

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Revelation 8:7-9:12 | Session 14 | The Trumpet Judgments

In the book of Revelation, there are seven pairs of visions given to John. The first pair of visions pertains to events that are taking place in Heaven, and the second part of the pair concerns events taking place on Earth.

- 1.1 | The First Vision in Heaven (4:1-5:14).
- 1.2 | The First Vision on Earth (6:1-7:8).
- 1.3 | The Second Vision in Heaven (7:9-8:6).
- 1.4 | The Second Vision on Earth (8:7-11:14).

1.4 THE SECOND VISION ON EARTH (8:7-11:14) | THE FIRST SIX TRUMPETS



The first four seals are precursors to the seven-year Tribulation. Seal number five is the consolidation of the entire Tribulation, and seal number six takes the reader to the time of the end and the coming of the Son of Man, Jesus. Seal number seven takes the reader back to the Tribulation and commences a new series of judgments to fill in the details of Seal number five. These judgments are initiated by the seven Trumpets followed by the seven Vials. The entire Tribulation, therefore, comes under the Seventh Seal.

Remember that Revelation is not linear; it jumps forward and backward. The Trumpet and Vial Judgments, however, are continuous once they begin. They are only interrupted by information that shows why they are necessary.

1.4.1 THE FIRST TRUMPET (8:7)

The Lord revealed to the Old Testament Prophet Joel details of the Tribulation and this first Trumpet judgment. He said, “*And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke*” (Joel 2:30). Unless we try and spiritualize this, there is no other way to take this except literally.

How God will do this and how hail and fire can be mingled with blood is unclear. But in the plagues of Egypt, as recorded in the book of Exodus (9:24), there was a similar plague; *fire mingled with hail*. And earlier, the Nile River and all the water sources were turned to blood (Exodus 7:19). Certainly, God will perform this great wonder again. The result will be **a third part of the trees** burned, along with all the **green grass**.

1.4.2 THE SECOND TRUMPET (8:8,9)

We can be certain when John uses an analogy because he tells us. Here he says not a mountain, but **As it were a great mountain**, something like a **mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea**. The **sea**, however, is literal since John does not say *something like a sea*. What is this that John sees? A massive meteor? A nuclear explosion? Or, a supernatural act from God (more likely, in my opinion)? We don’t know, but to John, he could only describe it as a **great mountain**. The result is that **a third part of the sea became blood...the third part of the creatures...in the sea...died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed**.

1.4.3 THE THIRD TRUMPET (8:10,11)

There fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp. The name of the star is called Wormwood. The word **wormwood** is one of those words that cannot be interpreted except by context. In this case, it could be construed as *bitterness* since the result is that **the third part of the waters became wormwood, and many died of the waters because they were made bitter**.

1.4.4 THE FOURTH TRUMPET (8:12)

It was prophesied in Genesis 1:14 that the sun and the moon were to be *signs*. Luke 21:25 quotes Jesus, “*And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations...*” (also Matthew 24:25; Mark 13:29). It shouldn’t come as a surprise that God will show signs in the sky again during the Tribulation. The result is that **the third part of the sun...moon...and stars** will be affected. Day and night cycles will be disrupted.

1.4.5 THE THREE WOES ANNOUNCED AND THE FIFTH TRUMPET (FIRST WOE) (8:13-9:12)

Verse 1—

The word **woe** is an interjection and is an *exclamation of grief*, as in “*woe is me!*” An angel (messenger) introduces the three woes. Modern translations state *an eagle flying through the midst of heaven*. This is due to a *textual variant* between the Textus Receptus and the Critical Text. **Angel** fits best in the context of this verse and the book of Revelation. In other passages where there is no textual variant, angels speak or say **with a loud voice** (for example, Revelation 14:6; 19:17). There is no need to take this as an eagle. Either way, it does not change the message of **Woe, woe, woe**.

The interpretive rule we want to use in the book of Revelation is *to interpret everything literally* unless the literal translation makes no sense or we are told otherwise. Here, **a star fallen from heaven unto earth** makes sense, but then it says, **to him, was given the key of the bottomless pit**. We know this is not a literal star; it represents someone. It could refer to Satan, whom we will see in Revelation 12:9, who is cast down to the earth. Jesus also spoke of Satan falling from heaven (Luke 10:18). The text doesn't tell us, but whoever it is, **to him was give the key of the bottomless pit**.

Verse 2—

The Greek word translated **bottomless pit** is *abussos* or abyss. It means a deep gulf or chasm in the earth's lowest parts. It is separate from *hades, Sheol, or hell*. It is a place of **smoke** and fire. It is where demonic forces are imprisoned (As we will see later; Revelation 17:8; 20:1-3).

The angel opened this pit, and **the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit**.

Verse 3—

Demonic forces are being released from the bottomless pit, **out of the smoke locusts upon the earth**. These are not common locusts since the insect locust does not have a king—in verse 11, their king is named. They are called locusts but are likely supernatural and have great power.

Verse 4—

It seems these supernatural locusts were designed for a different purpose than simply eating vegetation. Instead of devastating plant life, these locusts have human beings in sight. While they have power, it is limited. God always holds demonic forces in check (See Job 1:12). These **locusts** are instructed not to hurt the men **with the seal of God on their foreheads**. All other humans are the target.

Verse 5,6—

They are limited in how far they can go in afflicting humans. Their **torment** will not be deadly but for **five months**, so painful that **men will seek death, and shall not find it**. Men **shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them**.

Verse 7,8,9,10—

Their **likenesses...were like to horses prepared for war...with crowns on their heads like unto gold, and their faces were as the faces of men**. Their size is not given. **They had hair, like women's...teeth like lions'**.

Breastplates...like iron. They have wings that sound like **chariots** pulled by **horses running to battle**. And their power, **sting**, was in **their tails**.

Verse 11—

Their **king...which is the angel of the bottomless pit: Abaddon** in Hebrew and **Apollyon** in Greek. The word refers to *a Destroyer*.

Verse 12—

One woe is past, and behold; there come two woes more hereafter. The second woe at the completion of the sixth trumpet (11:14), and the third and most terrible of the three in 12:12 when Satan is cast down to the earth in his last-ditch effort to eradicate the Jews.