

Session 9 The Forerunner Message in Revelation 8-9

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Revelation 8 and 9 describes some details of the judgment events that will occur in the second chronological section in the book of Revelation.
- B. **Outline of Revelation 8** (the second chronological section)
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| 8:1-6 | The seventh seal and the releasing of the trumpet judgments |
| 8:7 | The first trumpet: 1/3 of the earth's vegetation is burned |
| 8:8-9 | The second trumpet: 1/3 of the sea turns to blood |
| 8:10-11 | The third trumpet: 1/3 of the fresh water becomes bitter |
| 8:12 | The fourth trumpet: Darkness on 1/3 of the sun, moon, & stars |
| 8:13 | The angelic declaration of "Woe, woe, woe" |
- C. **Outline of Revelation 9** (the second chronological section continued)
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| 9:1-12 | The fifth trumpet judgment: Torment by demonic locusts |
| 9:13-19 | The sixth trumpet judgment: 1/3 die by demonic horsemen |
| 9:20-21 | Multitudes refuse to repent |
- D. God's wrath is not released on His people. They are appointed to engage in His salvation purposes.
⁹For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through...Jesus. (1 Thes. 5:9)
- E. The trumpet judgments are not released *on* the saints, but *as a result* of the prayers of the saints in deep partnership with Jesus and under His leadership (5:8; 6:10; 8:3-5; 9:13; 16:7; 22:17).
1. The trumpet and bowl judgments parallel the 10 plagues of Egypt (Ex. 7-12). As Moses released the plagues on Egypt through prayer, so the Church will partner with Jesus in prayer as He releases His Tribulation judgments on the Antichrist's empire (Rev. 8-9; 16).
 2. The miracles of Exodus and Acts will be combined and multiplied on a global level. The miracles like those seen in Egypt in Moses' generation will occur in the end times (Mic. 7:15; cf. Isa. 10:22-25; 11:12-16; 30:30; Jer. 16:14-15; 23:7-8; Ezek. 38:22; Joel 2:30).
¹⁵As in the days when you came out of...Egypt, I will show them wonders. (Mic. 7:15)
¹²The works that I do he will do; and greater works than these he will do... (Jn. 14:12)
- F. I refer to Revelation as the *canonized prayer manual* that informs God's people of the ways in which Jesus will manifest His power. Imagine hundreds of millions of believers with a unified prayer focus because they know the sequence in which the trumpet judgments will unfold.
- G. God's people are prepared by studying God's judgments that will be released in the Tribulation against the kingdom of darkness. Gaining understanding of what the Scripture says about these most intense expressions of God's judgments helps us to have a right paradigm to discern similar yet lesser expressions of God's judgment activities that will lead up to the Great Tribulation.

