

December 1, 2019  
Revelation 8:1-13

**Outline: I am grateful to the Outline Bible for this outline.**

- I. Verse 1: silence in Heaven
- II. Verses 2-4: prayers of the saints
- III. Verse 5: sample of what is to come
- IV. Verses 6-13: events accompanying the Trumpet blowing
  - a. **First trumpet (8:6–7): One-third of the trees and grass are burned by hail and fire mixed with blood.**
  - b. **Second trumpet (8:8–9): One-third of the marine life and ships are destroyed by a burning object that falls into the waters.**
  - c. **Third trumpet (8:10–11): One-third of the fresh waters are poisoned, killing many people by a falling object known as Bitterness.**
  - d. **Fourth trumpet (8:12–13)**
    - i. *The action* (8:12) : One third of the sun, moon, and stars are darkened.
    - ii. *The aftermath* (8:13) : A flying eagle now warns the earth in regard to the final three trumpet judgments.<sup>1</sup>

Verse by verse:

- I. Verse 1: silence in Heaven
  - a. We have been in an interlude and we have seen this great picture of worship in Heaven, now we are about to begin the 7<sup>th</sup> seal.
  - b. In verse 1 they open the seal.
  - c. Silence in Heaven for about a half an hour.
  - d. Silence could mean many things. It could have to do with worship.
  - e. There are some ramifications for this time reference. John is in Heaven and if there are measurements of time that means there still is time in Heaven. Randy Alcorn has written that before.
  - f. Why did things become silent?
- II. Verses 2-4: prayers of the saints
  - a. Verse 2 tells us what John saw.
  - b. Was John seeing this or these during the silence? Or, is this now after the silence?
  - c. He now sees the 7 angels who stand before God, see Rev. 1:6 about that.
  - d. Verse 3: now there is another angel:
    - i. Standing at the alter,
    - ii. This angel has a golden censer,
    - iii. Incense was given to him, much incense,
    - iv. He is to add this incense to the prayers of the saints,
    - v. This is all on the golden alter before the throne.

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<sup>1</sup> H. L. Willmington, [\*The Outline Bible\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Re 8:6–13.

- e. Remember the idea of an Old Testament pool of imagery, The NET Bible shares: *A golden censer was a bowl in which incense was burned. The imagery suggests the OT role of the priest.*<sup>2</sup>
- f. Verse 4 tells us what happens to that: the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.
- g. In Ex 30:1 we see instructions about making an alter of incense.
- h. It seems that this is a symbolic image of prayers going to God.
- i. Depending how literal this is these could be the prayers of the saints during the tribulation period.
- j. The ESV Study Bible shares: *The Angels and the Trumpets: Warnings of Coming Wrath. A brief vision of God's heavenly temple, focusing on a golden incense altar, opens a new cycle of seven visions, each of which is introduced by an angelic trumpet blast. Fiery devastation descends from God's altar in response to his people's pleas. It despoils the entire environment inhabited by rebellious humanity: land and sea, rivers and springs, lights in the sky overhead—yet divine restraint and forbearance delay the final cataclysm, prolonging the opportunity for repentance. Visions of woe initiated by the last three trumpets disclose intensified demonic activity and global violence as the consummation approaches, at which time "the kingdom of the world" will have "become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ" (11:15), and every rebel against his reign will endure eternal condemnation and punishment.*<sup>3</sup>
- k. The ESV Study Bible continues:

*Rev. 8:3–5* The earthly OT sanctuary had two altars, one for bloody sacrifice in the courtyard and the other for smoky incense inside, adjacent to the veil into the Most Holy Place (*Ex. 27:1–8; 30:1–10*). John sees only one altar in heaven, fulfilling both functions (*Rev. 6:9; 8:3*). As incense was associated with the prayers of the saints in the earthly sanctuary (see *Ps. 141:2; Luke 1:9–11*), so it is in John's visions (see *Rev. 5:8*). *Not only martyrs under the heavenly altar (6:9–10) but also suffering saints on earth cry out for justice. Therefore fire from the altar, from which the saints' prayers rise, will be flung to earth in judgment, indicating that the judgments to follow answer the prayers of the saints.*

## The Seven Trumpets of [8:7–11:19](#)

Restrained judgments from heaven are sent in response to the saints' prayers.

