

***The First Four Trumpets***  
***Revelation 8:6-13***  
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**INTRODUCTION**

1. Turn in your Bibles this morning to Revelation chapter 8.
2. Last week we looked at the calm before the storm.
3. This morning we will see the blast of the first four trumpets as the Day of Lord's wrath begins.
4. Read Revelation 8:1-13.
5. People today are very concerned about saving the environment.
6. We constantly hear in the news about the depletion of the ozone layers, pollution, the destruction of the rain forests, and global warming.
7. There is also a passionate concern to save endangered species – from whales to the spotted owls.
8. For many, protecting the environment has become far more than a concern for health and safety; it has become an issue of idolatry as they worship "Mother Nature."
9. There is no question that fallen man has failed in his responsibilities to properly care for God's creation.
10. But the damage that man has done to the earth pales in comparison to what God will one day do to it.

11. The powerful judgments that are contained in the seventh seal will utterly devastate the earth causing wholesale, unimaginable destruction to the environment.
12. Eventually, after the Millennium, God will completely destroy (or uncreate) the present heaven and earth (2 Pet.3:10), and, after the whole universe has gone completely out of existence, He will replace it with a new heaven and new earth (Rev.21:1 ff).
13. Now as we have already seen last week that as the 7<sup>th</sup> seal is opened it stuns the heavenly scene into silence.
14. John says he sees “the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets” (8:2).
15. But before they sound “another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. And he was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne” (8:3).
16. Verse 4 tells us that the “smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel’s hand.”
17. Then, the silence is over as the “angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth.” (v.5).
18. It says “there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake” (v.5).
19. Following this scene the angels are now ready to blow the trumpets.
20. As we look at verse 6 we do not know what the angels did in

preparing themselves to sound the trumpets.

21. All we know is that they were standing before God and they “were given seven trumpets” (v.2).
22. We don’t know if God gave them the trumpets or another angel.
23. All we know is following the event of the angel at the altar with the prayers of the saints, they are now ready to sound.
24. The first four angels sound in chapter 8.
25. The fifth and sixth angel sound in chapter 9 while the seventh angel sounds in chapter 11, verse 15.
26. The first trumpet sounds in verse 7.

## I. The First Trumpet (v.7)

“The trumpet-plagues are directed against a world adamant in its hostility toward God. As the intensity of the judgments increases, so also does the vehemence with which man refuses to repent (9:20-21; 16:9,11,21). But the trumpet judgments are not final. They affect a significant proportion but not all of the earth (one-third occurs twelve times in vv.7-12)” (Robert Mounce, Revelation, p.184).

### A. It is Described As Hail and Fire Mingled with Blood (v.7a)

Marvin Vincent says, “Instead of ‘with blood’ as the AV and REV, we should render ‘in blood.’ The hailstones and fire-balls fell in a shower of blood” (Vincent’s Word Studies in the New Testament).

1. Hail is frequently associated in Scripture with divine judgment
  - a) When God answered Job “out of the whirlwind,” He said in 38:22-23 - “Have you entered the treasury of snow, Or have you seen the treasury of hail, Which I have reserved for the time of trouble, For the day of battle and war?”
  - b) In reference to the impending Assyrian invasion Isaiah says in Isa.28:2 - “Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one, Like a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, Like a flood of mighty waters overflowing, Who will bring them down to the earth with His hand.”

2. Fire is Also Associated in Scripture with Judgment

- a) God rained brimstone (sulfur) and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah - Gen.19:24

“Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens.”

“"Brimstone" could refer to any inflammable substance; perhaps a volcanic eruption and an earthquake with a violent electrical storm "overthrew" (v. 25) the area. That area is now believed to be under the south end of the Dead Sea. Burning gases, sulfur, and magma blown into the air all fell to bury the region” (The MacArthur Study Bible).

- b) It says in Psalm 11:5-6 that “The LORD tests the righteous, but the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates. Upon the wicked He will rain coals; Fire and brimstone and a burning wind Shall be the portion of their cup.”

3. The Combination of Fire Mixed with Blood is Reminiscent of Joel 2:30

“And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.”

