

Revelation A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #20

12/06/2006

The Judgment of God, The Great Tribulation, The Great Day of God's Wrath

Revelation 8:13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

Following the fourth "Trumpet Judgment" the sounding of the trumpets is suddenly interrupted with an ominous sign. John saw and heard another angel flying in heaven crying out in a loud voice, **"Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!"**

As if the previous four plagues, plus the trauma and destruction of the seven **"Seal Judgments,"** were not frightening enough, the cry of this angel indicates that the intensity and devastation of the following judgments is to be much greater. It is a shocking announcement. These are called **"The woe judgments."** They describe the last three **"Trumpet Judgments."** Many Bible scholars place these in the last half of the Tribulation Period because of their horrific nature, but to do that seems to place an unnatural twist upon the interpretation of these things. The **"Two Witnesses"** will be introduced to us in 11:3 where we are told that they prophesy for **"a thousand two hundred and three score days."** This is an obvious indication that their ministry is during the first half of the Tribulation Period because their ministry is introduced, described and finished in chapter eleven.

Revelation eleven two refers to the Gentiles being in charge of the Temple for **"forty two months,"** which would be **"the times of the Gentiles"** of which Jesus spoke (Luke 21:24) and which is described a number of times in the book of Daniel (7:25; 9:27; 12:11), but the introduction of Anti-Christ does not appear until Revelation 13 where we are told that he is given power to blaspheme God for **"forty two months,"** or three and one half years, (13:5). This is also the **"abomination of desolation"** to which Jesus referred in Matthew 24:15 and which Paul described in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12. It appears clear that, since the time of the **"Two Witnesses"** is during the first half of the seven year **"Tribulation Period,"** and **"the times of the Gentiles"** is during the last half of that period, that the three **"Woe judgments"** happen during the last portion of the first three and one half years.

Before we leave this chapter it is important to note that the **"Woe judgments"** are pronounced upon those who are **"inhabitants of the earth."** God uses a specific Greek word to tell us something about the recipients of these judgments. The Greek word translated **"inhabitants"** is **kataoikeo** (2730) which means **"to dwell somewhere permanently."** It is contrasted with another word, **paroikeo** (3939), which means **"to sojourn, to be a stranger, to dwell temporarily."** The choice of words and contrast is significant. These judgments are pronounced upon those who consider the world to be their home. They have no place in heaven, no home there and don't want to dwell there. The other word refers to someone who is not at home in this world, to someone who has a home in heaven. One other place where **kataoikeo** appears in Rev. 13:8 where it refers to those who worship the Anti-Christ. The conclusion is that God specifically and justly pours out His judgment upon those who have chosen to be His enemies and to worship Anti-Christ instead of Him.

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Any attempts to identify this mass and what it does and how it does it is futile. It is particularly fallacious to attempt to attribute this to some irresponsible act of pollution on the part of man. God does this. Nothing that man can do can simulate this form and extent of destruction.

Revelation 8:10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

Revelation 8:11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

“And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp.” Once again notice the specific language, **“as it were”** to indicate that this earthly invasion from the heavens may not be anything known to man today or behave like anything known to man as it burns. While it could be possible for God to send a meteor or some other heavenly body to collide with the earth from outer space, this **“star”** seems to have such a peculiar nature that it even has a name, **“Wormwood.”** The word **“Wormwood”** literally means the deadly liquor ingredient known as absinthe, from the Greek word [absinthos](#) (894). It is a poison of great strength. Whatever the nature of this it was very poisonous and a huge number of men died from the poison in the waters.

Apparently, whereas the first mass to fall upon the seas must have been a solid mass, this intruder seems to have broken up and scattered its fiery, poisonous substance as it fell upon one third of the fresh waters and springs on the earth from which man derives his drinking water.

