

39. The Book of Revelation—8:7-13

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(4-28-21)

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Revelation Chapters 6 through 19 contain the judgments of God that will be poured out upon the earth during the 7-year Tribulation Period.

These judgments will culminate with Jesus' return to the earth at which time He will do battle with the Antichrist and his armies, casting the Antichrist and False Prophet alive into the Lake of Fire and destroying the remaining 'earth-dwellers' with the sword that proceeds from His mouth.

He will then bind Satan in the bottomless pit for a thousand years—all as a prelude to establishing His Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 19).

The pattern of the Book of Revelation so far in our study is as follows—in Chapter 6 we saw Jesus break the seals on the scroll which He took out of the Father's right hand.

This scroll is the title deed to the earth—which Jesus redeemed back to God on Calvary's Cross.

However, before He can come and establish His Kingdom upon the earth—He has to first judge the 'earth-dwellers' who are presently occupying it and remove them.

We see Him begin to do this in Chapter 6 by breaking the first 6 seals on the scroll—and as He does various judgments are unleashed on the inhabitants of the earth.

As we've already seen, after the 6th Seal Judgment there is a break—a parenthesis in ch.7 which we have already studied. After the pause of Chapter 7—Chapter 8 opens up with the breaking of the 7th Seal.

This Seal sets in motion another series of judgments more devastating than the first 6-Seal Judgments—these judgments are known as the 7-Trumpet Judgments.

Revelation 8:1-6 (NKJV)

¹ When He opened 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 to them were given seven trumpets. ³ Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. 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. ⁴ And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw *it* to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. ⁶ So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

The first 4 trumpets are judgments against the *earth* followed by the 5th and 6th trumpets which are judgments directed at *mankind*. The 7th trumpet will unleash the 7-Bowl Judgments which will be against both the earth *and* mankind.

The first 4 seem to be natural disasters which God uses in a supernatural way to bring judgment—like the plagues of Egypt.

The First Trumpet

Revelation 8:7 (NKJV)

⁷The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

“**Hail and fire mingled with blood**” reminds us of the seventh plague that God sent against Egypt (Exodus 9:18–26).

Also, the Prophet Joel promised “*blood and fire*” during the last days, “Day of the LORD” judgments (Joel 2:30).

This could be a totally supernatural judgment, and if it is—it’s not necessary to try to explain how hail, fire, and blood become mingled. However, it could be that God will use natural disasters to bring about this judgment—as Dr. Henry Morris in his commentary on Revelation explains:

“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...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...”

Another possibility might be that of worldwide volcanic explosions, a normal consequence of a worldwide violent earthquake (Revelation 8:5). The masses of water vapor blown skyward might well condense in the intense updrafts as hailstones, and showers of burning lava might well be ‘cast upon the earth with them.’ 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 target for this judgment is green vegetation consisting of the trees, and the grass resulting in one-third of the trees and all the green grass being burned up. We can only imagine how this would affect not only the balance of nature—but also the food supply.

The Greek word for ‘**trees**’ (dendron) usually means “*fruit trees*”; along with the destruction of pasture lands would devastate the meat and milk industries and lead to further famine and death.

Of course, the ‘*tree huggers*’ (radical environmentalists) are going to have heart attacks when this happens—but God is judging man’s god—Mother Earth (Gaia—the earth ‘goddess’) Many people today worship the earth (maybe you’ve seen the “*Love Your Mother* (containing a picture of the earth)” bumper sticker).

People today are worshipping the earth—and it takes different forms—naturalism (evolutionists), pantheism (Hinduism, New Age—that the ‘god-force’ flows through everything), and other forms of idolatry are simply the worship of the creation in defiance of the Creator.

Romans 1:18, 25 (NKJV)

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness...

²⁵ who exchanged the truth of God for the lie and worshiped and served the creature [the creation] rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

So here God is judging and **destroying man’s god**.

- “Yes, but God is destroying His own creation!”
- —No, He is destroying the creation that man corrupted—the fallen creation.

