

From the Rapture to the Second Coming

Revelation 8: "First Four Trumpets"



Chapter Highlights

- [Silence](#)
- [Golden Censer](#)
- [First Four Trumpets](#)
- [An Eagle's Cry](#)

Chapter Aids

- [Let's Get Started](#)
- [Study Questions](#)
- [Chapter Wrap-Up](#)
- [Biblical Maps](#)
- [Biblical Time Lines](#)
- [Biblical Illustrations](#)
- [Biblical Tables and Charts](#)

Topical Index

- [The Seventh Seal](#)
 - [Seven Archangels](#)
 - [An Eight Angel?](#)
 - [No Other Choice](#)
 - [Answered Prayers](#)
 - [Thus It Begins](#)
- 
- [Destruction of the Earth](#)
 - [Destruction of the Sea](#)
 - [Wormwood](#)
 - [Lights Out](#)
 - [Trumpet Woes](#)

Let's Get Started

Chapter 6 described the opening of the first six seals, but it ended before reaching the seventh seal. Chapter 7 covered the sealing of the 144,000 but likewise, failed to mention the seventh seal. It is not until Chapter 8 that we learn about this final seal. The opening of the seventh seal reveals the appearance of seven angels with seven trumpets (see [Time Line #2](#)).

Note the pattern being established. The seven seals were broken down into two sets: the four horsemen followed by three additional judgments. Likewise, the seven trumpet judgments will be broken down into two sets: four judgments followed by three judgments called "**woes**."

Key Symbols:

Seven Seal Judgments		Seven Trumpet Judgments	
Seal 1—Judgment	White horse, Antichrist	Trumpet 1—Judgment	
Seal 2—Judgment	Red horse, sword of war	Trumpet 2—Judgment	
Seal 3—Judgment	Black horse, scales of economic collapse and famine	Trumpet 3—Judgment	
Seal 4—Judgment	Pale horse, death	Trumpet 4—Judgment (woe)	
Seal 5—Judgment	Many believers die	Trumpet 5—Judgment (woe)	
Seal 6—Judgment	Earthquake	Trumpet 6—Judgment (woe)	
Seal 7—Judgment		Trumpet 7—Seven Bowl Judgments (woes)	

The Seventh Seal

Revelation 8:1 When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

When this seal is broken, the scroll will be completely open. Nothing will remain to restrain the carrying out of the remaining judgments. Before they can begin, though, there will be silence in heaven for about half-an-hour.

The flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder coming from the throne of God will cease. The four living creatures will cease their talk about the holiness of God. The twenty-four elders will suspend their declarations about the worthiness of the Lamb. The heavenly hosts will stop their singing, and the Tribulation Saints will cease their praise. An eerie silence will move across heaven.

Everyone will wait in anticipation of what is to come next. Will people be given time to repent? Will God destroy the earth? Something will be on the horizon, something of tremendous importance.

Seven Archangels

Revelation 8:2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.

The Tribulation Period carries many names: the **Time of Jacob's Trouble** (Jeremiah 30:7), the **Seventieth-Week of Daniel** (Daniel 9:24-27), and the **Day of the Lord's Vengeance** (Isaiah 34:8). The prophet Zephaniah gives it seven different names, and it is significant to notice that the last one is *a day of trumpet and battle cry* (Zephaniah 1:14-16).

Out of all the angels in heaven only seven particular angels constantly stand in the presence of God. They are known as archangels. The names of these archangels is a

mystery, except for two, the angels Michael (Daniel 10:13) and Gabriel (Luke 1:19). These seven archangels, who make announcements of great significance, will each be handed a trumpet on this *day of trumpet and battle cry*.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ Seven Trumpets
 - *held by seven archangels*

An Eighth Angel?

Revelation 8:3 Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne.

Even though this eighth angel is not identified, some experts believe he is Jesus. He could be Jesus, but he is probably just another powerful angel. We do know this angel holds a special position of service before the golden altar (Exodus 30:1-8) of God.

Golden Altar: Made by King Solomon for God's temple. Symbolizes the altar of God, where an angel will mix incense with the prayers of the Tribulation Saints.

The eighth angel will come with a golden censer and stand before the altar of God. He will be given a great quantity of incense to mix with the prayers (Psalm 141:2) of the saints. Then he will place the censer on the golden altar before the throne of God.

