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THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

"Heaven's Throw Down"
8:5-13

A special ceremony will take place in heaven to celebrate the opening of the seventh seal. Chapter eight began by describing that future ceremony. Here is the liturgy, or the order, of that ceremony:

- An angel with a container called a golden censer comes to an altar and fills the censer with fire from the altar.
- The angel proceeds to a second altar where he mixes incense and the prayers of the saints with the fire from the first altar, producing a fragrant smoke before the throne of God.
- Returning to the first altar he again fills the censer with fire, but this time hurls the fire upon the earth, initiating the blowing of the seven trumpets.

The same **fire** from the first altar has one of two effects, depending upon the group involved:

- Verses three and four describe believers by calling them **saints**. If you're a believer, the fire kindles your prayers.

- Verse thirteen describes unbelievers by calling them **the inhabitants of the earth**. If you're a nonbeliever, the fire kindles your fears.

We've previously seen that multitudes on the earth during the Great Tribulation will respond to the Gospel and be saved. Most will be martyred.

Multitudes on the earth during the Great Tribulation reject God's offer of salvation. They face the fire being poured out upon them.

Revelation 8:5 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.

We saw that this **censer** also contains the prayers of the saints. We all want God to answer our prayers. We all at least sometimes feel as if He is not. Our ultimate prayer is always, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. In the future all of our prayers will be joined together to accomplish God's will on the earth.

And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. Imagine, if you can, all these phenomena occurring at once all over the planet. It will be ominous; it will be eerie.

Revelation 8:6 So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

I assume they have been ready for all of human history. Still they make last minute preparations.

I don't know exactly what an angel ought to do to prepare for his ministry. I know what I should do! I should get alone with the Lord so that I have a clear vision of Him. A lot of pastors have on their pulpit or podium the words of John 12:21, **Sir, we wish to see Jesus**.

Then I must prepare on a somewhat 'natural' level. If I am a teacher, I must study my text and topic. I should consider my delivery – even how I look, to a certain extent, in order to be all things to all men.

Whatever ministry you are called to perform, you have 'natural' preparations to consider.

The first four trumpet judgments affect the natural creation.

Revelation 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.

We take these judgments to be literal - not figurative or symbolic. Commentator J. A. Seiss wrote,

The truth is, if *earth*, *trees*, and *grass* do not mean earth, trees, and grass, no man can tell what they mean. Letting go the literal signification of the record, we launch out upon an endless sea of sheer conjecture.

A mighty **hailstorm**, accompanied by some sort of **fire** reigns down from heaven. By the way, now you can understand why it is that fire comes down out of heaven to judge sinners. It represents the fire burning at the altar of sacrifice in heaven. It's a reminder that a way of forgiveness for sins has been made - but rejected by men.

Mingled with blood is just creepy. It could be the carnage from the deaths of men on the earth as they are caught in the storm.

It may be literal blood. The only **blood** so mentioned in the Revelation is the precious blood of Jesus and the blood of the Tribulation martyrs. Since the martyrs, in 6:10, specifically asked the Lord to avenge their blood, I'm thinking it is their blood.

There will also be massive fires on the earth as a result of this judgment. In chapter eleven you'll learn that there has been a three and one half year drought on the earth - fuel for the fire from heaven.

And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up. We've been feeling the awful effects of the terrible fires all over our state. Multiply it to include all green grass and fully one-third of the world's trees.

Revelation 8:8 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.

Revelation 8:9 And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

Just a note: There is a sense of timing in Heaven. As this chapter began we saw a silence of about thirty minutes. Now, when we read **then the second angel sounded**, you get the idea he **sounded** at just the precise moment he was supposed to. While our services are not a show or a performance, there is nothing wrong with good order and proper timing. It is not more spiritual to be spontaneous, nor less spiritual to keep things decent and in order.

It isn't a **mountain** that is thrown down. It is **something like a great mountain**. It is a giant, solid mass which hits the earth, surrounded by combustible gases which ignite as it enters the earth's atmosphere. It hits in one of the oceans and **a third of the sea** [becomes] **blood**. This could mean that the ocean affected literally turns to blood - as the Nile River did during the ten plagues in Egypt. Or it could again be the effect of the creatures in the sea dying.