Revelation 8:12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

While the analysts and government leaders of the world are still reeling from the effects of the first three plagues, suddenly a more mysterious one takes place. The **“fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars.”** Exactly what this means and how it happens is beyond us. A humanistic explanation of this is impossible. The sun gives off light from the burning of its elements. The moon and stars are reflective bodies. Precisely how the burning of the sun can be reduced by one third and the reflective ability of the moon and stars be affected by one third is beyond human, scientific explanation. But, God is not understandable by man nor does He have to give an account or explain His actions to man. It is sufficient that He tells us it will happen.

The emphasis upon **“one third”** is indicative of the planned and orderly process of God's judgment. In this chapter we have seen four plagues affecting **“one third”** of the earth. In chapter nine we will see **“one third”** of the people on the earth die in one day (Rev. 9:15,18).

Jesus, in His discourse on Mount Olivet (Matthew 24:29) had spoken about special signs in the heavens: **“Immediately after (with) the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken.”**

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Revelation 8:6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

Revelation 8:7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

This is a most solemn moment. The hush of silence is over. The prayers of the saints have been heard. The Lord's order has been given. The angels come to attention and prepare to carry out their assignments. The **"trumpets"** do not introduce symbols, but reality. The plagues to be poured out upon the earth are literal plagues.

Notice that there is a correlation between these plagues during the **Tribulation Period** and the plagues that God poured out upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians as recorded in the book of Exodus. Those were literal and so are these.

Each of the first three involves the use of fire, suggestive of the final destination of the wicked.

"Hail and fire mingled with blood" is cast out upon the earth. Hail comes only from God's heaven and fire has both a cleansing and destructive nature. Here, one third of all the green vegetation on the earth is to be consumed by fire. When God poured out His seventh plague upon the Egyptians the hail destroyed every tree and every blade of green grass on the land that belonged to the Egyptians, but did not hurt even one tree or blade of grass on the land of the Israelites (Exodus 9:23-26). That was literal and so is this.

Revelation 8:8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

Revelation 8:9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

"And the second angel sounded." The sea which covers most of the earth's surface is affected next. Notice the precise language used by John. He does not say that a mountain was cast into the sea. **"As it were a great mountain"** indicates that some great mass, unidentifiable by man, but like a mountain, is cast into the sea. It is something that is literal, but not identifiable to John. The best way to describe it is to compare it to a great mountain.

Whatever this is, it is a huge literal mass that is not known to man at this time. It is a mass with chemical and toxic properties. It is something that God does. It transforms one third of the seas into blood and kills and destroys one third of all living creatures in the seas as well as one third of all the ships in the seas. God has created the seas to normally function as great "cleansing machines," to cleanse the earth of various toxins, but now God does something to the seas that is beyond the ability of the seas to cleanse. In this plague, one third of all living things in the seas die, but later, everything in the seas will be killed by another of God's plagues (Rev. 16:3).

Again, as God had used the rod in Moses' hand to turn the water into blood (Exodus 7:17-20), it could be that He uses His **"Two Witnesses"** to turn the seas into blood (Rev. 11:6). How God does it He does not explain, neither does He need to do so. The seas are His and it is within His authority to do with them as He so pleases.

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Lesson #20
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To understand the role of the “seven trumpets” we need to remember that this **Tribulation Period** has a special Jewish flavor to it. We should turn back to the Old Testament to understand the role of the trumpets which is explained in Numbers 10:1-10 where God instructed Moses to make two silver trumpets. In Numbers 10:9 we are told that the trumpets were to be blown when Moses led the people into battle. Whereas the opening of the seals on the little book signified the authority of Jesus, as owner of all of creation, to bring forth judgment upon that which belongs to Him, the blowing of the trumpets signifies His authority to go to war against those who have declared themselves to be His enemies.

Revelation 8:3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

Revelation 8:4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

“Another angel” is not Christ. At this point He is no longer serving in the role as intercessor for the church for the church which is in heaven. While, in the Old Testament, Christ did appear as an angel (Genesis 18), He is now in His glorified body and never again appears as an angel.