Golden Censer: Similar to the censer used in the Old Testament Jewish temple for burning incense.

This golden censer (2 Chronicles 4:22) is similar to the one used in the Old Testament Jewish Temple. It contained charcoal that was burned under a layer of incense. When the hot charcoal warmed the layer of incense, a sweet fragrance was produced. This fragrance or aroma may be that of the spice frankincense (Matthew 2:11), one of the gifts the wise men gave to the baby Jesus. Frankincense was also one of the spices burned (Exodus 30:7-10, 34-38) in the censer at the Jewish temple. Its fragrance reminds God of his Son who came and died for the sins (1 Peter 2:24) of the world.

No Other Choice

Revelation 8:4 The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand.

Revelation 8:3 told us that the eighth angel will be given the prayers of all the saints. We may never know what all those requests may be, but Revelation 6:10 identifies one of them as a prayer of the Tribulation Saints: How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood? Judgment is not God's first choice, but patience is. He is patient and will hold off his judgment longer than any man. Nevertheless, when all options fail, his judgment will fall.

The angel will take the censer containing the hot incense and the prayers of the saints, and wave it around causing the smoke to drift toward the throne of God. The Almighty God will smell the incense, hear the prayers, and prepare an answer (James 5:16).

Key Point

- ✓ When all options fail, God's judgment will fall.

Answered Prayers

Revelation 8:5 Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

When the incense and all the prayers of the saints have been consumed in the censer, the angel will take the empty censer, go back to the altar, fill it with fire, and hurl it down on the earth. The prayers will go up to God and the answers will come down to earth. God will avenge the death of the Tribulation Saints with fiery trials on earth.

Try to visualize this great scene. The Antichrist and False Prophet will rise to power leading the inhabitants of the earth to worship Satan, while at the same time, God's people will be hunted down, persecuted, and killed. These martyred saints will arrive in heaven praying to be avenged. At first, they will be told to wait until the number of saved is increased, but then after a brief time, God will hear their prayers and respond by having his angel hurl the burning censer (possibly in the form of a meteor) to earth. This will be a clear statement of God's wrath. It will be followed by loud thunderclaps, flashes of lightening, and an earthquake. The earnest prayers of God's hurting people will finally reach into his wrath and cause a response that will be felt by the **whole earth** (Psalm 82:8).

What Others are Saying:

Jack Van Impe: Futurist Gordon-Michael Scallion, editor of *Earth Changes Report*, has been suggesting for months that a frightening global killer earthquake pattern is emerging. He is predicting that a series of magnitude 10.0 quakes will rip up America's West Coast in the next few years. [8-1](#)

Related Current Events

The following major earthquakes occurred during the first six months of 1996:

January 1	Indonesia—7.7 on the Richter Scale
February 3	China—7.0
February 7	Kuril Islands—7.0
February 17	Indonesia—7.5
February 25	Mexico—6.6
April 29	Solomon Islands—7.5
June 10	Aleutian Islands (2)—7.2 and 7.7
June 11	Philippines—7.0
June 17	Indonesia—7.5 ⁸⁻²

Thus It Begins

Revelation 8:6 Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them.

Once the burning censer has hit the earth the archangels will prepare to sound their trumpets. The prayers of the saints will be heard, and the whole world will be ripe for judgment. God's wrath will be kindled to unleash the next set of judgments, and the archangels will prepare to sound the alarm.

Destruction of The Earth

Revelation 8:7 The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

Some Bible experts will not accept a literal fulfillment of this verse. However, prophecy experts have little difficulty believing this will happen. The **seventh plague on Egypt** (Exodus 9:18-26) in the days of Moses was a rain of grievous hail mixed with fire that smote the cattle, herbs, and trees. It was a plague directed against Egypt's false goddess, Isis. God also rained hail, fire, and brimstone on **Sodom and Gomorrah** (Genesis 18:16-19:29). There is no reason to believe he will not do it again.