<b>Trumpet</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Result</b>
Trumpet 1	<a href="#">8:7</a>	hail, fire, and blood cast on land—one-third burned
Trumpet 2	<a href="#">8:8–9</a>	burning mountain cast into sea—one-third bloodied
Trumpet 3	<a href="#">8:10–11</a>	burning stars fall on rivers and springs— one-third embittered

<sup>2</sup> Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Re 8:3.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.esv.org/Revelation+8/>

Trumpet 4	<u>8:12</u>	sun, moon, and stars—one-third darkened
Trumpet 5 (1st Woe)	<u>9:1–11</u>	demons from the Abyss
Trumpet 6 (2nd Woe)	<u>9:13–21</u>	invasion from the east—one-third of mankind killed
Trumpet 7 (3rd Woe)	<u>11:15–19</u>	kingdom of world becomes kingdom of God <sup>4</sup>

### III. Verse 5: sample of what is to come

- a. Verse 5 seems to be a response to the prayers of the saints.
- b. The angel seems to be responding to the prayers by bringing judgment.
  - i. Censer filled with fire from the alter
  - ii. Throws it to the earth
  - iii. Follows:
    1. Peals of thunder
    2. Sounds and flashes of lightning
    3. And an earthquake (singular).

Eze 10:2 *The LORD said to the man dressed in linen, “Go between the wheelwork underneath the cherubim. Fill your hands with burning coals from among the cherubim and scatter them over the city.” He went as I watched.*

### IV. Verses 6-13: events accompanying the Trumpet blowing

#### a. **First trumpet (8:6–7): One-third of the trees and grass are burned by hail and fire mixed with blood.**

- i. Verse 6 seems to be a simple declaration verse. It is telling what they are about to do.
- ii. Verse 7: the first sounds and so does calamity: hail, fire, blood mixed in and they were thrown to the earth.
- iii. A third of the earth was burned up. A third of the trees were burned and all of the grass.

Ex 9:23ff *When Moses extended his staff toward the sky, the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire fell to the earth; so the LORD caused hail to rain down on the land of Egypt. <sup>9:24</sup> Hail fell and fire mingled with the hail; the hail was so severe that there had not been any like it in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation. <sup>9:25</sup> The hail struck everything in the open fields, both people and animals, throughout all the land of Egypt. The hail struck everything that grows in the field, and it broke all the trees of the field to pieces. <sup>9:26</sup> Only in the land of Goshen, where the Israelites lived, was there no hail. <sup>9:27</sup> So Pharaoh sent and summoned Moses and Aaron and said to them, “I have sinned this time! The LORD is righteous, and I and my people are guilty.*

Zec 13:8 *It will happen in all the land, says the LORD, that two-thirds of the people in it will be cut off and die, but one-third will be left in it.*

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<sup>4</sup> ESV Study Bible

- iv. ESV Study Bible: *Angels Sound Seven Trumpets*. Revelation's third sevenfold series (with a second interlude in [10:1–11:14](#)) portrays judgments sent from heaven in response to the saints' prayers. Judgments revealed by the first four trumpets harm the same spheres that will be destroyed when the first four bowls are poured out ([16:1–9](#)): earth, sea, rivers and springs, and sky. The damage done with the trumpets is limited to "a third": God restrains his wrath, while giving foretastes of total devastation to come if rebels ignore his warnings. "Woes" introduced by the last three trumpets are increasingly severe ([8:13](#); [9:12](#); [11:14](#)). **Futurists (see [Introduction: Schools of Interpretation](#)) generally see these trumpets and plagues as signifying actual calamities to be suffered by unrepentant unbelievers during the great tribulation.** They may be either supernatural judgments or symbols for events caused by man (such as nuclear, biological, or chemical warfare). See note on [6:1–8](#) for the "four-plus-three" format of the judgments
- v. The ESV Study Bible continues: *At the first trumpet blast hail and fire, mixed with blood, are thrown from the heavenly altar to earth, consuming a third of the earth and its trees, and all green grass. **This reproduces the seventh plague on Egypt (Ex. 9:24).*** The first four seals ([Rev. 6:1–8](#)) signified the Lamb's power to use human aggressors to punish persecutors of his people. *Here God's providential rule makes use of human combatants' military strategy of ruthless defoliation (cf. [Deut. 20:19–20](#)) to call rebellious nations to repentance.*

