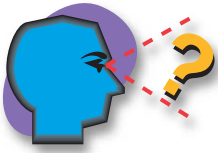
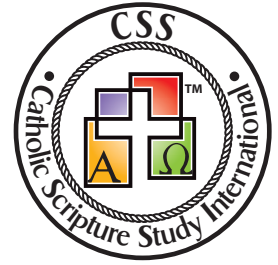


Revelation

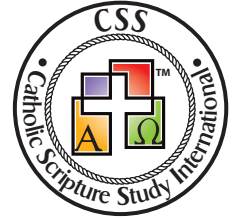


Suggested Responses to the Questions

Note: Be sure to answer all the questions yourself before reading the suggested responses in order to make the most of this study.

Revelation 8:1-13

1. In Habakkuk 2:18-20, man-made idols are contrasted with the majesty of God: “Of what avail is the carved image, that its maker should carve it? Or the molten image and lying oracle, that its very maker should trust in it, and make dumb idols? But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.” Zephaniah 1:4-6 warns that God will stretch out his hand against Judah and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem because of their worship of false gods, including the stars and planets in the host of heaven. In Zephaniah 1:7 the prophet admonishes the people of Judah: “Be silent before the LORD God! For the day of the LORD is at hand; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated his guests.”
2. Half an hour is about the same the amount of time it usually took the high priest to make an offering on the golden altar in the Temple at Jerusalem. This quiet in heaven may refer to the silence that falls upon some ministers of the Old Covenant as it reaches its culmination. Luke 1:5-25 recounts how Zechariah is silenced preceding the birth of his son, John the Baptist, who’s to be the precursor of the New Covenant. In Luke 1:19, an angel appears to Zechariah, identifies himself as Gabriel, and says that he stands in the presence of God. In Tobit 12:15, an angel identifies himself as Raphael and says that he’s “one of the seven holy angels who present the prayers of the saints and enter into the presence of the Holy One.” In Revelation 8:2, the apostle John is shown seven angels who stand before God.
3. In Revelation 8:3-4, the incense mingled with the prayers of the saints suggests that the prayers of “the saints” are made more powerful because they are joined to the prayers of the angels in heaven and raised up like incense “before the throne” of God. In Psalm 141:2, the psalmist sings: “Let my prayer be counted as incense before thee, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice.” In his letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul often refers to baptized Christians on earth as “saints” since they are “fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,” and he refers to himself as “the very least of all the saints.” Moses, Aaron, and Hur exemplify the power of intercessory prayer during the battle between the Israelites and the Amalekites. Exodus 17:11-13 records: “Whenever Moses held up his hand [a common prayer gesture] Israel prevailed; and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses’ hands grew weary; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat upon it, and Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; so his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua mowed down Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.”



Suggested Responses (cont.)

4. In Ezekiel 10:1-2, the prophet envisions a throne on a firmament above the cherubim and a man clothed in linen being told: “Go in among the whirling wheels underneath the cherubim; fill your hands with burning coals from between the cherubim, and scatter them over the city.” This parallels the apostle John’s vision in Revelation 8:5: “Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth.”
5. In the Old Testament, trumpets are used in worship, in warfare and to signal a warning. Trumpets remind worshipers about the circumstances surrounding entering into the covenant at Mount Sinai (*Num* 10:1-10). Their most famous use in warfare was during the battle of Jericho, and they symbolize the Israelites’ reliance on God for victory in all endeavors (*Josh* 6:2). The Old Testament prophets also relied on trumpets as a method of signaling a warning, as in this prophecy: “Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near” (*Joel* 2:1). In the book of Revelation, trumpets are used for the same three purposes—to call to worship, to engage in battle and to warn of impending doom. The trumpet imagery is drawn from the Old Testament feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashana), which celebrates the Jewish New Year.
6. In Joshua 5:10-6:21, the Israelites, with God’s help and under the direction of Joshua, defeat Jericho liturgically—that is, using weapons of worship. The people of Israel march around Jericho in silence for six days. On the seventh day, seven priests bearing seven trumpets approach Jericho with the ark of the covenant. When the trumpets sound and the people shout, the walls of the city fall. When the trumpets are blown in the book of Revelation, this may be seen as inaugurating judgment against Jerusalem, which in this case represents a new Jericho. In terms of Old Testament history, the original Jericho was the stronghold of the Promised Land. Jerusalem, the new Jericho, represents the stronghold of God’s original creation. With the advent of the New Covenant, it’s no longer Canaan but the whole world that’s to be conquered by the people of God. This is the ultimate fulfillment of God’s covenant promise in Genesis 22:15-18 that all the families of the earth will be blessed through Abraham.
7. In the context of the book of Revelation, “this mountain” may be seen as referring to Mount Zion, and its being cast into the sea implies the passing away of the fruitless Old Covenant and the establishment of the New. In Isaiah 2:2, Israel is called “the mountain of the house of the LORD.” Isaiah 27:13 prophesies the blowing of a trumpet to call all the 12 tribes of Israel to worship on “the holy mountain at Jerusalem.” Isaiah 30:29 prophesies to the people of Jerusalem: “You shall have a song as in the night when a holy feast is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one sets out to the sound of the flute to go to the mountain of the LORD, to the Rock of Israel.” Isaiah 66:20 shows how Israel is intended to be a light to all the nations: “And they shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as an offering to the LORD, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD.”



Suggested Responses (cont.)

8. In Revelation 8:7, hail and fire mixed with blood fell on the earth with the first trumpet blast. Exodus 9:23 describes the seventh plague of Egypt as hail: “Then Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth.” Revelation 8:8-9 prophesies that with the second trumpet blast “something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died.” In Exodus 7:14-21, the first plague to befall Egypt occurred when the Nile River was turned to blood and all the fish died. The blast from the third trumpet in Revelation 8:10-11 also parallels the first plague in Egypt—the water becomes foul and undrinkable in both the Revelation vision and in the Egyptian plague. In Revelation 8:12, the blast from the fourth trumpet brings darkness, while Exodus 10:22 recounts that the ninth plague brought a “thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days.”
9. In Deuteronomy 29:16-19, Moses cautions the Israelites against turning from God and worshipping idols as the Egyptians did, and he warns about “a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit, one who hears the words of this sworn covenant, blesses himself in his heart, saying, ‘I shall be safe though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.’ This would lead to the sweeping away of moist and dry alike.” In Revelation 8:11, the star “Wormwood” “fell from the sky like a torch,” poisoning a third of the rivers and the fountains so that many died. Genesis 3:1-7 tells how Satan poisoned Eve with his evil words and tempted her to eat the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Isaiah 12:12-15 records that Satan (called a “Day Star” before his fall) was cast from heaven because of his stubborn pride, saying in his heart: “I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high.” Luke 10:18 records Jesus saying: “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.” In Jeremiah 9:13-15, the prophet warns that because of the stubborn, idolatrous hearts of the people, God will feed them with wormwood and give them poisonous water to drink. In Amos 6:12, the people of Israel are accused of turning “justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood.”
10. In Ezekiel 7:5-6, the prophet calls out: “Disaster after disaster! Behold, it comes. An end has come, the end has come; it has awakened against you. Behold it comes,” announcing to the people of Israel that God is going to judge them according to their ways and punish them for all their abominations. In Revelation 8:7, the eagle calls out: “Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets which the three angels are about to blow!” The three times the eagle cries “woe” correspond to the last three trumpet blasts and imply that the doom that accompanies the last trumpet blasts will be even more devastating than that which accompanied the first four blasts.

Responses to the Questions for Reflection will vary.