

1. **Introduction: Trumpet judgments:** Before the trumpets of judgment sounded, *“another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne,⁴ and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel.⁵ Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.”*

- God is Sovereign over all things even forces of evil. Nothing happens unless God allows it. He restrains evil and judges wickedness but sometimes withdraws His restraining power.
- Though much of the world today thinks otherwise, Jesus will come back as He promised to judge and punish wickedness. He will ultimately separate the redeemed from the wicked.

2. **Revelation 8:6-7:** *Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.⁷ 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 4 trumpets trigger stunning judgments that rip apart the ecology and natural order of the earth. The plague released by first trumpet recalls the 7th plague on the Egyptians where God sends lightning, thunder, and a huge hailstorm that devastates the land, but here there is also fire and blood.
- In Scripture, fire and blood are often associated with judgment (Joel 2:30-31; Ezek. 21:32; 38:22)
- Thus, the first trumpet judgment releases hail and fire mixed with blood on the earth. The result is a natural disaster of epic proportions. A third of the earth and trees and all the green grass are burned.
- That only 1/3rd of the earth is burned is taken to mean a severe but limited judgment. In the seal judgments, Death and Hades were given authority over 1/4th of earth to kill with sword, famine, pestilence, and by wild beasts. With the trumpet judgments, the extent of disaster increases from 1/4th to 1/3rd and will increase again with the bowl judgments.

2. **Revelation 8: 8-9:** *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.⁹ A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.*

- A great mountain burning with fire could refer to a volcano erupting. G.K. Beale argues that the image is from Jeremah 51 where Babylon is described as a burning mountain, which suggests this burning mountain image is related to the judgment of a wicked kingdom.
- The 2nd trumpet judgement causes destruction of 1/3 of sea-life and 1/3 of ships, a result especially bad for Rome since it depended heavily on ships of the sea for transport of food and other goods.

3. **Revelation 8:10-11:** *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.¹¹ 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 judgment begins with a blazing star, named “wormwood” falling from the sky to pollute 1/3 the fresh water supply. “Wormwood” is a shrub producing a bitter dark green oil used to kill intestinal worms. Precisely what the “blazing star” represents is not known.
 - Thus, wormwood came to symbolize bitterness and sorrow. The wormwood judgment turns 1/3 of the fresh water supply poisonous killing many people as wormwood could do.
4. ***Revelation 8:12: 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 1/3 imagery of the first four trumpet judgments reveals God’s restraint. During the Egyptian plagues, for example, God stated to Pharaoh ***“For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth”*** (Exodus 9:15).
 - The fourth trumpet judgment resembles the plague of darkness imposed on Egypt. Darkness in the OT is often associated with God’s judgment. (Amos 5:18; Joel 2:2)
 - Isaiah 13:10 describes the Day of the Lord for Babylon as a time when “the stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light, the sun darkened, and the moon will not give its light.”
 - In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus says that just prior to the coming of the Son of Man, ***“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).
 - Cosmic events are used symbolically to signify divine judgment and removal of God’s blessing. Cosmic events in the Olivet Discourse likely signify the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple, the end of Jewish sacrificial worship and government, a million people killed and 100,000 enslaved.
 - The New Testament often associates darkness with demonic activity. The fourth trumpet anticipates that demonic activity will increase in intensity in the fifth and sixth trumpet judgment. G.K. Beale suggests the darkness signifies transition to more demonic activity with the fifth and sixth trumpet.
 - Natural events, like smoke from fires started in the first 3 trumpet judgements, could reduce the light from sun, moon, and stars. Another possibility is debris from volcanic eruptions.
 - Before the final three trumpets sound, three “woes” of increased-intensity are pronounced by a great eagle (possibly one of the four living creatures from 4:7 who is before the throne of God and who, at God’s instruction, sends out judgment upon the earth and its people).
 - Beale notes the judgment of darkness is likely figurative connoting judgment for human and angelic idolatry. Likely it is a theological metaphor based on spiritual darkness as Paul uses it.
5. ***Ephesians 4:17-18: Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.***
6. ***Romans 1:21: For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.***

