

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 6-2-13 PM NOTES
"ANGELS OF DOOM"
REVELATION 8:1-13
#15 in Series, "Verse by Verse through Revelation"

Matthew 24:21 (NKJV) "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."

Revelation 6:17 (NKJV) "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Revelation 14:10 (NKJV) "he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb."

Revelation 19:15b (NKJV) "He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

Revelation 21:8 (NKJV) "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

The Bible presents the wrath of God as being one of His perfections as much as His love is one of His perfections.

I. The Preparations for the Trumpet Judgments (V1-6)

Exodus 5:2 (NKJV) "And Pharaoh said, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice...'"

A. The Postponing of the Judgments (V1-4)

Revelation 4:8b (NKJV) "And they do not rest day or night, saying: 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!'"

Revelation 4:11 (NKJV) "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."

Revelation 5:13 (NKJV) "And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: 'Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!'"

Luke 1:19a (NKJV) "I am Gabriel, **who stands in the presence of God**, and was sent to speak to you..."

Revelation 6:9-10 (NKJV) "9 When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?'"

Romans 12:19 (ESV) "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'"

B. The Precipitation of the Judgments (V5-6)

II. The Particulars of the Trumpet Judgments (V7-13)

A. The First Trumpet Judgment – The Brewing Storm (V7)

Joel 2:30 (NKJV) "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke."

"It may be possible that the 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. The most spectacular comet with which we are familiar – Halley's Comet – would not need to stray too far from its normal orbit to envelop earth in its fiery train. 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."

- Dr Henry Morris

B. The Second Trumpet Judgment – The Boiling Sea (V8-9)

C. The Third Trumpet Judgment – The Bitter Star (V10-11)

Wormwood literally means undrinkable.

Amos 5:7 (NKJV) "You who turn justice to wormwood, and lay righteousness to rest in the earth!"

D. The Fourth Trumpet Judgment – The Blackened Sky (V12-13)

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The seven years of tribulation that conclude with the literal, bodily return of Jesus Christ to the earth to destroy His enemies and to rule and reign for a thousand years here on earth is the ultimate fulfillment of what the Old Testament prophets called "The day of the Lord". It is the time Jesus spoke of in **Matthew 24:21 (NKJV)** "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." Let's take a moment to review. In chapter five of Revelation, we saw that Jesus Christ was the only one worthy to take the scroll which symbolized the title deed to the earth and take back the dominion Adam forfeited to the great usurper – Satan. The scroll was sealed with seven seals. In chapter six, we see the seals being broken or opened one at a time. Every time a seal is broken, the judgment of God is poured out on the earth. The first four seals brought forward what has come to be called "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse". By the time the sixth seal had been opened ¼ of the population of the earth had been destroyed. After an interlude in chapter 7 where we saw how God's mercy and grace were poured out even in the midst of horrific judgment, we come to chapter 8. In chapter 8, the seventh seal is broken and we find that the seventh seal brings forth seven trumpet judgments that were telescoped in the seal judgments. Each judgment seems to get progressively worse. The wrath of our holy God is a fearsome thing to behold. Listen to a few of the descriptions of it. **Revelation 6:17 (NKJV)** "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" **Revelation 14:10 (NKJV)** "[The one who gives allegiance to the antichrist] he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb." **Revelation 19:15b (NKJV)** "He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." **Revelation 21:8 (NKJV)** "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually

immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." It is no mystery to me why those who have a low view of the Word of God explain away and thus deny the wrath of God. It is a hard thing to accept; it is painful to think about. However, the Bible clearly proclaims it, and it cannot be denied without denying the Scriptures themselves. The Bible presents the wrath of God as being one of His perfections as much as His love is one of His perfections. I have taught verse by verse through Revelation in the three churches I have pastored about three other times, and if I remember correctly, it is at about this point in the study that the crowds begin to noticeably drop. These aren't pleasant truths, but they are God's truths and it is essential that we understand the wrath of God. It is impossible to truly appreciate the love, the mercy and the grace of God until we understand the wrath of God.

I. The Preparation for the Trumpet Judgments (V1-6)

Remember that these horrible judgments are being poured out on a people who like Pharaoh in the days of Moses said in **Exodus 5:2a (NKJV)** "And Pharaoh said, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice...'" It is not a coincidence that many of the trumpet judgments resemble some of the plagues God sent to Egypt in the days of Moses.

