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Revelation 8

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Learn the Bible at Home

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Revelation 8.

Topics.

- The lamb opened the seventh seal and there was silence in heaven.
 - Seven angels stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.
 - A great fiery mountain, is thrown into sea and a third became blood.
 - A star named wormwood, fell and a third of the waters became wormwood.
 - A third of the sun, the moon, the stars, the day and the night was darkened.
 - Woe, woe, woe, the blasts of the other three trumpets are about to blow!
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A personal note: though I have always loved reading and studying the Scriptures and have now walked with Christ and in God's grace for around fifty years the following studies should not be taken to be dogmatic, inflexible or the final word on the matter since I am fully aware that my mind is limited by mortality and that greater understanding of God's revelation is continually becoming clearer before our eyes as we move closer to the time of Christ's glorious return in glory.

The previous chapter: is an interlude chapter between the sixth seal and the seventh seal. It began with the 144,000, from every tribe of Israel being sealed, after which a great multitude from every nation washed in the blood of the Lamb are seen standing before the throne of God and before the Lamb worshipping God and saying, "Salvation belongs to our God and to the Lamb." The chapter ended with the words, the Lamb will be their shepherd, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

REVELATION 8:1

The Lamb Opened the Seventh Seal and there was Silence in Heaven.

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

When reading this book, it should always be kept in mind, that though it appears there is a general order of events, these are visions of the future that John is seeing and writing down in the present time, which means the symbolical representations may not always follow the exact chronological order. It is very likely that in some cases one event may overlap another so that some are mixed together until the final-end, while others are interludes that give greater detail of events already seen or are inserted to give encouragement to the church during troublesome times, especially for those living during the final antichristian global empire.

Silence in heaven: when the seventh seal is opened, there is profound silence in heaven for a space of time, which could signify one of the following four things:

1. The church on earth is quiet (i.e., dwelling in calm and peace), for the following reason, whenever the church on earth cries, and prays in anguish, because of tribulation, persecution, oppression or for any

other reason, that cry flows up to heaven and is heard, so if heaven is silent it means the church on earth is at peace.

2. The silence is a silence of excited anticipation since Christ's return draws near or it is a silence of stunned dread and fearful expectation because the seven vial/bowls of God's wrath are about to be opened.
3. All the host of heaven stand in silent suspense waiting to know what is to be revealed or stand in shock horror at what is revealed.
4. Upon seeing the earth covered with wars, famines, natural disasters, plagues, violence, murders, rapes and global financial oppression, it leaves those in heaven standing in stunned silence. This silence could be likened to the stunned silence a parent feels when they are told their child has been killed.

REVELATION 8:2

Seven Trumpets are Given to the Angels.

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

The following verses show that the series of the visions now introduced of the seven angels and the seven trumpets extend through to chapter sixteen:

- **Chapter ten states:** in the days the seventh angel sounds the seventh trumpet, the mystery of God will be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets. (Revelation 10:7).
- **Chapter eleven states:** The seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." (Rev. 11:15).
- **Chapter sixteen states:** The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" (Rev. 16:17).

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These series of visions show us the following four things:

1. The way to peace is not easy.
2. We must be prepared to see great troubles on earth remaining until the Lord returns in glory.
3. It is through great tribulation that the literal Kingdom of God and peace on earth comes and the kingdoms of the world become the Kingdoms of the Lord.

The first and second set of visions: the first set of visions show Christians that the way through trouble to rest is enduring with patience through persecution and suffering. The second set of visions show Christians who hold fast to their faith through the troubles of the world that they will triumph over the world when the events of these visions reach their final-end. At the end of the second set of visions John is given a new set that reveal that the faithful church advances through the antichristian empire to emerge as the victorious Kingdom with Christ as its head ruling and reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords over the nations of this world.

NOTE: the following two things should be highlighted here:

1. Even though it appears that there is a general order of events, these are visions of future events that John is seeing in the present moment, which means the symbolical representations may not always follow the

exact chronological order, it is very likely in some cases that one event may overlap another so that some are mixed together until the final-end.

2. Some of these visions are interludes that give greater detail of events already seen or like this vision (Rev.7) are inserted to give encouragement to the church during troublesome times, especially for those living during the latter day antichristian global world ten-horned beast government.

The number seven: is the proper number for the blowing of the seven trumpets, since it is the number for completeness and the events not only unfold and complete the final three woes that are to come upon the world, but also remove all obstacles and hindrances to Christ's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace coming on earth. Throughout the Bible the number seven is often used symbolically and not literally to represent the power of God over the world and signify the complete circle of God's power in judgment.

Trumpets: were to be a perpetual statute throughout Israel's generations and the priests were to blow them (Num. 10:8) for the following reasons: to pronounce a memorial-day of solemn rest; to summon the people together for worship; for a festival; for calling armies to war; for calling of the assembly together; for the people to uproot their camp to journey to another; to announce holy feasts and Sabbath days and to joyfully celebrate festivals. (Leviticus 23:24) (Num. 10:2-6, 10) (1 Chron. 13:8). The Seven angels may symbolize:

- Seven archangels distinguished from among the myriads of angels around about the throne.
- God's various forces over the earth and the power He commands over the world.
- The complete circle of God's power over the world.
- Seven chief and preeminent angels that God used in His service to execute His judgments that are about to be revealed.
- Destroying angels similar, to the one God used in the following verse:
 - When the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the calamity and said to the angel who was working destruction among the people, "It is enough; now stay your hand. (2 Sam. 24:16).

Each of these seven angels use a trumpet to sound the alarm of the coming judgments of God, before they begin the execution of them.

Stood before God: does not mean they were permanently standing before the throne, but that they were like Gabriel who stands in the presence of God, (Luke 1:19) and was sent by God to do His will. Standing before God signifies nearness to Him and that they always behold His face and are continually ready to carry out His will.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

The seven trumpets: are most likely given to seven angels, by the four living creatures, or at least one of them for the following reasons:

- The first of the four living creatures released the rider on the white horse that came out to conquer (i.e., make war). (Rev. 6:1-2).
- The second living creature released a rider on a red horse that takes peace from the earth. (Rev. 6:3-4).
- The third living creature released a rider on a black horse that brings great famine. (Rev. 6:5-6).

- The fourth living creature released a rider on a pale horse, that brings Death to the earth. (Rev. 6:7-8).
- The opening of the fifth seal, pictures those slain for the word of God crying from the altar of God, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:9-11).
- After this, the sixth seal is opened, and the great day of wrath comes. (Rev. 6:12-17).
- Then in Chapter fifteen we read that one of the four living creatures give to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God. (Rev. 15:7).

