

Revelation 7

- v1** And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

In the midst of the swift movement of events decreed by the Lamb that contain the specter of earthquakes, the heavens departing, and the great men of the land trembling at the specter of "the wrath of the Lamb" (6:15-17), we find Christ directing His angels to hold back the approaching destruction. The angels are told to let nothing harmful occur in a sequence that has been heading towards the desolation of the holy city and its people. The reason for this divinely decreed "pause" of the oncoming slaughter will be seen in 7: 3.

- v2** And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

The angel arises "from the east." This was the direction of light (sunrise) and blessing. Indeed, in Numbers 2:3, Judah is on the east, the tribe that was chosen for special blessing, the tribe through which the Messiah would come to bless all nations (Genesis 12:3 cf.. Revelation 5:5). In Ezekiel 43:1-4, the vision of Ezekiel has the Lord coming into the temple by way of the east (Ezekiel 43:1-2). This angel is going to seal God's people, a sign in this case of protection from the coming wrath (Matthew 3:7).

- v3** Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

The pause is now explained to us. There will be a "sealing," a protection placed upon the chosen of God before God pours out the anger He threatened in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 28:15ff), prophesied in Daniel (Daniel 9:26-27), reiterated in the gospels (Luke 21:20-22), promised in the epistles (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16; 5:3, 5:9), and confirmed in Revelation. That we have this incident in the book of Revelation should not surprise us because the Lord Jesus took great effort in warning His people about the coming fall of the holy city.

giving them a specific sign as to its nearness and directions for their safety (Mark 13:1-4 cf. 13:14-18).

Historians tell us that in the year of the four Roman emperors, June 68 – June 69 A.D., the civil unrest of the empire caused the commander of the Roman forces, Vespasian, to break off the military actions that were in the process of laying waste to the land of Palestine and the city of Jerusalem and return to Rome. This provided a window – a pause – for the Christians in this region to flee, and historians said the Christians did just that (the historian Eusebius wrote that Christians fled to such places as Pella for safety). Jesus said in Luke 21:20 that saints in His day would see the Roman armies surrounding Jerusalem and the Lord gave directions for their escape (Luke 21:21).

v4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: [and there were] sealed an hundred [and] forty [and] four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

As we see from this verse, there is the remnant God secures of those of the fleshly seed of Abraham – Jews (see Romans 11:1-5). Before Jerusalem falls, God warns His own to forsake the doomed nation of Israel. The Jews who confess Christ as the Messiah are to flee Jerusalem (as He warned His Jewish apostles in Matthew 24:16-21). Even in this though, God will leave a witness in Jerusalem right up to the time it is overrun (see the two witnesses and their "testimony," Revelation 11:3-7. This witness occurred just prior to the fall of the city – 11:13).

v5 Of the tribe of Juda [were] sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben [were] sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad [were] sealed twelve thousand.

Twelve thousand out of each tribe are sealed from the nation of Israel, a number (12 x 1000) that implies completeness or fullness (note the use of "thousand" in Psalm 50:10, also see note in Revelation 9:16). Why certain tribes of Israel are not included (e.g. Dan and Ephraim), and why Joseph was included is not explained (Ephraim and Manassah essentially make up the tribe of Joseph). What seems to be important is that "one hundred and forty-four thousand," or a full compliment of the twelve Jewish tribes are sealed.

v6 Of the tribe of Aser [were] sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephtalim [were] sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses [were] sealed twelve thousand.

See verse five.

- v7 Of the tribe of Simeon [were] sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi [were] sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar [were] sealed twelve thousand.

See verse five.

- v8 Of the tribe of Zabulon [were] sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph [were] sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin [were] sealed twelve thousand.

See verse five.

- v9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

This multitude from all nations is over against those who have been sealed from the seed of Abraham – Jews. These are Gentiles, the spiritual seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:29). The truth that the cross of Christ shall deliver multitudes from sin, both Jew and Gentile, is throughout the Old and New Testaments (Psalm 22:27; 98:3; Isaiah 2:2; Matthew 20:28; Matthew 8:11). The white robes are the righteousness of saints, whether imputed (2 Corinthians 5:21) or practical (Matthew 5:20), and the palm branches are instruments of worship (Matthew 21:8ff). As in much of the Revelation/tribulation theme, something of the book of Daniel can be found here (Daniel 7:14).

