

“The Worst is Yet to Come” (Revelation 8:1-13)

Contemporary society, for the most part, has very little knowledge of Scripture. Occasionally on the news, however, a reporter describes a flood’s devastation or a famine as “of biblical proportions.” Sometimes I have heard the phrase “a plague of biblical proportions” with reference to some swarm of insects or some other natural calamity. To describe recent disasters in such extreme language makes me curious as to how reporters will describe the plagues God sends just prior to Christ’s return.

God sent the original “plagues of biblical proportions” on Pharaoh and the Egyptians. These ten plagues recounted in Exodus 7-12, brought about the release of Israel from bondage. Beginning in Revelation 8, John foresees a series of divine plagues that are the ultimate in biblical proportions. He sees them as parallel to the plagues of Egypt, but worldwide. Both sets of plagues are warnings offering the ungodly an opportunity to repent. Both sets of plagues are divine judgments that go beyond any natural explanation. Both sets result in salvation and victory for the people of God.¹

1. Stand and kneel before God (8:1-6). In 8:1, John writes, “**When² the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about³ half an hour.**” This is what’s called a “dramatic pause.” Considering the catastrophic events of chapters 4-7, the sudden and deafening silence in heaven is startling (cf. 7:10). The impact of such silence must have been impressive, for until now, everything that has been done has been done loudly.⁴ Although heaven is quiet Bible students are not. Some male Bible students have suggested that there are no women or children in heaven at this point. They believe that this is the only way to explain how there can be 30 minutes of silence. While that may be slightly amusing, I have found many men to be the worst of culprits when it comes to talking; but that’s another sermon.

Why was there “**silence**”⁵ in heaven for approximately 30 minutes?⁶ The silence intensifies a sense of anticipation and awe for God’s awesome judgments to follow (cf. Hab 2:20; 3:3; Zeph 1:7-8, 15, 17-18; Zech 2:13).⁷ It is the calm before the storm of judgment to come, as a few moments of calm precede the most devastating destruction of a tornado or hurricane.⁸

Let me ask you a painful question: How many of you remember being spanked? If your parent was an effective disciplinarian, he/she made you wait for it. Good parents understand the art of psychological warfare. I remember... I mean, you probably remember when your dad said, “Go into the bathroom, go downstairs, or upstairs. I’ll be there in a few minutes.” I could almost feel the pain. Seriously, I don’t know which was worse: the emotional anguish of waiting or the physical pain of discipline. I concluded, with Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers that, “*The Waiting is The Hardest Part.*”

In a similar way, God unleashes His power with an expression of silence and delay to ensure that He has the full attention of everyone in the universe.

In 8:2, John writes, “**And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.**” These seven angels are those “**who stand before God**” (cf. Rev 1:4; 3:1; 8:6; 15:1). They are always prepared, always available, and always obedient to carry out God’s will. In the same way, we are called to always and immediately obey God’s decrees. In the Lord’s Prayer, better called the Disciples’ Prayer, Jesus exhorted his disciples to pray, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt 6:10).

In what area of your life is the Lord urging you to be obedient to Him? Are you willing to stand at attention and say, "Lord, whatever You ask?" Will you yield that area of your life that you've been holding back?

John tells us that, apparently, God gives these angels seven trumpets⁹ of judgment by which they will execute His will. Trumpets play a major role in God's dealings with His people.¹⁰ They assembled the Israelites for war, journeys, and special feasts (e.g., Num 10:9-10). A trumpet was sounded at Mount Sinai when the law was given; another was sounded at Jericho when the walls fell down; another when a king was anointed (Exod 19:19; Lev 23:24; 25:9; Josh 6:1, 13-16). They announced coming disaster (Amos 3:6-8). Here they announce divine judgment in the day of the Lord (cf. Joel 2:1; Zech 1:14-16).

