** (Rev. 9:13 with 8:3) that in the O. T. were anointed with blood **only** on the Day of Atonement (Ex. 30:9-10) when Israel's sins were **confessed** (Lev. 16:1-34). (c) Thus, if a believer prays re: idolatrous persecution **in God's will** (1 John 5:14-15) having **confessed his sins**, his prayer is from a **righteous** man, so it is **powerful** and **effective** (James 5:16-19 NIV) seen in God's great judgment on idolatrous persecutors in response to such prayer!]
- IV. **Following these first 6 trumpet judgments, most idolaters still will not repent of their evil, Rev. 9:20-21!**
- V. **[The seventh trumpet and "Woe" contains the seven great bowl judgments to be poured out on ORGANIZED GROUP idolatry, what we will explain later, cf. Revelation 11:15-19 with 15:1 and 16:1.]**

***Lesson:*** *God will judge His people's idolatrous persecutors in the trumpet judgments, but He calls them to (1) pray in faith over what they face, waiting for Him to act, (2) to do so with their sins confessed (1 John 1:9), (3) making Biblically correct requests (1 John 5:14-15) and (4) heeding God's will in living (1 John 3:22) for effectiveness!*

***Application:*** *(1) May we trust in Christ as Savior for eternal salvation, John 3:16. (2) If persecuted by idolatrous parties, may we pray as God instructs us to pray in the Revelation 8-9 trumpet judgments prophecy!*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the message . . .)

Last Monday, my "day off," I had an urge to drive to the Church to replace my pencil sharpener! I tried to tell myself I could do that the next day when I went to study, but the urge persisted. I thus drove here and found one of the back doors ajar, so I closed it! God had just shown me His protection of what none of us knew was a need! That taught me, in light of this sermon, that He wants us to trust Him for every concern of ours, be it known or unknown.

**May we trust in Christ to be saved and live by faith in Him, especially in regard to persecution!**