- v10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

This is the foundation of all praise and thanksgiving. It is not the miracles of Christ, the prosperity we might enjoy by His kindness, or any other doctrine that the 20th century church seems to hold so dear. It is Grace! Grace! that we cry (Zechariah 4:7). We offer praise with a loud voice to God and his Son for the great plan of redemption He has purposed and accomplished (Psalm 98:4). Any other doctrine, no matter how biblically true, can never compare to the deliverance wrought out on the cross by God's dear Son. This heavenly congregation should be our congregation, a people who gather to praise the Lord not for any other reason than grace! If we share the same salvation, we can share the same choir!

Away with divisions in the church and separation of Christians because of some secondary doctrine! We come together because of **Grace! Grace**!**

****** I cannot emphasize this point too strongly. If there is to be any true unity that mirrors "as in heaven, so on earth," it must be in the **cross**. If we as a congregation in a local assembly gather together based on **ANY** other doctrine or group of doctrines, we are out of the New Testament concept of unity. Far too often we have false unity based on doctrines other than Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2). Yet, when we meet in glory, will there be any other basis for worship and praise than Jesus? If that will be true in glory, should it not be true in this world? If we have unity in Christ, what can divide us? And if Christ is not the source of our unity, what could keep us truly united? And if we are united apart from the centrality of the love of Christ, is that unity really worth anything?

v11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and [about] the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

The salvation purposed by God (Acts 2:22-23) and accomplished by the Lord Jesus (John 10:17-18) moves God's creatures to worship and adoration. We should never be deluded into thinking that redemption is ours by any other means than the good pleasure of God in choosing us (Galatians 1:15-16; Ephesians 1:3-4; Colossians 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Titus 1:1; 1 Peter 1:2). Here are the elders and beasts falling down before God as the subject of redemption is proclaimed. When the flag of the cross arises, the christian kneels. They fall on their faces in adoration and wonder, the elders because they are the objects of grace, the beasts because God devised such a plan of grace.

v12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, [be] unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

The word "Amen" is Hebrew and carries the idea of "Let it be so" or "I believe." It is a confession of faith, which is nothing more or less than a proclamation of that which is true. These creatures are saying as it were "It is true Lord, your work has displayed your glory before our eyes. And all the praise we can bestow belongs to you forever more. The cross has proclaimed your grace eternally, as it has also proclaimed your Son's grace and glory."

v13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

The question of the elder is one he knows the answer to but, as is sometimes in the Scriptures, he is drawing John's thoughts out for the apostle's own benefit (for other examples of this methodology, see Genesis 3:9; John 6:5-6).

v14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Here we have mention of the great tribulation, the period which our Lord ties to Daniel's desolation in Daniel 9:24-27 (compare Matthew 24:15ff; Mark 13:14-19; Luke 21:20ff). As previously mentioned, we must remember that Gabriel told Daniel that 70 weeks were determined with reference to the people and the holy city (Daniel 9:24). This response of Gabriel was in answer to Daniel's prayer (Daniel 9:16-19), the end result being desolation for the city (Daniel 9:26-27). Gabriel has us understand that there are three parts to the 70 weeks: seven weeks from the command to restore Jerusalem to its restoration in troubled times (Daniel 9:25); sixty-two weeks (in addition to the first seven) to the coming of the Messiah (Daniel 9:25); and the "after" week (Daniel 9:26a), the week *after* the seven plus sixty-two - which is the seventieth week - the week in which Messiah was cut off (Daniel 9:26), the week that also sees the confirmation of the covenant (Daniel 9:27)**. The result of all this is the final desolation of the city that was built in v25 (Daniel 9:26b,27c).

Thus Gabriel brings out a truth the Old Testament has proclaimed often - there is a direct connection between the holy city and the holy people, between how the Jewish people lived and the prosperity or demise of their habitation, between the holy land and its center, the holy city Jerusalem. This is precisely the way the New Testament sees the people and the city (Matthew 23:34-38). There should be no doubt in our minds by comparing Matthew 24:15ff with Luke 21:20ff that when the great tribulation is the subject, the desolation of Jerusalem is also the subject, for the prophecies of Daniel concern themselves with the city (Daniel 9:26-27) and Matthew ties this to the great tribulation in Matthew 24:21. This is also the subject here in our verse. Again, remember that just a few verses earlier in Revelation (6:15ff) we had a direct reference to the desolation of Jerusalem and we are still on the subject of the seven seals (Revelation 6:15ff compare Luke 23:27-31).

Note: This idea of desolation as judgment when it came to the holy land and the holy city is well attested to in the Old Testament (Jeremiah 25:18; Lamentations 1:4, 1:13, 1:16 etc.). Just as an aside, the fact that John speaks of these saints as *having come out of the great tribulation* implies its nearness to John and his personal acquaintance with this time of trouble.