We have been told that God hears our prayers and always answers them. Our prayers, which ascend into heaven, are not always answered in the manner and time we desire. However, our prayers for justice along with the prayers of the martyred saints (Rev. 6:9-11), are going to be answered. They are poured out upon the golden altar of God's throne, with the smoke of their incense ascending up before God. God does hear and answer our prayers if we do not regard iniquity in our hearts” (Psalm 66:18)!

Revelation 8:5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

The “censers” which had previously held the prayers of the saints were filled with the symbols of judgment: fire from the altar which, cast out upon the earth, was accompanied by “**voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.**”

The “**voices**” indicate the intelligent purposes and direction of God. God is in charge. This is not the purposeless activity of nature.

“**Thunderings, and lightnings**” always accompany and signify an approaching storm. The storm of God's judgment was about to be poured out upon this sinful and wicked earth.

The “**earthquake**” is one of the most fearsome forces in nature and is just one of the weapons God will use against man. There is absolutely no defensive measures man can take to protect himself from the destruction that results from the earth opening up and swallowing whatever is in its path.

Interestingly, in our very day, many God-rejectors, humanists and evolutionists seem to think that man can affect or control nature. During the Tribulation Period it will be very ironic for these, who consider themselves to be so smart and powerful, to be the very victims of God's wrathful weapons of His nature. They will be destroyed by them and be utterly helpless to do anything about it. God is in control, not man. Finally, God's fearful and awesome judgment upon wicked man is about to begin and His weapons will be those which He has created and which obey His every command.

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Remember the series of “**sevens**” in Revelation. There are three series of seven judgments. The first series is the “**Seal Judgments,**” of which we are now coming to the last one. Then there will be the series of seven “**Trumpet Judgments,**” which begin in this Chapter in verse seven. Then, there will be the series of seven “**Bowl Judgments,**” which we will see in chapter sixteen. Out of the seventh “**Seal Judgment**” flows the next series of judgments, the “**Trumpet Judgments.**” Out of the seventh “**Trumpet Judgment**” flows the next series of judgments, the “**Bowl Judgments.**” Thus, God gives to us a sequential flow of the judgments which He pours out upon the earth during this seven-year Tribulation Period.

God's pattern is also to have an **Explanatory Interlude** between the sixth and seventh seal judgments and also between the sixth and seventh trumpet judgments in order to explain other matters taking place during these periods of judgments. In the **Explanatory Interlude** between the sixth and seventh “**Seal Judgments**” God told us about the worship service which will take place in the Millennial Kingdom after the Tribulation Period and the Second Coming of our Lord. In the **Explanatory Interlude** between the sixth and seventh trumpet judgments, God presented the “**Seven Key Personalities**” which we find in chapters twelve and thirteen.

Following the **Explanatory Interlude** in chapter Seven, which described the worship service in the Millennial Kingdom, we come to the opening of the Seventh of the Seal Judgments in Chapter eight, verse one.

Revelation 8:1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

With the opening of the “**Sixth Seal Judgment**” (6:12-17) a horrible scene was presented of God using His forces in nature to rain down judgment upon the sinful earth to the extent that men tried unsuccessfully to hide themselves from the wrath of the Lamb in the rocks and caves and concluded with their recognition that the great day of the Lamb's wrath had come. The prophet Nahum had vividly prophesied this day (Nahum 1:5-7) and it has now come.

The awesomeness of what had just taken place had its impact upon the viewers in heaven. Considering what had just happened and, perhaps with a glimpse of what was next, produced an atmosphere of silence and awe in heaven. Silence in heaven implies something great and awesome.

The Lamb, whose attributes of love and mercy had previously been exhibited, was now seen in more of His fullness — as also One Who possessed great wrath. Our Lord had created all things, all of the elements of this creation. He had created them for the benefit of man. Each and every one of these elements belonged to Him and obeyed Him. Now, He was beginning to do what is called in the Old Testament “**a strange thing**” (Isaiah 28:21).

What is strange about God? He is a God of love, but He is also a God Who judges. It is a role that belongs to Him, but not one which He enjoys. Concerning the just punishment of the wicked He told us in Ezekiel 18:32 that “***I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth ...***”

Revelation 8:2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.