In 8:3-6, God has something else to show us. What is our place in all this? Do we have any role to play? Do we make anything happen? In 8:3, "**Another¹¹ angel came and stood at the altar.**"¹² The vision at this point is very reminiscent of priestly service as it took place in Israel's tabernacle and temples. The Old Testament priest burned incense on the altar of incense that was symbolic of worship and the prayers of the people rising to God. This angel is "**holding a golden censer.**" A "**censer**"¹³ is a bowl or fire pan designed for holding live coals and incense. The adjective "**golden**" describes the value of this censure. This angel is standing before God "**holding**" this very precious gift. He is then "**given...much incense.**" What is "**incense**"? Incense is a precious and valuable perfume. It is esteemed. The text doesn't explicitly say who gives this angel the incense. Yet, in Revelation, the Father is the One who "gives" or "grants" all things. Why was this angel given all of this incense? Verse 3 states "**...so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne.**" God desires incense to be "add[ed] to the prayers of all the saints."¹⁴ Now wait just a minute. If incense is added to prayer, the incense will be diluted or worse yet, contaminated.¹⁵ There are so many prayers that are prayed with selfish or impure motives. These are not precious or beautiful. This verse seems to suggest that even these less noble prayers are precious to God. The incense is added to the prayers of "**all**" (*pas*) the saints. Not merely the super spiritual but every "**saint.**" By the way, what is a "saint"? A saint is any and every believer in Jesus Christ. "Well," you may say, "I'm more of a sinner than a saint." That may be true, positionally speaking, but because of the work of the Son, the Father sees you as perfect.

This verse teaches that there is something pleasing and fragrant about the prayers of the saints that God enjoys (cf. Rev 5:8; cf. 2 Cor 2:14-16). Have you ever pondered this long and hard? The Lord longs to hear your prayers. Your prayers are special to Him. Your prayers are unique. No one else's prayers can substitute for yours. The Lord loves it when we call out to Him. He wants to converse with us. He wants to hear the expressions of our heart. What makes our prayers especially beautiful and meaningful to God and others? The answer is simple, yet profound. Our prayers are especially meaningful and fruitful when our lives match our prayers.

John goes on to tell us that the prayers of all the saints are "**on the golden altar which was before the throne.**" What a powerful picture! God esteems and enjoys our prayers so much that He keeps them before Him. In 8:4, John describes further God's great pleasure with our prayers: "**And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.**" The smoke of the incense went up before God symbolizing His receiving the prayers of His people (Ps 141:2).

Sometimes you may wonder if your prayers are reaching God or if they have any impact. Prayer can at times feel like a lonely venture, especially when we don't see immediate answers. But we see here that not only are our prayers supremely important to God, but they actually are closely connected to setting in motion the final judgments of God. So we can be certain that when we pray in faith and according to God's will, we will receive an answer; maybe not on the same day on which they are offered, but at least

in that day which John saw, if not before.

After the beautiful descriptions in 8:1-4, John writes, **“Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake”** (8:5). There seems to be a connection between these prayers that go up and the judgment that comes down. Verse 5 says that the same censor that carried the prayers up to God is dipped down into the fire of the altar and flung earthward. The saints who were martyred prayed that God would avenge them (6:9-11). Their prayers are about to be answered. The storm is about to begin. There is noise and thunder and lightening and earthquakes. The seven angels prepare to blow their trumpets.

This verse reminds me of Luke 12:49 where Jesus says, “I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled!” Both of these contexts are referring to God’s judgments. “Thunder, lightning, and earthquakes” are all symbols of God’s power and wrath (cf. Ezek 10:2-7; Hag 2:6). This storm apparently implies the awful calamities that will come in the trumpet and bowl judgments that are ahead. The censer thus became a symbolic instrument of judgment in response to prayer.

Verse 6 informs us: **“the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them.”** Once again, God’s judgment was about to fall. It is worth noting that all the trumpet judgments proceed out of the seventh seal judgment (8:1). The seven trumpets are not the same as the seven seals. Both the bowl judgments and the trumpet judgments are within the seal judgments. These judgments are one series in three movements. In other words, when the Lamb broke the seventh seal John saw not just one judgment but a whole new series of judgments.¹⁶ Therefore, they are more severe than the first six seal judgments. Their object is to lead hostile unbelievers to repentance, but few will repent (9:20-21).

The remainder of chapter 8 gives us the first four trumpet judgments. The first four trumpet judgments fall on creation and the last three on mankind (9:1-21).