These verses show that the four living creatures hold in their hands the wrath of God ready to be poured out at the appointed time. The judgments the seven angels are about to bring to pass answer the following cry of the martyrs under the altar who had been slain:

- O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:9-10).

These seven judgments fall on all the inhabitants of the earth and not just part of it. The sounding of the first trumpet begins the ongoing events that remove all opponents and obstacles that stand in the way of God's plans and purposes being accomplished. As this revelation advances through the following chapters the vision becomes clearer. (Rev. 13:1-18) (Rev. 16:10) (Rev. 17:18). The first four trumpets are connected, together, while the last three, alone have Woe, woe, woe (Re 8:7-13). When we reach the end of the events the seven trumpets and the end of the three woes, the kingdoms of this world are overturned to make way for Christ's universal Kingdom on earth.

- Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." ¹⁶And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. ¹⁸The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth." (Rev. 11:15-18).

The use of these trumpets was to sound the alarm, proclaim the will of God concerning things to come and give warning of impending wars, desolations, and calamities, which will at the appointed time come upon all the world.

REVELATION 8:3-4

Another Angel Offered Prayers of the Faithful Before God's Throne.

- **Revelation 8:3-4:** And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, ⁴and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel.

The altar with a golden censer: (v3) in Hebrews it is written:

- Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, ⁴having the golden altar of incense (the golden censer in KJV) and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. (Heb. 9:3-4).

The word, censer: comes from the Greek word, (*libanos*) which means frankincense and carries the idea of burning. The scene is of this other

angel mixing burning incense (symbolizing judgment) with the prayers and cry of the faithful for justice. As soon as the angel mixes this fire with the prayers, he shows it to God.

The golden altar of incense: was to burn incense on so the sweet-smelling fragrance (symbolizing the prayers of the faithful) would flow up to the LORD. It was around one and a half feet square and three feet high, and made of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold. Around its top it had a moulding of gold with four golden horn at each corner made of one piece. Two golden rings were on each side to place two golden poles in for carrying it. Every morning and every evening throughout Israel's generations when the priest attended to the lamps, he was also to burn a regular fragrant incense offering to the LORD on the golden altar in the Holy Place in front of the veil that covers the ark of the covenant. (Exod. 30:6) where God met the priests. They were commanded never to offer unauthorized incense or any other type of offering on it. (Exodus 30:1-9).

These verses from the English Standard Bible imply that the golden altar of incense is in the Most Holy Place, which seems to contradict Old Testament verses that place the Altar of incense in the first section called the Holy Place or Sanctuary of the temple, before the veil with the Table of shewbread and lampstand and we know that God instructed Moses, to place the altar of incense in the Holy Place. The King James Bible interprets the same verse saying, "the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant," (v4), this is the better interpretation since the golden censer (a bowl) and the altar are two separate items. The altar was in the Holy Place, while the golden censer would be carried by the high priest from the altar into the Most Holy Place. The following verses clearly show that the altar of incense and the golden censer are two separate items:

- He (the high priest) shall take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, and two handfuls of sweet incense beaten small, and he shall bring it inside the veil ¹³and put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is over the testimony, so that he does not die. (Leviticus 16:12-13).
- He (Solomon) overlaid the whole house with gold, until all the house was finished and, also the whole altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary (the Holy Place) he overlaid with gold. (1 Kings 6:22).

The golden altar of incense, sat in front of the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (the Holy of Holies). The priest was to take the censer/bowl full of hot coals off the golden altar of incense in the Holy Place and carry it behind the veil and then drop the handfuls of incense onto the hot coals which created a cloud of sweet smelling smoke that covered the mercy seat that sits over the law inside the ark of the covenant. The symbolism is that God's mercy covers and protects the faithful from the condemnation of the law as they offer their prayers and praise to the LORD. Many commentators suppose that this other angel (Rev. 8:3) that John sees in this vision represents the Lord Jesus Christ as a mediator and High Priest between God and the people, but it is also very likely that this angel signifies the prayers of the faithful being carried (or ascending) from earth to the Throne of God and the Lamb in heaven. Most altars were made of stone and brass, the fact these prayers of the faithful are spoken of as being in a golden censer on the golden altar signifies how precious the prayers of the faithful are to God.

Evening and morning: every morning and evening, the priests were to burn incense on the golden altar at the same time the daily burnt offerings were made and they were to be kept continually burning throughout the day and the night as a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

The ingredients of the incense: the incense was made of an equal part of four precious spices (stacte, onycha, galbanum and frankincense) and was considered holy. God commanded the Israelites not to use the same formula outside the tabernacle to make perfume for their own consumption, if they did, they were to be cut off from their people (Exodus 30:34-38).

The symbolism of incense: God wanted His House to be a place where people could approach Him and pray to Him. The incense was a symbol of the prayers and intercession of the people going up to God as a sweet fragrance.

- These (the obedient and faithful) I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. (Isaiah 56:7).

The picture of prayers wafting up to heaven like incense is captured in the following words of David.

- Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice! (Psalm 141:2).

And, also in John's vision in Revelations.

- Another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne,⁴ and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. (Rev. 8:3-4).

The golden altar is also a representation of Christ, who is our intercessor before God the Father. During Jesus days on earth he prayed for believers, he was like the high priest of the tabernacle, who bore the names of each of the Israelite tribes on their breastplate before God. Just before Jesus was betrayed and sentenced to death, he interceded for his disciples and all believers, asking God to guard them from evil and sanctify them by His word, and that they may see God's glory and be a witness to the world (John 17:1-26). Today, Jesus is still our high priest at the Father's side, interceding for God's people.

- Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. (Rom. 8:34).

Since we have been forgiven of our sins through the blood of Christ, we also come boldly in prayer in Jesus' name. When we pray in Jesus' name, we are praying based on the work He has done and not on our own merit. It is in His powerful name that we are saved and baptized, and in His name, we live, speak and act. Jesus said:

- Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
¹⁴If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. (John 14:13-14).

The horns of the golden altar were sprinkled with blood from the animal sacrifice to cleanse and purify it from the sins of the Israelites (Leviticus 4:7, 16:18). In the same way that the horns on the brazen altar represent the power of Christ's blood to forgive sins, the horns on golden altar signify the power of His blood to cleanse us as we in prayer confess our sins and ask for His forgiveness.

- The prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. (James 5:15-16).

