

Revelation

Notes #8A

Seal #7 - Half Hour of Silence

Chapter 8:1-6

Seal	Description
#7	(1) When the Lamb broke the seventh seal , there was silence in heaven for about half an hour . (2) And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them . (3) Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne . (4) And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. (5) Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth ; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake . (6) And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them . (Revelation 8:1-6 NASB)
Symbology	Meaning(s)
Half Hour	Prophetic 15 years
Incense	Prayers of the saints
Golden Altar	Altar of sacrifice
Smoke	Fragrant aroma; covering
Fire	Judgment
Thunder	Judgment
Sounds	Judgment
Lightning	Judgment
Earthquake	Judgment; shaking of the WRE
Period	Interpretation
395-410 AD	Opening of 7th Seal. Preparation for the sounding of the seven trumpets.

The Half Hour

When the 7th and last seal was broken, heaven went silent for about a half hour. Then John saw seven angels being given seven trumpets, meaning that all these events and what follows when the trumpets are sounded belong to the 7th seal.

But how long was the half hour? Was it a literal 30-minute period or a prophetic half hour? Given the history of the WRE and keeping with the prophetic nature of John's vision, it appears that the half hour pertains to a 15-year period.

To understand this requires some background on what is called the **day-year principle**, or **year-day principle**, or the **year-for-a-day principle**. The historicists apply this principle in interpreting most biblical prophecy, especially in regard to Revelation; however, the futurists do not, for they see all references to time as literal.

There is scriptural precedence for the day-year principle.

'According to **the number of days** which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your guilt **a year**, even forty years, and you will know My opposition.' (Numbers 14:34 NASB)

(4) "As for you, lie down on your left side and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel on it; you shall bear their iniquity for **the number of days** that you lie on it. (5) "For I have assigned you a number of days **corresponding to the years** of their iniquity, three hundred and ninety days; thus you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. (6) "When you have completed these, you shall lie down a second time, but on your right side and bear the iniquity of the house of Judah; I have assigned it to you for forty days, a day for each year. (Ezekiel 4:4-6 NASB)

So that it does not escape our notice, Peter adds another dimension to the day-year.

But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord **one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.** (2 Peter 3:8 NASB)

Further, biblical prophecy is always based on 360 days per year, based on 30 days per month, not 365 days per year with variable days to the months.

Thus, according to the day-year principle, a day can mean one of four things: one literal day of 12 or 24 hours; one year of 360 days; a 360-year period called a "time"; and 1,000 years.

Now, given this principle, a half hour signifies a 15-year period. This is based on an hour being 1/24th of a night and day of a 360-year day.

The end of the 6th seal was estimated to be around 395 AD, after God's judgment of the preceding seals had fallen on the pagan Roman Empire. Also, after 313 AD, the visible church was released from persecution and had risen to power with the first Christian Emperor on the throne in Constantinople. However, from its elevated position, the church in Rome became just as immoral and corrupt as the pagans had been. God's judgment of the WRE was about to begin. The half hour or 15 years of silence gave them time to repent and turn from their evil ways. Unfortunately for them, they refused.

It appears that the 15-year period occurred from 395-410 AD. While the judgment of God was held back, a new threat was being raised up against Rome from a northern tribe called the Goths.

From 395-398 AD, Alaric the Goth attempted to invade Greece and then Italy, but in both cases he was held back.

The Christians in Rome failed to see that this was the hand of God readied to bring judgment upon this so-called Christian Empire, starting with the western region. The clergy and other leaders were not manifesting the character of Christ and His love for all people, including the pagans or unbelievers. Instead they were into avarice, murder, and idolatry, and they were more than willing to employ the physical sword and other ungodly means against all unbelievers or any who disagreed with them. They were worse than their predecessors; they were pretentious hypocrites. The 15-year silence was a warning and indicator that judgment was coming.

Incense & Golden Altar

Once the angels were given the trumpets, John saw another angel standing before the golden altar. The scene is reminiscent of Aaron offering the bull of the sin offerings.

(12) "He shall take a firepan full of coals of **fire from upon the altar** before the LORD and two handfuls of finely ground **sweet incense**, and bring it inside the veil. (13) "He shall put the **incense on the fire** before the LORD, that **the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the ark of the testimony**, otherwise he will die. (14) "Moreover, he shall take some of the **blood** of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on **the mercy seat** on the east side; also in

front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times. (Leviticus 16:12-14 NASB)

John saw the prayers added to the incense on the golden altar. Previously in his vision, John saw that the golden bowls of incense are the prayers of the saints (Revelation 5:8).

Jesus was the sin offering for the world, and the saints are ones that have applied the blood of His sacrifice to their hearts. Because of their faith in God's Son and His blood that was poured out for all humanity, their prayers reached the throne of God and went up before God as a fragrant aroma.

The word *incense* comes from the Greek word *thumiana*, which refers to a "fragrant aroma."

The prayers of the saints are fragrant because they are based on the finished work of the Cross. When the incense was fired on the altar it created smoke, and this smoke covered the mercy seat indicating that the saints are alive in Christ, under His covering from the wrath of God, and their prayers will be heard in heaven.

Fire, Peals of Thunder, Flashes of Lightning, Earthquake

Then **the fire of the altar was thrown to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.** In this case, fire accompanied by peals of thunder and flashes of lightning signify the judgment of God that was to come upon the WRE. Another mighty earthquake was coming upon the Christian Empire. Like the previous quake of the 6th seal, this quake was not a literal one either; it was a quake that would shake the very core of the empire, its political and religious institutions, and leaders that would first bring the western division of the empire down (476 AD), followed by the eastern division many centuries later (1453 AD).

Repentance did not occur so **the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them.**