

## Revelation Pt 22 The First Four Trumpets and the Eagle

Isaiah Wilson / General Adult

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# I. Introduction

### Where We've Been

Two weeks ago we studied the opening of the seventh seal in [Revelation 8:1-5](#). We saw something remarkable happen at the throne of God. The prayers of the saints rose up like incense before the altar. Then fire from that same altar was thrown down to earth, bringing thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

From that passage, we learned four truths that we need to carry with us today:

First, worship and judgment belong together. The same throne that receives our worship also dispenses justice. The same altar that holds our prayers also provides the fire of response.

Second, God's justice is holy and measured. God doesn't throw fire around randomly. There's a process. Silence first. Prayer received. Then response. Even in judgment, God moves with perfect timing and holy order.

Third, the church participates through prayer. Our prayers are the incense that rises before his throne. Our intercession shapes what happens next.

Fourth, Jesus is both Shepherd and Judge. The same Lamb who opened the seal is the same one who receives our prayers and responds with fire. Jesus doesn't have multiple personalities. His love and his justice flow from the same perfect heart.

### Where We're Going Today

Today we'll see what happens when those trumpet warnings actually sound. We're going to walk through the first four trumpets in [Revelation 8:6-13](#). But before we start, I want to set the right tone.

These passages talk about judgment. Real judgment. We won't soften that or explain it away. But we also won't lose sight of something important: these judgments come from the same altar where our prayers are heard. They flow from the same heart that loves us enough to die for us.

The Hebrew word for trumpet is *shofar*. It wasn't just a musical instrument. It was an alarm. A wake-up call. A summons to pay attention. When the *shofar* sounded in ancient Israel, people dropped what they were doing and listened.

That's what's happening here. God is sounding an alarm. Not because he's lost his temper, but because he loves his world too much to let it sleep through its own destruction.

## **Reading the Text**

Let's read Revelation 8:6-13 together

### **Revelation 8:6–13 ESV**

<sup>6</sup> Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them. <sup>7</sup> The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up. <sup>8</sup> The second angel blew his trumpet, 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> A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. <sup>10</sup> The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing 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 people died from the water, because it had been made bitter. <sup>12</sup> The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night. <sup>13</sup> Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!"

## **The Big Picture**

Did you catch the pattern? "A third... a third... a third." This isn't random destruction. It's measured. Purposeful. Limited.

Why one-third? Why not half? Why not everything? Because God's judgments are always aimed at something. They're warnings before the final warning. Wake-up calls before the last alarm.

The eagle's cry at the end tells us something important: "Woe! Woe! Woe!" Things are about to get more serious. But even that cry is a mercy. It's advance notice. It's God saying, "Pay attention. Respond while you still can."

This connects directly to what we learned last week. These trumpet blasts are the direct result of the altar fire thrown to earth. They're the answer to the prayers of the saints. When we pray, "Your kingdom come," this is part of what we're asking for. When we pray for justice, for God to intervene in our broken world, this is how he responds.

But the same God who judges is the same God who saves. The same fire that brings these warnings is the same fire that purifies his people. The same voice that calls "Woe!" is the same voice that calls "Come!"

Today we'll walk through each trumpet. We'll see how John uses language from the Old Testament that his readers would recognize. We'll notice how these judgments echo both the plagues of Egypt and the warnings of the prophets. And we'll remember that the goal isn't destruction for its own sake. The goal is restoration. The goal is bringing a rebellious world back to its Creator.

## II. Verse by verse

### 2.1: The Trumpet is Sounded (Rev 8:6)

#### Revelation 8:6 ESV

<sup>6</sup> Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

This might seem like a small verse, but it sets up everything that follows. John shows us seven angels getting ready. They don't just grab their trumpets and start blowing. They prepare.

The Greek word here is *hetoimazo*, which means to make ready or get prepared. It's the same word used when someone prepares a meal or gets a room ready for guests. There's intentionality here. Purpose. This isn't chaos about to break loose. This is ordered, deliberate action.