God told the Levitical priests that the fire was to be kept burning on the altar continually; it shall not go out. (Lev. 6:13). To keep the fire of God and the passion of the heart continuously burning is the challenge of all those redeemed in Christ. To keep this fire of God forever burning we must surrender to the sovereignty of God, and by faith fully trust that we are made righteous not by our own good works and self-righteousness, but by Christ's righteousness and God's grace. Without these acts of faith, no fellowship with God is possible.

Fire Thrown to Earth, Thunder, Lightning and an Earthquake.

- **Revelation 8:5-6:** Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake. ⁶Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them, (prepared to blow them in KJV).

After the angel had presented the prayers of the faithful mixed with burning incense before God he threw the fiery mixture (symbolising the faithfuls cry for justice and the judgments of God) to earth, because of this, earth was struck with severe storms, calamities, disasters and catastrophes (symbolised by thunder, lightning and an earthquake). These calamities would not only embrace natural storms, earthquakes and disasters, but eventually include wars, civil upheaval, violence of all kinds, the downfall of governments and the collapse of the global banking system. Upon hearing the thunder and seeing the flashes of lightning, and an earthquake on earth the seven angels, knew that the appointed time had come for them to sound the trumpets and begin the execution of God's judgments upon the earth. This is not written to simply inform mankind what is coming upon earth, but a warning given with the hope, mankind would repent and set their life right before God so they would meet Him with joy and not in fear of judgment.

THE FIRST ANGEL BLOWS HIS TRUMPET

REVELATION 8:7

Hail and Fire, mixed with Blood, Burned a Third of Earth.

- **Revelation 8:7:** The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

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The first trumpet: begins preparing the advancing progress of Christ's Kingdom, while the seventh trumpet reveals the destruction of those who destroy the earth, and the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ who will reign in righteousness. In chapter eleven we read:

- The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever for by God's wrath he has taken great power against the destroyers of the earth and begun to reign and judge the dead and reward, the faithful. (Revelation 11:15-18).

The history of the world is not to be folded up in a hurry, but achieved by slow and painful steps. The final triumph and fulfilment of these prophetic visions cannot be completed in one event. Likewise, the literal coming of Christ's Kingdom on earth cannot be attained in the quick ways our impatience might desire. The series of the following events not only reveal to John and the faithful the general decay of the world, but also of the gradual decay and wrong growth of the church.

Hail and fire, mixed with blood: (v7) this may be an allusion to the seventh plague of Egypt:

- Then Moses stretched out his staff toward heaven, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. ²⁴There was hail and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. ²⁵The hail struck down everything that was in the field in all the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And the hail struck down every plant of the field and broke every tree of the field. (Exodus 9:23-25).

Referring to this plague upon Egypt, the Psalmist wrote:

- He gave over their cattle to the hail and their flocks to thunderbolts. (Psalm 78:48).
- He gave them hail for rain, and fiery lightning bolts through their land. (Psalm 105:32).

These verses remind us of God's mighty works during the time of Moses and of God delivering His people from the tyranny of Pharaoh, while the seven trumpets bring to our mind Joshua blowing trumpets seven times and the walls of Jericho falling-down giving God's people triumphant victory. In the same way that God brought judgment upon Egypt and Jericho by His mighty power and delivered and saved His people He will bring catastrophic judgments upon the world and save His people to re-build a new world of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth with Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. Hail is usually a symbol of war and of God's divine judgment and punishment. The following shows that it can refer to literal hail or symbolize war:

- Have you (Job) entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail, ²³which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war? (Job 38:22-23).

The prophet Isaiah expresses the invasion of Israel by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria in similar prophetic language:

- Behold, the Lord has one (Shalmaneser king of Assyria) who is mighty and strong; like a storm of hail, a destroying tempest, like a storm of mighty, overflowing waters, he casts down to the earth with his hand. (Isaiah 28:2).

Isaiah uses the same type of prophetic language when speaking about the multitude of nations that the LORD will use to fight against the strongholds of Ariel (signifying Jerusalem) and distress her: -

- You (Ariel signifying Jerusalem) will be visited by the LORD of hosts with thunder and with earthquake and great noise, with whirlwind and tempest, and the flame of a devouring fire. (Isaiah 29:6).

Here the thunder and the flame of devouring fire refers to Cyrus king of Media Persia and his armies invading and conquering the Empire of Babylon and setting the people of Israel free from their seventy years in captivity to Babylon. Isaiah likens Cyrus armies to the power of thunder; the terror of earthquakes and a whirlwind, because they bring mass annihilation and lay to waste everything that stands in their path. Ezekiel expresses the judgments of God on the prophets who deceived the people in a similar manner:

- Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD: I will make a stormy wind break out in my wrath, and there shall be a deluge of rain in my anger, and great hailstones in wrath to make a full end. (Ezekiel. 13:13).

Here the stormy wind and great hailstones refers to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and his armies, who broke down the wall of Jerusalem, slaughtered the people, killed the kings' sons, and blinded Zedekiah the king of Judah, then emptied the city of its inhabitants by taking them in chains captive to Babylon for seventy years. Some understand the expression, "hail and fire mingled with blood," to apply to the following:

- The persecutions of the early church by the Roman emperors and the Jews, but these were over at the time of John.
- God's judgment upon the Jews with the destruction of Jerusalem, but this happened in A.D. 70 and John wrote these letters around A.D. 96
- Great troubles, wars, bloodshed, and slaughter and abominable heresies, hypocrisy and distorted teachings and widespread dissensions happening within the church, which did happen from this time onward and will increase in the latter days.

What we do know for certain is that should massive hail stones fall on man and beast, it would result in much blood being mixed with the hail and the waters of the rain, especially when it is mixed with the blood of every flying bird it kills as it falls to earth. Scientifically if a meteorite was falling at the same time as the hail, especially if the meteorite was

breaking up there would be flames and red-hot meteorite particles mixed with the hail which in such a dramatic vision would certainly appear as blood.

A third of the trees were burned up: (v7) the following verses show that cedar trees signify the heads of Israel; cypress trees signify the priests and the prophets of Israel and forests signify Jerusalem.

- By your (Sennacherib king of Assyria) messengers you have mocked the Lord, and you have said, 'With my many chariots I have gone up the heights of the mountains (signifying Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem), to the far recesses of Lebanon (signifying Israel); I felled its tallest cedars (the heads of Israel), its choicest cypresses (priests and prophets of Israel); I entered its farthest lodging place, its most fruitful forest (Jerusalem). (2 Kings 19:23).

In the following verses, the cedars of Lebanon are symbols of proud and lofty men.