### **Progressively Increasing Destruction**

- [6:8](#) Seals      Death and Hades given authority over one *fourth* of the earth
- [8:7–12](#) Trumpets one *third* of all affected
- [16:3](#) Bowls      every living creature<sup>5</sup>

- b. **Second trumpet (8:8–9): One-third of the marine life and ships are destroyed by a burning object that falls into the waters.**
- i. Verse 8: Now the second angel...
  - ii. Notice the words, "something like" and remember that John is trying to describe what he cannot describe.
  - iii. It is hard to say what is happening here, but we have a lot of room for the imagination.
  - iv. A great mountain burning with fire thrown into the sea... **a volcano? A comet or asteroid??? A bomb???**
  - v. Verse 9: this is now cataclysmic: a 3<sup>rd</sup> of the creatures in the sea died and a third of the ships destroyed.

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<sup>5</sup> ESV Study Bible

- vi. Dr. Constabel shares: Following the blowing of the second trumpet something “like [cf. 6:13] a great mountain” that was on fire came crashing down from heaven into the waters of one or more of the earth’s seas. This resulted in a third of the oceans, perhaps a third of the ocean waters, becoming blood. Whether the water became blood, or became a substance like blood, or simply looked like blood is difficult to determine from the text (cf. Exod. 7:20–21; Ps. 78:43–44; Joel 2:31; Zeph. 1:3). Literally it could become blood.<sup>314</sup> A third of the creatures living in the sea died, and a third of the ships on the sea perished.
- vii. “As of January 1, 1981 there were 24,867 ocean-going merchant ships registered. Imagine the shock waves that would hit the shipping industry if 8,289 valuable ships were suddenly destroyed! And what about their cargoes!”<sup>316</sup>
- viii. The ESV Study Bible shares: *The second trumpet reveals a great mountain, burning with fire, thrown into the sea, turning a third of it to blood and destroying a third of its creatures and ships. Volcanic eruptions such as Vesuvius and bloody battles on the Mediterranean show the Lamb’s sovereignty over another sphere of human life. The first plague on Egypt turned the Nile to blood (Ex. 7:20–21). The imagery echoes Jer. 51:25, 42, where God announced that he would make Babylon, Zion’s destroyer, a “burnt mountain” and cover it with the sea.*
- c. **Third trumpet (8:10–11): One-third of the fresh waters are poisoned, killing many people by a falling object known as Bitterness.**
  - i. Things keep getting worse.
  - ii. Verse 10: the angel sounds the trumpet and the destruction comes.
  - iii. There are many thoughts as to what this star was. It cannot be a star, at least I believe. It says, “Great star.” As we know a literal star would destroy the earth before it even gets close. This could be a meteor or an asteroid, or a bomb. Maybe this is chemical warfare???
  - iv. A different take is given by Dr Mulholland: **8:10–11 a great star fell from the sky.** *Isaiah seems to have originated the image in his description of the coming fall of Babylon: “How you are fallen from heaven, O shining star, son of the morning! You have been thrown down to the earth, you who destroyed the nations of the world” (Isa 14:12). This image was also used by Jesus: “I saw Satan fall from heaven like*

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<sup>314</sup> 314. I understand that the only chemical difference between sea water and blood is that blood contains an iron molecule that is absent in sea water. Perhaps this mountain-like mass (a meteor?) will provide that molecule resulting in a change in the chemical composition of these seas.

<sup>31</sup> 315. Wiersbe, 2:593.

<sup>6</sup> Tom Constable, [Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Re 8:8.

lightning” (Luke 10:18). First Enoch has the same image of one star (Satan) who falls to earth and then is joined by other stars (1 Enoch 86:1, 3).<sup>7</sup>