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John MacArthur says, “The combination of fire mixed with blood is reminiscent of Joel 2:30, which also describes the Day of the Lord. The specific cause of the hail and fire ... thrown to the

earth is not revealed, but from a scientific standpoint an earthquake of the magnitude and extent of the one in 8:5 would likely trigger worldwide volcanic eruptions. Besides spewing vast quantities of flaming lava (which could be bloodred in appearance) into the atmosphere, the atmospheric disturbances caused by those eruptions could trigger violent thunderstorms that would produce large hail. Such thunderstorms would be in keeping with the imagery of 8:5; after the angel hurled his censer to earth "there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning" (Revelation 1-11, pp.245-246).

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Dr. Henry Morris suggests that the blood may be actual blood, or John may be using descriptive language: "The masses of water vapor blown skyward might well condense in the intense updrafts as hailstones. ... The blood of entrapped men and animals might be mingled with them, or possibly showers of liquid water drops might be so contaminated with dust and gases as to appear blood-red" (The Revelation Record [Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1983], 146).

Morris also offers an alternative explanation for the fiery phenomena: "It may be possible that angelic hosts will divert the path of one of the many comets with which the solar system abounds so that the earth will pass through its tail. The most spectacular comet with which we are familiar-Halley's Comet-would not need to stray too far from its normal orbit to envelop Earth in its fiery train. Whether such an experience would produce the phenomena described in this passage we do not know, since our scientists have no

experimental data to go on yet” (Morris, Revelation Record, 146).

4. Hail and Fire Mingled with Blood is Reminiscent of the Plagues on Egypt - Ex.9:13-25

A.T. Robertson says, “The first four trumpets are very much like the plagues in Egypt, this one like a semitropical thunderstorm (Swete) with blood like the first plague (Ex 7:17ff.; Ps 106:35)” (Robertson’s Word Pictures).

Lehman Strauss says there is one major difference between the plagues of Egypt and the trumpet judgments: “Then the plagues were to save Israel; [here] they will trouble her” (Revelation, p.184).

The “hail and fire...mingled with blood,” “Some have thought of blood-red rain such as has been attested in the Mediterranean region when the air is thick with fine red particles of sand blown in from the Sahara. But this scarcely seems adequate” (Leon Morris, Revelation, p.120).

B. The Devastation that Followed the First Trumpet (v.7b)

David Jeremiah writes in his book *Escape the Coming Night* writes that during this time “Blackened land, charred and smoldering, covers America, Europe, Australia, Africa, and all the continents. Wildlife dies. Death emits its acrid odors. I believe the earth will experience an ecological upheaval that will make our toxic dumps seem like playgrounds” (p.126).

“The judgment seems to be directed to vegetation”  
(John Walvoord, Revelation, p.153).

1. “A third of the trees were burned up”

This rendered “the soil in which crops are cultivated unusable” (John MacArthur, Revelation 1-11).

“The trees that are destroyed are probably to be taken as fruit trees” (Mounce). The Greek word dendron is used in reference to “fruit trees” (Liddell-Scott). It’s used in Mat.7:17 of “every good tree bears good fruit” and in Jude 12 referring to “fruitless trees in late autumn.”

These fruit trees “were so important to the maintenance of life in Palestine” (Mounce).

2. “All green grass was burned up”

Finally all the green grass was burned up.

Commenting on the difficulty posed by the destruction of all, rather than a third, of the green grass, Robert Thomas writes “This poses a dilemma, because grass still exists when the fifth trumpet arrives (9:4). It is hermeneutically wrong to see this as an inconsistency retained to preserve artistic effect. ... Two considerations help to resolve the quandary. First, a time lapse between the first and fifth trumpets allows time for grass to be regrown after the burning, but before the assault of the fifth [trumpet]. Second, in most parts of the earth grass is not green the year round, but is seasonal. Burning of all the grass that is



green during a particular season would leave the remainder untouched until its season of dormancy is over. ... Whether the affected portion was one-third or some other percentage, the text does not say. The description simply says "all" that is green at the time of the plague. Either of these two explanations allows for taking "all" in its literal sense without contradicting 9:4" (Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary [Chicago: Moody, 1995], 17-18).

John MacArthur says, "The effects of such catastrophic fires would be widespread and devastating, including destruction of crops, death of animals on a massive scale, loss of wood for construction, and the destruction of watersheds. That is a fitting judgment for those who "exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (Rom. 1:25). Fallen mankind has failed to recognize and honor God as Creator, choosing instead to make a god out of the earth. But the environmental, evolutionary pantheism that devalues man, elevates animals and plants, and ignores the Creator will be severely judged. "Earth Day" that year will be a gloomy and dismal affair; in a scorched and ravaged world there will be little of the environment left to celebrate. And worse judgments are still to fall" (Revelation 1-11, p.247).