- The LORD of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up and it shall be brought low; ¹³against all the cedars of Lebanon, lofty and lifted up; and against all the oaks of Bashan. (Isaiah 2:12-13).

In the following verses, Judah is symbolized by cypress trees and Israel is symbolized by cedar trees.

- The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing (because the king of Babylon is laid low). ⁸The cypresses (signifying Israel) rejoice at you (the king of Babylon), the cedars of Lebanon (signifying Judah), saying, 'Since you were laid low, no woodcutter (signifying enemies) comes up against us. (Isaiah 14:7-8).

In the context of this verse, woodcutters signify enemies, while cutting down forests leaving its mighty and tall trees lying dead on the surface of ground signifies the ruin of mighty rulers and widespread bloodshed and death, which if applied to, "hail and fire, mixed with blood falling to earth," would refer to nations engaged in war. In the following verses cypress trees signify the inhabitants of Jerusalem, glorious trees signify the shepherds of Israel, oak trees signify Israel and thick forest signify the entire nation of Judah and Israel:

- Open your doors, O Lebanon (signifying Judah), that the fire may devour your cedars! (worthless shepherds) ²Wail, O cypress (signifying inhabitants of Jerusalem), for the cedar has fallen, for the glorious trees (signifying the shepherds of Israel) are ruined! Wail, oaks of Bashan, (signifying Israel) for the thick forest (signifying the entire nation of Judah and Israel) has been felled! ³The sound of the wail of the shepherds, for their glory is ruined! The sound of the roar of the lions (kings of Israel), for the thicket (people of Israel) of the Jordan is ruined! (Zech. 11:1-3).

Writers of biblical poetry speak at length on the motion of Lebanon's famous cedar trees, their massive branches their fragrance and on their height as a symbol of dignity and pride and on their growth and resistance to decay as a symbol of endurance. (Lebanon is included in God's promise). From these verses, we learn that:

Cypress trees and the glorious trees: symbolize the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the people of Judah.

Thick forests: symbolize the people of Israel in the land of Samaria.

Oak trees: symbolize the shepherds of Israel.

Cedar trees: symbolize the shepherds of Judah.

Trees and forests: symbolize people and nations.

A third part of the green grass: (v7) the following verses show that trees and grass symbolise mankind and mortality:

- A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. (Isaiah 40:6).
- All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls. (1 Peter 1:24).

Here grass symbolises the mortality of mankind, when trees are contrasted to grass the trees are symbols of great ones, while grass signifies the common people.

Summing it up: the expression, "hail and fire, mixed with blood, were thrown upon the earth and a third of the earth, a third of the trees and all the green grass was burned up," can signify either of the following five things:

1. Figuratively to a great part of the earth suffering wars, violence, slaughter and natural disasters causing massive upheaval, grief and great troubles.
2. Literally to massive hail stones falling on mankind, multitudes of beasts and flying birds causing great pools of blood mixed with water on much of the earth.
3. Literally to a flaming meteorite falling toward earth and its red-hot meteorite practicals mixing with the falling hail stones causing great bloodshed on earth as they kill every living thing they fall on.
4. Figuratively to many churches suffering horrific persecutions, and corrupt priests, prophets and shepherds of God's people leading many churches into abominable heresies, hypocrisy, distorted teachings and widespread dissensions.

The fall of mighty rulers the ruin of governments and the destruction of their great empires. It is pointless to debate which of these the expression it may refer to as it is very likely will all apply in the latter days, prior to Christ's return in glory.

THE SECOND ANGEL BLOWS HIS TRUMPET

REVELATION 8:8-9

A Fiery Mountain, is Thrown into the Sea and a Third became Blood.

- **Revelation 8:8-9:** The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood.
⁹A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

A great mountain: (v8) a mountain is a natural symbol of strength, and it was upon mountains that the early civilizations built fortified places, and it was in these places that the seats of power rested. For these reasons mountains became a symbol of strong and mighty nations, but not necessarily a nation, that came from a mountainous region but a nation that by its steadfast might and strength resembled a mountain such as Babylon and Rome and any other warlike nation of the similar character and strength. The following verses show that a mountain often symbolizes kingdoms, nations and cities.

- Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, declares the LORD, which destroys the whole earth; I will stretch out my hand against you, and roll you down from the crags, and make you a burnt mountain. (Jer. 51:25).

Here the destroying mountain refers to the strong consolidated power of the empire of Babylon and the whole earth, refers to the land of Judah, Jerusalem and all the nations the armies of Babylon plundered and brought to ruin in warfare.

- Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. (Dan. 2:35).

Here the great mountain refers to the Kingdom of God when Christ returns in glory to judge the nations and gather the faithful to himself.

- Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of, "Grace, grace to it!" (Zech. 4:7).

Here the great mountain refers to all the obstacles, negativity and discouragement that there was against the re-building of the temple. The statement, "The great mountain will become a plain," means all obstacles to the rebuilding of the temporary temple will be removed. By extension this echoes Jesus who through his death and resurrection removed all obstacles that would hinder and stop anyone, Jew or Gentile from being able to become part of the eternal temple that God is at this present time building in Christ. The words, "The top stone of the temple will be brought forward amid shouts of grace, grace to it," means when the final stone of the temple is laid and the temple completed there will be great rejoicing and the people will know God's grace. This of course also echoes the Lord Jesus Christ the head stone returning to the eternal spiritual global temple God is building now in Christ and all those who are part of it rejoicing greatly with loud shouts of grace, because they will know that it is only by his grace that they are part of God's eternal temple. The overthrow of this mountain, comes after a great part of the earth, the trees, and the green grass has been burned up (v7) which means that after the earth has suffered massive upheaval, disasters and great troubles, violence wars and slaughter and a great many churches worldwide have suffered horrific persecutions, and been filled with corrupt priests, prophets and shepherds of God's people who have lead many believers into abominable heresies, hypocrisy, distorted teachings and widespread dissensions.

Literally, in the context of this chapter the mountain could refer to:

- A meteorite falling into the sea which would not only pollute the waters and kill thousands of fish, but also cause a massive Tsunami and by it destroy all ships in its path.
- A volcanic mountain blazing with fire with its trees and woods covered in great flames of fire as they burn and its lava flows into the oceans killing fish and destroying ships and everything else in its path.
- To the destruction of much of the world's global commerce and trade that is carried out by ships sailing from country to country transporting cargo needed for the world economy to prosper and the inhabitants of the earth to survive.

