

Note: “After the parenthetical matter of the sealing of the two companies in chapter 7, the opening of the seals is resumed. Only the 7th seal remains to be opened. The opening of the 7th seal introduces the 7 angels with the 7 trumpets. This sets the pattern for a remainder of the book of Revelation. Before the 7th of any series is introduced, a subsidiary subject is introduced to provide more light on the particular series.

The 7 trumpets bring us to the full intensity of the Great Tribulation. The 7 seals bring judgments which are the natural results of the activities of sinful man apart from God. The 6th seal brings the judgments of nature. The 7 trumpets reveal that God is judging directly and supernaturally a rebellious race. The first four series of sevens can be explained in the following manner:

- (1) Seven Seals – judgment which is the result of man’s wilful activity,
- (2) Seven trumpets – judgment which is the direct activity of God,
- (3) Seven Personalities – judgment which is the result of Satan’s fight against God,
- (4) Seven Vials (Bowls) – final judgment of the Great Tribulation which is the direct activity of God because of man’s and Satan’s rebellion.

There is a strange and strong similarity between the plagues of Egypt, in Moses’ day, and the trumpet judgments. It is both reasonable and logical to conclude that if one is literal, the other is likewise literal. These are literal plagues of the Great Tribulation. It is well to keep in mind that this is a revelation of Jesus Christ. These are not hazy and shadowy symbols which can be dissipated into thin air by some specious system of hermeneutics. When symbols are used – and they are used in this book – the key is supplied. Scripture will furnish the explanation. Revelation is the last book in the Bible, because a knowledge of the 65 books preceding it is the basic requirement for an understanding of its vivid language (2 Peter 1:20).”¹

(8.1) And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

1. Remembering that the entire 7th chapter of John’s Revelation is a parenthesis in his record of the unfolding of the redemption scroll, we now take up where John left us off. This is the verse that old preachers used to prove that all people who go to heaven end up being men. On what basis is this said? There is silence in heaven for a half hour. Of course, that is a very prejudiced attempt at humor, and I would never say such a thing myself since it is usually the men in our Church I cannot stop talking while I preach.
2. Who opens this seventh seal? The Lord Jesus Christ opens the seal. Jesus is the “he” referred to in this verse. Why must it be Him Who opens the seal? Only He is worthy to break the seals and open the book, Revelation 5.1-5:

- 1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.
- 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

¹ J. Vernon McGee, *Reveling Through Revelation, Part I*, (Pasadena, CA: Thru The Bible Books, 1979), page 65.

- ³ And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.
- ⁴ And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.
- ⁵ And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

3. Ponder this silence in heaven. Is silence in heaven unusual? Apparently, it is. Why? Because there is usually constant praise and adoration of God being offered up in heaven. Is half an hour a long time to be silent? It is. It is a very long time to be silent. Ask someone to make not one sound for 30 minutes and understand how long a half hour is.
4. What could be the reason for this pause? Opinions are varied, but I think it is a dramatic pause that comes just before the unleashing of fury. Just imagine the hush that spreads all over heaven in anticipation of what will happen next.
5. The late Lehman Strauss comments on this verse: “Notice that the silence is in Heaven, not on earth. The Bible tells us of a coming day when all the earth (Habakkuk 2:20), and all islands (Isaiah 41:1), and all flesh (Zechariah 2:13) will be called upon to be silent before God. Presently this is not the day of silence on the earth. There are many voices and varied noises which well-nigh prevent men from hearing the Word of God, but that day when all creation remains silent before God will surely come. The silence in Heaven of which our text speaks precedes the silence on earth. In chapters five and six all of Heaven resounds with the praises of redeemed men and of angels, giving glory to the Lamb. Here there is a stillness and a silence. No voice is heard; no motion is seen. Subsequent to the silence God will speak. ‘Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure’ (Psalm 2:5). Now it is man’s turn to speak. God has spoken. ‘God spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,’ and He ‘Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son’ (Hebrews 1:1,2). But the next time His voice is heard throughout all the earth, judgment will fall upon the unbelieving world of men.”²

