

### The Scroll Judgment Opened; The First Four Trumpet Judgments

#### Revelation 8

Revelation 8 - *"When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. <sup>7</sup> 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.*

*<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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.*

*<sup>13</sup> 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!"*

#### Background Notes

In Revelation 6 through 16, three series of judgments take place on this earth: first, the Seal Judgments, then the Trumpet Judgments, and finally the Bowl Judgments. All these judgments will occur during the Tribulation period, after the Church is taken home to heaven. This is all in line with the pre-Tribulation, Futurist view of the Book of Revelation that we are presenting in these Talks from Revelation.

We believe that the future Tribulation Period will be seven years in length, based on the prophetic vision of the prophet Daniel that is recorded in Daniel 9. This prophetic vision takes us from Daniel's time all the way to the time of the end. This vision is known as Daniel's "Seventy Week Vision," and most of it has already been fulfilled in the centuries since Daniel's time. However, the last "week" of the vision is yet to be fulfilled. This seventieth "week" (like the first sixty-nine weeks) is a grouping of seven **years**, not seven days. (See the Talk on Daniel 9 for further information on this interpretation of the words "weeks.")

We believe that the Seal Judgments, the Trumpet Judgments, and the Bowl Judgments will be spread out over the entire Tribulation period, with the Seal Judgments occurring in the first half of the seven-year period. Most likely the Lord was referring to this time when He spoke about “the beginning of sorrows” in Matthew 24:8, in His Olivet Discourse about the future.

We believe that the Trumpet Judgments and Bowl Judgments will take place in the second half of the seven-year period, which is known as “The Great Tribulation.” In the Book of Revelation, the last 3 1/2 years is referred to as “forty-two months.” Forty-two months is 3 ½ years (1260 days), and that’s also three and a half years based on the Hebrew 30-day months.

Here in Revelation 8 the seventh seal is opened so that the Scroll of God’s judgment can be unrolled, or further unrolled, to reveal the Trumpet Judgments, which lead us into the Great Tribulation. There is silence in heaven for about a half hour, like the ominous lull before the storm – the storm of the Great Tribulation.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. The first Trumpet Judgment involves burning on the earth.

Verse 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.”*

This reminds us of the seventh plague of God’s judgment on Egypt. Exodus 9:22-25 says, *“Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt—on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.”<sup>23</sup> And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt.<sup>24</sup> So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.<sup>25</sup> And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field.”*

The plagues of Egypt were certainly a preview of the judgments of God during the coming Tribulation period. As the plague of hail and lightning in Egypt was literal, so we believe that the first Trumpet Judgment described here in Revelation will be literal. However, the resulting fires and burning of the first Trumpet Judgment will not be limited to Egypt, but will be worldwide – so much so that 1/3 of the earth will be burned up. Can you imagine the famine and other hardships that will naturally follow this judgment?

The blood mentioned here probably refers to the great amount of death that will be associated with this first trumpet judgment. *“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.”* The first Trumpet Judgment involves burning on the earth.

## **2. The second Trumpet Judgment involves upheaval in the sea.**

Verses 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.”*

What would happen if one of the asteroids in our solar system were to collide with the earth and crash into the ocean? It would certainly look like a great mountain on fire being thrown into the sea (v8-9). And think of the tsunamis that would result around the world! They would make the tsunami that occurred several years ago in the Indian Ocean seem like nothing in comparison. As a result of this great catastrophe, 1/3 of all sea creatures will die, and 1/3 of all ships will be destroyed. Again, the reference to blood here may indicate a huge death toll, or it may be similar to sixth Seal Judgment in Revelation 6:12, when the moon will appear like blood. The second Trumpet Judgment involves upheaval in the sea.

## **3. The third Trumpet Judgment involves poisoning of the waters.**

Verses 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.”*

Here again, there's no reason not to take the results of this third judgment in a literal way, even though some commentators believe the “wormwood” may be symbolic of the bitterness that will come as a result of the political fall of some world ruler, represented by the great star. In this symbolic view, the waters represent the peoples of this world. However, if we interpret it literally, it's quite easy to see how an asteroid body (such as a comet passing this earth within what's known as Roche's Limit) would be fragmented by the gravitational forces and fall in a scattered patterned around this earth and poison a third of the fresh water supply. This would lead to much death. The third Trumpet Judgment involves poisoning of the waters.

## **4. The fourth Trumpet Judgment involves catastrophe in the heavens.**

Verses 12-13: *“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. <sup>13</sup> 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 first three Trumpet Judgments had to do with 1/3 of the earth. The fourth Trumpet Judgment has to do with one-third of the heavens. Here again, the ninth plague, darkness over Egypt, was a preview of this judgment of the Tribulation period. We already saw cosmic disturbances under the sixth Seal in Revelation 6.

The cosmic disturbances of the Tribulation period are predicted in the Old Testament prophecies of the end time and in our Lord's Olivet Discourse about the future. Joel 2:30-31 - *"And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. <sup>31</sup> The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD."*

In verse 13 we see that the last three Trumpet Judgments of the Great Tribulation will be quite severe because they're announced as "Woes" on those who dwell on the earth. *"Woe, woe, woe..."*

## Practical Application

### Thank the Lord for the "added incense."

Verses 3-5: *"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. <sup>4</sup> And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. <sup>5</sup> 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."*

Who is the angel in these verses? We believe that this Angel is the Lord Himself, appearing in John's vision here as an "Angel Priest" standing before the throne of God the Father and offering up the prayers of believers before God. No mere angel or believer can do that -- only our Great High Priest, the Lord Himself. In the context here, it is the prayers of the Tribulation saints that are being offered up, but it can be applied to the prayers of all believers of all time periods.

Notice that He not only offers up the prayers of the saints, but He adds incense to them! In Old Testament times, incense was used for worship because of its sweet smell or aroma. Do you see the spiritual picture? The Lord takes our prayers and adds the fragrance of His Person and His Work to them, so that they're heard by God the Father and are acceptable and pleasing to Him.

Do you ever feel that you're not a very good "pray-er"? Then thank the Lord for His "added incense"!