2. Recognize and respond before God’s wrath is revealed (8:7-13). In 8:7, **“The first sounded,¹⁷ and there came hail and fire,¹⁸ mixed with blood,¹⁹ and they were thrown to the earth; and a third²⁰ of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.”** The scene shifts again, this time from heaven to earth. This first trumpet blast signaled the beginning of a judgment that involved hail,²¹ fire, and blood (cf. Joel 2:30-31).²² Hail is only mentioned here in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, hailstorms are a common element in God’s judgment (e.g., Josh 10:11; Job 38:22-23; Ps 78:47; 105:32-33; 148:8). Why were these judgments **“mixed with blood”**? “Blood” is a key word here. Blood is the symbol of vengeance. Blood and fire were often combined as symbols of judgment (e.g., Isa 9:5; Ezek 21:32; 38:22).

This is similar to the seventh plague on the Egyptians (Exod 9:13-35) in which Moses raised his staff to the sky and God sent hail mixed with lightning and thunder. This proved to be the worst storm in the history of Egypt (Exod 9:18) and it destroyed all vegetation. This judgment in Revelation resulted in the fiery destruction of one-third of the earth (cf. Ezek 5:2; Zech 13:8-9). This would also refer to the various crops of the earth like wheat, barley, rice, corn, etc.²³ Besides the obvious ramifications of losing a third of all lumber-producing trees which will effect everything from home prices to the availability of paper, this first judgment will also possibly have a significant impact on our most basic need—oxygen, which is a by-product of trees and vegetation.

Can you imagine how the destruction of a third of all trees²⁴ and the destruction of grass will upset the balance of nature and the supply of food and oxygen? Most of us have seen the results of terrible forest fires when even the ground was charred black and the all the vegetation was destroyed.

Yet none has seen anything like this image. Even the ravaging of large forest fires in the western United States is partial. We are supposed to picture one-third of all the great forests of the world (the Amazon, the Congo, Yosemite, Yellowstone) burned down. It is a natural disaster beyond anything imaginable. Think of all the firefighters of the world trying to stem fires thousands of times greater than anything ever known.²⁵ This may be a temporary problem (9:4) but it will still have a tremendous effect on the environment.

The opening of the seventh seal introduces the second series of judgments. The trumpet judgments are more intense and severe than the seal judgments. The seals will wipe out one-fourth of the world's population: 1.5 billion. The trumpets will decimate another third of the world and its population: 3 billion. The bowl judgments will leave only a fraction of the world's initial population intact. What a principle for believers and unbelievers alike to consider. Revelation is a reminder that human wickedness will not go unnoticed or unpunished.

Some have taken the judgments of Revelation and interpreted symbolically rather than literally. However, if you consider any of God's judgments in the Old Testament, especially the ten plagues in the book of Exodus, there is no reason to believe that these judgments are to be interpreted in any other way than in their literal and obvious sense. It would be very inconsistent to understand these judgments symbolically and interpret the plagues in Egypt plainly and actually.

A point worth noting is that the Old Testament prophets understood that the miracles of Egypt were to be repeated in the future (e.g., Isa 10:22-25; 11:12-16; 30:30; Jer 16:14-15; 23:7-8; Ezek 38:22; Joel 2:30; Mic 7:15). At several points the prophet Amos uses God's miraculous work of deliverance from Egypt as a reference point for the way He will deal with His people in the future (cf. Amos 2:10; 4:10; 8:8-9; 9:5-7).²⁶

In 8:8-9, **“The second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea;²⁷ and a third of the sea became blood, and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.”** Let's be careful to note exactly what this says and what it does not say. It does not say that a great mountain, burning with fire, was cast into the sea. Remember, mountains were moved in Revelation 6:14 and then disappear altogether in 16:20. Rather, it says, “Something *like* a great mountain . . .” It was a huge mountain-like ball of fire, which was cast into the sea.²⁸ It is the perfect picture of what we know today about asteroids. Asteroids are literally mountains hurling through space. There is one family of asteroids called the Apollo group with an orbit that crosses directly across the earth. These asteroids are masses of rock, which vary in size from just a few miles to several hundred miles. Some scientists make ominous predictions of asteroids hitting the earth. They say the impact will be like many hydrogen bombs, causing massive death within hundreds of miles of their collision. According to NASA scientists, an asteroid of four kilometers broad could wipe out half the world's population.²⁹ Yet, we must remember the words of Psalm 46:2-3, “Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains quake at its swelling pride.” Selah.