The result of **hail, fire, and blood** (Joel 2:30) being hurled down upon one-third of the earth in a furious storm is almost unimaginable. Not only will it cause immediate and indescribable destruction, it will also bring many other terrible consequences. Much of the lumber needed to build houses will be gone, along with much of the grain used for food. The entire balance of nature will be upset and the loss of life will be horrendous.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ First Trumpet
 - First Trumpet Angel
 - *hail, fire, and blood*
 - *1/3 of earth and trees, all grass burned up*

What Others are Saying:

Hal Lindsey: With this massive loss of vegetation will come soil erosion, floods, and mudslides. Air pollution will be immense; the smoke of the fire will fill the atmosphere, and the remaining vegetation will be unable to adequately absorb the hydrocarbons from automobiles and industry. Ecology will be thrown chaotically out of balance. ^{8:3}

Jack Van Impe: Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9's impact on Jupiter grabbed the attention of the entire world. Was it a sign? Enormous explosions, hundreds of times more powerful than all the earth's nuclear warheads, made people realize just how vulnerable our planet is to a similar occurrence. ^{8:4}

Related Current Events

- ✓ Destruction of the world's rain forests contributes to global warming by destroying trees and other plant life that absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. ^{8:5}

Something to Ponder

- ✓ If God opposed the false goddess Isis, would he not oppose any other false god or goddess?

Destruction of The Sea

Revelation 8:8, 9 The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

The first trumpet will signal judgment upon the earth. This trumpet will signal judgment upon the sea. It reminds us of the first plague on Egypt in the days of Moses that turned the **waters into blood** (Exodus 7:14-25). It was a plague directed against Egypt's false goddess Hika that killed the fish and frogs, and made the water unfit for consumption.

Pay close attention to the wording in this verse. It does not say a burning mountain will be thrown into the sea. It says, something like a huge burning mountain will be thrown into the sea. Some think it will be a nuclear missile. Others think it will be a burning meteor. Whatever it is, it will be big, blazing, and cause the sea to turn into blood. It will kill one-third of sea life and destroy one-third of the ships. Those who depend upon the sea for jobs, food, defense, or cargo transport will suffer. As a result of this "mountain" hitting the sea, it is likely that everything close to the sea will probably be damaged or destroyed by a great tidal wave.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ Second Trumpet

- Second Trumpet Angel
 - *a huge mountain thrown in the sea*
 - *1/3 of sea turned to blood, living sea creatures die, ships destroyed*

Related Current Events

"If you've gotta go, go with a bang." That's what Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 did last July (1994). Nearly two dozen mountain-size chunks of this fragmented interplanetary wanderer slammed into Jupiter, creating 2,000-mile-high fireballs and sooty smudges on the planet's cloud tops that were visible from backyard telescopes. [8-6](#)

They are a cosmic accident waiting to happen: Astronomers revealed new evidence that the solar system is encircled by a 90 billion-mile-wide, disk-like cloud of at least 200 million mountainous chunks of dirt and ice, some of which occasionally come hurtling through the solar system as starry-tailed comets. [8-7](#)

Astronomers forecast a meteorite storm between 1997–2001 that will produce more than 250,000 meteorites in one evening. [8-8](#)

More than 200 asteroids measuring as much as a half mile in diameter are drifting around the solar system. Scientists believe that some of them could cross the Earth's orbit. [8-9](#)

Wormwood

Revelation 8:10, 11 The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water, the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.

Some believe this star *blazing like a torch* will be a meteor. Others suggest a nuclear missile. While they hold different opinions about what it is, they usually agree about what it will do.

A great blazing object containing some type of pollutant or poisonous substance will fall out of the sky. It will be named after a bitter herb called **Wormwood** (Deuteronomy 29:18; Lam. 3:15) in the Bible. It will contaminate one-third of earth's fresh water supply, causing many people to die from drinking the tainted water. Although the Bible does not say, it is reasonable to assume that many others will die from thirst. With one-third of the fresh water tainted, most people will be unable to obtain drinkable water before extreme thirst sets in. Adults will survive without water for about three days while the sick and infants will have fewer.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ Third Trumpet
 - Third Trumpet Angel

- *a poisonous ball*
- *1/3 of earth's fresh water contaminated*

What Others are Saying:

David Hocking: This tragic judgment, affecting the water supply of the world and bringing about the death of many, is a consequence upon those who refuse to submit to God's authority in their lives. We all need water; it is basic to human survival. One can only imagine what sort of additional tragedies will occur because of the terrible pollution caused by this third trumpet judgment. ⁸⁻¹⁰

Related Current Events

According to a former Soviet scientist, Russia has developed extremely deadly biological weapons, including a strain of bacteria that could produce a "superplague" capable of wiping out tens of thousands of people within a week. ⁸⁻¹¹

As the Clinton White House recklessly plunges head-first into the chemical and biological warfare ban agreement, critics warn the treaty is full of loopholes that will allow the Russians to continue developing and producing their new weapons... The new weapons, referred to as Novichok, Russian for "newcomer," can be "toxic like a chemical agent or cause diseases like a biological agent. It can be lethal or debilitating." ⁸⁻¹²

Lights Out

Revelation 8:12 The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.