** Thus the 7 weeks plus 62 weeks plus the "after" week (1) equals the 70 weeks of Daniel. The destruction of the holy city in Daniel 9:26,27 is the response of God to the actions of Isreal in the seventieth week.

v15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

The temple here, as in all places in Revelation excepting chapter 11:1-2, is the place of God's presence in glory. Often this temple is specifically placed in heaven (Note: the temple in Revelation 11 is the Jewish temple which was still standing, and which was soon to fall - Revelation 11:13 cf.. Hebrews 8:13). These are the true worshipers, those that have suffered for the cross and the word of God. They shall forever see God, delight in Him and serve Him (cf.. Revelation 22:3-4). It may well be, in light of verse 16, that these saints have been martyred. Now they serve Him night and day, freed to adore the One who bought them with His blood.

v16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

If this phrase is to be understood as similar to Isaiah 49:10, then it is figurative and expressive of God's blessing and favor (e.g. the sun not smiting them - see also Psalm 121:6). The verse does not seem to be quite the same as Revelation 21:23, which has "no need of sun," because our verse ends with "nor any heat." One verse deals with the new heaven and the new earth, the new temple and God dwelling eternally in our midst, whereas our verse seems to emphasize deliverance from the troubles so prevalent during the great tribulation.

v17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Much can be said about this verse, but the essence is that the comfort that shall forever be the saints is a comfort which we tasted of in *this life* (compare this verse with Psalm 23). It is God who does all. It is the Lamb who leads them beside living waters (cf.. John 4:10; 7:37ff; Revelation 21:6). It is God who takes the tears away (see Revelation 21:4 cf.. God does all in Psalm 23, "He leads me beside still waters...He restores my soul...He prepares a table"). The ultimate reason for these verses (vv15-17) is to encourage the saints as the tribulation is unfolding and the suffering is intensifying. They are to know and be assured that they are God's people and the sheep of His pasture (Psalm 100:3). He knows them by name and leads them in the way, while all the time going before them (John 10:1ff). All these saints, like John the Apostle, are ones whom the Lord loves. He will always, even in the midst of great trial and tribulation, prove His love for us (John 21:20; Revelation 3:9).

Revelation 8

v1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

The Greek word *sige*, translated "silence" here means "**silence!**" as opposed to another Greek word, *esuchia*, which means "quietness." John is saying that after all the action of the opened seals in Revelation 6-7, chapter 8 begins with silence in heaven – a pause in the unfolding of history – possibly to give more weight both to the end of the seals and the beginning of the trumpets (for an example, see Eliphaz and Job 4:16). When the Lord arises to act, silence is the exhortation (Zechariah 2:13).

The Greek says "there was silence in heaven (Greek, *os*, English, "as") one half hour." This is typical in Greek, to use the Greek word *os* with numbers and descriptions of time. This is as well a lesson for all who look at Greek, especially interlinear Greek New Testaments. We may think we have the "literal" translation (and probably further confuse ourselves), when in fact the use of *os* in this manner with numbers or time is a Greek idiom that should not be translated in this case, as is usual, "as." It is better to translate as our English Bible has it, "for," although the word *os* does not actually mean "**for**!" Greek idioms occur often enough in Scripture to warrant our careful attention whenever we study the Word of God**. "Literal" is not always equal to accurate.

**We must always keep in mind when dealing with language that there will be times in which the idea of a *literal* translation from Greek into English will not even be possible.

v2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

For the use of seven trumpets in the announcement of God's coming works, see Joshua 6:1ff, Amos 3:6.

The angels stand before the throne (the symbol of sovereignty in Revelation), with all direction coming from the King. He gives the angels the trumpets to blow and will decree all that comes as a result of the angels sounding their trumpets. The seventh seal will start the

first trumpet sound. This ending seal will be the beginning of frightful judgment.

- v3 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.

The preciousness of the prayers of God's people comes out here just as we saw in Revelation 5:8. There is so much in Scripture to encourage us in prayer, in particular the Divine Logic of our Lord's statements in Luke 11:1-13 and Luke 18:1-8. Will the Lord give us bad things, or is the eternal Word true; "the desire of the righteous *shall be granted*" (Proverbs 10:24), and "He shall give us good things to enjoy" (1 Timothy 6:17)? This implies He hears us, but more, He *delights* in our requests (ASK! John 14:13-14; 15:7, 15:16; 16:23). Prayers are a sweet sound to His ears, a savor before Him. Again, this is explained for *our* benefit, and *our* blessing. The descriptions and vision of the prayers are to warm our hearts to Him, for He is warm in His love to us.