John writes that a third of the sea **“became blood.”** This could be caused supernaturally, as with the Nile River in Exodus 7:20, or perhaps it could be caused by the tremendous amount of death resulting in

blood poured into the sea. The sea becoming blood would simply mean or refer to a tremendous loss of life.

Undoubtedly, the impact of this enormous object will generate global tsunamis, tidal waves, floods, and unprecedented destruction. The movie, *Deep Impact*, is about asteroids that create a huge tidal wave or tsunami that sweeps over all the global, coastal communities and wreaks terrible destruction. Likely the greatest damage to the shipping industry will take place in harbors geographically closest to ground zero. So if you intend to still be on earth after the rapture and you enjoy oceanic cruising, I would suggest that you get your fill of it early on in the tribulation period, while your ship is still afloat (cf. Isa 2:11-22).

The first plague in Egypt (Exod 7:17-18) made the water undrinkable, killed all the fish, and had a terrible stench. In this verse a third of the living sea creatures died. These creatures constitute the lowest and most basic component of the world's food chains. Their destruction will produce a significant domino effect on many higher forms of life. We know this is only a precursor to the second bowl judgment, found in Revelation 16:3-6, that will result in the death of every living thing in the sea (cf. Zeph 1:3).

Just try to imagine how the world's nations will deal with disposing of billions of marine corpses. Although John does not mention it, many land animals perished as well. If a third of the world's drinkable water is gone, we can only imagine the dreadful impact on the animal kingdom.³⁰ This will greatly impact the world ecologically and economically, considering that three-fourths of the earth's surface is water.

In 8:10-11, **“The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters.”³¹ The name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.** Next a falling star or meteorite³² fell from heaven on the fresh water sources on earth.³³ It too was on fire (cf. 8:7-8). The name of this star was **“Wormwood”³⁴** which means “bitter” (cf. Deut 29:18). It was a bitter herb that was a symbol of divine punishment (Jer 3:15; 9:15; 23:15; Lam 3:15, 19; Amos 5:7). “Wormwood” is also the name of a demon in C.S. Lewis' book, *Screwtape Letters*. This star kills many men and causes a third of the fresh waters of the world to be bitter.

This judgment recalls the bitter water that God gave the rebellious Israelites to drink in the wilderness, which the tree cast in, turned sweet (Exod 15:23-25), as well as the first Egyptian plague (Exod 7:21). This is a reversal of the miracle at Marah, recorded in Exodus 15:25, where God made bitter waters sweet for the people of Israel as they traveled through the desert. A very important principle from this passage is: sin brings bitterness. We must also remember that God has the power to make sweet waters bitter and bitter waters sweet.

When is the last time you thanked God for trees, for grass, for the ability of food to be distributed, for predictable cycles, for water? These are all gifts from a loving God to an undeserving world. The coming judgment on the earth's natural resources reminds us of just how gracious God is to us now. He has supplied everything we need for physical life. He has also provided all we need for eternal life. This eternal life is the gracious gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Avail yourself of God's grace before it is too late.

I have great sympathy for many of the environmentalists of our day. Instinctively, they seem to know what the Bible says in Genesis 1; that man has been given dominion over the earth. But we must

recognize that the long-term solution is not passing more laws; it is repenting of our sin and turning to our Creator. The greatest threat to our environment is not carbon monoxide or chemical plants or nuclear reactors. The greatest threat to our environment is sin! While committed Christians should be very conscientious in the way we care for the environment, creation will not be truly liberated and restored to its original state until mankind is right with God.³⁵

While politicians, world leaders, and scientists are attempting to find naturalistic explanations for the catastrophic events and emergency responses to their effects, yet another trumpet is sounded.