II. THE SEVENTH SEAL AND THE RELEASING OF THE TRUMPET JUDGMENTS (REV. 8:1-6)

- A. The seventh seal describes significant events in addition to releasing the seven trumpets (8:1-6).
¹*When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.*
²*I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.*
³*Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. And 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. ⁴*And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. ⁵Then 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. ⁶So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.* (Rev. 8:1-6)*
- B. *Five aspects of the seventh seal* include (1) the commissioning of 7 angels with trumpets (8:2, 6), (2) an eighth angel being given heavenly incense to strengthen the praying Church resulting in (3) fire being cast on the earth with (4) cosmic disturbances in the sky, and (5) an earthquake.
- C. *Given seven trumpets*: There will be a time when the 7 angels who regularly stand before God will each be commissioned to sound a trumpet that will release an aspect of God's end-time judgments. This commissioning includes being given a trumpet (8:2) and being prepared to sound it (8:6). This historic commissioning will occur at a very significant moment in the future.
- D. *Silence in heaven*: This silence is due to the awful anticipation of the release of the trumpet judgments related to the 7 angels each being given a trumpet. Silence will also cover the earth in context to the Lord's great judgments (Ps. 46:10; Hab. 2:20; Zeph. 1:7; 2:13).
²⁰*The LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him.* (Hab. 2:20)
⁷*Be silent in the presence of the LORD; for the day of the LORD is at hand...* (Zeph. 1:7)
- E. *Another angel having a golden censer*: An eighth angel with a golden censer approached the altar.
- F. *Given much incense*: An angel will be given much "heavenly incense" in a censer to offer with the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar before the throne. This will provide a supernatural strengthening of the end-time praying Church. The prayers of the saints are imperfect (Rom. 8:26). I assume that the intercession of Jesus and the Spirit are included in the incense given to this angel.
³⁴*Christ...at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.* (Rom. 8:34)
- G. *Ascended before God*: From the hand of the angel, the fragrant smoke of the incense together with the prayers of the saints ascends before God, signifying He is pleased with the collective prayers of the saints (8:4). When incense was poured out on burning coals in the days of Moses, it produced smoke that had a sweet odor. Incense was added to the burning sacrifice by the priest in the OT.
¹²*He shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar...with his hands full of sweet incense...and bring it inside the veil. ¹³And he shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense [fragrant smoke] may cover the mercy seat... (Lev. 16:12-13)*

- H. **The prayers of all the saints:** The prayers of *all* the saints are both accumulated from history as well as accelerated in the generation in which the Lord returns. The prayers of the end-time Church will be the most powerful force on earth as it functions under the all-powerful leadership of Jesus. The fire is followed by noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.

⁵Then 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. (Rev. 8:5)

1. **Fire:** The angel will throw fire to the earth (8:5; 11:5; 14:18; cf. Lk. 12:49). Elijah said that the God who answers by fire is the true God (1 Kg. 18:24; 2 Kgs. 1:10-12). God sent fire on Sodom as an example of His end-time judgments (Gen. 19:24; 2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 7).

⁴⁹I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! (Lk. 12:49)

⁶...Sodom...making them an example to those who...live ungodly... (2 Pet. 2:6)

2. **An earthquake:** The earthquake sequence that will occur during the Tribulation can be seen in 6:12; 8:5; 11:13, 19; 16:18, along with Mt. 24:7; Isa. 29:6; Ezek. 38:19; Zech. 14:5, 10.

III. AN OVERVIEW OF THE TRUMPET JUDGMENTS (REV. 8-9)

- A. The 7 trumpets are *literal* (not symbolic), *future* (their fulfillment is still in the future), *progressive* (increasing in intensity), and *numbered* (released in a sequential order).
- B. The trumpet judgments have a 3-fold purpose. First, to *hinder* the Antichrist empire's spread of evil and persecution by destroying their natural resources. Second, to *rally* the saints to pray with unity as they see the trumpets unfold. Third, to *warn* unbelievers of increased judgment by God and rage from Satan, thus creating an optimum environment for people to receive salvation.
- C. The first 4 trumpet judgments are limited to 1/3—being a partial judgment (8:7-12). This limitation warns that there is more to come. This gives people the opportunity to repent before God's judgment surely intensify in the bowl judgments (16:1-21).

⁷The first angel sounded: hail and fire followed...a third of the trees were burned up...

⁸The second angel sounded...a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood...¹⁰The third angel sounded: a great star fell...on a third of the rivers and on the springs...¹¹a third of the waters became wormwood... it was made bitter.

¹²The fourth angel sounded: a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon... (Rev. 8:7-12)

- D. The trumpet judgments are supernatural acts of God released against the Antichrist's empire through the created order (first 4 trumpets) and demons (fifth and sixth trumpets).
- E. The *first four trumpets* punish the Antichrist's empire by destroying the natural resources that support life (without targeting people). The *fifth and sixth trumpets* punish the Antichrist's empire by targeting humans with demonic torment that results in the death of 1/3 of the human race.
- F. The first four trumpets destroy the resources of the Antichrist's empire (8:6-12) affecting areas of the *environment* (trees, grass, sea, rivers, sky), *food supply* (vegetation, meat, fish) as well as the *sea trade, water supplies, and light and heat* (sun, moon, stars). Their purpose is to destroy, not kill.

