

## THE BOOK OF REVELATION

JROC – Rev. 8:7-13 – The First Four Trumpet Judgments

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Our God is a loving, gracious, merciful, faithful, HOLY and JUST God. Therefore, God is also a God of judgment.

Sin demands a payment. *The wages of sin is death* (Rom. 6:23).

*BUT GOD demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us* (Rom. 5:8)

Jesus took the JUDGMENT that we deserve upon Himself!

And, so we see the glory of God in salvation through judgment! AND, God's judgment is ALWAYS righteous – it is based on WHO God is!

J.I. Packer in his book, *Knowing God*, wrote the following about God and judgment:

“The reality of divine judgment...is set forth on page after page of Bible history. God judged Adam and Eve, expelling them from the Garden and pronouncing curses on their future earthly life (Gen. 3). God judged the corrupt world of Noah's day, sending a flood to destroy mankind (Gen. 6-8). God judged Sodom and Gomorrah, engulfing them in a volcanic catastrophe (Gen. 18-19). God judged Israel's Egyptian taskmasters, just as He foretold He would (Gen. 15:14), unleashing against them the terrors of the ten plagues (Ex. 7-12). God judged those who worshipped the golden calf, using the Levites as His executioners (Ex. 32:26-35). God judged Nadab and Abihu for offering Him strange fire (Lev. 10:1ff), as later God judged Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who were swallowed up in an earth tremor. God judged Achan for sacrilegious thieving; he and his family were wiped out (Josh. 7). God judged Israel for unfaithfulness to Him after their entry into Canaan, causing them to fall under the dominion of other nations (Judges 2:11ff; 3:5ff; 4:1ff).”

God continues to be JUST in the NT. He must because He is ETERNAL; justice is an eternal attribute. And, so our God of love also continues to be a God of judgment in the NT...the cross of Christ is THE most graphic picture of that truth! And, consider with me the following judgments that we read of in the NT:

In the NT we read that judgment falls on

- Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum – Matt. 11:20-24 - *Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: ....*

○ AND, Jesus speaks of the day of judgment in this passage in the future – it's not just in the OT!

- Ananias and Sapphira were judged for lying to the Holy Spirit – to God (Acts 5).
- Acts 12:21-23 – King Herod was judged by God because he did not give glory to God.
- I Cor. 11:29-32 – *judgment came upon those Christians in Corinth who were afflicted with serious illness and even death in response to their irreverence in connection with the Lord's Supper* (see also I John 5:16).

- Christians will one day stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ (I Cor. 3:12-15; II Cor. 5:10). The sin of believers has already been forgiven because Jesus took upon Himself our judgment. The works of believers will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ as to whether they were works of eternal value – “gold, silver, precious stones” or NOT of eternal value “wood, hay, straw” (I Cor. 3:12) – and that includes motivation. Our work for God might look like gold, silver and precious stones – but if our motivation is BAD, self-focused, etc. – it will amount to nothing.
- Unbelievers will be judged at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-1).

In the book of Revelation we continue to understand these series of judgments – the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls - in regard to God finishing His discipline/chastisement of Israel and finalizing His judgment of the unbelieving, rebellious world.

I’m suggesting that the trumpet judgments in Rev. 8 are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the Tribulation. The first four seal judgments (the appearance of the antichrist, war, famine, pestilence/wild beasts) appear to fall in line with what Jesus calls “birth pangs” in the beginning of the Tribulation.

When the fifth seal is opened we see the martyrs – killed for their testimony – under the altar before the throne of God – (in God’s temple in heaven). This appears to equate to the middle of the Tribulation and moving into the second half of the Tribulation when the antichrist goes after believers with a vengeance.

In the sixth seal - cosmic disturbances, HUGE earthquake, sky rolling up like a scroll– brings us toward the very end of the Tribulation – and those on earth cry out for the mountains and the rocks to fall on them and hide them from the face of the One Who sits on His throne and from the wrath of the Lamb (which – from the grammar – has already been in action). With the sky parting, is God’s throne room visible to the people on earth? Doesn’t this sound like the end? Remember, we’re coming to the seventh seal – and when that’s open – Jesus receives His inheritance (Psa. 2) – the KINGDOM! BUT - when the 7<sup>th</sup> seal opens, the scroll will be open and yes, Jesus will receive the Kingdom!

BUT – the seventh seal opens up to the trumpet judgments. And we will see the INTENSITY of the trumpet judgments which corresponds to Jesus’ words in Matt. 24:21 - *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

NOTE:

- First Half (Tribulation): First 4 Seals
- Second Half of the Tribulation: Last 3 Seals, Trumpets and Bowls

This view is supported by the following authors:

John MacArthur: *The seals encompass the entire period of the Tribulation (3:10), culminating with the return of Christ. It seems best to understand the first four seals as taking place during the first half of the Tribulation, the fifth stretching from the first into the second half, (called the “great tribulation” in 7:14 and lasting three and one-half years; 11:2; 12:6; 13:5) and the sixth and seventh taking place during that “great tribulation.” Apparently the seventh seal contains the seven trumpet judgments (8:1–11:19) and the seventh trumpet (11:15) contains the seven bowl judgments (16:1–21). The seven seals thus contain all the judgments to the end when Jesus Christ returns.*

Renald Showers (Former Executive Director, Friends of Israel)

In his vision, the Apostle John watched as the seventh seal was opened and the seven angels were given seven trumpets. These trumpets represent specific catastrophes, many of which will destroy large portions of the earth. We read of these trumpet judgments spanning Rev. 8 through Rev. 11. Great disturbances will affect nature and change climates. These judgments, though at times sounding symbolic, point to real events. The real world is effected!