In 8:12, **“The fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way.”** In contrast to the first three trumpet judgments against the land, sea, rivers, and fountains of water, the fourth trumpet is aimed against the heavens. It is interesting that it was on the fourth day that God created and made visible to the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars.

This time the trumpet blast announced judgment on a third of the heavenly bodies. Darkness is a common symbol of judgment in the Old Testament, and the day of the Lord was to be a time of darkness (Amos 5:18; cf. Isa 13:6-13; Joel 2:2; Matt 24:29; Mark 13:24). The darkening of the heavenly bodies predicted in this verse also serves to warn of more judgment to come. Evidently, God will cut off light from the sun, moon, and stars and from the earth, by one-third (cf. Exod 10:21-23). The text seems to imply that God will reduce the intensity of light from these sources by one-third (cf. Matt 27:45). Perhaps a partial eclipse or pollution in the atmosphere is in view. Such a reduction in light, and consequently temperature, would have a devastating effect on the earth.

Verse 12 describes an incredible atmospheric phenomenon, which will result in the period that constitutes a day (24 hours), being reduced by one-third to 16 hours.³⁶ There is some similarity between this and the 9th plague upon Egypt (Exod 10:21-23), which brought supernatural darkness to the Egyptians for three days. Jesus promised that the sun and moon would be smitten (Matt 24:29-30; Luke 21:25-28) and that the days would be shortened for the elect’s sake (Matt 24:21-22).

Some interpret the 33% reduction of light as meaning that the daytime lasts for eight hours and the nighttime lasts for 16. However, the wording of this judgment implies an overall reduction of light for these heavenly bodies so that even the daylight hours are darkened to some extent.

It could mean that the sun, moon, and stars will not be seen for several hours of the normal cycle of day and night. But probably what is meant is the intensity of light during the day and night is reduced by a third because of cosmic and atmospheric disturbances (8:7, 8, 10).

The impact of these phenomena is incalculable. World climates will suddenly change. Temperatures will dramatically drop. There will be unpredictable and violent atmospheric storms as well as interruptions to botanical and biological growth cycles since their existence is dependent on light for photosynthesis. As a result, a significant portion of the world’s food supply will be destroyed.

How long will it last? It seems to be temporary, since we are told in Revelation 16:8-9 that this judgment will be reversed to a deadly extreme when the sun will be so intense that the earth and mankind will be scorched due to the intense heat.

A fitting judgment—they rejected the true Light, now the light they had is taken away. They rejected the Water of Life, so water is taken away. If the most dependable things in the world are taken away (the sun rising), on top of poison water and scorched earth, what would be the impact on humans? I can tell you this, insurance companies will be bankrupt.

Amazingly, there will be those who refuse to acknowledge the increasingly obvious fact that God is judging the earth and its inhabitants. But God’s next messenger will be difficult to disregard.

In 8:13, **“Then I looked, and I heard an eagle³⁷ flying in midheaven,³⁸ saying with a loud voice, ‘Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth,³⁹ because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!’”** The phrase **“Then [or “and”] I looked”⁴⁰** signals a new scene in John’s vision. John next saw an eagle flying through the sky and warning those living on the earth to beware of the last three trumpet judgments. This could be a literal eagle.⁴¹ God has given animals the ability to communicate with people in the past (cf. Gen 3:1-5; Num 22:28-30). As a donkey spoke to Balaam, so this eagle, by the power of God, speaks to men. Eagles (or vultures) are birds of prey that approach rapidly and are a sign of disaster (Matt 24:28). Thus this eagle is a fitting herald of God’s judgments to come. Its loud voice further guarantees that everyone on the earth will hear its message. The eagle announces the last three trumpet judgments which are also “woes” (9:12; 10:14). They are especially bad because they have people, rather than the objects of nature, as their targets. There are several examples of double woes in Scripture (18:10, 16, 19; Ezek 16:23), but a triple woe announces an even worse. The objects of these judgments are earth-dwellers, and their judgment is partially in response to the prayers of the tribulation martyrs (cf. 6:10).

As severe as the first four judgments have been, worse is yet to come. The first four attacked nature, with humankind affected indirectly. The next judgments will attack humanity directly. John is saying, “The worst is yet to come. You haven’t seen nothing yet!”

