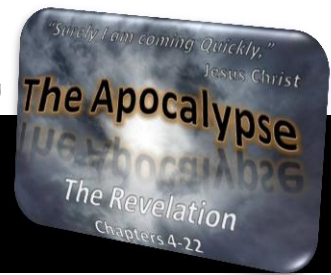


Part 5–The Trumpet Judgments: The Earth and Heavens Judged Revelation 8



Growing up in Iowa it was a normal occurrence to hear tornado sirens and to spot tornadoes from time to time. One of the unique features of a tornado is the silence and calm that comes right before a tornado strikes. One summer our family was in our backyard when a large storm came through and we used the strong winds to fly some homemade kites (yes, I know that was not intelligent!) and just before the heavy winds hit the sky changed colors and there was a silence and calm. At the time I thought this was pretty awesome, but if I were to be in this situation again I would find it ominous and possibly unnerving.

This is the picture we find at the beginning of the trumpets as there is silence in heaven for a half hour and there seems to be a general, ominous peace and silence just before God unleashes divine wrath and judgment upon the earth. Unlike the seal judgments, the trumpet judgments will all bear the mark of supernatural origins.

✚ THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

(1-7)

The use of trumpets by the angels has considerable background in the Scriptures. Trumpets were used in various phases of Israel's economy. They were sounded at times of public assembly, used to direct soldiers in war and to signal important events on the calendar. Trumpets were used on the occasion of the giving of the law, were sounded on the first of the month, and served to announce almost every important occasion (cf. Ex. 19:19; Lev. 23:24; 25:9; Num. 10:2-10; Joel 2:1)¹

Verse 2

As John observed the heavenly scene, he wrote that he **saw the seven angels** to whom **were given seven trumpets**. The fact that these are angels' trumpets distinguishes them from the trumpet of God (1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thes. 4:16) and from other New Testament trumpets (Heb. 12:19; Rev. 1:10; 4:1).

Verses 3-5

In the Old Testament tabernacle a censer made of copper, probably heavy to handle, was used to carry coals from the brazen altar outside the tabernacle to the altar of incense inside. Later, in the temple, Solomon used censers made of gold (1 Kings 7:50; 2 Chron. 4:22).

This is the only reference to censers in the Book of Revelation, though golden bowls full of incense, which probably were not censers, are mentioned in Revelation 5:8. Like the golden bowls of 5:8, however, the golden censer offering incense here is symbolic of **the prayers of all the saints**.

This offering in heaven corresponds to the custom of offering incense on the altar of incense in both the tabernacle and the temple. The censer would hold the coals, and a separate vessel would carry the incense which was to be poured on the coals once the altar was reached. The resulting smoke was typical of prayer ascending **before God**.²

✚ THE BEGINNING OF THE STORM

(8-13)

✚ Trumpet #1—Judgment upon the earth

The Second Trumpet (8-9)

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. Rather, it says "Something like a great mountain ..." The object which is cast into the sea is compared to a great burning mountain. It was a huge mountain-like ball of fire which was cast into the sea. 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.

About 3,500 asteroids have been cataloged, and more are discovered each year. Their orbits are generally very elliptical, with one end closer to the sun than the other. The largest asteroid, Ceres, is about 620 miles (1,000 kilometers) in diameter. Next in size are Pallas, about 332 miles (534 kilometers); and Vesta, about 240 miles (386 kilometers).¹¹⁶

What would happen if even a small asteroid struck the earth? First, as it entered our atmosphere, as with shooting stars, it would begin to heat up and glow white with fire by friction. It would actually begin to burn. Then, when it hit the sea (as this object will if this is something like an asteroid) it would cause tidal waves and devastation for hundreds of miles. The meteorite which fell in Siberia in 1908

²Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:951). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹ The Revelation of Jesus Christ by Dr. John F. Walvoord

devastated over 1,000 square miles. The shock was felt as far away as Europe while trees up to 20 miles away were blown down. Yet the 1908 meteorite was only about 200 feet across—a far cry from one mile across!

One of the most powerful and devastating volcanic eruptions was that of Krakatoa. Its eruption in 1883 was one of the most catastrophic ever witnessed in recorded history and provides us with just an inkling of what the future holds in the time of the Tribulation.

On the afternoon of Aug. 26, 1883, the first of a series of increasingly violent explosions occurred. A black cloud of ash rose 17 miles (27 kilometers) above Krakatoa. On the morning of the next day, tremendous explosions were heard 2,200 miles (3,540 kilometers) away in Australia. Ash was propelled to a height of 50 miles (80 kilometers), blocking the sun and plunging the surrounding region into darkness for two and a half days. The drifting dust caused spectacular red sunsets throughout the following year. Pressure waves in the atmosphere were recorded around the Earth, and tsunamis, or tidal waves, reached as far away as Hawaii and South America. The greatest wave reached a height of 120 feet (36 meters) and took 36,000 lives in the coastal towns of nearby Java and Sumatra. Near the volcano masses of floating pumice produced from lava cooled in the sea were thick enough to halt traveling ships.