God’s original creation was perfect and pure before it was defiled and corrupted by man—and so He will recreate it after this fallen world is judged and destroyed. In verses 7 through 12, four times during these judgments it says, “*and a third was destroyed, and a third was destroyed...*”

God could have destroyed *everything* in a millisecond—but His grace is holding back to give people an opportunity to repent because of His great love and longsuffering not wanting to see any perish but that they would come to repentance and salvation (2 Peter 3:9).

Before we go on, let me say that there are many commentators who look at this whole section allegorically and try to symbolize the text—

- “**Grass**” is referring to people (“*all flesh is grass*”—Isaiah 40:6)
- “**Trees**” those are world leaders (Nebuchadnezzar—Daniel 4:20-22)
- “**Mountains**” are symbolic of earthly governments (Daniel 2:35)
- “**Sea**” refers to humanity in general (Revelation 13:1)

However, I interpret the judgments of Revelation 8 to be *literal* judgments upon the plant life and the waters of the earth—in the same way that the plagues of Egypt were literal (see Exodus 9:18–26). In fact, there is a striking similarity between the plagues in Egypt and the trumpet judgments—this is no accident; it is by divine design.

If you go back to the Book of Exodus, you will see that the plagues were literal—no serious student of the Bible would deny that. If you take those plagues to be literal—there is no reason not to take these plagues in Revelation 8 as being literal also.

The Second Trumpet

Revelation 8:8-9 (NKJV)

⁸Then the second angel sounded: And *something like* a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. ⁹And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

- This seems to be a reference to a giant *meteor* burning with fire as it enters the earth’s atmosphere.

In Luke 21:26, Jesus tells us that during the Tribulation Period at one point—“*Men’s hearts would be failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth...*”

If you compare that statement with Revelation 8:8—it could be that one of the things that will terrify the people of the world at that time will be this giant meteor hurtling toward earth. It will dominate the news day and night.

Of course, initially, the big question is going to be—*will* it hit the earth. Then, after determining that it will strike the earth, then the big question becomes—*where* on the earth will it hit, and how much damage will it do?

“And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea...”

If a meteor one mile wide fell into an ocean it would create a tidal wave 2 miles high, traveling in excess of 600 miles an hour. A tidal wave of that magnitude would hit the surrounding shores in every direction destroying billions of dollars of property and would no doubt kill hundreds of thousands if not millions of people depending on how much warning time they were given to evacuate.

The “**sea**” here could be the Mediterranean Sea which would be at the heart of the Antichrist’s base of operations.

However, the Greek word for ‘**sea**’ could be speaking of a larger body of water like an *ocean*. That’s interesting because the Pacific Ocean happens to cover almost one-third of the earth’s surface.

If this thing does hit in the Pacific Ocean—it’s hard to comprehend the damage it will do.

Do you realize that 80% of our oxygen on planet earth doesn’t come from the rain forest—it comes from phytoplankton and algae in the world’s oceans and seas.

If the Pacific Ocean is in view and this meteor wipes out one-third of its phytoplankton and algae—that will mean the earth’s oxygen will be cut by 10 to 15% making it hard to breath—especially at higher elevations.

And if several of the ships that are destroyed are *nuclear* powered battleships and submarines and they have a core meltdown in the Pacific Ocean—that would greatly contribute to the marine life being destroyed.

The Third Trumpet

Revelation 8:10-11 (NKJV)

¹⁰Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter [wormwood means ‘bitter’].

This is a judgment being poured out on the *fresh* waters of the earth. Since we just saw, what is probably going to be a giant meteor hitting the earth, that leads me to believe that this is not another meteor—this is something different.

This ‘**star**’ could be a reference to an angelic being named ‘*Wormwood*’ (in Revelation 12 angels are referred to as “*the stars of heaven*”) that supernaturally strikes the earth’s fresh water making it bitter (poison).

Or it could be a nuclear explosion of some kind above the earth which poisons the fresh water supply.

An unnamed “prominent *Russian* writer” was quoted as claiming the Ukrainian word for ‘**wormwood**’ is—Chernobyl.

I’m not suggesting that the Chernobyl catastrophe was a fulfillment of this prophecy—it’s just an interesting thought that when Revelation 8:11 talks about a third of the fresh waters on earth becoming ‘*wormwood*’ that it might be a reference to nuclear contamination of some kind.