- v. “wormwood” was a chemical. One source shares: *Wormwood refers to a particularly bitter herb with medicinal value. According to L&N 3.21, “The English term wormwood is derived from the use of the plant as a medicine to kill intestinal worms.” This remark about the star’s name is parenthetical in nature.*<sup>8</sup>
- vi. The ESV Study Bible shares: *Wormwood is a plant native to Europe, Asia, and northern Africa, with a bitter-tasting and poisonous extract (also [6:12](#)).*<sup>9</sup>
- vii. Compare this to the Nile River turning to blood in Ex. 7:24. The ESV Study Bible continues: *Besieged cities could be driven to surrender by sheer thirst (see [2 Kings 20:20](#); [2 Chron. 32:30](#); [Ps. 46:4](#)). If [Rev. 8:10](#) is understood literally, it may represent a great meteorite falling to earth.*<sup>10</sup>

**d. Fourth trumpet (8:12–13)**

- i. *The action (8:12) : One third of the sun, moon, and stars are darkened.*
- ii. Verse 12 makes me think, “wow”! This would be disastrous.
- iii. Verse 12 could happen from a meteor or meteorite or asteroid or a volcano. Yellowstone is a super-volcano. Maybe the sun is not literally destroyed but it is like the sun is destroyed. Meaning, the sun and the moon’s light is taken away by clouds, dust, debris in the sky. This could also happen by nuclear war.
- iv. The ESV Study Bible once again gives insight: *The darkening (at the fourth trumpet) of a third of the sun, moon, and stars, obscuring their light for a third of the day and the night, **resembles the ninth plague on Egypt (Ex. 10:21–23).** Since stars are still in the sky, this judgment apparently precedes the shaking of heaven and earth portrayed with the sixth seal ([Rev. 6:12–14](#); but see note on [6:13](#) for another view). The means causing this darkness may be billowing smoke from burning cities, but the ultimate source is the Lamb’s reign.*
  - 1. Apparently, the writers of the ESV Study Bible take this to be out of chronological order from chapter 6.
  - 2. That does make sense.

Joel 2:10 and 31:

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<sup>7</sup> M. Robert Mulholland Jr., “[Revelation](#),” in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 486.

<sup>8</sup> Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Re 8:11.

<sup>9</sup> ESV Study Bible

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

*The earth quakes<sup>33</sup> before them,<sup>34</sup>  
the sky reverberates.<sup>35</sup>  
The sun and the moon grow dark;  
the stars refuse to shine.<sup>36</sup> <sup>11</sup>*

*<sup>2:31</sup> The sunlight will be turned to darkness  
and the moon to the color of blood,<sup>82</sup>  
before the day of the LORD comes—  
that great and terrible day! <sup>12</sup>*

v. *The aftermath* (8:13) : A flying eagle now warns the earth in regard to the final three trumpet judgments.<sup>13</sup>

**IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary:**

*The eagle was a symbol of imperial Rome carried by the legions and used on Herod's temple, but that symbolism is probably irrelevant here. Perhaps more to the point, eagles were used as messengers in some texts (4 Baruch); they could symbolize God's protection (Rev 12:14), or—most likely—the term here means (as it often does, including in the LXX) “vulture,” indicating a bird of prey (see 19:17), and thus imminent doom. “Midheaven” (NASB, NRSV) is the level of heaven between God's throne and the lowest atmosphere (in the minimal three-heaven scheme of some ancients—on which see comment on 2 Cor 12:2–4—but also in some other schemes, e.g., in 2 Enoch).<sup>14</sup>*

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<sup>33</sup> **sn** Witnesses of locust invasions have described the visual effect of large numbers of these creatures crawling over one another on the ground. At such times the ground is said to appear to be in motion, creating a dizzying effect on some observers. The reference in v. 10 to the darkening of the sun and moon probably has to do with the obscuring of visibility due to large numbers of locusts swarming in the sky.

<sup>34</sup> **tn** *Heb* “before it.”

<sup>35</sup> **tn** *Heb* “trembles.”

<sup>36</sup> **tn** *Heb* “gather their brightness.”

<sup>11</sup> Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition; Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2005), Joe 2:10.

<sup>82</sup> **tn** *Heb* “to blood,” but no doubt this is intended to indicate by metonymy the color of blood rather than the substance itself. The blood red color suggests a visual impression here—something that could be caused by fires, volcanic dust, sandstorms, or other atmospheric phenomena.

<sup>12</sup> Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition; Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2005), Joe 2:31.

<sup>13</sup> H. L. Willmington, [The Outline Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Re 8:6–13.

NASB New American Standard Bible  
NRSV New Revised Standard Version

<sup>14</sup> Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Re 8:13.