

The Last Days

An In-Depth Study of Biblical Eschatology

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

“Write ... what will take place later” – Revelation 4-22

Revelation 8 *The 7th Seal Judgement* ⇒ *First 4 Trumpet Judgements*

Jesus Opens the Seventh Seal: *Silence in Heaven* (8:1-5)

8:1 The Seventh Seal Judgement: Jesus opened the seventh seal (He alone is worthy to open the seals ^{Revelation 5:5,9}), which produced a silence of “about half an hour” in heaven. The seventh seal was the last seal on the scroll ^{Revelation 5:1}; therefore, its opening revealed not only the seventh seal judgement, but also the other fourteen remaining judgements (the seven trumpet judgements ^{Revelation 8:6-9:21,11:15-19} and the seven bowl judgements ^{Revelation 16:1-21}). Consequently, the silence in heaven was a great sign of awe and reverence ^{Luke 5:26, Hebrews 12:28-29} for God’s majesty in anticipation of the great power He was about to display in His remaining judgements.

8:2 God gave 7 trumpets ^{Joshua 6:2-20} to 7 angels to present His next set of judgements.

8:3-4 The “golden censer” ^{Leviticus 16:12} (a firepan ^{Numbers 4:14} suspended on a rope/chain used to transfer fiery coals from the bronze altar of burnt offering ^{Exodus 38:1-7,30} to the golden altar of incense ^{Exodus 30:1-6, Hebrews 9:4}) represented all of the trumpet and bowl judgements to come. The fragrance of the incense from the golden altar symbolized the prayers ^{Psalms 141:2, Luke 1:8-10, Revelation 5:8} of the saints, and is a reminder of the earlier mentioned prayers of the martyred saints for retribution ^{Revelation 6:9-10}. The angel transferred the prayers of the saints (the rising smoke from the incense) over to God.

8:5 The angel threw the censer filled with altar fire on the earth, resulting in thunder, rumblings, lightning and an earthquake ^{Revelation 4:5, 11:19, 16:18} – a clear signal to the angels holding back the four winds ^{Revelation 7:1-3} to be prepared to act ^{Revelation 9:15}.

The Trumpet Judgements Begin: *From Bad to Worse* (8:6-12)

8:6 It was God's timing for the angels to "sound" (announce) the trumpet judgements.

Several of the judgements seem to be reflective of the ancient plagues on Egypt ^{Exodus 7-11}.

8:7 The **First Trumpet Judgement:** Hail ^{7th Plague of Egypt: Exodus 9:13-35} and "fire mixed with blood" ^{Joel 2:30} were "hurled" to earth (possibly indicating explosive volcanic activity resulting from the earlier earthquakes ^{v.5}). The subsequent fires consumed one-third of the earth's trees (a partial judgement) and all of the grass (which grows back quickly).

Hail is a common agent of Biblical judgement ^{Joshua 10:5-11, Job 38:22-23, Isaiah 28:17, 30:30, Ezekiel 38:21-13}.

8:8-9 The **Second Trumpet Judgement:** A massive fiery mountain was thrown into the sea ^{Matthew 21:21} (probably an asteroid or a huge meteor crashing into the ocean), which caused one-third of the "sea" (probably a reference to salt-water) to turn into blood ^{1st Plague: Exodus 7:14-24}, one-third of all sea life to die ^{Psalms 105:29} and a third of the world's sea ships to be destroyed ^{Isaiah 2:12-18} (~15,000 ships ruined, by today's count).

"Blood" could refer to actual blood or perhaps billions of dead microorganisms from the impact.

The lost ships may be the result of a gigantic tidal wave produced by the asteroid collision.

The 2nd Bowl Judgement ^{Revelation 16:3} will finish the devastation of the 2nd Trumpet Judgement.

8:10-11 The **Third Trumpet Judgement:** A blazing "great star" named *Wormwood* (means bitterness; a plant whose roots have a strong bitter taste and are poisonous) fell to earth ^{Revelation 6:12-14, 9:1} (possibly a comet that broke up in the atmosphere and scattered over the land). The star made a third of the "rivers and springs of water" (most likely the fresh-water) turn bitter and poisonous, resulting in many people dying.

The 3rd Bowl Judgement ^{Revelation 16:4} will finish the devastation of the 3rd Trumpet Judgement.

A bitter tasting poison resulted when the Jews rejected God ^{Deuteronomy 29:18, Jeremiah 9:13-16, 23:15}.

Note: Curiously, the Russian translation of the word *Wormwood* is *Chernobyl*.

8:12 The **Fourth Trumpet Judgement**: The fourth angel sounded his trumpet and one-third of the sun, moon and stars ^{Luke 21:25} turned dark ^{Isaiah 13:10, Joel 3:15}, resulting in a one-third reduction of the daylight and the nightlight ^{9th Plague: Exodus 10:21-23}.

There are few reasonable explanations for the darkening heavens, but perhaps it was the result of massive amounts of dust and smoke from the first three Trumpet Judgements ^{v.6-11}. Whatever the cause, the result will be a radical (temporary) drop in the global temperatures.