#### The Trumpet in Scripture

The word "trumpet" here is *salpigx* in Greek. But John's first readers would have immediately thought of the Hebrew *shofar*. The *shofar* wasn't background music. It was an alarm system.

Look back at Numbers 10:2-10. God told Moses to make two silver trumpets for very specific purposes: "Make two trumpets of silver; of hammered work you shall make them. And you shall use them for summoning the congregation and for breaking camp" (Numbers 10:2, ESV).

But then God gets more specific. Verse 9 says, "And when you go to war in your land against the adversary who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, that you may be remembered before the Lord your God, and you shall be saved from your enemies" (Numbers 10:9, ESV).

The trumpet was a call to action. When it sounded, people moved. When it sounded in war, it meant God was about to act on behalf of his people.

## New Testament Trumpets

The New Testament picks up this same idea. Paul writes about the trumpet in 1 Thessalonians 4:16: "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first" (ESV).

In 1 Corinthians 15:52, Paul says the resurrection will happen "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed" (ESV).

Jesus himself talked about trumpets in Matthew 24:31: "And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (ESV).

Do you see the pattern? The trumpet means God is about to do something decisive. It's a summons. A call to attention. A signal that the normal order of things is about to change.

## Back to the Altar

But here's what we can't forget. These trumpets sound because of what happened at the altar in verses 3-5. The prayers of the saints went up as incense. Fire from the altar was thrown to earth. Now the trumpets sound.

This isn't God losing his patience. This isn't divine anger finally boiling over. This is the measured, purposeful response to the prayers of his people. When we pray "Your kingdom come," when we cry out for justice, when we ask God to intervene in our broken world, the trumpet is part of his answer.

The seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets because the altar has already spoken. The fire has already been thrown. The prayers have already been heard.

## A Call to Attention

So when you hear "trumpet" in Revelation, think alarm clock. Think air raid siren. Think emergency broadcast system. God is about to act, and he wants his world to pay attention.

But unlike a human alarm that might go off by accident, this trumpet sounds on purpose. The angels prepare. They get ready. They wait for the right moment.

And when they sound, it's not just noise. It's a call. A summons. An invitation to respond while there's still time.

The trumpet says, "Wake up. Look up. Pay attention. God is moving, and you need to decide where you stand."

That's what verse 6 is really about. It's the moment before the alarm sounds. The deep breath before the announcement. The pause before everything changes.

## **2.2: First Trumpet — Hail and Fire Mixed with Blood; One-Third of Earth, Trees, Grass Burned (Rev 8:7)**

### **Revelation 8:7 ESV**

<sup>7</sup> The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

The first trumpet sounds, and immediately we're hit with strange, terrifying imagery. Hail and fire mixed with blood get thrown to the earth. A third of everything green burns up.

If you've read the Old Testament, this should sound familiar.

### Echoes of Egypt

Turn back to Exodus 9:22-26. Moses stretches out his staff, and God sends the seventh plague on Egypt: *"So Moses stretched out his staff toward heaven, and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. There was hail and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation"* (Exodus 9:23-24, ESV).

The result? *"The hail struck down everything that was in the field in all the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And the hail struck down every plant of the field and broke every tree of the field"* (Exodus 9:25, ESV).

Sound familiar? The same God who judged Egypt's oppression is now judging the world's rebellion.

But notice something important. In Egypt, the hail struck down everything in the field. Here in Revelation, only a third gets burned. That's not an accident.

## The One-Third Pattern

This is the first time we see it, but "one-third" will show up again and again in these trumpet judgments. Why one-third? Why not half? Why not everything?

Because God's justice is measured. Even in judgment, he shows restraint. Even when he acts decisively, he leaves room for repentance. The goal isn't total destruction. The goal is warning.

Think about it this way. If God destroyed everything with the first trumpet, there would be no one left to hear the second trumpet. If he wiped out all vegetation immediately, there would be no ecosystem left to sustain life. But by limiting the damage to one-third, he gets everyone's attention while leaving room for response.