(8.2) And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

1. Wow! Now we have seven angels standing before God, who are given seven trumpets. What can we surmise from this verse? Let me read from Albert Barnes’ comments: “Professor Stuart supposes that by these angels are meant the ‘presence-angels’ which he understands to be referred to, in Re 1:4, by the ‘seven spirits which are before the throne.’ If, however, the interpretation of that passage above proposed, that it refers to the Holy Spirit, with reference to his multiplied agency and operations, be correct, then we must seek for another application of the phrase here. The only difficulty in applying it arises from the use of the article—‘the seven angels’--τῶν--as if they were angels already referred to; and as there has been no

² Lehman Strauss, *The Book Of The Revelation*, (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1963), page 180-181.

previous mention of ‘seven angels,’ unless it be in the phrase ‘the seven spirits which are before the throne,’ in Re 1:4, it is argued that this must have been such a reference. But this interpretation is not absolutely necessary. John might use this language either because the angels had been spoken of before; or because it would be sufficiently understood, from the common use of language, who would be referred to--as we now might speak of ‘the seven members of the cabinet of the United States?’ or ‘the thirty-one governors of the states of the Union,’ though they had not been particularly mentioned; or he might speak of them as just then disclosed to his view, and because his meaning would be sufficiently definite by the circumstances which were to follow--their agency in blowing the trumpets. It would be entirely in accordance with the usage of the article for one to say that he saw an army, and the commander-in-chief, and the four staff-officers, and the five bands of music, and the six companies of sappers and miners, etc. It is not absolutely necessary, therefore, to suppose that these angels had been before referred to. There is, indeed, in the use of the phrase ‘which stood before God,’ the idea that they are to be regarded as permanently standing there, or that that is their proper place--as if they were angels who were particularly designated to this high service, Compare Lu 1:19: ‘I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God.’ If this idea is involved in the phrase, then there is a sufficient reason why the article is used, though they had not before been mentioned.”³

2. To distill Barnes’ comments down to their minimum, some Bible scholars think the reference to “the seven Spirits which are before his throne” refers to seven angels, the same seven angels mentioned here in Revelation 8.2. Barnes thinks the reference in Revelation 1.4 is to the Holy Spirit in seven of His divine attributes and that created beings are referred to in this verse. I agree with him. This verse refers to seven angels.
3. That issue dealt with, what would you say about these angels who stand before God? What kind of angels would stand before God? Important angels or unimportant angels? From Luke 1.19, we know that Gabriel stands before God, and his duties in Scripture show him to be a significant angel in God’s hierarchy of the heavenly host. Therefore, it is likely that these seven angels are not unimportant but are high-ranking angels of great power and authority.
4. That they are given seven trumpets suggests that when the seven trumpet judgments arrive, these angels have responsibility for overseeing the execution of those seven judgments, an angel for each of the trumpet judgments. Ἐδόθησον is the aorist passive indicative third person singular of δίδωμι, to give.
5. One might wonder when the trumpets were given to these angels. The aorist tense does not provide that information, meaning the angels might have been given the trumpets when they were created, before the account of Genesis 1.1, or they might have been given the trumpets when the seals were to be opened.

³ Albert Barnes, *Albert Barnes’ NT Commentary*, (Bronson, MI: Online Publishing, Inc., 2002), bible@mail.com

6. But what about the trumpets? What significance would they have? Trumpets played a crucial role in the life of Israel. While marching in the wilderness and conquering the Promised Land, trumpets were used to signal the people. Two passages of Scripture give an idea of the importance of trumpets to the Israelites:

Exodus 19.1-19:

- 1 In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they *into* the wilderness of Sinai.
- 2 For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come *to* the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount.
- 3 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;
- 4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.
- 5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:
- 6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.
- 7 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him.
- 8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.
- 9 And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.
- 10 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes,
- 11 And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.
- 12 And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, *that ye go not* up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death:
- 13 There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether *it be* beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.
- 14 And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes.
- 15 And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at *your wives*.
- 16 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice

of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.

- 17 And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.
- 18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.
- 19 And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

Numbers 10.1-10:

- 1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
- 2 Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps.
- 3 And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.
- 4 And if they blow *but* with one *trumpet*, then the princes, *which are* heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee.
- 5 When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward.
- 6 When ye blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys.
- 7 But when the congregation is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm.
- 8 And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations.
- 9 And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies.
- 10 Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I *am* the LORD your God.