Everything on the nearby islands was buried under a thick layer of sterile ash. Plant and animal life did not begin to reestablish itself to any degree for five years. The volcano was quiet until 1927, when sporadic weaker eruptions began. These tremors have continued into the 1990s.¹¹⁷

Other reports have mentioned that it killed 38,000 due mostly from the huge tidal waves.³

Trumpet #2—Judgment upon the seas

According to the 2005 [CIA World Factbook](#), the world total number of merchant ships of 1,000 [Gross Register Tons](#) or over was 30,936. Statistics for individual countries are available at the [List of merchant marine capacity by country](#).⁴

Scientists plumb the depths to ask how many fish in the sea

First global census of marine life logs 230,000 species – but 10-year study by 360 scientists warns of mass extinctions

It has been the biggest and most comprehensive attempt ever to answer that age-old question – how many fish are there in the sea?

Published today, a 10-year study of the diversity, distribution and abundance of life in the world's [oceans](#) attempts just that. The [Census of Marine Life](#), which hopes to

paint a baseline of [marine life](#), estimates there are more than 230,000 species in our oceans.

"From coast to the open ocean, from the shallows to the deep, from little things like microbes to large things such as fish and whales," said Patricia Miloslavich of Universidad Simón Bolívar, Venezuela and co-senior scientist of the COML. The study also covers crabs, plankton, birds, sponges, worms, squids, sharks and slugs.

A team of more than 360 scientists around the world have spent the past decade surveying 25 regions, from the Antarctic through the temperate and tropical seas to the Arctic to count the different types of plants and animals.

The results show that around a fifth of the world's marine species are crustaceans such as crabs, lobsters, krill and barnacles. Add in molluscs (squid and octopus) and fish (including sharks) and that accounts for up to half of the number of species in the world's seas. The charismatic species often used in [conservation](#) campaigning – whales, sea lions, turtles and sea birds – account for less than 2% of the species in the world's oceans.

The surveys have also highlighted major areas of concern for conservationists. "In every region, they've got the same story of a major collapse of what were usually very abundant fish stocks or crabs or crustaceans that are now only 5-10% of what they used to be," said Mark Costello of the Leigh Marine Laboratory, University of Auckland in New Zealand. "These are largely due to over-harvesting and poor management of those fisheries. That's probably the biggest and most consistent threat to marine [biodiversity](#) around the world."⁵

The main threats to date include overfishing, degraded habitats, pollution and the arrival of invasive species. But more problems are around the corner: [rising water temperatures](#) and [acidification thanks to climate change](#) and the growth in areas of the ocean that are low in oxygen and, therefore, unable to support life.

The COML identified enclosed seas such as the Mediterranean, Gulf of Mexico, China's shelves, Baltic, and the Caribbean as having the most threatened biodiversity. "Enclosed seas have the risk that, when you impact it and throw chemicals or other garbage into it, it will not go away so easily as it will from the open ocean," said Miloslavich.

Dense coastal populations of humans also tend to be packed along enclosed seas, meaning increased pollution and extraction of more biodiversity from the water.

The Mediterranean, which contains almost 17,000 identified species, scored the maximum threat rating of five for four of the categories. Scientists studying the Mediterranean identified problems related to increased litter from shipping and munitions across the sea as well as bombs discharged during the Kosovo war.

The Mediterranean also faces problems because of invasive species displacing the creatures that already live there. This sea had the most alien species out of all the 25

³ <http://bible.org/seriespage/first-four-trumpet-judgments-rev-81-13>

⁴ www.wikipedia

⁵ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/aug/02/census-marine-life-sea>

regions surveyed by the COML, with more than 600 (4% of the all species present). Most had arrived from the Red Sea via the Suez Canal.

The most diverse regions identified by the COML are around Australia and south-east Asia. "It's also a hotspot for terrestrial biodiversity as well and this has been known for about 100 years," said Costello.

"It looks like that region with the coral reefs has always had a very high rate of speciation. It also has a very diverse range of habitats – from the deepest areas of the oceans to large areas of shallow seas, which can support coral reefs."

Both Australian and Japanese waters contain more than 30,000 species each and are among the most biologically diverse in the world. Next in line are the oceans off China, the Mediterranean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico.

Apart from algae and the seabirds and mammals that travel around the sea, the COML identified the manylight viperfish (*Chauliodus sloani*) as the most "cosmopolitan" marine creature. Its presence was recorded in around a quarter of the world's seas.

"This inventory was urgently needed for two reasons," said Costello. "First, dwindling expertise in taxonomy impairs society's ability to discover and describe new species. And secondly, marine species have suffered major declines – in some cases 90% losses – because of human activities and may be heading for extinction, as happened to many species on land."

Miloslavich said the COML data would "allow policy-makers to make better and more informed decisions on what areas should be protected for the better management of resources and the ecosystems as well, in order that they keep providing good services."

The results of the survey are published today online at the [PLoS ONE journal](#). More detailed results will be published in October, at which time the COML will confirm how many species it estimates are in the world's oceans.

And for every marine species of all kinds known to science, COML scientists estimate that at least four have yet to be discovered. They said that around 70% of species of fish have been discovered, for example, but for most other groups likely less than one-third are known. As of February, the number of marine fish species known to science stood at 16,764, and was growing at around 100 a year.