IV. THE FIRST TRUMPET: 1/3 OF THE EARTH'S VEGETATION IS BURNED (REV. 8:7)

- A. The first trumpet judgment destroys food supplies by burning 1/3 of the earth's vegetation (8:7). A supernatural event, like a meteor storm, with hail and fire, will burn the earth's trees and grass. The first trumpet corresponds to the seventh Egyptian plague of fire and blood (Ex. 9:22-26).
⁷The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. A third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up. (Rev. 8:7)
- B. God will send the combination of hail and fire to destroy Gog and Magog in the end times.
²²I will bring him [Antichrist] to judgment...I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him...great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. (Ezek. 38:22)
⁸Fire and hail, snow and clouds; stormy wind, fulfilling His word...¹¹Kings of the earth and all peoples; princes and all judges of the earth...¹³Let them praise the name of the LORD, for His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and heaven. (Ps. 148:8-13)
- C. **Hailstones**: God will use hail in the end times (11:19; 16:21; cf. Isa. 28:2, 17). The law of Moses required the stoning of idol worshippers—or the Antichrist (Deut. 17:2-5; Lev. 24:16)
- D. **All the green grass**: The prohibition not to hurt the green grass in the fifth trumpet (9:4) points to the fact that the grass will have time to grow back after the first trumpet some months earlier.

V. THE SECOND TRUMPET: 1/3 OF THE SEA TURNS TO BLOOD (REV. 8:8-9)

- A. The second trumpet judgment destroys food supplies and sea trade (8:8-9). A large, burning object will fall from the sky, turning 1/3 of the sea into blood and destroying 1/3 of sea life and ships.
⁸The 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. ⁹And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. (Rev. 8:8-9)
- B. **The sea**: Some see this trumpet as referring *only* to the Mediterranean Sea (18:18; Isa. 2:12-16). Since “the sea” is in the singular it may refer to one specific sea—the Mediterranean Sea. The second trumpet judgment is intensified by the second bowl judgment (16:3). Many of the seas in the earth will still be functioning at the time of the seventh bowl (18:17-19).
³The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood...and every living creature in the sea died. (Rev. 16:3)
- C. **Great mountain**: This is not a mountain, but “like” a mountain. It may be a vast, burning meteorite. Jesus spoke about the prayer of faith throwing a “mountain” into the sea (Mk. 11:23).
²³“Whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and...believes that those things he says will come to pass, he will have whatever he says.” (Mk. 11:23)
- D. **The destruction of sea life and ships**: 1/3 of the living creatures in the sea died, and 1/3 of the ships were destroyed. Both the sea life and ships will be destroyed, causing a great disruption of the Antichrist's commerce and naval military power (18:18; Isa. 2:12-16).

VI. THE THIRD TRUMPET: 1/3 OF THE FRESH WATER BECOMES BITTER (REV. 8:10-11)

- A. The third trumpet judgment will poison 1/3 of the earth's fresh water supply (8:10-11). A burning star or meteoric mass will fall from the sky poisoning the water in the rivers and springs, thus causing the inland fresh water supply to be contaminated and intensifying the global famine (6:5-6).

¹⁰The 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. ¹¹The 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. (Rev. 8:10-11)

- B. In the third bowl, this judgment intensifies as the rivers become blood (16:4).

⁴Poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. (Rev. 16:4)

- C. **Wormwood:** The star is named for the effect it has in polluting the fresh water. Wormwood in the OT is a symbol for divine punishment (Jer. 9:15; 23:15; Lam. 3:15, 19). It is an herb with a bitter taste that can poison water (Deut. 29:17-18; Prov. 5:4; Lam. 3:15, 19; Amos 5:7; 6:12; Hos. 10:4).