The fourth trumpet judgment will affect the heavenly bodies: the sun, moon, and stars. Pagan religions worship these objects. Astrologers, fortune tellers, and witches rely on them to predict the future. A few bizarre interpretations of this judgment exist, but the generally accepted meaning is that the light of the sun, moon, and stars will be diminished by one-third. We can be sure that smoke from the burning of one-third of the earth will block out a lot of the light from the sun, moon, and stars. Nuclear winter brought on by smoke, dirt, and debris being hurled into the atmosphere is also a possibility.

How long this will continue is not said, but there is no question that a reduction of the earth's sunlight will affect the weather, crops, and all of life in general. Major winter storms will sweep the earth causing multitudes to freeze to death.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ Fourth Trumpet
 - Fourth Trumpet Angel
 - *1/3 of sun, moon and stars are struck causing 1/3 darkness*

What Others are Saying:

World Book Encyclopedia: Nuclear winter refers to the deadly worldwide environmental effects that could result from a major nuclear war. Such a war could bring on nuclear winter by causing disastrous changes in the earth's atmosphere and climate.

Nuclear winter could begin to develop from city fires created by the extreme heat of nuclear explosions. Large amounts of smoke from these fires could spread and cover at least half the earth's surface. The smoke could prevent most sunlight from reaching the ground. Temperatures could drop substantially, and rainfall could be reduced. These conditions might last for several months or years. With greatly reduced sunlight, less rain, and lower temperatures, farming could stop, and worldwide famine could result. [8-13](#)

Trumpet Woes

Revelation 8:13 As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!"

Who or what is this eagle? Some say it will be the Raptured Church. Others say it will be an angel, while still others say it will be a literal eagle. One thing is for sure: If God could make Balaam's donkey (Numbers 22:21-30) talk, he can make an eagle talk.

This eagle will fly through the air pronouncing three woes upon the inhabitants of the earth. These three woes correspond to the last three trumpets. Some even call them the "trumpet woes." It is hard to imagine, but these woes will be worse than any judgment previously mentioned.

Key Point

- ✓ The three trumpet woes will be worse than any other prior judgment.

What Others are Saying:

J.H. Melton: Long was the old world left to drive its crimes, jeer at Noah's odd notions, and fling defiance into the face of God; but presently the earth broke down beneath their feet, and their lifeless bodies dashed upon each other amid the waves of an ocean world. The trampled law will assert its rightful honour, and Christ will not endure the smiting, taunts, and wrongs of Pilate's hall forever. And when these trumpets once give out their clangour, the vibrations will run through the universe, and everything created for human blessedness shall turn into a source of disaster and trouble to them that know not God and obey not the Gospel of Christ. [8-14](#)

Study Questions

- ✓ What is the reason for the heavenly silence?
- ✓ The fragrance of the incense reminds God of what?
- ✓ Why would God call for an earthquake?
- ✓ What is the correlation between the plagues of Egypt, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the judgment of thirds?

[Go to Answers](#)

Chapter Wrap-up

- ✓ Silence fills heaven for a half hour upon the opening of the seventh seal. ([Revelation 8:1](#))
 - ✓ The aroma coming from the incense mixed with the prayers of the saints will elicit a response from God when an angel takes the Golden Censer filled with fire and hurls it to earth. ([Revelation 8:3-5](#))
 - ✓ The first four trumpet judgments will: burn a third of the earth, turn a third of the seas to blood, pollute a third of all drinkable water, and diminish a third of the light from heavenly bodies. ([Revelation 8:7-12](#))
 - ✓ After the first four trumpets have sounded an eagle will fly through the air proclaiming three woes upon the earth. These woes correspond to the last three trumpet blasts. ([Revelation 8:13](#))
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