7. It is clear that trumpets are essential and significant in Israel's past. What do you think the trumpets in this verse will be used to signal? Could it be that the trumpets will signal the destruction of those who resist the will of God? I think so.
8. John MacArthur writes, "In Revelation, trumpets primarily announce impending judgment. The trumpets are of greater intensity than the seals, but not as destructive as the final bowl judgments will be (cf. 21). They occurred during the final 3½

years, but the time of each is indefinite, except the effects of the fifth trumpet judgment, which will last 5 months (9:10). The first 4 announce divine destruction of earth's ecology (vv. 12), while the final 3 involve demonic devastation of earth's inhabitants 21; 11:15ff)."⁴

(8.3) And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

1. "And another angel came and stood at the altar."

a. This other angel seems to approach the altar and take incense rather priestly. "Who this angel was is not mentioned, nor have we any means of determining."⁵ Many notable commentators think that this angel is the Lord Jesus Christ, while others are persuaded that this is not our Lord.

b. I tend to agree with Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, who write in their commentary, "**another angel**--not Christ, as many think; for He, in Revelation, is always designated by one of His proper titles; though, doubtless, He is the only true High Priest, the Angel of the Covenant, standing before the golden altar of incense, and there, as Mediator, offering up His people's prayers, rendered acceptable before God through the incense of His merit. Here the angel acts merely as a *ministering spirit* (Heb 1:4), just as the twenty-four elders *have vials full of odors*, or incense, *which are the prayers of saints* (Re 5:8), and which they present before the Lamb. How precisely their ministry, in perfuming the prayers of the saints and offering them on the altar of incense, is exercised, we know not, but we do know they are not to be prayed TO. If we send an offering of tribute to the king, the king's messenger is not allowed to appropriate what is due to the king alone."⁶

c. The fact that this angel's identity is not revealed to us, as well as knowing that Jesus did appear as the Angel of the LORD during Old Testament times, causes me to think that it is not critical during our era that we know precisely who this angel is. If this knowledge were vital for us, we would be given more information to make our determination.

2. "having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne."

a. Look back to Revelation 6.9-10 and note the cries of those saints under the altar:

⁴ See footnote for Revelation 8.2 from John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), pages 2002-2003.

⁵ Barnes

⁶ *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Vol 3, Part Three*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1997), page 682.

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⁹ And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

b. It could be that the prayers offered here with what we are told is “much incense” are the prayers of the Tribulation saints, those people who will trust Jesus after the Rapture and be martyred before the Second Coming of Christ.

c. What we have now, in this verse, are the prayers of these martyred Tribulation believers, crying for vengeance by the will of God, now being presented to God.

(8.4) And the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

1. Notice, incense, and prayers come after passing through the brazen altar of sacrifice. Prayers are offered up on the basis of sacrifice. No sacrifice, no prayers.

2. How would that apply to these people's prayers? Simple. Had they not come to Christ first, their prayers would not be offered up to God.

3. This is yet another passage of Scripture that shows us that the unconverted can pray, that the unconverted should pray, but that there is no guarantee whatsoever that God will accept and act on the prayers of the unconverted.

4. It is the child of God who is urged by Hebrews 4.16: “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

(8.5) And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast *it* into the earth: and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

1. Notice that here the angel begins the same way the angel did in verse 3, but instead of offering up more incense and prayers, he casts the censor down to the earth. I think this is an accurate picture of God's wrath being the other side of the coin of grace.

2. Receive Christ, and the censor is used to offer up your prayers to a God Who hears and answers. Reject Christ, and the censor is used to cast down wrath from heaven, as further evidenced by voices, lightnings, thunders, and earthquakes.

3. This offends the sensibilities of those with an assumption of entitlement but reflects perfectly the self-revealed character of God in the Scriptures.