The sea may be a specific reference to the Mediterranean and not a reference to all oceans. For a person in the world John lived in, the Mediterranean Sea was the sea, and they really had little knowledge of other oceans (Guzik).

A **third of the ships** in the world's oceans are destroyed by resultant rogue waves.

Notice the precision of the measurements. It's **one third** – no more, no less. It shows that these are carefully calculated judgments sent by God - not simply nature gone bad.

The third trumpet brings poison upon the world's fresh waters:

Revelation 8:10 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.

Revelation 8:11 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.

Another object strikes the earth. It's called a [star](#). It seems mostly fluid, burning like a lamp. As it strikes the atmosphere it scatters all over the planet. It affects the earth's fresh water rivers and the springs from which they flow.

It is named [Wormwood](#), perhaps the way we name storms and hurricanes. [Wormwood](#) is a word that refers to something being poisonous to you.

The word occurs frequently in the Bible, and generally in a metaphorical sense. In Jeremiah 9:15; 23:15; and Lamentations 3:15 & 19 [wormwood](#) is symbolical of bitter calamity and sorrow. Unrighteous judges are said to [turn judgment to wormwood](#) in (Amos 5:7).

Why drink this poisoned water? In desperation those lost at sea sometimes drink salt water even though it is poisonous. Thirst is a powerful drive.

The fourth trumpet brings a plague on the heavens, and darkness on the earth:

[Revelation 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.

This is more than an eclipse. The light from these heavenly bodies is actually reduced by a factor of one third. It will result in severe drops in the world's temperatures, vast meteorological upsets, and changes in climate.

Commentators sometimes attribute these judgments to extreme natural disasters. Sort of like people blame so-called global warming for all manner of problems.

Other commentators see a nuclear event in these descriptions.

These are supernatural judgments in nature - not natural events. Verse thirteen removes all doubts:

Revelation 8:13 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!"

The word translated **angel** is odd and is more likely *eagle*. Weird but true. Here is a suggestion by Dr. Henry Morris:

He is both angel and eagle. [There are] four mighty cherubim, the living creatures of Revelation four... The fourth of these is said to have an appearance "like a flying eagle" (4:7).

God is not a passive bystander who allows mankind to ruin himself by environmental ignorance or unrestrained weapons technology. This isn't describing nature taking its course, or even human nature taking its course.

People on the earth will know what is happening. God isn't trying to fool anyone. Everyone will have an opportunity to repent. **Woe** is a word that indicates God is at work judging sin. *He tells mankind that the worst is yet to come!*

The angel's woes are well founded, because one-third of the earth's population will die in the next three trumpets.

We understand the phrase **the inhabitants of the earth** to be a technical phrase describing unbelievers on the earth who have deliberately rejected salvation and who prefer this world over Heaven for their home. They will be without excuse. If they won't accept Jesus as their Substitute at the altar of sacrifice, then the fire from that altar must fall upon them. If they won't apply His blood to their sins, the blood of the martyrs they have slain will stain them.

Commenting on these judgments, Pastor David Guzik writes,

[God] attacks all the ordinary means of subsistence, such as food and water; and He attacks all the ordinary means of comfort, and knowledge, such as light and the regular rhythm of days. Man has come to see these aspects of the created order as impersonal, perpetual forces. During the great tribulation, God proclaims His Lordship through their agonizing disruption.

Remember, though, that God 'only' kills one-third. It's been said that He spares more than He strikes. Judgment is inevitable. The wages of sin is death.

But in His divine wrath God remembers mercy. Men will still have the opportunity to repent.

We live in the age of grace. Men scoff at the coming of the Lord and the end of days. But prophecy stands true and can be an effective tool for witnessing.

Our Sunday night segment on prophecy is *The Top Ten Signs We Are Living in the End Times*. They are:

- #10 The Explosion of Knowledge
- #9 Global Communication Technology
- #8 Increasing Violence and Immorality
- #7 Movements Towards Regional World Government
- #6 The Rise of Europe as a Superpower
- #5 The Technology for a Global Cashless Economic System
- #4 The Alignment of Nations Hostile to Israel
- #3 International Conflict Over the Nation of Israel
- #2 Plans to Rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem
- #1 The Birth of Modern Israel as a Nation

Nothing sensational – just bedrock prophecies that are being fulfilled in our lifetimes.

Use them to witness for the Lord.