

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

THE DISASTROUS “ACTS OF GOD”

REVELATION 8: THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS

THE SEVENTH SEAL

- ▶ With the breaking of the seventh seal, comes the unfolding of the specific details of the “day of wrath”— the great tribulation “that will come upon all those who live on the face of the earth” (Luke 21.35).
- ▶ The seventh seal is the segue to seven trumpets; within the events unleashed by the seven trumpets are three “terrors” (or woes), an escalation of the intensity of the judgments. The seventh trumpet ultimately segues into the seven bowls, the final plagues of God’s wrath. These judgments are why Jesus stresses that we must:

“Keep alert at all times. And pray that you might be strong enough to escape these coming horrors and stand before the Son of Man.” (LUKE 21.36)

SEVEN ANGELS WHO ARE GIVEN SEVEN TRUMPETS

When the Lamb broke the seventh seal on the scroll, there was silence throughout heaven for about half an hour. I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and they were given seven trumpets.

- ▶ There are no insignificant details in Scripture; therefore, we need to take note of these words: “the seven angels who stand before God.” The only other place where this term is used in a corresponding manner is found in the account of Zechariah’s encounter with the angel, Gabriel, who came to announce the birth of John, and his response to Zechariah’s uncertainty of the angel’s prediction.

“I am Gabriel! I stand in the very presence of God. It was He who sent me to bring you this good news! But now, since you didn’t believe what I said, you will be silent and unable to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly be fulfilled at the proper time.” (LUKE 1.19-20)

- ▶ Some consider these seven angels to be “archangels,” a term that is used of Michael. What is clear is that this is an important distinction and that *“angels who stand in the very presence of God”* possess unique authority to represent God in His prophetic purposes.
- ▶ In the prophecy given to Daniel, we are given insight into the invisible realm where we find that angels battle for the fulfillment of God’s prophetic plan against opposing demonic principalities.

THE TRUMPET BLASTS

Then the seven angels with the seven trumpets prepared to blow their mighty blasts.

- ▶ Throughout Scripture, trumpet blasts are found in many settings, from worship (Psalm 150.3) to battle (Joshua 6.2-5; Judges 7.17-18). In Numbers 10, God mandated the sounding of trumpet blasts for different occasions and purposes. The trumpet blasts of these angels fulfill the announcement spoken by the prophet Joel:

Sound the trumpet in Jerusalem!

Raise the alarm on My holy mountain!

Let everyone tremble in fear

because the day of the Lord is upon us. (JOEL 2.1)

- ▶ Extensive natural disasters are often referred to as “an act of God” and the words “biblical proportions” are used to characterize the widespread devastation which occurred. The first four trumpet blasts will unleash natural disasters that are supernaturally driven; each will be a true act of God. They are also characteristic of the plagues in Egypt where God acted to administer judgment and demonstrate that He also was the True Sovereign God. But, while those plagues were localized, these will be global and will fulfill Old Testament prophecies given centuries before this vision of the Apostle John – prophecies that declared that these future judgments will exceed those “acts of God” done in Egypt (cf. Jeremiah 23.7-8).

THE FIRST TRUMPET

The first angel blew his trumpet, and hail and fire mixed with blood were thrown down on the earth. One-third of the earth was set on fire, one-third of the trees were burned, and all the green grass was burned.

- ▶ Action: Hail and fire mixed with blood is thrown down on the earth
- ▶ Result: One-third of the earth is burned up
- ▶ Corresponds to the seventh plague in Egypt: Exodus 9.22-32

*And I will cause wonders in the heavens and on the earth—
blood and fire and columns of smoke. (JOEL 2.30)*

THE SECOND TRUMPET

Then the second angel blew his trumpet, and [something like] a great mountain of fire was thrown into the sea. One-third of the water in the sea became blood, one-third of all things living in the sea died, and one-third of all the ships on the sea were destroyed.

- ▶ **Action:** Something similar to a mountain of fire is thrown into the sea
- ▶ **Result:** One-third of the sea becomes blood; one-third of the fish die, and one-third of shipping is destroyed
- ▶ **Corresponds to the first plague in Egypt: Exodus 8.20-21**

*He turned their water into blood,
poisoning all the fish. (PSALM 105.29)*

THE THIRD TRUMPET

Then the third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from the sky, burning like a torch. It fell on one-third of the rivers and on the springs of water. The name of the star was Bitterness. It made one-third of the water bitter, and many people died from drinking the bitter water.

- ▶ Action: A great star, “blazing like a torch” falls on fresh water sources
- ▶ Result: One-third of the fresh water sources will become toxic, resulting in the death of many people
- ▶ Corresponds to the undrinkable waters of the Nile after the first plague

So now, this is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says:

Look! I will feed them with bitterness and give them poison to drink. (JEREMIAH 9.15)

THE FOURTH TRUMPET

Then the fourth angel blew his trumpet, and one-third of the sun was struck, and one-third of the moon, and one-third of the stars, and they became dark. And one-third of the day was dark, and also one-third of the night.

- ▶ Action: One third of the sun, moon, and stars become dark
- ▶ Result: A loss of light for one-third of the day and also the night
- ▶ Corresponds to the darkness of the ninth plague in Egypt: Exodus 10.21-29

*The heavens will be black above them;
the stars will give no light.*

*The sun will be dark when it rises,
and the moon will provide no light. (ISAIAH 13.10)*

THE WORST IS YET TO COME!

*Then I looked, and I heard a single eagle crying loudly as it flew through the air,
“Terror, terror, terror to all who belong to this world because of what will happen
when the last three angels blow their trumpets.”*

- ▶ The first four judgments were directed against nature, resulting in ecological and economic disaster and the loss of many lives. These judgments, however, cannot compare to those which are coming. The next judgments will be so terrible that they are called “terrors” (or “woes”) and will be directed, not against nature, but against humanity, and will result in unimaginable suffering.

THE ONLY GOOD “WOE”

“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.” (ISAIAH 6.5)

- ▶ The word “woe” was used by Jesus to predict inescapable judgement (Matthew 11.20-24; 23) on those who saw his miracles but did not repent. The word appears dozens of times in the prophecies of Isaiah; in only one instance did it produce a good outcome: when Isaiah recognized his own sinfulness in light of God’s holiness. We must acknowledge our need and seek the Lord *now*, before it is too late.

For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. (1 CORINTHIANS 11.31)