## Hail, Fire, and Blood

The imagery here is intense. Hail mixed with fire is already supernatural. Hail is frozen; fire is hot. You don't normally get both at the same time. But then John adds blood to the mixture.

In Hebrew thinking, blood represents life ([Leviticus 17:11](#)). But when blood gets spilled or mixed with other elements, it often represents death or violence. The image suggests that this judgment carries the weight of violated life. There's a forensic quality to it, like evidence of a crime.

The Greek word for "thrown" is *ballo*, which means to hurl or cast with force. This isn't gently sprinkled. This is hurled down with power. The same word gets used when Jesus casts out demons. There's authority behind this action.

## What Burns

Notice what gets targeted: earth, trees, and grass. This hits the foundation of life on earth. Trees provide oxygen, shade, and fruit. Grass feeds livestock. The earth itself supports all agriculture.

But again, only a third. The destruction is severe but not total. It's enough to get everyone's attention. Enough to disrupt normal life. Enough to make people ask, "What's happening?"

The earth groans under the weight of human rebellion ([Romans 8:22](#)). These trumpet judgments acknowledge that groaning and promise that something will be done about it. God won't let his creation suffer forever under the curse of sin.

## Hope in the Judgment

Yes, this is scary. Yes, it's sobering. But it's also hopeful. The same God who judges is the same God who saves. The same fire that burns also purifies. The same voice that calls for judgment also calls for repentance.

The first trumpet sounds because the altar fire has been thrown to earth. And that altar fire comes in response to the prayers of the saints. When we pray for God's kingdom to come, when we cry out for justice, when we ask him to make all things new, this is part of his answer.

The world needs to wake up. The first trumpet is God's alarm clock. It's his way of saying, "Pay attention. This isn't how things are supposed to be. And I'm going to do something about it."

But there are still six more trumpets to come. Still time to respond. Still room for repentance.

The question is: will anyone listen?

## **2.3: Second Trumpet — Like a Great Burning Mountain Cast into the Sea; One-Third Sea Becomes Blood; One-Third Sea Life Dies; One-Third Ships Destroyed ([Rev 8:8-9](#))**

### **Revelation 8:8-9 ESV**

<sup>8</sup> The second angel blew his trumpet, 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> A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

The second trumpet brings an even stranger sight. Something that looks like a massive burning mountain gets hurled into the sea. The results are catastrophic but, again, limited to one-third.

### **A Mountain in the Sea**

John says it was "something like" a huge mountain. The Greek word *hos* means "as" or "like." He's not saying it was actually a mountain. He's saying that's the best way to describe what he saw.

What could look like a burning mountain flying through the air? Maybe a meteor. Maybe a volcanic island. Maybe something we don't have words for yet. John sees it in vision and uses the language available to him.

But the image of a mountain carries weight in Scripture. Mountains represent stability, permanence, power. When Babylon falls in [Jeremiah 51:25](#), God calls it "a destroying mountain" that he will make "a burnt mountain." When Jesus talks about faith, he says it can move mountains ([Matthew 17:20](#)).

Here, something mountain-sized gets thrown into the sea with devastating force. It's an image of overwhelming power meeting the vast waters.

## Back to Egypt Again

The first plague turned the Nile River into blood: *"And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink the water of the Nile. Seven days passed after the Lord had struck the Nile"* ([Exodus 7:24-25](#), ESV).

But there's a key difference. In Egypt, it was a river. Here, it's the sea. The scale has expanded. What happened to Egypt's main water source now happens to a third of all the world's oceans.

[Psalm 78](#) recounts the plagues and says God "turned their rivers to blood, so that they could not drink of their streams" ([Psalm 78:44](#), ESV). John sees that same pattern applied on a global scale.

## The Sea in Scripture

The sea means more than just water in biblical thinking. It represents chaos, danger, the unknown. It's where storms come from. It's where monsters live. In [Revelation 13](#), the beast rises from the sea.

But the sea is also a highway. In John's time, the Roman Empire depended on Mediterranean shipping routes. Trade, communication, military movement—it all happened by sea. The sea was the interstate system of the ancient world.