The darkness created by the 4th Trumpet Judgement is an increase in the darkness of the 6th Seal Judgement ^{Revelation 6:12}, but will be completed by the 5th Bowl Judgement ^{Revelation 16:10}. The total darkness of the 5th Bowl will be a duplication of the 9th Plague of Egypt ^{Exodus 10:21-23}.

The 1st Trumpet: aimed at earth (1/3 of trees destroyed), 2nd Trumpet: sea (1/3 fish, ships), 3rd Trumpet: fresh water (1/3 rivers, springs) & 4th Trumpet: sun, moon, stars (1/3 darkened). These first four trumpet judgements are sometimes referred to as the Judgement of Thirds.

Announcing the Last Three Trumpets: *Woe! Woe! Woe! (8:13)*

8:13 A high-flying eagle cried out: "Woe! Woe! Woe!" as a "loud" proclamation of the horrible intensity of the last 3 Trumpet Judgements ^{Revelation 9:1-19, 11:15} on the unsaved. The "inhabitants of the earth" ^{Revelation 3:10, 6:10, 8:13, 11:10, 13:8,12,14, 17:2,8} always means unbelievers.

The first four Trumpet Judgements involved natural forces directed at the created universe; however, the next two Trumpets were demonic forces focusing on the unredeemed population.

Revelation 9 *The 1st and 2nd Woes: Hell on Earth*

This chapter has nine "likes" ^{v.2,3,5,7,8,9,10,17,19}, as John struggled with describing what he saw.

The Fifth Trumpet Judgement: *Locusts from the Abyss (9:1-12)*

9:1-2 The **Fifth Trumpet Judgement**: The fifth angel trumpeted in the first "Woe". A "star that had fallen" to the earth opened the Abyss (*abyssos*: pit of the abyss [lit]) with a key he was "given" (later an "angel" opens it and throws Satan in ^{Revelation 20:1-3}). The smoke (of "torment" ^{Revelation 14:9-11}) rose from the Abyss like smoke from a "gigantic furnace" ^{Genesis 19:27-28, Exodus 19:18, Isaiah 34:9-10} and darkened the sky ^{Joel 2:2,10}.

The Last Days: 12 Revelation 8-9

Apparently the *star* of the 5th Trumpet Judgement was Satan, because the star was:

- † A being, referred to as "he" ^{v.2}, so this star is not a celestial body,
- † One of Satan's names is a "morning star" ^{Isaiah 14:12}, and
- † Satan is someone who has "fallen from heaven" ^{Isaiah 14:12, Luke 10:18, Revelation 12:7-9}.

The *Abyss* (also called *Tartarus* ^{2 Peter 2:4}) is the place where:

- † The worst of the fallen angels are retained ^{Isaiah 24:21-22, 2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6},
- † Jesus declared victory over sin/death during His 3 days in the grave ^{1 Peter 3:18-20a},
- † The demons dreaded to be sent ^{Luke 8:26-31},
- † Satan will be bound during the Millennium ^{Revelation 20:1-3,7}.

9:3-6 Locusts with scorpion-like power (venomous stinging tails ^{v.5,10,19}) came out of the smoke and down to earth. The 'locusts' could not "harm" (eat) vegetation, and were told to attack only the people who did not belong to God ^{John 8:47}. Those lacking God's seal ^{Ephesians 4:30, 2 Timothy 2:19} were tormented ^{Joel 2:6} with scorpion-like stings (painful, but not lethal) for 5 months: the normal life cycle of locusts (and the length of the Flood of Noah ^{Genesis 7:24}). The tortured people experienced such incredible pain that they wanted to die, but God would not allow it to happen ^{Job 3:20-22, Jeremiah 8:1-3}.

9:7-9 The locusts resembled horses ^{Joel 2:4} (symbolizing royal power), with golden crowns ^{Revelation 4:4} (*stephanos*: victor's crown) (victorious stature) and faces similar to humans ^{Daniel 7:8} (intelligence) and hair like a woman ^{Song of Songs 4:1, 7:5-6} (attractive, seductive). In addition, they had lion-like teeth ^{Joel 1:6} (fierceness), iron-like breastplates ^{2 Chronicles 18:33} (invincibility) and their wings were deafening like the sound of "many horses and chariots rushing into battle" ^{Joel 2:5, Jeremiah 47:2b-3a} (intimidation).

9:10-11 The locusts had tails (similar to false prophets ^{Isaiah 9:14-15}) with scorpion-like stingers for tormenting unbelievers for 5 months ^{v.4-5}. The "angel of the Abyss" was the king of these locusts, and the King's name was *Abaddon* ^{Psalms 88:11, Proverbs 15:11} in Hebrew (destruction ^{Job 28:22}) or *Apollyon* in Greek (destroyer). Other than a title/name, there is little evidence to determine who this "angel" is: Satan or high-ranking demon?

Please forward questions/concerns about these notes to ron price, 505-294-4743, ron@hopeinchristnm.com.