In the original Greek, the descriptions of "gold" and "before the throne" have articles before them, giving these descriptive terms unique force. We might translate the prayers of all the saints upon "the altar, *the* golden altar, *the* altar which is before the throne." The surrounding elements give a special status to this altar and therefore the prayers offered upon that altar.

- v4 And the smoke of the incense, [which came] with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

Compare Exodus 30:1; Psalm 141:2

Here the prayers of saints before the throne are seen as "smoke" (for this in the Old Testament, see Exodus 30:1ff). These prayers fill the temple of God. This is a crucial truth to the saints of this book who are undergoing persecution. They need to know that their prayers are heard. They need to know the power and value of such petitions. Here, as with many passages in the book of Revelation, we can see a natural parallel between this verse and Luke 18:1ff. There is this great encouragement to pray in faith. Despite the temptation to become prayerless under such difficulties as we find in this book, there are visions that lead us with confidence to our knees (cf.. Romans 5:1-5; Hebrews 4:14-16). We find prayers that fill God's dwelling place, and ascend to His Holy hill (Psalm 3:4). He will hear, He will answer (Psalm 34:4; 120:1; Isaiah 65:24; note the themes that surround the great promise of answered prayer in Isaiah 65:24, themes that fit very naturally into the book of Revelation - Isaiah 65:17ff).

- v5 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.

The answered prayers give fire to the censer and are cast upon the earth [Greek, *ge*, English, "land"]. We must not miss this connection between the prayers of these persecuted saints and the casting of the fire, a theme we have seen both in the New Testament (Luke 18:7-8) and in Revelation (Revelation 6:9-11). Indeed, if we may see a close chronological relationship between Revelation 6:9ff and our passages here, then the statement of Luke 18:8a "He will avenge them speedily" has blessed force to it. This vengeance is clearly the vengeance against Israel as is explained by our Lord in Luke 21:20ff (see Revelation 16:6, 17:6, 18:24, and the conclusion as summed up in Revelation 19:2 "hath avenged")!

- v6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

In Joshua 6 we have seven trumpets sounding, which brings an announcement of doom to Jericho. Such is the force of the trumpets in Revelation. There is a sense of completeness with the seven trumpets as well as a sense of finality. Since the trumpet is used also to call or announce some gathering or declaration of great moment such as a feast or other special incident (see Exodus 19:13, 19:16, 19:19), there is great seriousness added to this scene in Revelation eight. The last of seven seals moves into the first of seven trumpets. It is the unfolding of the great tribulation which culminates in the coming of the Lord (Revelation 7:14 cf.. Revelation 19; Matthew 24:15ff cf.. Matthew 24:29-31).

- v7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

The language here could be literal language of a literal event, or figurative language of a literal event (such as the beast in Revelation 13, a symbol used to denote something truly real and truly terrible). In either case, literal or figurative, the events are very historical, very real, and very terrifying. That the subject of God's anger against Israel is expressed in the way we find it here is easily found in both Old and New Testaments (see Ezekiel 38:18ff [judgment against Gog], esp. 38:22; Joel 2:28ff cf.. Isaiah 29:1ff; 30:27ff; Acts 2:16ff).

These things are cast down to the earth [Greek, "land"], and one third of the trees are burnt up. The number "three/third" is found often in Revelation (one out of every three uses in the New Testament are in Revelation). The import of "three" in the Bible seems to be "partial" (i.e. something in part rather than the whole). Similar to this

is the idea of "third" implying a remnant (see Zechariah 13:7-9). This is the start of the vengeance of God poured out upon the land of Israel for their crucifying the Son of God (note the themes and language of Acts 2:16-24 and its relationship to our passage here). That this is partial here is, like the plagues in Exodus, intended to bring repentance (Revelation 9:20-21 cf.. Romans 2:3-4).

v8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

See Exodus 7:17ff, Nahum 1:1-5, and Daniel 2:44ff for helpful terminology.

God's presence "burning" the earth (Nahum 1:5), and Daniel's "stone falling" (Daniel 2:34, 2:45) are relevant to our verse in that the subjects of Nahum 1 and Daniel 2, namely judgment and the establishment of the kingdom, are the themes of Revelation. Fire is a common word associated with judgment, and the same is true of the Lord sending things upon the land from heaven (e.g. Sodom and Gomorrah). The burning mountain falls upon the land, causing the sea to turn to blood. This reminds us of the plague of blood in Exodus as well as Deuteronomy 28:27 and 28:60, where God tells Israel that if the nation is disobedient they would be cursed with the curses the Egyptians experienced. There is destruction on land (8:7) and destruction at sea (8:8-9).