(8.6) And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

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1. “This is a solemn moment. The half-hour of silence is over. The prayers of the saints have been heard. The order is issued to prepare to blow. The angels come to attention. At the blowing of the trumpets, divine wrath is visited upon rebellious men. The blowing of the trumpets does not introduce symbols or secrets – the plagues are literal.”⁷
2. Sometimes, we read the Word of God and miss something. Other times we study and can be too close to the topic to see the forest for the trees. So, let us take a step back and remind ourselves of the deliberate way in which this drama unfolds:
 - a. First, the four angels will hold back the winds, in Revelation 7.1: “And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.”
 - b. Then, there will be silence for half an hour, in Revelation 8.1: “And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.”
 - c. Now, the seven angels prepare themselves to sound. There will be no chaos at that time except in the minds of men. However, from God’s perspective, all will be done methodically and orderly, executing His wrath on a gainsaying and Christ-rejecting world.
3. Albert Barnes commented on this verse: “The way is now prepared for the sounding of the trumpets, and for the fearful commotions and changes which would be indicated by that. The last seal is opened; heaven stands in suspense to know what is to be disclosed; the saints, filled with solicitude, have offered their prayers; the censer of coals has been cast to the earth, as if these judgments could be no longer stayed by prayer; and the angels prepare to sound the trumpets indicative of what is to occur.”⁸

(8.7) The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

1. As mentioned before, some people think symbolism is used here. Let me ask you a question. When God sent the plagues upon Egypt, were they symbolic? Were the lice symbols?⁹ Were the frogs symbols?¹⁰ Was the water turned to blood a symbol, or was the water turned to real blood?¹¹ Why do “Bible believers” insist that the things mentioned here are symbols? Simple. They do not believe the Bible.

⁷ McGee, page 68.

⁸ Barnes

⁹ Exodus 8.16-18

¹⁰ Exodus 8.2-13

¹¹ Exodus 7.17-21

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2. Only two differences exist between what is written in Exodus and here: Exodus is past, and Revelation is future, and Exodus deals with one nation while this deals with the whole world.
3. Think about what is going to happen. Hail and fire, mingled with blood, symbols of slaughter and ruin, coming out of the sky. Moreover, it will burn up one out of every three trees on the planet and every bit of green grass. Imagine what devastation will result, what buildings will be burned up, and what people will be killed when this happens!
4. How could these things happen? “This may describe volcanic eruptions that could certainly result from the earthquake in v. 5. The steam and water thrown into the sky by such eruptions could easily condense into hail and fall to earth along with the fiery lava (cf. Ex. 9:13-25). Dust and gases may so contaminate falling liquid water that it appears blood red.”¹²
5. What about the burning up of the trees? “The lava storm will create a blazing fire that devastates one-third of the earth’s forests.”¹³
6. Why the ecological devastation against plant life, trees and grass? Plant life was the first to be created, and it is first to be destroyed (see Genesis 1:11, 12).¹⁴ I wonder if this portion of God’s judgment is His righteous vengeance toward those who have made an idol of the environment, ripping from those who have worshiped the creation more than the Creator their beloved ecology, taking away the nature they love so much more than the God Who created and sustained what is commonly called nature.
7. To be sure, humanity should exercise good stewardship of the environment. However, this earth and its resources were given to us by God to use, not to sit back and watch. The oil in the ground was placed there by God to be pumped out and processed to advance the well-being and condition of humanity. Likewise the precious metals and coal, provided by God to make stoves and furnaces and fuel to warm our homes in the cold.
8. But what do the eco-freaks do? They love the environment while denying the existence of the One Who created and sustains all things. Even worse, they have transformed God’s creation into a god that they call Gaia, Mother Earth, and they seek to deny the proper use of the world’s resources for everyone’s benefit. They are guilty of idolatry, and their idol will be the first to suffer God’s wrath when the first trumpet sounds.

¹² See footnote for Revelation 8.7 from John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 2003.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ McGee, page 69.

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(8.8) And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood

1. Now the second angel sounds the second trumpet. In this verse, we do have some symbolic language ... and it is easy to discern because John uses the phrase “as it were.” This does not post a problem, seeing that symbolism is intended.
2. What happened? Some great mass was cast into the sea, affecting one-third of the sea. What this tremendous (the Greek word used is μέγα) mountain-like mass will be, I do not know. However, the result is a literal turning of a third part of the sea into blood.
3. Does this not echo the ten plagues God sent to Egypt to force Pharaoh to let His people go? Would this not remind anyone steeped in the Old Testament Scriptures of those ancient plagues? But whereas God sent the plagues that devastated Egypt to free His people from bondage to the Egyptians, these plagues are sent by God to release His creation from the grip the god of this world has on it.

