

Divine Plagues IV

The Plagues of Revelation

By Rich Jacobs, MD

The Plagues of Revelation - are also called God's "wrath" (Greek: "orgae"); this is NOT "tribulation" (a different Greek word: "thlipsis") revealed by the Seals of **Revelation 6**. It is likely that these Plagues do not begin until the rapture of the Church, during the 70th Week of Daniel, because Scripture says the Church is not destined for wrath, but will be delivered from God's wrath by Christ (**1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9; Romans 5:9**). The Plagues of Revelation are reminiscent of the Plagues of Egypt, Sodom and Gomorrah, and even Noah, in some respects. The Trumpet Plagues appear to be invoked by God's two witnesses in Jerusalem (**Revelation 11:5**). Each Trumpet may also announce a new month, but because the 5th Trumpet Plague lasts 5 months (**Revelation 9:5**), all 7 Trumpet Plagues may take place over about a year. The Mishna says that the Plagues of Egypt also took place over the course of about one year (*Note: straw for bricks was usually gathered in Egypt in the month of Iyyar - about May — and the Jews left Egypt in Nissan — about April, the next year*). Rabbinical speculation says each Egyptian plague lasted one month, with time between each plague for interaction between Moses and Pharaoh. The Bowl Plagues follow the Trumpet Plagues and probably take place during the 30 days following the 70th Week of Daniel.

1. **The First Four Trumpets** - Preliminary Trumpets Before the "Woes" Trumpets. They bring divine judgment to all dimensions of God's creation - land, sea, lakes/streams, and heavens.
 - a. **First Trumpet - afflicts one-third of the land**

The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up. Revelation 8:7

 - i. This is no natural phenomenon. The hail is associated with fire — something that is reminiscent of the seventh Plague of Egypt (**Exodus 9:23-28**). It is also mixed with blood — it brings destruction and death.
 - ii. This plague afflicts the land, including the trees and grass. The deaths of people is not mentioned in scripture, but since one-third of the earth is involved, the effects would be devastating.
 - iii. It is a literal fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy that precedes the deliverance of Israel. It is written in **Joel 2:30** - "I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire and columns of smoke." Joel goes on to say that anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be delivered and that survivors will escape to stand on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem. (**Joel 2:32**)
 - iv. This trumpet — hail, fire, blood — is specifically listed to be a plague on Antichrist, often called "Gog" in scripture, and on his wicked Kingdom (**Ezekiel 38:22, 23**). It will prove that Antichrist is NOT God, as he claims!
 - b. **Second Trumpet - afflicts one-third of the sea**

The second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood, and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed. Revelation 8:8, 9

 - i. Expositors have speculated that this plague is initiated by a meteor crashing into the ocean since it begins with something like a great flaming mountain the lands in the sea. This results in a third of the sea becoming blood, also probably not a natural phenomena.

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- ii. Apparently all of the sea life and ships in that particular sea are destroyed as a result of this event. Presumably, men on ships also die from this plague, but this is uncertain.

c. Third Trumpet - afflicts one-third of fresh water sources

*The third angel sounded, and a **great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters.** The name of the star is called **Wormwood**; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter. **Revelation 8:10, 11***

- i. The burning star that fell from heaven turns fresh water into a bitter, lethal brew that kills many people. God could be initiating a natural event, such as another comet impact, but “stars” are symbolic of angels in Scripture.
- ii. “Wormwood” (Greek: “*absinthos*”) refers to group of plants belonging to *Artemesia* genus. These plants grow in temperate semi-arid climates and produce a potent bitter chemical (a mixture of isoprenoids and sesquiterpenoids) that cause toxic and allergic affects in animals and men. An extract from wormwood is added to alcoholic beverages, but excessive amounts of the extract can cause serious mental changes and/or seizures.



d. Fourth Trumpet - afflicts one-third of the heavens

*The fourth angel sounded, and a **third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck**, so that a third of them would be **darkened** and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way. **Revelation 8:12***

- i. After judging the land, the seas, and the fresh waters, God judges the “heavens”. Thus all dimensions of His earthly creation are swept into judgment because of the wickedness of man.
 - ii. The battle also rages in the spiritual realm, with Satan opposing God and demons opposing the holy angels. The language of these trumpet may also be symbolic. Typically, stars represent angels (**Revelation 1:20**), the seas represent the nations (**Revelation 17:15**), a mountain represents Christ’s earthly government (**Isaiah 2:2; Daniel 2:35, 45**), fresh water represents the life-sustaining Word or Spirit of God (**Jeremiah 17:13**), and when mentioned together, the sun, moon, and stars represents Israel (**Genesis 37:9**). A more detailed symbolic interpretation remains elusive.
2. Subsequent Plagues are divided into three (3) “woes”, which are announced upon the inhabitants of the earth by an angel in **Revelation 8:13**.
 - a. **First Woe: Fifth Trumpet (Revelation 9:12)** - “star” from Heaven falls to earth.

*Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw **a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth**; and **the key of the bottomless pit was given to him**. He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke*

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went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. Then **out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth**, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the **men who do not have the seal of God** on their foreheads. And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but **to torment for five months**; and their torment was **like the torment of a scorpion when it stings** a man. And in those days amen will seek death and will not find it; **they will long to die**, and death flees from them. The appearance of the locusts was **like horses prepared for battle**; and on their heads appeared to be **crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men**. They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions. They had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle. They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and **in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months**. They have as **king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon**. Revelation 9:1-11

- i. This “star” is a “fallen angel” because Scripture says “he” is given a key to the bottomless pit. He is empowered to unleash the next Plague, which is the First Woe.
 - ii. Locust-like demons are released from the pit that sting people not sealed by God. Those who are stung suffer terrible agony and pain for five months.
 - iii. The King of these demons is called “Abaddon” (Hebrew) or “Apollyon” (Greek). Both Abaddon and Apollyon can be translated as “Destroyer”. In Hebrew, Abaddon also refers to the place of lost souls, similar to our concept of Hell.
 - iv. Some commentators identify Abaddon/Apollyon with Antichrist (*Mathew Henry*), whereas most commentators say he is Satan (*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, Halley, etc.*).
 - v. It should be noted that the angel from Heaven with the key to the Abyss may not be Abaddon, but may be the being who releases Abaddon and the Locust Plague.
- b. **Second Woe: Sixth Trumpet (Revelation 11:14)** - Four angels are released from their bondage at the Euphrates River, who lead a demon army of 200 million.

Then the **sixth angel sounded**, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden **altar which is before God**, one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, **“Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.”** And the **four angels**, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they would **kill a third of mankind**. The number of the armies of the horsemen was **two hundred million**; I heard the number of them. And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and **out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone**. **A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths**. For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their **tails are like serpents and have heads, and with them they do harm**. Revelation 9:13-19

- i. The **Sixth Trumpet** unleashes the **Second Woe**, which really consists of three plagues in one — **Fire, Smoke, and Brimstone** — reminiscent of Sodom’s destruction.
- ii. Four “angels” who have remained bound at the **Euphrates River** - found in ancient Assyria and Babylon - are set free to unleash this Trumpet-Woe Plague.

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- iii. They appear to be high ranking demons because the command an army of 200 million other demons. They may be “territorial arch demons” (see **Daniel 10:20**).
 - 1. Their release is authorized by a command from God’s throne.
 - 2. They remained imprisoned but were released as part of God’s divine plan for the end-times
 - iv. Apparently the burning associated with these plagues is so extensive that the smoke itself is deadly — perhaps because its is toxic, extremely hot, and/or deprives people of oxygen. The result is the death of one-third of mankind.
 - v. Notice that grass, trees, and other creatures were not harmed by this plague. Instead, the plague-woe only killed men. This plague cannot be simply volcanic activity, nuclear war, or raging forrest fires!
- c. **Third Woe: The Seventh Trumpet - Unleashes “the great wine press of the wrath of God” & the final Bowl Judgments**

Then the seventh angel sounded; 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 will reign forever and ever.” **Revelation 11:15**

- i. The 7th Trumpet announces Christ’s return to the earth and salvation of the remnant of Israel, establishing God’s Kingdom on earth, ruled from Jerusalem. To free the beleaguered Jewish remnant, Christ must lead them against Antichrist’s pursuing army, resulting in the Battle of Bozrah — a literal blood bath for Antichrist’s armies. (**Revelation 14:14-15:1**)
- ii. Instead of rejoicing, the nations become enraged when Christ’s earthly kingdom is announced. God answers their aggression with seven bowl judgments. This probably takes place during the 30 days following the 70th Week of Daniel (**Daniel 12:11** - the 70th Week of Daniel is 1260 days, so 1290 days accounts for the additional time).
 - **First Bowl** - Malignant sores on those who worshipped the Beast (**Revelation 16:2**)
 - **Second Bowl** - Sea becomes like a dead man’s blood, killing all sea life (Revelation 16:3)
 - **Third Bowl** - Fresh water becomes blood, retribution for those who martyred the saints during the Great Tribulation (**Revelation 16:4-7**)
 - **Fourth Bowl** - scorching heat from the sun, causing men to blaspheme God (**Revelation 16:8, 9**)
 - **Fifth Bowl** - deep darkness, associated with scorching heat and painful sores, causing men to blaspheme God (**Revelation 16:10, 11**)
 - **Sixth Bowl** - a horde of deceiving demons, causing the ungodly rebellious nations to gather together to war on the Kingdom of God in earth. (**Revelation 16:12-16**)
 - **Seventh Bowl** - Battle of Armageddon and the destruction of the Harlot of Babylon, Antichrist, the False Prophet, and the one-thousand year imprisonment of Satan. God’s weapons during this battle include global earthquakes, seismic geographic changes, lightning, thunder, and 100-pound hail. (**Revelation 16:17-21**)