When a third of the sea turns to blood it's economic and political chaos.

## Ships and Commerce

Notice that a third of the ships get destroyed. John isn't just talking about fishing boats. The Greek word *ploion* includes everything from small craft to massive merchant vessels.



Losing a third of all ships would cripple international trade. Food supplies would be cut off. Luxury goods would disappear. Communication between distant parts of the empire would break down.

But it's deeper than economics. Ships represent human ambition, exploration, the desire to conquer distance and connect with other lands. When a third of the ships are destroyed, it's like a third of human connectivity gets severed.

## Blood in the Water

The sea turning to blood is one of the most disturbing images in this passage. Blood speaks of life poured out, of violence, of death. When the sea turns to blood, it becomes a massive graveyard.

The Greek word for "blood" is *haima*, the same word used for Christ's blood that cleanses us from sin ([1 John 1:7](#)). But here it's not cleansing blood. It's blood that speaks of judgment and death.

Yet even this connects back to the altar. Remember, the fire that started these trumpet judgments came from the altar where Christ's blood was offered. The same sacrifice that saves also judges. The same blood that cleanses also condemns those who reject it.

## One-Third Again

The pattern continues. A third of the sea, a third of the sea creatures, a third of the ships. Not everything. Not total annihilation. But enough to get the world's attention.

God could have turned all the sea to blood. He could have destroyed every ship and killed every sea creature. But he doesn't. Even in judgment, he shows restraint. Even in wrath, he remembers mercy.

## Looking Ahead

This second trumpet points forward to [Revelation 16:3](#), where the second bowl judgment turns the entire sea to blood: *"The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing died that was in the sea"* ([Revelation 16:3](#), ESV).

Do you see the progression? The trumpet affects a third. The bowl affects everything. The trumpets are warnings. The bowls are final judgments. God escalates gradually, giving people time to respond.

## 2.4: Third Trumpet — Star Called Wormwood; One-Third of Rivers and Springs Bitter; Many Die (Rev 8:10-11)

### Revelation 8:10-11 ESV

<sup>10</sup> The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing 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 people died from the water, because it had been made bitter.

The third trumpet brings a different kind of disaster. Instead of hail and fire or a burning mountain, we see a star fall from heaven. But this star has a name: Wormwood.

### A Star Falls

John sees a "great star, blazing like a torch." The Greek word for star is *aster*, which could mean an actual star, a planet, a meteor, or even an angelic being.

But this star falls. The Greek word *pipto* suggests a sudden, dramatic descent. This isn't a gentle drifting down. This is a catastrophic fall from heaven to earth.

The image of falling stars appears throughout Scripture as a sign of cosmic upheaval. Jesus said, "And the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken" (Mark 13:25, ESV). Isaiah wrote about the day of the Lord when "all the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll" (Isaiah 34:4, ESV).

### The Name: Wormwood

Here's where things get specific. This star has a name: Wormwood. In Greek, it's *apsinthos*. In Hebrew, it would be *la'anah*. Both words refer to a bitter, poisonous plant.

Wormwood wasn't just any bitter herb. It was known for its medicinal properties in small doses but could be deadly in large amounts. The plant was so bitter that it became a symbol for anything painful, distressing, or punishing.

### Wormwood in the Old Testament

The Hebrew prophets used wormwood as a picture of God's judgment.

### Jeremiah 9:15 ESV

<sup>15</sup> Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will feed this people with bitter food, and give them poisonous water to drink.

The Hebrew text literally says "wormwood" and "poisonous water."

Deuteronomy 29:18 warns about someone whose heart turns away from God, producing "a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit." The Hebrew word there is *la'ananh*—wormwood.

## Fresh Water Turns Bitter

The first trumpet hit the land. The second trumpet hit the sea. Now the third trumpet hits fresh water—rivers and springs. These are the sources people depend on for drinking water.

But notice the pattern again. A third of the waters turn bitter. Not all of them. God's judgment is measured, purposeful, designed to warn rather than destroy completely.