(8.9) And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

1. Here, we have more results of the great mass falling into the sea. “Probably a huge meteor or asteroid surrounded by gases that will ignite as it enters earth’s atmosphere. Its impact will create a tidal wave, destroying a one-third of the world’s ships.”¹⁵
2. Can you imagine the consequences of one-third of all marine life suddenly dying? Can you project what the smell and the potential health effects would be?
3. And one-third of all ships destroyed. How many ships would that be? One thousand? Five thousand? How would MSNBC or CNN report that on the evening news? This old world will be in the middle of the greatest mass hysteria since the Flood. Anarchy will be the rule of the day.

(8.10) And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters

1. We have the third of the trumpets sounded by the third angel, with even more devastation raining down upon a world of Christ-rejecting men.
2. “and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp.” If stars are bigger than our sun, could this happen? No. From our previous study of Revelation 6.13-4, I wonder if the conclusions reached by scientists regarding the immensity of the heavenly bodies could very well be in error. Could stars be much

¹⁵ See footnote for Revelation 8.8 from John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 2003.

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smaller than we have been led to believe? Could this large star be smaller than we have been led to think stars are? Does this star fall to earth?

3. I am no cosmologist or astronomer, so my questions and speculations are just that. Perhaps this refers to a comet with a fiery tail that will plunge to earth and contaminate the atmosphere and the world with toxic chemicals. In any case, the ecological catastrophe only worsens.

(8.11) And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

1. Breaking up as it enters the atmosphere, this star, called Wormwood, contains some chemical substance that pollutes one-third of the freshwater supply of the planet Earth, making the polluted water undrinkable, resulting in the death of many people.
2. How many would you say will die? It is a great many. However, how many is many in a world of 8 billion people? Millions? Tens of millions? It could be a hundred million people. What if it is one or two billion people? Has that kind of catastrophe ever occurred?
3. Not even the Flood killed that many people. Nothing this horrible has ever happened before. But do not think it cannot occur. “We should not think it strange that a great burning star could communicate a poisonous bitterness to the waters upon which it fell. On March 21, 1823, a volcanic explosion in the Aleutian Islands caused the water to become bitter so as to be unfit for use. God will use that which He created to effect His ends.”¹⁶
4. It is said by some that Chernobyl is the Ukrainian word for “wormwood.” Several websites suggest what this site offers.¹⁷ Another source presents “чорнобиль noun masculine” and uses the translated Ukrainian word in a sentence: “What would I get if I added root of asphodel to an infusion of wormwood?”¹⁸
5. Think about this bitter water for a moment. Consider what happened to Jesus as He hung from the cross, in Matthew 27.34: “They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted *thereof*, he would not drink.” What He was offered was bitter, indeed. If you have trusted Christ, He was offered what would have been offered to us.
6. During the Tribulation, however, unbelievers will be offered bitter water for themselves because Christ was not received to be their Substitute for sin.

¹⁶ Strauss, page 185.

¹⁷ <https://wordhistories.net/2019/08/31/chernobyl-wormwood-disney-land/#CHERNOBYL%20and%20%E2%80%98WORMWOOD%E2%80%99>

¹⁸ <https://glosbe.com/en/uk/wormwood>

(8.12) And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

1. The word “smitten,” ἐπλήγη, the aorist passive of πλήσσω, refers to a strike or a blow.¹⁹ When the fourth angel blows his horn, one-third of the world’s natural light is gone. One-third of the sunlight. One-third of the moon’s reflected light. One-third of the stars.
2. How will that be accomplished? I do not know. However, the climatological consequences will be immediate and severe. What will happen to plant life when one-third of the available solar energy is suddenly gone? What will happen, with the winds already stilled and now the sudden temperature drop resulting from greatly diminished sunlight? How will that affect animal life once nighttime temperatures in the winter hemisphere drop dramatically?
3. Some scientists are crying about global warming, global warming. Global warming will be the least of any problems once these things happen. Folks will forget about recycling. The Greens will be too busy ducking for cover, along with everyone else, to argue about environmental policy.