The Fourth Trumpet

Revelation 8:12 (NKJV)

¹² Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.

As **the fourth angel sounded**, the focus of divine judgment shifts from the earth to the heavens.

One pastor had this to say—

“Still reeling from the effects of the first three ecological judgments, people will be desperately seeking answers to the crisis. There will no doubt be seminars, conferences, emergency sessions of the United Nations, discussions among scientists—all desperately but futilely seeking to cope with the damage to the earth’s ecosystems. In the midst of all that frenzied activity comes a new disaster in the sky, as a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were smitten.”

When verse 12 says that **“a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars”** with this judgment—the word in Greek is ‘plēssō’ which is the verb from which the noun **“plague”** (cf. 11:6; 16:21) comes from. In other words, the language being used indicates that the sun, moon and stars are hit with a **“*plague*”** from God in the sense that they become ‘sick’ and not able to function to their full capacity.

- Does this mean that the *brightness* of the sun, moon and stars is reduced by a third?
- Many commentators believe that is what is being said here—but that it will only be *temporary* (Revelation 16:8-9).
- Others, like myself, believe that these cataclysmic judgments change the earth’s rotation and or tilt in some way so that a typical 24-hour day will be changed into a 16-hour day—

Amos 8:9 (NKJV)

⁹ “And it shall come to pass in that day,” says the Lord God, “That I will make the sun go down at noon, And I will darken the earth in broad daylight...”

We know that the sun doesn’t ‘go down’ or sets—the earth revolves making it look as though the sun was going down—Amos is telling us that something is going to happen to the rotation of the earth.

In Luke 21, Jesus is speaking about the very time we are studying in Revelation—and in fact, He could have in mind the events (that John sees happening that he records in Revelation 8:12) in view when He said—

Luke 21:25-26 (NKJV)

²⁵ “And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity [the Greek means ‘no way out’], the sea and the waves roaring; ²⁶ men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers [dunamis-‘dynamite’] of heaven [uranos-‘uranium’] will be shaken [to set off balance].”

With all of that in mind, turn to Isaiah 13—could this be what Isaiah prophesied about:

Isaiah 13:9-13 (NKJV)

⁹ Behold, the day of the Lord comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it. ¹⁰ For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun

will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine. ¹¹ "I will punish the world for *its* evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

¹² I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir.

¹³ Therefore I will shake the heavens, And the earth will move out of her place, In the wrath of the Lord of hosts and in the day of His fierce anger.

It sounds like the Lord will be messing with the tilt and rotation of the earth—in judgment!

Isaiah 24:19-20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ The earth is violently broken, the earth is split open, the earth is shaken exceedingly.

²⁰ The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard and shall totter like a hut; Its transgression shall be heavy upon it, and it will fall, and not rise again.

Is that figurative language—or is the earth going to fall from its 23 ½ degree tilt to something else?

Could this giant meteor that strikes the earth change the rotation of the earth from a 24 to a 16-hour day—causing the sun and moon to not shine for a third of the day and night?

Revelation 8:13 (NKJV)

¹³ **And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying 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!"**

At this point, some kind of supernatural messenger will appear in the sky, proclaiming “**woe**” to the earth’s inhabitants.

Most manuscripts have “**eagle**” here instead of “**angel**”—but either one would certainly get people’s attention!

Maybe this supernatural creature is both—in other words, this could be the angelic eagle-like ‘living creature’ that John saw worshiping before the throne of God in Chapter 4:7. Maybe this is what John is describing—how God will send this super angel eagle-like creature on this special mission—we cannot say for sure, but it is a possibility.

The three “**woes**” in Revelation 8:13 refer to the three judgments yet to come when the remaining three angels blow their trumpets. In the Old Testament, whenever the word “*woe*” is used, it is often if not always used in connection with very severe and even violent judgment.

It is as though the messenger cried, “*If you think this has been terrible—just wait! The worst is yet to come!*”

The phrase “**inhabitants of the earth**” (or “*them that dwell on the earth*” or “*earth-dwellers*”) is found twelve times in Revelation (3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10 [twice]; 12:12; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:6; 17:2, 8).