The Greek word for "bitter" is *pikraino*, which means to make bitter or embitter. It's the same root word Paul uses in Ephesians 4:31: "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you" (ESV).

## Many People Die

The Greek phrase *polloi anthropon* means "many people" or "many human beings." John doesn't say everyone who drinks the water dies, but many do. The poisoning is real and deadly.

## Physical and Spiritual Poison

Wormwood works on multiple levels. Yes, it's about literal water becoming undrinkable. But the image also points to spiritual corruption.

In the New Testament, the closest parallel is Hebrews 12:15: "*See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no 'root of bitterness' springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled*" (ESV).

Just as physical wormwood can poison the body, spiritual bitterness can poison the soul. False teaching, resentment, rebellion against God—these create their own kind of wormwood that makes life bitter and ultimately deadly.

## The Irony of the Name

Think about this: the star that poisons the water has a name. It's not just "disaster" or "catastrophe." It's Wormwood.

This reminds us that God's judgments aren't random natural disasters. They're purposeful acts with specific meanings. When God judges, he wants people to understand what's happening and why.

The name Wormwood carries the message: rebellion against God leads to bitterness. Sin promises sweetness but delivers poison. What looks like freedom becomes slavery. What promises life brings death.

## A Warning About False Teaching

Many interpreters see Wormwood as a symbol for false teaching or corrupt leadership. Just as poisoned water looks like good water until you drink it, false teaching often looks like truth until it destroys your soul.

Paul warned Timothy about people "having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power" ([2 Timothy 3:5](#), ESV). Peter wrote about false teachers who "will secretly bring in destructive heresies" ([2 Peter 2:1](#), ESV).

## **2.5: Fourth Trumpet — One-Third of Sun, Moon, and Stars Struck; A Third of Day and Night Without Light ([Rev 8:12](#))**

### **Revelation 8:12 ESV**

<sup>12</sup> The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night.

The fourth trumpet takes us beyond earth's surface, beyond the sea, beyond fresh water, all the way to the heavens themselves. God strikes the very sources of light that govern our world.

### Cosmic Chaos

Up to this point, the trumpet judgments have affected things on earth. Now they reach into space itself. The sun, moon, and stars—the celestial bodies that have marked time and seasons since creation—suddenly dim by one-third.

The Greek word for "struck" is *plesso*, which means to hit, smite, or wound. It's the same word used when Jesus was struck during his trial ([Matthew 26:68](#)). This is violent assault on the cosmic order.

## The Day of the Lord Arrives

John's first readers would have recognized this imagery immediately. The Hebrew prophets repeatedly used darkened heavenly bodies to describe the coming day of the Lord.

Joel writes: *"The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining"* ([Joel 3:15](#), ESV). Earlier in the same book: *"And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes"* ([Joel 2:30-31](#), ESV).

Isaiah paints an even more dramatic picture: *"For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light"* ([Isaiah 13:10](#), ESV).

Ezekiel adds: *"When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens and make their stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over you, and put darkness on your land, declares the Lord God"* ([Ezekiel 32:7-8](#), ESV).

The pattern is clear. When God judges nations and empires, the very lights of heaven respond. The cosmos itself participates in judgment.

## Jesus and the Cosmic Signs

But John's readers would also remember Jesus' own words about the end times. In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus said: *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken"* ([Matthew 24:29](#), ESV).

Mark records similar words: *"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken"* ([Mark 13:24-25](#), ESV).

Luke adds: *"And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves"* ([Luke 21:25](#), ESV).

The cosmic signs that Jesus promised are now beginning to happen.

## One-Third Darkness

But notice the restraint again. The sun doesn't go completely dark. The moon doesn't disappear entirely. The stars don't all fall. A third of their light is removed.

This creates an eerie, unsettling twilight world. There's enough light to see, but not enough for comfort. Enough illumination to function, but not enough to feel secure. It's like living in perpetual dawn or dusk.

The Greek text literally says "a third of the day might not shine, and likewise the night." Normal patterns of light and darkness get disrupted. The rhythms that have governed human life since creation suddenly change.