With the language of verse eight this question still confronts us: how do we decide which way we should look at such passages as verses seven and eight (and many others that will follow in this book)? We have seen the Bible can be both literal/literal (that is, language that is to be taken literally about some literal/historical event), or figurative/literal (language that is figurative of a literal/historical event). In answering the above question, the verses before us are interesting and instructional.

Judgment is found in the Old Testament with hail, blood, etc.. that involved literal hail and blood (Exodus), as well as judgment that involved figures of hail and blood (see Psalm 11:6; Ezekiel 32:6). Which is the correct interpretation in our verses? Which understanding is the one John the apostle had in mind? What is the proper way to look at Revelation 8:7,8? How do we know?

It would seem that we should think along the following lines:

- 1) Look at the style and type of book,
- 2) Find any other help in the author's other writings (if applicable),
- 3) Look at both the general/chapter context as well as the near context of the verses in question.

- 4) Find the closest parallel passages in the Scriptures and study their language use (this being the most important rule to follow).

Ultimately when language, subject, and context of statements are found to be similar in comparing other Biblical Scriptures with those found in Revelation 8:7,8, it is probable that:

- 1) The Lord is inspiring John (or any writer) *the same way* He did other prophets who prophesied of similar truths/themes (see verses noted above), and/or
- 2) John is *drawing on the language of the other inspired writer(s)* for his writings since their exposition is so appropriate to the truths he wants to make known.

- v9 **And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.**

See Exodus 7:21

On land and on sea the terrible tribulation begins. As each trumpet sounds a new woe is added to the suffering land and its inhabitants. There is so much here that takes us back to the plagues of Moses' time in Egypt. But here the curses of Exodus are leveled against the Lord's own as His warnings long ago threatened (Deuteronomy 28:15, 28:28). There might be some other idea in the destruction of the ships and the fish; one used for both protection and transportation of goods, the other a staple of the Israelite diet.

- v10 **And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;**

See verse 12.

- v11 **And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.**

Here, as in Old Testament history, the lifeline of survival (water) is made bitter and undrinkable (see Exodus 15:23). Yet the bitter waters of Marah, much like the water at the marriage of Cana in John 2 provide a vehicle by which God is glorified in what is done with the water. That is not the case here. The wormwood causes death by drinking or death by dehydration because one cannot drink. In our verses the food source, the transportation of food stuffs by ship, as well as the water are destroyed.

Jerusalem will experience great hunger during her tribulation brought upon her by God as judgment (Revelation 18:8; 6:5-6; Matthew 24:7), and all of this is because God is judging her (Revelation 18:8). Again, Revelation is calling us back to events in Israel's history, all of which are put in such a light as to reveal that the covenant God of Israel is against His Old Testament people! God's covenant nation has become the church (Matthew 21:43), and He is about to leave His Old covenant nation Israel desolate (Matthew 23:38).

v12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

One must not miss the major point of the verse here. A third of the sun, moon, and stars are smitten. But the result and point of this is to create a scene of darkness (e.g. "so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not"). This is a type of scene that implies judgment and unhappy times in the Old Testament, and examples abound: Amos 8:9, "I will cause the sun to go down at noon;" Ecclesiastes 12:1-2, "while the sun...be not darkened;" Joel 2:2, "a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness;" Jeremiah 4:23, "and they had no light." Isaiah's words are coming to pass for Israel the vine: "And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof" (Isaiah 5:30).

v13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

There is much more tribulation to come as announced by the angel. And these woes are coming upon the *land*. If we begin to see things on a world wide scale according to 20th century thinking, we will miss the intensity of the tribulation which is poured out upon Israel. **Remember, Matthew tells us there is "such tribulation...as was not since the beginning of the world, nor ever shall be!"**

As in Ezekiel 21:27, a three fold repetition of anything (woe, woe, woe) gives the subject the maximum emphasis. It is a Hebraism that gives the subject at hand a perfective idea. An example of this emphasis is the double use of "shalom" in Isaiah 26:3, translated *perfect peace*, or Genesis 2:18, where the Hebrew "dying thou shall die" is translated "thou shall *surely die*". The three woes here mean a complete cry of despair for the tribulation that is coming as announced by the last three trumpets.