A. The Postponing of the Judgment (V1-4)

Don't pass over verse one. From all we are told about Heaven, it is never silent there. In Revelation 4:5 we are told that there are peals of thunder and voices. In 4:8 we see the four living creatures crying out continually, **Revelation 4:8b (NKJV)** "And they do not rest day or night, saying: 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!'" We read in Revelation 4:11 that the church is continually crying out before the throne of God. **Revelation 4:11 (NKJV)** "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created." In chapter 5, we see hear a strong angel crying out with a loud voice in verse 2; we hear all of Heaven rejoicing when Jesus the Lamb of God takes the scroll (the title deed of the earth) as the only one who is worthy. **Revelation 5:13 (NKJV)** "And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: 'Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!'" In chapters 6 & 7 we hear the angels crying out commands. On and on I could go, but the point is that it is never quiet in Heaven. But in **Revelation 8:1 (NKJV)** "When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour." Let me try to explain this silence. Have you ever been in or very close to a tornado? In 1993 a tornado touched down and did considerable damage just a few hundred feet from my home. I was at home and the storm was raging with loud wind, loud rain, and loud thunder. Suddenly it was totally quiet. It was eerie! Then came the sound of a train (just like I had heard from others) and then the wind rain and thunder. Just before the tornado touched down in all its fury, there was silence. It will be silence like that silence in a courtroom when the jury walks back in from their long deliberation, and the judge, the defendant, the prosecutor and the onlookers sit in total silence waiting for the verdict. In other words, it is the silence that comes before something ominous happens. This is the unprecedented silence in heaven that verse 1 is referring to. It is implied that the 7th seal is opened and in a few moments the fury of divine judgment is going to be released, and there is absolute silence as the onlookers wait to see what the judgment will be. For a short period of time that judgment is postponed. What happens before we learn of the details of this judgment?

During this period of silence, the first thing that happens is that seven angels were each given a trumpet. Let's learn a little more about these 7 angels. They are called the angels who stand before the throne. The word "stand" is in the perfect tense which means that they have been standing before the throne for a time. They didn't just walk up. Scripture indicates that there are various orders or rankings of angels. There are cherubim, seraphim, archangels, and several other categories. Though one of the non-canonical books of the apocrypha names the angels, we don't know who they are. We do have a hint that one of them might be Gabriel. When Gabriel appeared to Zacharias and later Mary regarding John the Baptist and Jesus, he said in **Luke 1:19 (NKJV)** "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was

sent to speak to you...” Trumpets in the Old Testament had several functions. According to Numbers 10, trumpets had three functions. First, they called people together. Second they announced war. Third, they proclaimed special times and events. Here, the trumpets will announce seven horrific judgments that will be poured out on the earth. The announcing of the judgments is postponed while something else happens (V3-4). In the temple the golden censor was the pan used to transport fiery coals from the brazen altar of sacrifice to the altar of incense to ignite the incense. Now, another angel carries a golden censor like the one in the tabernacle and later the temple and came and stood at an altar in Heaven that was the counter part of the altar on earth. This was the same altar that Isaiah saw in his vision in Isaiah 6:6. The angel ignites the incense and mixes it with the prayers of the saints. “Saints” here is synonymous with Christians – saved ones. He is not talking about some special category of Christians. The prayers of the saints are mixed with the sweet smelling incense that is pleasing to God [God sees the prayers of His children as delightful like sweet smelling incense]. Though we are not told specifically the subject of these prayers, it is likely that it is the prayers of the believers during the great tribulation who are praying for God to avenge their suffering and deaths. We saw some of those prayers from martyred saints in **Revelation 6:9-10 (NKJV)** “⁹When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. ¹⁰And they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’” Is it wrong for Christians to want vengeance taken on those who have wronged them? Not necessarily. I think that a part of being in the image of God is that we desire justice. That image of God in man was warped when sin came into the world (though it is still there). The warped way that it comes out is that we want to take the vengeance ourselves. **Romans 12:19 (ESV)** “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’” These prayers for justice to be carried out against the wicked are now coming before God and that is what is going to be carried out in these trumpet judgments. God’s wrath and His people’s prayers are connected. He is about to answer the prayer of the martyrs in **Revelation 6:10 (NKJV)** “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

B. The Precipitation of the Judgments (V5-6)

Heaven’s half hour of silence is ended. Now, in direct answer to prayer comes the trumpet judgments. The throwing of the coals from the altar symbolizes that the wrath of God that is coming is to avenge the suffering and murder of His people. While this example is prayers for God to take vengeance on wrong doers, take comfort that this is true of any prayer offered in God’s will. These prayers go up like incense into the Lord’s presence. Your prayers offered in His will for His glory are sweet smelling offerings to Him. The time has now come for the pouring out of God’s wrath without mixture of mercy.

II. The Particulars of the Trumpet Judgments (V7-13)

We live in a day where many people are concerned about the environment. Often as we read the news or listen to TV we are told that we are on the brink of some kind of environmental disaster. The ozone layer is depleted, the rain forests are destroyed, and global warming threatens to wipe us all out. There is a passionate concern for endangered species from whales to spotted owls to snail darters. I believe that we are stewards of God’s creation, but many have gone way beyond legitimate concern and it has become a matter of idolatry as people worship “Mother Earth”. I hate to inform creation worshippers, but many of these trumpet judgments focus on the environment and how the population on earth will be affected.