## Time and Order Disrupted

Since Genesis 1, the sun, moon, and stars have marked time for humanity. *"And God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years'"* (Genesis 1:14, ESV).

When these lights are struck, more than brightness is affected. The very ordering of time itself gets disrupted. How do you measure a day when the sun only shines at two-thirds capacity? How do you track months when the moon's light is diminished? How do you navigate when the stars are partially darkened?

This strikes at humanity's most basic need for predictability and order. We depend on the reliability of sunrise and sunset, on the phases of the moon, on the steady position of the stars. When these become unreliable, human confidence shakes.

## Creation Groans

Paul writes in Romans 8:22: *"For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now"* (ESV). The fourth trumpet shows us that groaning in cosmic terms.

Creation itself responds to the rebellion of humanity. The sun, moon, and stars—which have faithfully given light since the beginning—now participate in God's judgment by withdrawing their full brightness.

But this isn't permanent. Earlier in Romans 8, Paul explains: *"For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God"* (Romans 8:19-21, ESV).

The cosmic dimming is part of creation's longing for redemption. It's a sign that the old order is passing away and something new is coming.

## The God Who Controls Light

This judgment reminds us who really controls the universe. We often take the sun, moon, and stars for granted. They've been shining reliably for so long that we forget they're not autonomous. They shine because God commands them to shine.

When God strikes them, when he dims their light by one-third, he's reminding the world that he is the ultimate source of all light. He spoke light into existence in [Genesis 1:3](#). He can dim that light whenever he chooses.

But here's the hope: God is himself light. *"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all"* ([1 John 1:5](#), ESV). Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life"* ([John 8:12](#), ESV).

The fourth trumpet sounds as a wake-up call. In a world where the lights are going out, where can we find reliable illumination? In a universe where even the sun and stars can be struck, what source of light can we trust?

There's only one answer. And his name is Jesus, the Light of the world, who shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome him.

## **2.6: Interlude — The Flying Eagle's Warning: "Woe, Woe, Woe" ([Rev 8:13](#))**

### **Revelation 8:13 ESV**

<sup>13</sup> Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!"

The first four trumpets have sounded. Earth, sea, fresh water, and sky have all been struck. But before the next trumpet sounds, something unusual happens. An eagle appears in midair with a message that should make everyone stop and listen.

### A Voice from Heaven

John sees an eagle flying "in midair." The Greek phrase *en mesouranema* literally means "in mid-heaven" or "at the zenith." This bird is flying at the highest point of the sky, where everyone can see and hear it.

Some ancient manuscripts say "angel" instead of "eagle," but the meaning is the same. This is a heavenly messenger bringing an announcement. Whether it's an actual eagle or an angel appearing like an eagle, the message comes from God himself.

Eagles appear throughout Scripture as symbols of divine judgment and swiftness. Moses told Israel: *"The Lord will bring a nation against you from far away, from the end of the earth, swooping down like the eagle, a nation whose language you do not understand"* ([Deuteronomy 28:49](#), ESV).

## A Loud Voice

The eagle calls out "in a loud voice." The Greek phrase *phone megale* appears throughout Revelation to mark important announcements. This isn't a whisper. This isn't background noise. This is a public proclamation that demands attention.

The same phrase describes the voice of the Lamb in [Revelation 5:12](#), the voice of the angel in [Revelation 7:2](#), and the voice from the throne in [Revelation 16:1](#). When God has something important to say, he doesn't mumble. He speaks with a loud voice that no one can ignore.

## Three Woes

The eagle's message is simple but terrifying: "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth!"

In Hebrew and Greek literature, repeating something three times shows ultimate intensity. It's like putting exclamation points after a sentence, but stronger.

We see this pattern elsewhere in Scripture. The seraphim in Isaiah's vision cry out, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts" ([Isaiah 6:3](#), ESV). Peter denies Jesus three times ([Matthew 26:34](#)). Jesus asks Peter three times, "Do you love me?" ([John 21:17](#)).

But here, instead of "Holy, holy, holy," we hear "Woe, woe, woe."