7. **Revelation 8:13:** *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 eagle’s message is a warning, while it is possible, to “flee to Jesus.” Only “in Christ” is there protection. The 3 woes signify the remaining 3 trumpet judgments will be far worse than the first 4.
 - The first 3 trumpets affected people only indirectly, but the 3 woes (trumpets 5-7) are directed at *“those who dwell on the earth.”* The woes’ target is people who ignore God. Such judgment on people ignoring Him is for their refusal to honor and give Him thanks as God.
 - The judgments in Revelation are not from impersonal forces. They are decreed by God and carried out under His sovereign control. Even today, God’s wrath is on those who ignore Him. Paul says:
8. **Romans 1:18, 26-32:** ¹⁸ *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.* ²⁸ *And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.* ²⁹ *They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips,* ³⁰ *slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,* ³¹ *foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.* ³² *Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.*
9. **Revelation 9:1-2:** *And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit.* ² *He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft.*
- Falling stars sometimes represent demons or Satan (e.g., Jude 13; Luke 10:18; Rev 12:9). In this case, the star that descends to earth is an angelic messenger sent from God as an agent of judgment.
 - God, in sovereign control of everything in the universe, gives this angel-star the key to the cover that seals the shaft of the Abyss (a term used 7 times in Revelation to refer to the abode/prison for the demon locusts (9:1-2; 2 Pet 2:4); Apollyon, king of the locusts (9:11); the beast (11:7; 17:18); and Satan (20:1, 3)).
 - The cover was opened and sun and air were darkened by smoke from the shaft as from a furnace.
10. **Revelation 9:3-5:** *Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth.* ⁴ *They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.* ⁵ *They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone.* ⁶ *And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them.*

- This judgment resembles both the 8th plague against Egypt and the locust invasion of Joel 1-2. Here the hoard of scorpion-locusts is intent on torturing anyone not protected by the seal of God (7:1-8).
 - So, judgment was against unsealed people only. The scorpion-locusts were permitted torment unsealed people for 5 months but were not permitted to kill them. Intensity of pain and suffering was like that of a scorpion sting. The agony was so bad that those stung sought ways to die but death was not possible for them.
11. **Revelation 9:7-11**: *In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle: on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, ⁸ their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth; ⁹ they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. ¹⁰ They have tails and stings like scorpions, and their power to hurt people for five months is in their tails. ¹¹ They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon.*
- The gruesome appearance of these attackers from the Abyss together with their origin in the Abyss and the demonic character of their leader (Apollyon or destroyer), point to the demonic origin of the scorpion-locusts.
 - Believers' souls are secure "in Christ." They are sealed against all forms of harm.
 - Since Adam and Eve's first sin, their acquired sin nature has been transmitted to all their descendants leading to concrete, real sins such as idolatry, immorality, and unbelief.
 - God's wrath at sin is stored up not only for the final accounting at the last day, but His wrath is seen in war, psychological and emotional torment, murder, rape, and on and on. Precisely how God's wrath impacts individuals and nations is not revealed, but the reality of His wrath is easily seen.
 - Despite our constant attempts to understand Him, in the final analysis, God is unfathomable. Paul summed up the situation as well as it can be when he talked of the mystery of Israel's salvation.
 - **Romans 11:33-36**: *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ³⁴ "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" ³⁵ "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" ³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*
 - Remember that through all upheavals, God's desire is for sinful people to repent. If they don't, they will bear the consequences of their beliefs and actions.
 - Through it all, God's people (those "in Christ") will never directly suffer God's wrath. Their eternal being, their souls, that which will live in God's presence forever, is sealed and protected against harm.
 - **Revelation 9:12**: *The first woe has passed; behold, two woes are still to come.*
 - **Next**: Begin at Revelation 9:13.