The first four judgments that we will look at in this message are described in a brief manner, but the last three that we will look at in the next message are spelled out with much more detail.

A. The First Trumpet Judgment – The Brewing Storm (V7)

Thirteen times in this chapter the word “third” is used. Here it is a third of the trees were burned up. In addition all of the grass was burned up. The word for grass could include grains (rice, wheat, barley, etc.). We saw a similar thing in one of the plagues in Egypt. This one however is much broader that just Egypt. The planet loses 1/3 of its trees and all the grains and grass. We saw the famine in the third seal, but the judgments get progressively worse. The hail and fire mingled with blood reminds us of **Joel 2:30 (NKJV)**

"And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke." We can't be certain what all of this is referring to. The best guess is that it is caused by the earthquakes of Revelation 8:5. A large enough earthquake could set off worldwide volcanic eruptions. Besides spewing out vast quantities of flaming lava that would be blood red in appearance, the volcanoes could cause such a disturbance in the atmosphere that large hail could result. In 2005 I was in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and saw where an earthquake had erupted 3 years earlier and destroyed some 40% of a fairly large town. The magnitude of the kind of earthquakes we are talking about could trigger volcanoes around the world. I am not dogmatically saying that this is describing volcanoes, but simply that this would be one possibility. Other possibilities that have been offered involve the earth passing through the tail of a comet. Dr. Henry Morris says, "It may be possible that the 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. The most spectacular comet with which we are familiar – Halley's Comet – would not need to stray too far from its normal orbit to envelop earth in its fiery train. 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." [Dr Henry Morris, *Revelation Record*, Page 146].

B. The Second Trumpet Judgment – The Boiling Sea (V8-9)

As bad as the first trumpet judgment was, the second is worse. The judgment of the first trumpet was on the land and this one is on the sea. This will be an economic and ecological disaster. God created the sea to bless man. Most of the earth's oxygen comes from the phytoplankton and algae in the oceans. The hydrological cycle is dependent on the oceans since most of the rain on land is picked up from evaporation of the oceans.

We don't know what this is that is something like a great mountain burning with fire. Again it could be volcanoes from the massive earthquakes. A volcanic eruption in the Aleutian Islands in 1823 caused the waters to become bitter and unfit for human consumption. Whatever this thing like a mountain was, it wrecked havoc. Notice the "thirds" again – a third of the sea became blood. That could simply refer to the color or it could be literal from all of the ocean life that died. We see in the next verse that a third of the ocean life died. In addition, a third of the ships were destroyed. The ships could be destroyed by tsunamis that result from the object hitting the sea. Perhaps many of them were in port when tsunamis came. Commerce would be devastated.

C. The Third Trumpet Judgment – The Bitter Star (V10-11)

The word "star" can refer to any heavenly body other than the sun or the moon. Whereas the second trumpet judgment affected the salt water, this one affects the fresh water. The star is called "wormwood" because of the effect it has on the water. The word wormwood literally means "undrinkable". In the Old Testament it was synonymous with sorrow and great calamity. **Amos 5:7 (NKJV)** "You who turn justice to wormwood, and lay righteousness to rest in the earth!" Whatever this is that goes into the streams makes a third of the fresh water on the earth undrinkable. This would affect the wells, the fresh water seafood, and many other areas. John tells us that many will die from drinking the water.

D. The Fourth Trumpet Judgment – The Blackened Sky (V12-13)

Here we see some more "thirds". A third of the sun, moon, and stars were struck so that light was diminished by 1/3. This was likely temporary since later the sun's power will be intensified and will scorch the earth. After this judgment, the earth's temperatures will plunge drastically. The weather patterns will change which will affect human life and the ability to grow crops.

This is all very devastating – a third of vegetation destroyed, a third of the sea becomes blood, a third of marine life destroyed, a third of ships destroyed, a third of fresh water is poisoned, and a third of natural light taken away. But the last verse of this passage tells us that the worst is yet to come. The phrase "the inhabitants of the earth" speaks of those who have settled down and made the earth their home. It is used in Revelation to as a technical term for those who reject the Gospel. These are people who not only live on the earth; they live for the earth. The first "woe" is the fifth trumpet judgment; the second "woe" is the sixth trumpet judgment. The third "woe" is the 7th trumpet judgment. The seventh trumpet judgment is actually the seven bowls of wrath – the end of the judgment on earth. I can't wait until we get there.

CONCLUSION

I hope you are ready for His coming. His coming is immanent. We are to always be ready. There ought to be an urgency about the Lord's work.