Figuratively, in the context of this chapter the mountain could refer to: a great nation, its ruler and its army, that has a resemblance to a fiery mountain, meaning it would be powerful in strength. Should a literal mountain of fire be cast into the sea it would be an enormously breathtaking, destructive and a horrifically awful event. Likewise, when this great nation, its ruler and its army, is brought to ruin, much of the world will stand in stunned shock, fear and dread. The following verse shows that the sea, is used in Scripture as a symbol of nations and people:

- The angel said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. (Rev. 17:15).

Fire destroys everything in its path so the symbol of a fiery mountain being thrown into the sea would signify a mighty and powerful nation being utterly-destroyed and along with its destruction vast numbers of people and nations thrown into great confusion and distress and killed by calamities, disasters and war. Though the burning mountain symbolises a

great nation it would also embrace its weapons of mass destruction and include a great part of the global worlds political, governmental and financial system and the populations of the earth being destroyed by weapons of mass destruction. In the following Psalm, the writer comforts the faithful during such widespread destruction:

- God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ²Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, ³though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. *Selah* (Psalm 46:1-3).

The rest of the Psalm goes on to say that the LORD utters His voice and the nations rage, kingdoms totter and the earth melts, but the LORD is with His people. Though He brings desolations on the earth He is the fortress of the faithful, and will make wars cease to the end of the earth until He is exalted among the nations and in the earth! (Psalm 46:5-11). Nebuchadnezzar and a fiery burning mountain: may also symbolize a collection of many people and nations into one powerful political body or global government, while the sea symbolizes a collection or body of people worldwide that the political body or global government rule over and influence.

- Therefore, thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will plead your cause and take vengeance for you. I will dry up her sea and make her fountain dry. (Jer. 51:36).

In this context, the sea and the fountains symbolise all the power and glory of Babylon which was at this time called the glorious city of the entire earth. At this time Israel was in captivity to Babylon. God through the prophet Jeremiah told His people that He will take vengeance on Babylon for their sake and bring their cities to ruin and make Babylon an example to all nations. When these events came to pass God's, people had been in captivity to Babylon and under their oppression for seventy years. With, this in mind the great fiery mountain could symbolize God's judgment and wrath being poured out on the most powerful nations of the earth (symbolized by the sea) and thereby bringing the rulers of this world to utter-ruin and all those who are under their authority, power and influence too confusion, bewilderment, distress and ultimately collapse and destruction. This idea would be in harmony with the following vision of Daniel:

- You saw, O king (Nebuchadnezzar), and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. ³²The head of this image was of fine gold (Babylon), its chest and arms of silver (Media Persia), its middle and thighs of bronze (Greece), ³³its legs of iron (Rome), its feet partly of iron and partly of clay (the final kingdom of the world). ³⁴As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, (Christ) and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. ³⁵Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. (Dan. 2:31-35)
- The head of fine gold (v32) symbolize Babylon.
- The chest and arms of silver (v32) symbolize Media Persia.
- The middle and thighs of bronze (v32) symbolize Greece.
- The legs of iron (v33) symbolize Rome.

These are all world empires that played a great part in the history of Israel.

- **The feet partly of iron and partly of clay:** (v33) symbolize the final world kingdom and rulers and governments of the world in league with it.
- **The stone cut out by no human hand:** (v33) symbolize Christ and his faithful church.

- **The iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold:** all broken in pieces so that not a trace of them could be found. (v34-35) symbolize Christ returning in glory and destroying the kingdoms of this world, so that the kingdom of this world, become the Kingdom of Christ.
- **The seventh angel blew his trumpet:** and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever. (Rev. 11:15).

The stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. (v35) symbolize Christ and the faithful destroying the kingdoms of this world and becoming a great Kingdom on earth with Christ as the King. Daniel continues to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's vision:

- In the days of those kings (the powerful kings of the world) the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever. (Dan. 2:44-45).

THE THIRD ANGEL BLOWS HIS TRUMPET

REVELATION 8:10

The Third Angel Blew His Trumpet and a Star Fell from Heaven.

- **Revelation 8:10:** The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch (as a lamp in KJV), and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. (the fountains of waters in KJV)

Rivers and fountains of fresh water are necessary to support life so the drying up of them signifies a scarcity of all things necessary to sustain life.

Star: in this verse comes from the Greek words (*aster, stronnumi and steros*), Aster, refers to a literal star (as thrown over the sky). Stronnumi carries the idea of furnishing and spreading (i.e., like a carpet), while steros, means, solid, stable, steadfast, strong and sure.

The following verses show that a star is an emblem of a prince, of a ruler and of one distinguished by rank or by a great talent.

1. I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the forehead of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth. (Num. 24:17).

Here the star prophetically symbolises the Lord Jesus Christ. Moab and Edom symbolically, represent the enemies of Christ and of His church, who will eventually be subdued by the King of kings. Balaam, in his vision saw Christ coming out of the nation of Israel and defeating all the armies of God's enemies then ruling with power and authority over the survivors that remained in the cities.

2. You (Israel) shall take up Sikkuth your king, and Kiyyun your star-god—your images that you made for yourselves, (Amos 5:26).

Here the star symbolises a pagan god the people of Israel worshipped.

3. The pride of your (Edom) heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rock, in your lofty dwelling, who say in your heart, "Who will bring me down to the ground?"
⁴Though you soar aloft like the eagle, though your nest is set among the stars, from there I will bring you down, declares the LORD. (Obadiah 1:3-4).

Throughout Scripture a star is often a symbol of royal dominion, an illustrious king or ruler, but in this context, it refers to the fall of a prideful monarch, a sovereign ruler or eminent governor. Obadiah in this chapter is speaking of prideful rulers of great authority and power being plucked from their seat among the stars (i.e., exalted positions

of great power). A star falling from heaven is a natural symbol of one who had left a higher position of power and authority, and of one whose character and strategy and direction are like a meteor falling to the earth and bringing great destruction. The stars in this chapter symbolize great and powerful nations of the earth. The LORD is saying that He will pluck up (i.e., bring to ruin) Edom from amongst the nations of the earth. This ruin is followed by great miseries sorrows and grief.

4. How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! (Isaiah 14:12).

Here the star symbolises the extremely powerful and prideful king of Babylon.

5. You (the prideful rulers of Israel) took up the tent of Moloch and the star of your god Rephan, the images that you made to worship; and I will send you into exile beyond Babylon.' (Acts 7:43).