## **II. The Second Trumpet (vv.8-9)**

As the first plague scorched a third of the land, the second brings destruction to a third of the sea.

- A. It is Described Like a Great Mountain Burning with Fire (v.8a)

This “massive object plunging through the sky looked to the terrified observers on earth like a great mountain burning with fire.”

“This is evidently a giant meteorite or asteroid, surrounded by flaming gases set ablaze by the friction of the earth's atmosphere, on a collision course with the earth” (John MacArthur, Revelation 1-11, p.247).

B. The Destruction that Followed the Second Trumpet (vv.8b-9)

1. “A third of the sea became blood” (v.8b)

“This is like the Nile in the first plague” on Egypt” (AT Robertson, Robertson’s Word Pictures).

2. As a result of the “sea [becoming] blood,” “a third of the living creatures in the sea died” (v.9a).

John MacArthur says, “As with the first trumpet, it is impossible to say whether the blood was the miraculous deposit of actual blood. Perhaps more likely, the death of countless billions of sea creatures as a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died, could certainly account for the reddish tinge of the water...The reddish hue of the sun shining through the pall of smoke from the impact might also give the oceans’ surface a bloodred appearance” (Revelation 1-11, p.248).

3. “A third of the ships were destroyed” (v.9b).

The impact of this second trumpet will produce huge tidal waves. “Those waves will destroy a

third of the ships on the world's oceans, capsizing huge ocean-going vessels and completely swamping ports. The resulting disruption of commerce and transportation will cause economic chaos" (John MacArthur, Revelation 1-11, p.248).

Warren Wiersbe says, "Considering that the oceans occupy about three fourths of the earth's surface, you can imagine the extent of this judgment. The pollution of the water and the death of so many creatures would greatly affect the balance of life in the oceans, and this would undoubtedly lead to further insoluble problems. As of January 1, 1981 there were 24,867 ocean-going merchant ships registered. Imagine the shock waves that would hit the shipping industry if 8,289 valuable ships were suddenly destroyed! And what about their cargoes!" (The Bible exposition commentary).

David Jeremiah adds, "Imagine the chaos on the cruise ships and the cargo carriers after this catastrophic event. The naval fleets of every major country will be crippled beyond help. Seafood will be rationed, restaurants will go out of business, and the source of heart-healthy food will dwindle" (Escape the Coming Night, p.126).

### **III. The Third Trumpet (vv.10-11)**

- A. It is described as a Great Star Called Wormwood That Falls From Heaven Like a Burning Torch (v.10)

"Star" Gr.aster can "refer to any celestial body other than the sun and moon" (MacArthur).

This star “seems to be a heavenly body or a mass from outer space, understandably burning as it enters the atmosphere of the earth” (John Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, p.155).

“The massive object that smashed into the ocean remained intact, but this object (possibly a comet or a meteor because of its fiery trail) disintegrated as it reached Earth’s atmosphere. The fact that it is described as burning like a torch supports that interpretation, since lampas (torch) was used in ancient times to describe meteors and comets” (John MacArthur, *Revelation 1-11*, p.248).

“God will use that which He created to effect His ends. He put the stars in their place (Gen.1:14-16); He knows how many there are (Ps.147:4); and He has called each one by name (Job 9:9-10). The name of this star is ‘Wormwood’ (bitterness)” (Lehman Strauss, *Revelation*, p.185).

“The star is named for the effect it has on the water. It is called Wormwood after the strong bitter taste of the plant of that name. In the OT wormwood was used as a symbol of bitterness and sorrow” (Robert Mounce, *Revelation*, p.187).

1. Proverbs 5:3-4 warns against the strange woman whose lips drop honey but in the end is “bitter as wormwood.”
2. The writer of Lamentations prays, “Remember my affliction and roaming, The wormwood and the gall” (Lam.3:19).
3. Because Israel has forsaken God, he will "feed

them, this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink” (Jer.9:15).

B. The Destruction that Followed the Third Trumpet  
(vv.10-11)

1. “A third of the waters became wormwood”  
(v.11a)

“Whatever the poison represented by the name Wormwood is, it is lethal, since a third of the fresh waters became poisonous like wormwood.