What was the purpose of this proclamation? I believe it serves several purposes. For the reader, this sets the last three trumpets apart from the first four, distinguishing them and intensifying God’s judgment as it progresses. For the hearer of that day, I believe it was not intended to torment men so much as it was to be a turning point for those who were unbelievers. Why should men suffer further when they could turn to the Savior, who has already borne the punishment for their sin? Just as the prophets of the Old Testament called for men to turn from their wicked ways, so this warning of judgment is a message of hope for all who would repent and be saved.

It is a terribly sobering thing to envision what John describes as the final days of the world as we know it. However, there are benefits to understanding and heeding the prophetic future:

1. It brings perspective to what is important in life.
2. It serves as a warning to those who continue in sin.
3. It motivates us to share the truth with others.
4. It assures us of God’s ultimate victory over sin and evil.

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Notes

¹ Kendell H. Easley, *Revelation: HNTC* (Nashville: Holman Reference, 1998), 141.

² Rev 7 introduced additional information between the breaking of the sixth and seventh seals. Now the chronological progression of judgments resumes. The scene John saw continues to be in heaven.

³ Gk. *hos*, an adverb that means, “as, that, how, about.”

⁴ The word “loud” (*megas*) has occurred six times already in the book (Rev 1:10; 5:2, 12; 6:10; 7:2, 10) and will be found 15 times in Rev 8 and beyond (8:13; 10:3; 11:12, 15; 12:10; 14:2, 7, 9, 15, 18; 16:1, 17; 19:1, 17; 21:3).

⁵ Gk. *sige* (cf. Acts 21:40 for the only other New Testament usage). BDAG defines as “the absence of all noise, whether made by speaking or by anything else.”

⁶ There are at least eight other Greek words for “silence” that John could have used. Why did he use this particularly rare word? I’m uncertain. See Louw-Nida Lexicon 33.117-33.125, Electronic Ed.

⁷ The Old Testament writers take “silence” as an anticipation of God’s imminent action (Exod 14:14; 1 Sam 12:16), as the natural response to God’s omnipotence (Isa 41:1; Hab 2:20), or as a fearsome awe in light of His coming judgment (Zeph 1:7; Zech 2:13). Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation: ECNT* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 337.

⁸ Beasley-Murray writes, “Perhaps the silence represents God listening to the prayers of the saints.” George Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation: NCBC* (London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1978), 152

⁹ These trumpets appear to be different from the trumpet of God (1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thess 4:16) and other trumpets mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament (Heb 12:19; Rev 1:10; 4:1), though they too announce God’s working (cf. Ezek 33:3). Dr. Constable’s *Notes on Revelation* (www.soniclight.org 2003 edition), 90.

¹⁰ Cf. Exod 19:16; 20:18; Isa 27:13; Jer 4:5; Joel 2:1; Zeph 1:16; Matt 24:31; 1 Cor 15:51-52; 1 Thess 4:16.

¹¹ The Greek word for “another” is *allos*, “another of the same kind,” and not *heteros*, “another of a different kind.” This indicates this single angel is another angelic being of the same order as the seven.

¹² An altar in heaven is mentioned seven times in Revelation (6:9; 8:3 [2x’s], 8:5; 9:13; 14:18; 16:7).

¹³ Gk. *libanotos*, cf. outside of Rev 8:3, 5, this word is only used in 1 Chron 9:29 (LXX, Greek Old Testament).

¹⁴ The angel received more incense to add to the prayers of the saints already there. This may indicate that the prayers of the tribulation saints (Rev 6:10) joined those of the rest of God’s people requesting God’s justice (cf. Rev 5:8; 9:13; 14:18; Ps 141:2). Dr. Constable’s *Notes on Revelation*, 91.

¹⁵ Exodus 30:34-38 indicates that God considered incense precious.

¹⁶ The seven bowl judgments proceed out of the seventh trumpet judgment in the same way (see Rev 16:1).

¹⁷ Since the angels are specifically mentioned in 8:6 the text only tells us “The first sounded.” In the other trumpet judgments, however, we read “the second angel,” etc.