#### First trumpet judgment

Rev. 8:7 - *the 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 and blood – how can these elements be mixed together? GOD!!!! And, hail, fire, and blood were *thrown to the earth*. Who did that? GOD!! The effect of what was thrown to the earth: a third of the trees were burned up; all green grass was burned up. The effect of this judgment is limited.

#### Second trumpet judgment

Rev. 8:8-9 - *Then 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.<sup>9</sup> And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.*

*Something like* a fiery mountain was thrown into the sea.

Figurative language – what was thrown into the sea appeared to John to be LIKE a great mountain that was burning. This was a vision. (Could be a meteor – a body of matter from outer space) “Like” – etc. – perhaps inadequacy of human speech to describe what God is showing John. YET, the Holy Spirit inspires the authors...II Tim. 3:16 – all Scripture is God-breathed – inspired by God. THE question to ask is...what does GOD want us to know? (Dt. 29:29)

Consider: three-fourths of the earth's surface is water! The result: a part of the sea becomes blood – one third. Therefore, a percentage of the sea creatures die – one third. And ships were destroyed – one third. How else could you understand the results if not literally? We are reading about life on earth in its external, physical aspects as the living creatures and the ships are both destroyed. Again, the impact is limited. BUT, will this not impact the world ecologically (polluting such a large amount of the sea) and economically (with a food source destroyed during a time of scarcity/famine (third seal/third rider)?

#### Third trumpet judgment

Rev. 8:10-11 - *Then 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.<sup>11</sup> The 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.*

A star falls from heaven. Some interpret the “great star” as a person of great influence who poisons the earth with evil. And, the sun, moon, and stars are understood as governing powers and authorities.

Isa. 14:12 - *How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! (“morning stars – angelic realm; Lucifer – Cherub) How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!*

BUT, the context of the third trumpet judgment appears to be describing a cosmic/cosmological event involving a large physical object affecting a LIMITED portion of the world. This star that is burning will fall on one third of the waters – a life-giving source. One third will become polluted. These characteristics speak more of natural phenomenal than a spiritual being. The star's name is *Wormwood* which is a non-poisonous plant known for its bitterness. Satan is poisonous for ALL! Because we are speaking of natural catastrophes in the first and second trumpet judgments, this star might be a large meteor or an asteroid striking the earth. The word “wormwood” is mentioned only here in the New Testament, but it appears eight times in the Old Testament (Prov. 5:3-5; Lam. 3:15; Amos 5:7; Amos 6:12....), each time associated with bitterness, poison and death.

#### Fourth trumpet judgment

Rev. 8:12 - *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.* Cosmic disturbances among a limited part of the planetary heaven. A portion of the sun, the moon, and the stars were struck. “Struck” – smitten with calamity. The diminishing light during the day and during the night might be due to the massive dust kicked up into the atmosphere when the large meteor or asteroid associated with the third trumpet judgment strikes the earth. Consider the effects of the diminishing light. The growth of plant life will be hindered which means the reduction of food supply!

The first four trumpet judgments are separated from the final three as the last three trumpet judgments are designated as “WOE” judgments! It appears that these first four describe natural catastrophes that hammer the earth during the Tribulation. Those who interpret these four judgments as literal see no valid reason, based on the text, to spiritualize the judgments. Remember, God is cleansing the earth and is going to eventually dissolve the earth. Whether we understand John's visions literally or symbolically, we can all agree that the devastation will be so dreadful that no amount of relief efforts will be able to bring about recovery!

#### Nuclear warfare during the Tribulation?

In his book *There's A New World Coming* (1973), Hal Lindsey writes: *Although it is possible for God to supernaturally pull off every miracle in the Book of Revelation and use totally unheard of means to do it, I personally believe that all the enormous ecological catastrophes described in this chapter (Revelation 8) are the direct result of nuclear weapons. In actuality, man inflicts these judgments on himself. God simply steps back and removes His restraining influence from man, allowing him to do what comes naturally out of his sinful nature. In fact, if the Book of Revelation had never been written, we might well predict these very catastrophes within fifty years or less!”*

#### Britt Gillette – Global Government – RaptureReady

Is the world moving closer to a global government? The Bible tells us that the antichrist will conquer nations and create a global empire. Rev. 13:4 - *So they worshiped the*

*dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"*

BUT, how does that look in an age of nuclear weapons? How is globalization possible? The Bible says global government is coming, and the Antichrist will be its ruler (Revelation 13:7).

Re: John's visions....

We need to realize from the outset that much of what John sees or hears is new, different, or unearthly and, therefore, difficult to describe.

Apocalyptic literature is a specific form of prophecy, largely involving symbols and imagery and predicting disaster and destruction. Apocalyptic literature involves descriptions of the end of the world and typically depicts large cataclysmic events. REMEMBER – apocalypse means a revelation, an uncovering, an unveiling, a disclosing! Do you know what's "ironic"? In this book of Revelation we are being given CLARITY!

We need to know that all prophetic revelation has its origin in the Holy Spirit and never from man.

I Pet. 1:10-11 - *Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, <sup>11</sup> searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.*

OT prophets studied their own writings – what they were inspired to write through the Holy Spirit. The OT prophets poured through their writings in order to know more about the promised salvation. Peter is telling his people that these words of salvation that the Prophets wrote were not their words. The *Spirit of Christ* – the Holy Spirit – had given them the words, the revelation.