Here the star symbolises a pagan god the people of Israel worshipped

6. I will give him the morning star. (Rev. 2:28).

The star in this verse is not the stars that blazes in the darkness of the heavens, but the morning star, amongst commentators there are various ideas of what the expression: "I will give him the morning star," refers to. Following are the most common:

- In the last chapter of the Revelation the Lord is described as the bright and morning star (Rev. 22:16), based upon this it is suggested that the statement, "I will give him the morning star," means that Jesus will give the overcomer himself.
- The morning star signifies the beginning of a new day, so in this verse the expression, "I will give you the morning star," not only signifies the beginning of the new glorious age that Christ who is called the bright morning star will establish when he returns, but also carries the idea that Christ will receive those who overcome into the bright new age that is to come.
- Since the morning star is the first bright light that appears as the darkness of the night fades, the expression, "I will give you the morning star," is poetic language expressing the wonder and glory Christ will crown those who overcome with at the dawning of the new age to come, and that they will shine as the brightness of stars for ever.

NOTE: as spectators look up, they see the bright light and glory of the shinning stars, likewise in the new glorious future age to come their eyes will behold the shining light of the perfected resurrected immortal faithful brothers and sisters of Christ. Christ the valiant King after having conquered the stubborn nations keeps his words to the faithful and give them the morning-star, signifying unspeakable glory, brightness, and peaceable dominion with him over the nations.

The morning star in Peters letter: Peter speaks about paying attention to prophecy until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. (2 Peter 1:19). Peter here has the bright star that at certain periods of the year begins the day in the most magnificent brilliance. Figuratively the star is Christ and the reference is to that glorious day when Christ returns in the full revelation of his glory and the splendour of his Kingdom and his light shines its beams deep into our hearts and that hidden, but glorious light and love that dwells within the heart of every brother and sister in Christ rises in breathtaking and uncontrollable excitement and joy at the sight of seeing their risen Saviour.

7. The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter. (Rev. 8:10-11).

Here the star symbolises any object, or powerful king, ruler, political power or religious leader that brings calamity, chaos and destruction to earth or the world.

8. The fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit. (Rev. 9:1).

Here the star symbolises the head of some great religious and powerful institution or organisation or church falling from its great and high position of religious influence.

9. I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star. (Rev. 22:16).

Here the star symbolises the Lord Jesus Christ.

Summary: these verses show that a star in Scripture can symbolise the Lord Jesus Christ, a pagan god the people of Israel worshipped, an extremely powerful and prideful king and great and powerful nations of the earth.

A star falling from heaven: carries the idea of prideful rulers of great power and high position authority falling from their exalted positions and coming to ruin.

The morning star: signifies the beginning of a new day.

I will give you the morning star: carries three ideas, firstly, the word morning signifies the beginning of a new day, while the word star symbolises great light, therefore, the expression, "I will give you the morning star," refers to the beginning of the new glorious age full of God's light, that Christ who is called the bright morning star will establish when he returns in glory. Secondly, that Jesus will receive those who overcome into this bright new age.

Thirdly, the star symbolises Christ and the glorious day when he returns in the full revelation of his glory and the splendour of his Kingdom and his light shines deep into our hearts and that hidden, but glorious light and love that dwells within the heart rises in breathtaking and uncontrollable excitement and joy at the sight of seeing the risen Saviour.

Stars, in prophetic Scriptures are figurative representations of the following things:

1. Some great person in power who corrupted the churches and the Gospel of Christ. When the Gospel that brings spiritual life to the spirit of sinners, is corrupted it bring ruin and death, instead of spiritual life and eternal salvation
2. The chemical fall out of weapons of mass destruction pollute the water supplies so badly they cause severe sickness and poison those who drink them:
3. Calamities and disasters that undermine and weaken empires, nations and kingdoms.
4. A great prince that appears like a star falling from heaven to earth. This carries the idea that his coming is sudden, ungodly, unexpected and his stay short.
5. Death falling upon multitudes of people (symbolized by the sea). This carries the idea of death falling upon masses of the world's population.

6. Some person in power who corrupted the churches of Christ and brought into the body of Christ a mixture of false and deceptive errors and doctrines mixed with the true teachings of the Bible, the Scriptures and the Gospel and thereby lead much of the body of Christ astray robbing many from true inner life, joy, peace and eternal life and instead leading them to ruin, bitterness and destruction.
7. The judgment and wrath of God, which makes life burdensome and even the small comforts of life bitter.
8. A false teacher, whose evil influence poisoned the pure teachings of the Gospel, and perverted the minds of those seeking God (symbolised by fountains of water).
9. The fall of the great secular and religious rulers and leaders which brings misery to the secular and religious world.
10. A future chief minister or false teacher falling from his high place in the church and instead of bringing light to the people as a star does to the darkness, he distinguishes the light by bringing false doctrines and perverting and distorting the Gospel.

Blazing like a torch, (burning as it were a lamp in KJV): (v10) a falling star would appear as a falling meteor that is fiery intense, bright and full of energy and though magnificent and full of splendour in appearance, it rapidly moves downward with destructive speed. Figuratively such a star would signify the following things: -

- The destruction it brings is according to God's judgments and wrath and in His control.
- A renowned, famous and outstanding global ecclesiastical religious leader who made great pretensions to religion and holiness and for a space of time shone with great lustre and splendour but lead those who followed him into great doctrinal errors and away from the true Gospel.
- A global political ruler of fame, great wealth, authority, influence and power over much of the world that has a beneficial influence on mankind and as such shines brightly in the eyes of the world, but ultimately leads the world on a destructive path to Gods judgment and wrath.

It fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water: (v10) (the fountains of waters in KJV), the reference to the rivers and to the fountains of waters signifies two things:

1. Fresh water needed for survival would be affected.
2. Everything would be affected by this series of judgments and not just the land.

The effect of all fresh water in the following verse is, that many are destroyed by the bitterness of the water. A principal of judgments: if lesser judgments do not take effect on the world and the church greater judgments will follow; and when God comes to punish the world, the inhabitants will tremble before Him.

REVELATION 8:11

A Star Named Wormwood, fell and Waters became Wormwood.

- Revelation 8:11: The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter.