¹⁸ The Bible records occasions when God used hail or fire to judge his enemies: Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:24); the seventh plague of Egypt (Exod 9); Joshua’s defeat of the Amorites (Josh 10:11).

¹⁹ Some have understood these phenomena to be an electrical storm of some kind. But clearly the nature of this storm is differentiated from anything that could be attributed to natural phenomena when John adds in blood.

²⁰ The word “third” appears 14 times in Rev 8.

²¹ Hail is only mentioned here in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, hailstorms are a common element in God’s judgment (e.g., Josh 10:11; Job 38:22-23; Ps 78:47; 105:32-33; 148:8).

²² Blood and fire were often combined as symbols of judgment (e.g., Isa 9:5; Ezek 21:32; 38:22).

²³ Hampton Keathley III, *Studies in Revelation* (www.bible.org, Biblical Studies Press, 1997), 165.

²⁴ This holocaust included a third of its trees and all of its grass. There are two explanations of how all the grass perishes here but in Rev 9:4 we read that grass exists later. First, the grass may grow again since some time elapses between these two references. Second, it may only be the grass that is green that perishes now and what is now dormant and brown will be green when the events of 9:4 transpire.

²⁵ Osborne, *Revelation*, 351.

²⁶ Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22* (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 16.

²⁷ “The sea” (singular with the definite article) referred originally to the Mediterranean, the sea that virtually defined the Roman Empire.

²⁸ In the New Testament there is a close parallel is found in Mark 11:23, in which Jesus says that faith can say to a mountain, “Be taken up and cast into the sea.” Revelation 8:8 takes the analogy to another level, as the throwing of a mountain “on fire” into the sea is part of end-time events. See Osborne, *Revelation*, 352.

²⁹ Dr. Grant C. Richison, *Revelation* (Austin, TX: Grace Notes), 88.

³⁰ Easley, *Revelation*, 145.

³¹ “Spring of life” is used often in the Old Testament (Lev 11:36; Ps 104:10; 107:33) due to the fact that most of Judah’s water stems from natural springs. Osborne, *Revelation*, 354.

³² The ancients sometimes used “torch” (*lampas*) to describe a meteor shooting through the sky. Thomas, *Revelation* 8-22, 21.

³³ The National Geographic Society has listed 100 major rivers in the world ranging in length from 4,000 miles (the Amazon) to 150 miles (the Rio de la Plata). The U.S. Geological Survey reports 30 large rivers in the U.S. the largest of which is the Mississippi, 3710 miles long. See Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1989), 2:593.

³⁴ The Russian word Chernobyl (the city that suffered the tragic nuclear reactor disaster) means, “Wormwood.”

³⁵ These thoughts have been revised from Anne Graham Lotz, *The Vision of His Glory* (Dallas: Word, 1996), 155.

³⁶ Ryrie believes this means the day-night cycle is changed from a 24-hour day to a 16-hour day. Charles Ryrie, *Revelation: EBC* (Chicago: Moody, 1968), 58-59.

³⁷ Gk. *aetos*, cf. Rev 4:7; 12:14. This word is also used of vultures (Matt 24:28; Luke 17:37).

³⁸ Cf. Rev 14:6; 19:17. The “mid air” means top of the sky—where the sun shines at noon. Easley, *Revelation*, 146. See also Leon Morris, *The Book of Revelation: TNTC* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 125

³⁹ The phrase “those who dwell on the earth” means more than those who live on the earth, because that is where all living people reside. It refers to those that live for the earth and for the things of the earth (See Rev 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10 [2x’s]; 13:14 [2x’s]; 17:2, 8).

⁴⁰ Gk. *kai eidon* cf. Rev 5:1-2, 6, 11; 6:1-2, 5, 8, 12; 7:2; 8:2, 13; 9:1; 10:1; 13:1, 11; 14:1, 6, 14; 15:1-2; 16:13; 17:3, 6; 19:11, 17, 19; 20:1, 4, 11-12; 21:1.

⁴¹ There is a textual debate surrounding this verse. The King James and New King James Versions read “angel” (cf. Rev 12:14).