- D. The second and third trumpets correspond to the first plague in Egypt in which the Nile and the waters and streams were polluted, causing fish to die and making water undrinkable (Ex. 7:19-25).

VII. THE FOURTH TRUMPET: DARKNESS ON 1/3 OF THE SUN, MOON, & STARS (REV. 8:12)

- A. The fourth trumpet judgment will destroy light and heat by darkening 1/3 of the sun, moon, and stars (8:12). This supernatural work of God will reduce 1/3 of the daylight, moonlight, and starlight, and it will affect heat, health, agriculture, navigation, etc.

¹²The 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. (Rev. 8:12)

- B. The fourth trumpet corresponds to the ninth Egyptian plague of darkness (Ex. 10:21-22) from which Israel was spared (Ex. 10:23). In Egypt, darkness lasted for three days and could be "felt."

²¹The LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand...that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt." ²²...there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days...²³But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. (Ex. 10:21-23)

VIII. THE ANGELIC DECLARATION OF "WOE, WOE, WOE" (REV. 8:13)

- A. John saw an angel flying through the sky to warn people of the last 3 trumpet judgments (8:13).

¹³I 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 last 3 trumpet judgments]!" (Rev. 8:13)

- B. The angel announced that the last 3 trumpet judgments are referred to as "woes" (9:12; 10:14).

IX. THE FIFTH TRUMPET JUDGMENT: TORMENT BY DEMONIC LOCUSTS (REV. 9:1-12)

- A. The fifth trumpet releases an army of demonic locusts who inflict people for 5 months (9:1-6).
¹The fifth angel sounded: I saw a star fallen [descended] from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. ²He opened the bottomless pit...³out of the smoke locusts came on the earth. To them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth... ⁴They were commanded not to harm the grass...but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. ⁶In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them. (Rev. 9:1-6)
- B. *A star fallen*: Stars can speak of angels (1:20; 12:4). The star here is an intelligent being able to use a key. The word for *fallen* can be translated as *descended*. I see this as a good angel *descending* or coming down from heaven to the earth with the key to open the bottomless pit to judge the wicked. This angel's activity parallels the actions of a good angel with the key to the bottomless pit (20:1).
- C. *He opened the bottomless pit*: Some demons are bound by chains (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6) being kept or reserved for the final judgment in the lake of fire, and/or as agents or instruments of God's end-time judgment to inflict torment on those who worship the Antichrist. The bottomless pit or the abyss (Greek) is a temporary prison, restricting some fallen angels in chains (9:1-2, 11; 20:1-3).
⁴For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment [as agents and recipients]... (2 Pet. 2:4)
- D. *Locusts came on the earth*: Out of the bottomless pit, demonic locusts came to the surface (9:3).
- E. *The seal of God*: Those who receive a seal of protection are not harmed by God's judgments (9:4). The Lord will protect His people from His wrath as Israel was protected from His wrath during the plagues of Egypt in Goshen (Ex. 8:22-23; 9:4-6, 10:23; 12:7-13). God's judgment was not released until after the angel marked or sealed the foreheads of the righteous (Ezek. 9:4-6).

X. THE SIXTH TRUMPET JUDGMENT: 1/3 DIE BY DEMONIC HORSEMEN (REV. 9:12-21)

- A. Four demons will be released to lead a demonic cavalry to kill 1/3 of the human race (9:13-19). These angels were *prepared* for a specific work of judgment in the end times. They will lead a demonic army of 200 million horsemen (possibly each one commands 50 million horsemen).
¹⁴...to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels [demonic beings] who are bound at the great river Euphrates." ¹⁵So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. ¹⁶Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million...¹⁷I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them...out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone... (Rev. 9:14-17)
- B. The 4 primary demonic strongholds in society will be murder, sorcery, immorality, and theft (9:21).
²⁰The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent...²¹They did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or thefts. (Rev. 9:20-21)