Wormwood: is a bitter, nauseous plant, it comes from the Hebrew word (la'anah), meaning to curse as it was regarded as poisonous, and therefore accursed and from the Greek word (apsinthos), which means bitterness. Though it was moderately used for certain medicinal purposes

(and still is in some countries), if it is used as ordinary drinking water it would not only be disagreeable to the taste, but also fatal to life. Figuratively it carries the idea of great troubles and calamities, affliction, misery, unhappiness, depression, gloom, despair and grief, extreme distress, worry, fear, dread, hopelessness and death, troubling a great part of the world's secular population and much of the corrupt religious world. The Israelites were warned against idolatry being a root that bears gall and wormwood. (Deut. 29:18). There is no doubt that great destruction and devastation is intended by the falling star named wormwood, but it is not necessary to suppose that the waters would be literally turned into wormwood by the toxic effect of a falling meteor, nor is it necessary to suppose that the falling star is intended to be represented the literal destruction of much of human life by the poisoning of fresh waters.

Following are the seven mentions of wormwood in the Bible:

1. Beware lest there be among you (Israel) a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the LORD our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit. (beareth gall and wormwood in KJV). (Deut. 29:18).

Here wormwood carries the idea of God judging and condemning Israel to death and destruction, because they had turned from Him to worship and serve pagan gods.

2. The lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil, ⁴but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. ⁵Her feet go down to death; her steps follow the path to Sheol; (Prov. 5:3-5).

Here wormwood carries the idea of condemnation, death and destruction, because of sinful sexual behavior with a prostitute.

3. The LORD says: "Because Israel have stubbornly followed their own hearts and have gone after the Baals, as their fathers taught them. ¹⁵Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will feed this people with bitter food, and give them poisonous water to drink. (Jer. 9:14-15).

Here wormwood carries the idea of God judging and condemning Israel to death and destruction, because of their worship of Baal.

4. Therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets: "Behold, I will feed them with bitter food (wormwood in KJV) and give them poisoned water to drink, for from the prophets of Jerusalem ungodliness has gone out into all the land." (Jer. 23:15).

Here wormwood carries the idea of God judging and condemning the prophets of Jerusalem to death and destruction, because of their ungodliness.

5. He has filled me (a man who has seen affliction) (v1) with bitterness; he has sated me with wormwood. ¹⁶He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes; ¹⁷my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is; ¹⁸so I say, "My endurance has perished; so has my hope from the LORD. ¹⁹Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! (Lam. 3:15-19).

Here wormwood means great affliction, misery, unhappiness, depression, gloom, despair, grief, distress, extreme stress and worry, fear, dread and hopelessness

6. Seek the LORD and live, lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and it devour, with none to quench it for Bethel, ⁷O you (Israel) who turn justice to wormwood and cast down righteousness to the earth! (Amos 5:6-7).

Here wormwood symbolizes great affliction, misery, unhappiness, depression, gloom, despair, grief and extreme distress, worry, fear, dread and hopelessness.

7. The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter. (Rev. 8:10-11).

Here the great star not only symbolizes great affliction, misery, unhappiness, depression, gloom, despair, grief and extreme distress, worry, fear, dread and hopelessness afflicting a great part of the world's population, but also includes the death of a great mass of the inhabitants of the earth. Wormwood is an emblem of the calamity that would follow if the waters were made bitter and thereby useless to sustain life. Should a large portion of the fresh water of wells, rivers and fountains of a country be made bitter as wormwood the death of those inhabitants would be inevitable. The following verse shows that such an event occurred at Marah.

- When they (Israel) came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they *were* bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. ²⁴And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? (Exod. 15:23-24).

If the LORD had not led them to twelve wells of fresh water the people would have died. (Exod. 15:27). Likewise, if a considerable portion our worlds fresh water was made toxic (symbolized by wormwood) widespread desolations would be caused in the vicinity of those poisoned water supplies and death would spread over the lands adjacent to them.

THE FOURTH ANGEL BLOWS HIS TRUMPET

REVELATION 8:12

A Third of the Sun, Moon, Stars, Day and Night was Darkened.

- **Revelation 8:12:** The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck (smitten in KJV), and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night.

A third of the heavenly host are darkened, which means the light of the sun, the moon, and the stars are not entirely blotted out, which means that the darkness is not total, so some light remained, which carries the idea that there was a continuance of the existing state of things. The following verses show that the darkening of the sun, moon and stars symbolizes God's judgment.

- The stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light. ¹¹I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant, and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless. (Isaiah 13:10-11).
- When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens and make their stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light. ⁸All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over you, and put darkness on your land, declares the Lord GOD. (Ezekiel 32:7-8).
- Give glory to the LORD your God before he brings darkness, before your feet stumble on the twilight mountains, and while you look for light he turns it into gloom and makes it deep darkness. (Jer. 13:16).

Following are the three most common thoughts amongst theologians concerning what the darkening of the sun, the moon and the stars may symbolise.

1. The darkness is caused by an eclipse of some kind, or something like the darkness that came over the cross of Jesus when he breathed his last breath, or the sun, the moon and the stars being covered with thick clouds.

2. The following verse shows that biblically speaking light is a symbol of understanding God's word, joy and safety, in contrast to light, darkness symbolizes of a lack of understanding God's word and of misery and adversity.
 - Give glory to the LORD your God before he brings darkness, before your feet stumble on the twilight mountains, and while you look for light, he turns it into gloom and makes it deep darkness. (Jer. 13:16).

Christ (symbolised by the sun) gives light to the heads of the church (symbolised by the moon) and to its faithful members (symbolised by the stars). With, this in mind the darkness symbolizes the words of Christ and the Gospel, being twisted, distorted and corrupted so the that the light it should give is darkened and it no longer has the power upon the conscience, the mind and the heart to save to eternal life. The moon is designed to get its light and beauty from the greater light being the sun, the church is designed to get its light and beauty from Christ the Son of God but should that light be dimmed by the introduction of doctrinal distortion and corruption that light is obscured and darkened and robbed of its power to bring life. In the same way that the lights of heaven are placed higher than the earth, kings, governors and rulers are placed higher than the people they govern, and are to be a kind influence and dispense light to the nations they govern, (i.e., good counsel and laws that benefit society).

In this context the sun, the moon and the stars being darkened, signifies a general deficiency, failings and corruption in government and political magistrates. Generally light is a symbol of joy and safety, while darkness is a symbol of misery and adversity. When darkness is used symbolically the general rule of Scripture is, the greater the darkness (whatever it may symbolize) the greater the destruction. The final ungodly world ruler, the man of lawlessness (2 Thess. 2:1-4) (an antichrist) (1 John 2:22) and his antichristian empire will be opposed to Christ and his Kingdom as darkness is opposed to light.

