



I AM

# THE TRUMPET JUDGMENTS BEGIN

Revelation 8

The Daily Word from Laura Martin

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The seventh seal brought half an hour of silence in the throne room of heaven, and an angel offered incense and the prayers of the saints in the presence of God. John's vision continued as the first four angels blew the first four trumpets. The trumpets brought forth havoc on earth— fires destroying a third of the earth, a third of the sea filling with blood, a third of all freshwater becoming bitter, followed by darkness covering a third of the sun, moon, and stars. Finally, an eagle cried out in warning: "Woe! Woe! Woe!" Things were about to get *even worse* with the three remaining trumpets.

Do you find it difficult to imagine living through the images in John's vision? Yes, the reality is you could possibly experience this turmoil, even as a follower of Christ. However, even in the face of *darkness*, even in the face of *turmoil*, even in the face of *destruction*, *the Lord promises His presence*. He is your protector, and He is your hope. No matter what you will face— darkness, bitter water, or fire—the Lord promises to never forsake you. He is in your midst. He will be your strength when you are weak. Today, share the Lord's promises so others can find security, even in the midst of turmoil. Go!

*"I looked again and heard an eagle flying high overhead, crying out in a loud voice, 'Woe! Woe! Woe to those who live on the earth, because of the remaining trumpet blasts that the three angels are about to sound!'"*

*—Revelation 8:13*

## FURTHER SCRIPTURE

- *Deuteronomy 31:6* — "Be strong and courageous; don't be terrified or afraid of them. For it is the LORD your God who goes with you; He will not leave you or forsake you."
- *Proverbs 18:10* — "The name of Yahweh is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are protected."
- *Revelation 8:1–2* — "When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. Then I saw the seven angels who stand in the presence of God; seven trumpets were given to them."



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Teaching Notes

## INTRO

Revelation can sometimes feel like drinking from a fire hydrant. It is difficult to take everything in! It's encouraging to remember the promise of Revelation 1:3: "The one who reads this is blessed, and those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep what is written in it are blessed, because the time is near." The promise of being blessed just by reading Revelation will be repeated seven times throughout the book.

Our phrase for the book of Revelation is *I AM*. If you understand that Jesus is the beginning and the end, you will be blessed. Don't avoid Revelation because you aren't sure of your position on the end times. To be ready for the return of Christ, we have to embrace the hard things. Our hope in this study of Revelation is to help demystify the intimidating words like premillennial and pre-trib.

Over the last few days we've studied about six seals that would be unleashed over a period of seven years. We see 1,260 days mentioned a lot in Revelation. This is significant because it is 3.5 years, or half of the entire seven-year period known as the Tribulation. At this point in John's vision, the Antichrist is on the earth. A lot has already been happening. There have been famines, war, and death. Crazy things have happened in nature. Once the first 1,260 days pass, the second half of the Tribulation is known as the Great Tribulation. In the Great Tribulation, a great multitude of people from every tribe, tongue, and nation will come to Christ. It is likely they will be martyred too, because of the depiction of the great multitude worshipping God before the throne in Revelation 7.

Jesus was the person who opened all of the seals; six of them at this point. After the sixth seal was broken, there was a pause in the story in which an angel was given authority to seal 12,000 people from each of the 12 tribes of Israel for a total of 144,000 people. Being sealed meant no one could touch them.

## TEACHING

Revelation 8:1-6: Wiersbe noted that the first six verses depict a time of preparation.<sup>1</sup> Jesus opened the seventh seal, and heaven was quiet for "about half an hour" (v. 1). The quietness of heaven is similar to the calm before the storm. Everything that will happen from here isn't that great for the people of earth.

Seven angels were given seven trumpets (v. 2). The heavenly silence was broken by an angel who stood before the altar with a gold incense burner that was offered "with the prayers of all the saints" (v. 3). The angel offered the prayers "in the presence of God" (v. 4) before filling the incense burner with fire and throwing it to the earth (v. 5). As a result, there were "rumblings of thunder, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake" (v. 5). Remember, prior to this the 144,000 had to be sealed.

Revelation 8:7: Four trumpets were blown in the remainder of chapter 8. Trumpets normally served as a warning, an announcement of an incoming army, the pronouncement of a new king, or the coming of the Year of Jubilee.

At the first trumpet, "Hail and fire, mixed with blood, were hurled to the earth" (v. 7). As a result, "A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all of the green grass was burned up" (v. 7). Wiersbe characterized this as a judgment on the earth.<sup>2</sup> *Nelson's Commentary* pointed out that this was a combination of the first and the seventh plagues in Exodus.<sup>3</sup>

Revelation 8:8-11: At the second trumpet, "Something like a great mountain ablaze with fire was hurled into the sea" (v. 8). As a result, "A third of the sea became blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed" (vv. 8-9). Wiersbe characterized this as a judgment on the seas.<sup>4</sup> At the third trumpet, "a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from

<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Ephesians-Revelation*, v. 11 (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 1989), p. 592.

<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, p. 593.

<sup>3</sup> Earl Radmacher, Ronald B. Allen, and H. Wayne House, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999), p. 1746.

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heaven” on a third of the “rivers and springs of water” (v. 10). This star was named “Wormwood.” As a result, “A third of the waters became wormwood. Many of the people died from the waters, because they had been made bitter” (v. 11). MacArthur notes that “Wormwood” was “a bitter, poisonous substance from a root that causes drunkenness and eventually death.”<sup>5</sup> Wiersbe characterized this as a judgment on fresh waters.<sup>6</sup>

Revelation 8:12–13: At the fourth trumpet, “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” (v. 12). As a result, “A third of the day was without light, and the night as well” (v. 12). In verse 13, after the fourth trumpet, a talking eagle flew overhead and pronounced woe “to those who live on the earth, because of the remaining trumpet blasts that the three angels are about to sound!”

## CLOSING

The seventh seal has now been broken. In this process, the prayers of the saints, a heavenly offering, has been hurled at the earth. Angels sounded their trumpets in warning at God’s judgments that would fall to the earth.

In response, we should urgently share the good news of Jesus so that people might repent and avoid the coming judgment.

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<sup>5</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), pp. 2009–2010.

<sup>6</sup> Wiersbe, p. 593.



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Reading Guide Questions

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1. The opening of the seventh seal was immediately followed by what (Revelation 8:1)? Do you think that during this period of silence, the incense and prayers of all the saints were going up before God? If so, why is that significant before anything happened after the seventh seal was opened?
  2. Why do you think the angel filled the censer with the fire of the altar and threw it to earth? What are your thoughts about the peals of thunder, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake? (Revelation 8:5; 11:19; 16:18)
  3. What judgment did the first trumpet bring to the earth?
  4. With the second trumpet, something like a burning mountain was thrown into the sea. Do you think this might be a reference to the Mediterranean Sea, which John would have known, or is it more likely "oceans"? What do you think "Wormwood" means in this context? (Revelation 8:11)
  5. What proportion of the earth is affected with each of the first four trumpets? Did John record any repentance by the people up to this point?
  6. What did the Holy Spirit highlight to you in Revelation 8 through the reading or the teaching?



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