As we have said numerous times—the idea being expressed is more than just a reference to “*people who live on the earth*”—that would be a meaningless statement for that is where *all* living people reside.

- No, this is a reference to a particular *kind* of people that will be living upon the earth during this period of time.

- This is a special *designation* or *category* of people who only live *for* the earth and the things *of* the earth—in other words, these are the opposite of people who have their citizenship in heaven—born-again believers in Jesus (Philippians 3:18–21).

John described this worldly group well in his first epistle warning God’s people not to emulate them when he said—

1 John 2:15-17 (NLT2)

¹⁵ Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. ¹⁶ For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. ¹⁷ And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

Once again, this group are the ‘earth-dwellers’ that later in Revelation 13:8, John makes clear are not born-again (do not have their names written in the Book of Life).

Now, let me say this in closing—this fourth trumpet judgment could be helpful in pinpointing where we are along the timeline of the 7-year Tribulation Period.

Revelation 8:12 (NKJV)

¹² Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.

Joel 2:31 (NKJV)

³¹ The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD.

If the fourth trumpet judgment corresponds with what Joel prophesied—it means that we are now about to enter the great tribulation portion of these 7-year judgments.

Remember, as we have been saying—Jesus likened the whole 7-year Tribulation Period to a woman in labor and divided it into two parts—‘*labor*’ (first 3 ½ years possibly 4 years) and then ‘*hard labor*’ (last 3 ½ years possibly 3 years).

Matthew 24:4-8, 15-22 (NKJV)

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.

⁸ All these *are* the beginning of sorrows [**the Greek is “*the beginning of birth pangs*”—containing the first 6 Seal Judgments and the first 4 Trumpet Judgments**].

¹⁵ "Therefore when you see the '*abomination of desolation*,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. ¹⁸ And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁹ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰ And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation [**'great birth pangs'—like when a pregnant woman moves into hard labor—which will include the**

last 3 Trumpet Judgments and the 7-Bowl Judgments], such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

I believe that last statement of Jesus in verse 22 about the days being shortened is not a reference to them being shortened in *number* (they must number 1260 days according to Revelation 12:6)—but rather a reference to how they will be shortened in *duration* (from a 24-hour to a 16-hour day)—again a reference to Revelation 8:12.

This '*hard labor*' portion of the Tribulation Period known as "The Great Tribulation"—will see the martyrdom of millions of believers during the second half of this 7-year period—

Revelation 7:9 (NKJV)

⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands.

Revelation 7:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³ Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" ¹⁴ And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Revelation 8:13 (NKJV)

¹³ **And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying 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!"**

As we said, the fact that the final 3 blasts of the Trumpet Judgments are called "woe" judgments means that there is now going to be a great escalation in the judgments that are about to take place.

When the first of these last 3 Trumpet Judgments is sounded by the angel—it means that **we have now entered into the harshest and most devastating judgments of all before Jesus returns—the Great Tribulation judgments!**

I believe when the world enters these final judgments—that by this time the remaining unbelievers upon the earth will have hardened their hearts so much that they will have passed the spiritual point of no return and can no longer be saved (i.e., they will have committed 'Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit').

What I'm saying is that by the time the Lord unleashes these last judgments—everyone who *will* be saved has now been saved.

I say that because as God unleashes these 'woe' judgments upon the unbelievers living at that time—not only does it not 'soften' or 'break' them causing them to repent, but instead we read how they respond by blaspheming God. (Revelation 16:21)—in other words, their hearts are as hard as concrete.

So, I think that Joel's words could constitute a "last call" for the people of the earth to get saved before it's too late—before God shifts into His awesome and terrible Day of the LORD judgments—

In Acts 2 Peter quotes the prophet Joel:

Acts 2:20-21 (NKJV)

²⁰ *The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.* ²¹ *And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.*

In other words, this will be the ‘last call’ for salvation, and that “*whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved*”—but this will be it—the final opportunity to receive Jesus and be saved.

The next three trumpet judgments and the 7-Bowl Judgments will not be designed to *evangelize* but to ‘*vaporize*’ the remaining earth-dwellers.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower, and not an earth-dweller—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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