(8.13) And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

1. In verse 13, the angel cries out “Woe” three times. Every time the word “Woe” is found in the Bible, it is related to terrible judgment from God. But, precisely who will be on the receiving end of these “woe” judgments? Verse 13 shows us.
2. “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth....” The inhabitants of the Earth receive what is about to happen. Well, just who are the inhabitants of the Earth?
3. The word “inhabiter” comes from κατοικοῦσαν, which means to live, reside, abide, settle down in a place.²⁰ But what are believers called in the Bible? Believers are sojourners, are they not? Believers are *not* those who abide on the Earth but stay only briefly.
4. Could these woes fall only upon those who are not believers in the Lord Jesus Christ? Could it possibly be that the 144,000 and those they have led to a saving knowledge of Christ will not suffer these woes? Something to think about. Perhaps these plagues will affect everyone, but not affect everyone equally.
5. Allow me to conclude our consideration of this chapter with something from John Walvoord:

¹⁹ Bauer, page 830.

²⁰ Fritz Rienecker & Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1980), page 831.

“In contrast to the first three judgments having to do respectively with land, sea, rivers, and fountains of water, the fourth trumpet relates to the heavens themselves. As John witnesses the scene, he sees a third part of the sun, a third part of the moon, and a third part of the stars darkened, an eclipse that extends to a third part of the day and a third part of the night. The symbolic interpretation of verse 12 usually regards this prophecy as portending a disruption of human government and society extending to a third part of the earth. Here again, however, it is probably preferable to interpret this literally as extending to a disruption of light from heaven as a solemn warning of other judgments which were yet to fall upon the earth. J. B. Smith comments:

It is of considerable interest to note the progress—one third of the green trees and grass, one third of marine life and shipping, one third of the waters, and one third of the heavenly bodies. Food is destroyed; distribution is crippled; water supply is limited; production is hampered.

This interpretation is given support by the next verse, which indicates that the first four trumpets are not only judgments in themselves but warnings of the last three trumpets which will be far more severe in character. John records that he both beheld and heard the loud voice of an angel pronouncing a triple woe on the inhabitants of the earth because of the three trumpets which were yet to sound... The earth is warned of judgment to come. The trumpet judgments, which have their beginning in this chapter, confirm the predictions of Christ and the Old Testament prophets of the coming time of tribulation far worse than anything the human race had ever experienced before.

The first four trumpets deal with aspects of the physical world which are taken more or less for granted. The beauty and benefit of the trees, the luxury and growth of green grass are seldom occasions for thanks giving to the living God. In a similar way, men are prone to take for granted the blessings of water, whether it be the beauty of the sea, the majestic flow of great rivers, or the pure fountains and springs which abound in the natural world. These too are gifts from a loving God to an undeserving world, and they come under the blight and judgment described in the second and third trumpets.

Still another area of blessing from God is the light of the sun, moon, and stars. The handiwork of God in the heavens is mentioned frequently in Scripture as a reminder of God’s power, sovereignty, and wisdom. David, in writing Psalm 19, declared, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.” The very presence of these aspects of nature so essential to human life and existence is referred to by Paul in Romans 1:20 as manifesting God in His eternal power. The Prophet Jeremiah spoke of the sun and moon as tokens of God’s faithfulness to His promise to the nation of Israel and as symbols of their continuance as long as the earth endures (Jer. 31:35—36). These very tokens of blessing and revelation of the

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glory of God are affected by the fourth trumpet. So dramatic are the judgments and so unmistakably an evidence of the power and sovereignty of God that blaspheming men on earth can no longer ignore the fact that God is dealing with them. Fearful as these judgments are, they are only the beginning of God's dealing with the earth; and as indicated in a special announcement, three great woes are still to fall. Though it is difficult in this day of grace to imagine such catastrophic judgments, the Word of God is plain, and men are called everywhere to avail themselves of grace before it is too late.²¹

²¹ John Walvoord, *The Revelation Of Jesus Christ*, (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966), pages 156-157.