The Last Days: 12 Revelation 8-9

Locusts are grass-hopper-like insects that descend in swarms so thick they can block out the sun and wipe-out all the vegetation in their way. However, the locusts described here ^{v.1-11} are not regular insects, but were unquestionably demonic beings, because:

- † An insect-type locust naturally eats vegetation, but these locusts did not ^{Revelation 9:4},
- † After the plague of locusts in Egypt (8th plague), God promised: never again ^{Exodus 10:13-14},
- † Ordinary locusts have no kings ^{Proverbs 30:27a}; however, these have a king ^{Revelation 9:11},
- † These locusts came from the home of demons, the Abyss ^{Isaiah 24:21-22, 2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6}.

The fifth trumpet judgement was a "brief" glimpse of hell, because:

- † The Biblical images of rising smoke ^{Genesis 19:27-28, Exodus 19:18, Revelation 9:2} are very similar to the descriptions of the actual hell ^{Isaiah 34:9-10a, Revelation 14:9-11, 19:3},
- † Only the unbelievers (unsaved) were stung (tormented) ^{Revelation 9:4, 14:11, 20:11-15},
- † Nothing (e.g., death) to relieve the pain (torment) ^{Isaiah 34:9-10, Luke 3:17, Revelation 9:6, 14:11, 20:10}.

9:12 A quick reminder that only one of the three horrible "Woe" judgements was done.

The Sixth Trumpet Judgement: *200 Million Horsemen* (9:13-19)

9:13-15 The **Sixth Trumpet Judgement**: The sixth angel ushered in the next "Woe". A voice was heard from the "horns of the golden altar" ^{Exodus 30:1-3} (considered a place of mercy ^{1 Kings 1:49-51}). The voice from the altar horns commanded the sixth angel to release the four "bound" angels (first mention – they must have been fallen angels, because they were bound) at the Euphrates River ^{Revelation 16:12} (the eastern boundary of the Promised Land ^{Genesis 15:18, Joshua 1:4}). The angels were released exactly at the time appointed by God the Father ^{Daniel 8:19, Psalm 102:13, Matthew 24:36, Acts 1:7}.

9:16 John heard the size of the military force: two hundred million. This is apparently a very specific number ^{Revelation 7:4}, as opposed to a vast, unspecified number ^{Revelation 5:11}.

9:17 John saw a vision of horses with heads like lions ^{Proverbs 30:30, Joel 1:6} and breathing fire, smoke and sulfur ("brimstone") ^{Revelation 11:5}. The riders had fiery breastplates.

Fire, smoke, sulfur always indicate God's judgement ^{Psalm 11:6, Isaiah 30:33, Ezekiel 38:22, Revelation 21:8}.

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9:18-19 About 1.75 billion people (one-third of mankind) were killed by the plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur from the mouths of the horses. The "horses" not only had power in their mouths, but also in their tails (in other words, both directions were covered).

Based on the non-animal-like description of the horses, there are two main interpretations of who are in the vast army described here. These are: (1) the horses and riders are demonic or (2) John did his best to describe modern warfare, with the the riders being men and the horses representing modern combat vehicles (for example, helicopter gunships).

With the one-fourth of mankind killed in the seal judgements ^{Revelation 6:8}, half of the population of the world (about 3.5 billion people) died in the Tribulation up to this time.

Rebellious Mankind: *Pride over Repentance* (9:20-21)

9:20-21 The remaining pagans refused to repent of ^{Romans 2:5, Revelation 2:21, 6:15-17, 16:9-11} or stop being involved in their sins (see below), even in the face of these judgements.

The phrase "the rest of mankind" clearly refers to unrepentant sinners. Therefore, it seems as if John is using the word "mankind" to generally represent the unsaved, and so it can be inferred from the text that the "horses and riders" did not attack/kill any Tribulation saints.

Here are the five most prominent sins the "inhabitants of the earth" refused to repent of:

Worship of Demons and Idols: placing a higher priority than God on a demon ^{1 Corinthians 10:19-21} or an idol ^{Deuteronomy 4:27-28, Psalm 115:2-8, 135:15-18, Jeremiah 1:16, Daniel 5:23, Micah 5:13, Romans 1:18-25}.

Murder: the ultimate result of the devaluation of life ^{Exodus 20:13, Matthew 5:21-22}.

Magic Arts (*pharmakon* ⇒ pharmacy): engaging in spiritual/occultic practices, frequently involving mind-altering drugs ^{Isaiah 47:9b-15, Micah 5:12, Ephesians 5:18, Revelation 18:23b-24}.

Immorality (*porneia* ⇒ pornography): participation in any sexual activity ^{1 Thessalonians 4:3-8}, spiritual relationship ^{Matthew 12:38-39} or both ^{Revelation 17:1-5} that are outside the Biblical bounds (represents the essence of the breakdown of physical and spiritual family structures).

Thefts: the lack of respect for people and property (absence of honesty) ^{Exodus 20:15}.