NOTE: it should be mentioned here, that the the man of lawlessness (2 Thess. 2:1-4) (an antichrist) (1 John 2:22) and his antichristian empire in the eyes of the world will appear as an angel of light. He will speak with charm, authority skilful oratory, and appear to have answers that will solve much of the world's problems. He will be motivated by the spirit of humanism, meaning the well-being of mankind and the planet, which is not only a good thing, but also fulfils Christ second commandment. "love your neighbour as yourself," But from heavens view it is an evil, beast system, because it will not only deny God and the Lord Jesus Christ, but will also be hostile toward those who openly proclaim the Gospel. In the eyes of the antichristian world, the final world empire and its head will appear as a saviour, so much so that much of the world's population will adore him and give their heart and mind over to him. It is only from heavens viewpoint that he is spoken of as arising up out of the bottomless pit, because he will be hostile toward God, toward Christ and toward his people.

It should always be kept in mind, that the tree Eve ate of did not appear harmful, corrupted or poisonous in any way, if it had she would never have eaten of it, but rather when she looked at it she saw a tree that was good for food, and that was a delight to the eyes, and a tree that was to be desired to make one wise. (Gen. 3:6), likewise the final beast empire will appear to the eyes of the world as something good and to be desired. The fourth angel: (v12) the sun, the moon and the stars, give light in the darkness and bring life to the earth and as such should they be darkened, much of all living things on earth would die. Whether it is the heads of the secular world or the heads of the church when their great influence over those who they govern and guide becomes corrupted and their wisdom distorted and their hearts deceptive those who follow them are led to follow the wrong path which is eventually followed by dreadful judgments. God gives the alarm by the Ten Commandments and the written word, by faithful ministers and faithful churches and by everyone's own consciences

as to what is right and wrong, and by the signs of the times; so, that if secular people or Christians are surprised, it is because they haven't listened to their own conscience and have taken no thought as to what God values, but have been content to set their minds on worldly things rather than the things of God. Historians and theologians are so divided in their speculations that many have supposed that this the fourth trumpet refers to:

- The Eutychian heresy, which confounded the two natures of Christ.
- The Papacy, that corrupted the Gospel.
- The Jewish pagan rites and ceremonies that Israel adopted.
- The Scythians, the Goths, the Huns, the Vandals and Heruli.
- The western Roman empire, the Pagan empire and the Roman Papal Church.

However, there is no certain evidence that this refers to rulers, or to anything that would particularly affect the government. The general meaning is, that calamity would come as if darkness had spread over the sun, the moon, and the stars, leaving the world in gloom. What the precise nature of the calamity is not indicated by the language, but anything that would bring gloom and disaster would be in harmony with the symbol. Jesus said:

- There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, ²⁶people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. (Luke 21:25-26).

If the antichristian world does not heed the warnings of these lesser judgments, they must expect greater judgments to come. God withdraws His favour from the earth according, to the world's rejection of Him and His ways. The more the world cast God out of the consciousness of its schools, governments, society, their homes and their lives the more He withdraws His favour from the earth. God does not sit in heaven and choose to distance Himself from us for no reason, we are the ones that have the power to be in His favour or out of it. The greater the distance we put between us and Him the greater the distance He will put between Him and us. His love and grace is forever toward us, it is never withdrawn, His eternal voice is forever crying out, "Come unto me." But, He like every gentleman will never violate the will of another.

His invitation goes out to all, and all are left free to reject or accept it. This invitation could be likened to a wedding invitation to the richest and most powerful Groom on earth, all who accept it (noble or lowly, rich or poor) will enjoy the greatest wedding feast they could ever have known. In contrast, those who reject the invitation will by their free choice miss out on the abundant joyful celebration of the wedding feast. Likewise, those who reject God's invitation to the wedding feast of His Son to his Bride will by their own free choice not only miss out on all the spiritual and eternal blessings and joys the Groom would have loved to bestow upon them, but also by their own choice bring His judgment upon themselves.

Some upon reading this might think: this choice could be likened to a man holding a gun to a person's head and saying, "chose me or I will shoot you," (not much of a choice). The difference is God's ways are good, other than love Him, His number one commandment is to Love our neighbour as ourselves," which means do good to others and not harm. This is, why God, desires we chose Him, He knows if our hearts are filled with His love, we will live according, to love, and true love does no harm to another. It is His desire that mankind lives in peace, and without love for our neighbour this can never happen. It should be mentioned here, accepting God's invitation is not about committing ourselves to going to church

every Sunday (though this can be a good thing) or about strictly adhering to religious customs and traditions, but about inviting the Lord Jesus Christ into our hearts to be our Saviour and the King of our lives and living our lives with him as our best friend and from his love in our hearts having a natural desire to live a life that honours His good name.

WOE, WOE, WOE

REVELATION 8:13

Woe, Woe, Woe, the Blasts of the Three Trumpets are to Blow!

- **Revelation 8:13:** Then I looked, and I heard an eagle (angel in KJV) crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!" (By, reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound! In KJV).

The King James Bible translates eagle as angel, the word translated eagle comes from the Greek word (*aggelos*), and means, to bring tidings; it refers to a messenger (especially an angel) and by implication a pastor. Whether it is read as an angel, or an eagle matters little since, both fly and both carry the same idea whether we read it as angel or eagle, so it is pointless to spend time debating which it should be as both can apply, since both carry the same idea no matter which way it is read the sense is the same, which is that whether eagle or angel, they have something important to announce, which are lamentable predictions foretelling the execution of God's divine judgments. For the sake of this study the word angel will be used to keep it in harmony with all the previous and following angels. This verse is an introduction to the following three angels declaring that the times which are to follow will be full of many more miseries and woes.

I heard and angel: (v13) the purpose of this angel, is to raise mankind's attention to the following three trumpets, which predict events of a far more calamitous nature, and greater terrible plagues, than any of the previous calamities. This, is why they are distinguished from the calamities, before them and by the name of woes. It is as if the angel was saying, "Though the previous judgments signified by the four trumpets that have already sounded will be very great and dreadful, greater judgments far more terrible still remain to be inflicted on the earth, in the events that are to follow when the three remaining trumpets sound. It is possible that these three remaining trumpets are far more terrible, not in the sense of instilling greater terror as the preceding ones would certainly have instilled great fear in the people, but rather greater in the sense that they will not be limited to any country or nation but will be global and affect the entire world.

Woe, woe, woe: (v13) carries the idea heavy calamities are coming on all the earth. The repetition of the woes' three times is used to magnify the extreme magnitude and terror of these calamities and the loud cry emphasizes the fact the distress ruin calamity and chaos will be very great. The three woes refer to the following three trumpets about to be blown, being the fifth, sixth and seventh trumpet spoken of in the following chapter.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