Scientists estimate that there are almost 22,000 fish species in the world.

The most fruitful potential areas for discovery include the tropics, deep seas and southern hemisphere.

"At the end of the Census of Marine Life, most ocean organisms still remain nameless and their numbers unknown," said Nancy Knowlton, a biologist at the Smithsonian Institution, leader of the COML's coral reef project. "This is not an admission of failure. The ocean is simply so vast that, after 10 years of hard work, we still have only snapshots, though sometimes detailed, of what the sea contains. But it is an important and impressive start."

Comparing the trumpet judgment to the 2010 Deepwater Horizon BP Oil Spill:

A comprehensive 2009 inventory of offshore Gulf species counted 15,700. The area of the oil spill includes 8,332 species, including more than 1,200 fish, 200 birds, 1,400 molluscs, 1,500 crustaceans, 4 sea turtles, and 29 marine mammals. ^{[191][192]} As of August 13, 4,768 dead animals had been collected, including 4,080 birds, 525 sea turtles, 72 dolphins and other mammals, and 1 reptile. ^{[193]⁶}

Trumpet #3—Judgment upon the fresh waters

The Third Trumpet (10-11)

Quite clearly this is a heavenly body burning with fire as it comes into the Earth's atmosphere and hits the Earth. Evidently as the star enters our atmosphere it begins to burn and to break up affecting a very large area of land and especially the lakes, rivers and streams. This will cause a chemical change making the waters bitter.

The star is called "wormwood." This was a type of wood growing in Palestine that had a very strong and bitter taste. The star is called wormwood because of the affect the star has on the water. It makes the water like wormwood, i.e., bitter, but it appears that while the wormwood in Palestine is not poisonous, this star will poison the water because those who drink this water die. Thus one-third of the fresh water supply of the Earth is made unfit for human consumption.⁷

Trumpet #4—Judgment upon the heavenlies

The Fourth Trumpet (12)

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. So now the fourth trumpet judgment is aimed at these heavenly bodies—the gracious provisions of God's common grace (Cf. [Matt. 24:29](#); [Luke 21:25](#)).

The Luke passage teaches us that these very literal occurrences are signs. The Greek word here is *shmeion*, "a sign, mark, token." But this word looks at what is

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deepwater_Horizon_oil_spill

⁷ <http://bible.org...>

supernatural, a supernatural act of God, but one with a message or a moral or spiritual purpose. It is designed to teach and communicate a point and to cause people to take note of something. In the last days, man, in his humanism and the deification of himself, will have rejected the truth of creation and the authority of God. So now God acts supernaturally in that part of His creation which so clearly declares His glory—the sun, the moon, and the stars. Why? To demonstrate the truth of God as the Creator and Sovereign of the universe. However, surely it is also a warning and an appeal. It warns of final judgment, the return of Christ, and appeals to man to repent.

“Smitten” is the Greek word *plhssw* which means “to strike or smite.” The word *plhgh*, “a blow, stripe, wound, or calamity, plague,” comes from this word. The point is that God strikes one-third of the light-bearing bodies of the universe which hinders their light-giving capacity in some way. Note the emphatic thrust of the word order of the Greek sentence, “and was smitten, the third of the sun.”

The statement, “so that one-third of them might be darkened,” focuses our attention on both God’s purpose or design and the result. “So that” is *%ina*, a conjunction which normally shows purpose (“in order that”), but the distinction between purpose and result are often very delicate so that a purpose blends into the result (“so that”). “Darkened” is *skotizw* and means “to blacken, darken.” From this meaning and what follows, this could refer to an eclipse that will begin and occur daily from this point on in the Tribulation. The rest of the verse gives us the result.

“And the day might not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way.” The daylight hours are reduced by one-third and even the light of the night from the moon and stars will likewise be eclipsed for one-third of the night. Ryrie believes this means the day-night cycle is changed from a 24-hour day to a 16-hour day.¹¹⁹

Whatever, these things seem to defy what science knows about the laws of our universe. They are unexplainable apart from the omnipotence of God and this is the point. Matthew 24:29 tells us that “powers of the heavens will be shaken.” “Powers” refers to the stars, or the heavenly bodies perhaps so-called because of their light-giving capacity. “Shaken” is the Greek word *saleuw* and means “to agitate, to shake, cause to move to and fro.” The stars now so obedient and consistent in their orbit will then be moving out of their orbit. This is all tremendously frightening, and to live in these days will be beyond description.⁸

Romans 2:1-10—Don’t confuse God’s patience with His love. Sin and sinners are the object of His holy wrath, but because of his patience he is providing time for all to hear and believe.

What is God’s purpose for destroying His creation?

Romans 3:23...For the wages of sin is death

Genesis 6:1-10—The Story of Noah and the flood

How can a just God save anyone?

John 15:13...Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.

Romans 5:8, But God demonstrates his own love toward us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 Peter 3:18,¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:4-6

THE QUESTIONS SURROUNDING THE STORM

How can a loving God bring such judgments on earth?

⁸ <http://bible.org...>