This is the reverse of the miracle at Marah, where the Lord made bitter waters sweet (Ex.15:25)” (MacArthur).

2. “Many men died from the water because it was made bitter” (v.11b)

No human deaths were mentioned with the first two trumpet judgments, although they undoubtedly will take a severe toll of human lives. But with the third trumpet judgment, John records that “many men died from the water because it was made bitter.”

“The rivers will run with deadly poison; the wells will become springs of death; the lakes and reservoirs will be filled with toxic waters. People will be able to survive, for a time, the destruction of food supplies caused by the first two trumpet judgments, living off stored provisions. But people cannot long survive without fresh water, and the loss of a significant portion of the world’s fresh water supply will cause widespread death”

(John MacArthur, Revelation 1-11, p.249).

#### IV. The Fourth Trumpet (v.12)

- A. It is Described as a Third of the Sun, Moon, and Stars Being Struck (v.12)

Now the focus of divine judgment shifts from the earth to the heavens.

Lehman Strauss says, “Here is a prophecy, the fulfillment of which will baffle all scientists who have made a study of the heavenly bodies...No scientific answer will be able to explain adequately these astronomical effects...On the fourth day [God] brought the sun, moon, and stars into view in order to provide light for man; under the fourth trumpet He shall withdraw the light He Himself created” (Revelation, p.186).

1. Darkness as a symbol of judgment runs throughout the Old Testament
  - a) Amos spoke of the day of the Lord as a day of darkness rather than light - Amos 5:18
 

“Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord!  
For what good is the day of the Lord to you?  
It will be darkness, and not light.”
  - b) Joel said it will be a “A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness.”
  - c) Jesus, quoting Isaiah, says that in the day of the Lord “the sun will be darkened, and the

moon will not give its light” (Mk.13:24; Isa.13:10).

“The fourth trumpet plague is a fulfillment of these prophecies” (Mounce).

2. In the New Testament darkness is often connected with the demonic

- a) Unbelieving Israel is to be cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and the gnashing of teeth (Mat.8:12)
- b) The same is true for all those who reject Jesus Christ - Rev.20:11-15
- c) Jude 1:13 says that false teachers are “raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.”
- d) In 2 Cor.6:14-15 light and darkness stand parallel to Christ and Belial
 

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?”
- e) According to Colossians 1:13 the saints are those who have been delivered out of the power of darkness

“He has delivered us from the power of

darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”

“The darkness of the fourth plague anticipates the transition from divine warnings to demonic woes. It previews that ultimate excommunication of unrepentant man to the punishment for the devil and his angels (Mat.25:41)” (Robert Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, pp.188-189).

**B. The Destruction that Followed the Fourth Trumpet (v.12)**

1. “A third of them [sun, moon, stars] were darkened”
2. “A third of the day did not shine and likewise the night”

“This partial eclipse, reminiscent of the ninth Egyptian plague (Ex. 10:21-22), is temporary, as God will later increase the amount of heat coming from the sun (cf. 16:8-9). At this point, however, the loss of heat from the sun will cause temperatures to plunge drastically all over the world. That will severely disrupt the earth's weather patterns and the seas' tides, leading to violent, unpredictable storms and tides, the destruction of crops, and further loss of animal and human lives” (John MacArthur, *Revelation 1-11*, p.250).

**V. The Eagle’s Announcement (v.13)**

The AV says it’s an “angel” (aggelos) while the NASB says it’s an “eagle” (aetos).

The imagery better fits a strong bird of prey rushing to



consume its victim, in this case referring to the rapid approach of God's final vengeance.

“The majority of commentators understand the bird to be an eagle...Others understand the bird to be a vulture, which in this context would symbolize impending doom” (Robert Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, p.189).

John says he “looked...and...heard” this creature “flying through the midst of heaven.”

This would make it so as to be seen by all. He cries with “a loud voice, ‘Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!’”

The three “woes” correspond to the last three trumpets that are about to blow.

## **CONCLUSION**

1. The Day of the Lord's wrath has begun!
2. The day of judgment has come for the sinner.
3. In the words of John the Baptist – “flee from the wrath to come” (Mat.3:7).
4. The only way to “flee from the wrath to come” is to repent of your sin and turn to Jesus!
5. 2 Times in Revelation 9 we are told that those who experienced the trumpet judgments “did not repent.”
6. They are getting what they deserve! If you don't repent you will get the same.