## The Woe Tradition

"Woe" is a word of warning and lament in Scripture. It's what prophets said when they announced coming judgment.

Jesus used "woe" repeatedly in [Matthew 23](#) when he condemned the religious leaders: *"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces"* ([Matthew 23:13](#), ESV).



Isaiah pronounced woes on various nations and groups: "*Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!*" ([Isaiah 5:20](#), ESV).

But the eagle's three woes point to something even more serious than what the prophets announced. These woes are connected to the final three trumpets, which will bring unprecedented judgment.

## Inhabitants of the Earth

Notice who the woes are for: "the inhabitants of the earth." The Greek phrase *katoikountas epi tes ges* appears several times in Revelation, and it usually refers to unbelievers, those who have made earth their permanent home rather than looking for a heavenly one.

This phrase distinguishes between earth-dwellers and heaven-dwellers. It's not talking about where people physically live, but where their hearts are anchored. Earth-dwellers are those who find their identity, security, and satisfaction in this world rather than in God.

[Hebrews 11:13-16](#) describes the heroes of faith as "strangers and exiles on the earth" who were "seeking a homeland" and "desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one" (ESV). They lived on earth but weren't earth-dwellers in the spiritual sense.

## The Remaining Trumpets

The eagle specifically warns about "the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels." Trumpets five, six, and seven are coming, and they will be qualitatively different from the first four.

The first four trumpets affected the physical environment: land, sea, fresh water, and sky. The next three will unleash spiritual horrors. The fifth trumpet will open the bottomless pit. The sixth will release demonic armies. The seventh will announce the final kingdom.

Each of these remaining trumpets corresponds to one of the three woes. They escalate in intensity and supernatural terror. The eagle's warning gives people a chance to prepare, to repent, to turn to God before things get worse.

## The Patience of God

This interlude reminds us of something crucial about God's character. Peter writes: "*The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance*" ([2 Peter 3:9](#), ESV).

God doesn't take pleasure in judgment. He doesn't rush toward woe. He provides warnings, interludes, opportunities for people to turn around. The eagle's cry is evidence of divine patience, not divine cruelty.

But patience has limits. The eagle announces that more severe judgments are coming. The time for easy repentance is passing. The final woes are about to begin.

### A Call to Decision

The eagle's warning forces a decision. Will people listen to the voice from heaven? Will they take seriously the threat of coming woe? Will they use this brief interlude to turn to God?

Or will they ignore the warning, dismiss the voice, and continue living as earth-dwellers who have no thought for heaven?

The three woes are coming whether people believe it or not. The question is: will anyone listen to the eagle's cry while there's still time to respond?

## III. Conclusion

We've heard four trumpets sound. We've seen hail and fire mixed with blood strike the earth. We've watched something like a burning mountain crash into the sea. We've witnessed the star called Wormwood poison the fresh waters. We've observed the lights of heaven grow dim. And we've listened to the eagle's warning about three woes still to come.

But what does all this mean for us? How do we live in light of what we've learned?

### The Main Movement

Here's the flow we've traced: altar and incense lead to trumpet warnings, which lead to measured, escalating divine action aimed at repentance and restoration.

It starts with prayer. The saints cry out to God for justice, for intervention, for his kingdom to come. Those prayers rise like incense before his throne. Fire from the altar gets thrown to earth. The trumpet warnings sound. And God acts with measured judgment designed to wake up a sleeping world.

This isn't a story about an angry God losing patience. This is a story about a loving God responding to his people's prayers with warnings that give the world every opportunity to turn around.

The goal isn't destruction. The goal is restoration. The trumpet judgments are birth pangs, not death throes. They're preparing the way for something better.

### **Where We Stand**

We live between the altar and the trumpets. Our prayers rise before God's throne right now. Our intercession matters right now. The fire from the altar is being prepared right now.

But we also live in a world that's already experiencing trumpet-like warnings. Environmental disasters, economic chaos, the spread of deceptive ideologies, moral darkness—these aren't signs that God has abandoned the world. They're signs that he's actively working to get the world's attention.