

# The First Four Trumpets

## Revelation 8:7-13

Remember that the seven trumpet judgments are part of the seventh seal and that as the Lamb of God opened that seventh seal it is seen by John as unleashing these horrible judgments upon the earth itself, and all life on and in it.



Also, and more importantly, remember that the church-age believers won't be here for this at this time, and neither will many of the redeemed from the Tribulation period. There will be saved people here that will have to endure these judgments, but many have been martyred already and are seen around the throne of God.

In the first part of chapter 8 the trumpets are introduced and the first four are grouped together in the remainder of this chapter. The final three trumpet judgments are seen as especially terrible and are introduced separately (vs. 13), or again, if

you would, so as to emphasize the awfulness of their severity.

Each of these trumpet judgments, as they are called, is introduced by a different angel – one of the seven angels that are seen standing around the throne waiting for this event to take place. And, in my opinion, they are standing at the throne at this moment, and have been since John saw them 2,000 years ago, waiting for the order to sound. The wrath and judgment of God will replace His mercy, grace and love for mankind during the Tribulation and there is nothing that will prevent that from happening.

NOTE: As I have stated before, I believe the Bible to be literal unless the context indicates otherwise. That means that what is described here in these judgments is to be taken literally – they will happen just as they are described.



## I. THE FIRST TRUMPET – VS. 7

(images used for the trumpet judgments are from [www.cervantesdesign.com/revelations/](http://www.cervantesdesign.com/revelations/))



***A. When the first angel sounded the trumpet "there followed hail and fire mingled with blood"***

1. Literal hail, fire and blood – not symbolically but literally
2. Hail is seen two other times in the book of

## Revelation as well as in the Old Testament

### Revelation 11:19

(19) And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

### Revelation 16:21

(21) And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every stone* about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

### Exodus 9:18

(18) Behold, to morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now.

### Exodus 9:24-25

(24) So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

(25) And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that *was* in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.

### Joshua 10:11

(11) And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, *and* were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah,

and they died: *they were* more which died with hailstones than *they* whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.

3. It doesn't say how large the hail was, but it would have been significantly large to do the kind of damage it did

***B. The hail and fire that ensued, mixed with blood, would have been an awful sight as a third part of trees, and all the green grass on the earth was burnt up***

1. Imagine looking out over the mountains here and seeing them on fire and then seeing images on TV from all over the earth, maybe satellite images of the heat and smoke from all over the globe as a third of the earth's trees and all the grass goes up in flames
2. The phrase "the third part" is used in relation to these four judgments at least 11 times (that's what I count anyway). One author said that this "is a rabbinism, expressing a considerable number" (Adam Clarke). There is no reason to believe that this isn't to be taken literally – that a literal third part is in view.

## **II. THE SECOND TRUMPET – VS. 8-9**



***A. The second trumpet could be seen as volcanoes erupting, or as a huge meteor that falls from the sky and hits the water – either way, the destruction is the same***

***B. When John wrote this, it was only 20 years after the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius that destroyed Herculaneum and Pompeii in 79 AD***

***C. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by God with fire and brimstone that God sent from heaven – showing it could be either that He uses as this second***

## ***trumpet judgment***

***D. It says that this "great mountain" was cast into the "sea" – not "seas" – meaning either John saw it, in the vision, land in the Mediterranean Sea (what he would have seen from his exile) or it represents all the major bodies of water on earth as a whole (which is what I believe is in view)***

***E. The destruction, no matter the interpretation of the "great mountain" is the major point***

1. A third part of the waters of the sea were turned to blood
2. A third part of life in the sea subsequently died – considering how many people around the world live on a mainly fish diet this would have catastrophic affect
3. A third part of the ships are destroyed – this is an enormous number considering there is an estimated 38,300 ships in the oceans alone at any given time

## **III. THE THIRD TRUMPET – VS. 10-11**



**A. The third trumpet brings something definitely from outside our atmosphere – there is no doubt about this one for the Bible says that “a great star from heaven” falls to earth**

**B. There is great hype today about what would happen if an asteroid hit the earth**

1. There have been several movies about that very same theme – so we are well

aware of what would happen if one hits for real

2. Oddly enough, God already told us what would happen long before the modern age of science

**C. When this meteor or asteroid hits the earth "the third part of the waters" (not affected by the second trumpet) will be made bitter and cause great death**

1. The waters that it affects is the fresh water – the water that the world population would drink
2. One third of all the drinking water is going to be made bitter
3. Bitter water is mentioned in the OT where Moses made the bitter, deadly water sweet – here the opposite occurs

Exodus 15:23-25

(23) And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they *were* bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.

(24) And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?

(25) And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, *which* when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,

**D. This meteor is named "Wormwood" because of what it does to the water**

Zondervan's Pictorial Encyclopedia says this about wormwood:

The Greek word really means "undrinkable," and yet absinthe [strong green liquor] is one of the most popular aperitifs [an alcoholic drink served before a meal to stir the appetite] in France! It certainly has a most objectionable taste to the uninitiated. This is the plant *Artemesia absinthium*; it is a herbaceous perennial which bears masses of small, yellow flowers. The alcoholic drink is now manufactured in Jordania.

Wormwood is mentioned seven times in the Old Testament and twice in the New, in the same verse (Rev. 8:11). It is probable that the drink was known in the Old Testament, for Jeremiah complained "He hath made me drunken with wormwood" (Lam. 3:15). On the other hand, reference is made more than once to the bitterness and unpleasant taste of the wormwood: "her end is bitter as wormwood" (Prov. 5:4) and "a root that beareth gall and wormwood" (Deut. 29:18).

The wormwood has come to be used symbolically to describe sorrow, calamity, and even cruelty.

There are two other species grown in Palestine—*Artemesia herba-alba*, which has a camphor scent and is extremely bitter, and

*Artemesia judaica*. This latter plant was used, and still is in some places, to keep the maggots or moths away from woolen garments. The dried plants are laid in between them.

#### **IV. THE FOURTH TRUMPET – VS. 12-13**

The fourth trumpet is the most peculiar to this point – it states that a third of the sun, the moon and the stars are smitten and “put out,” if you would



**A. As near as I understand this, the sunlight of a normal day will be shortened by one third, and the normal "light" that the moon gives off (which affects the tides of the oceans) will be shortened by one third (which will have cataclysmic affect on the oceans). Also, one third of the stars will be put out – that will have a devastating psychological affect on many around the world.**

**B. Something of significance is the word "smitten" in relation to the sun, moon and stars. If one third of the sun is destroyed, as well as the moon, then it would be safe to believe that it is gone for good – for the length of the rest of the Tribulation period. If that is true, then the devastation of that will be global and extremely severe.**

**C. This fourth trumpet judgment is concluded in verse 13 with a warning about the last three**

1. An angel is seen flying (some believe this to be an eagle because of the way some manuscripts have read – but we will hold to it being an angel) "through the midst of heaven" with a warning of what is to come – all on earth would be able to see ("beheld") and hear him
2. He proclaims three "woes" to represent the last three trumpet judgments – a woe being a pronouncement of burden or destruction

3. Considering the first four trumpet judgments and their severity, how bad are things about to become!

Conclusion: J. B. Smith (as found in Walvoord's book on Revelation – pg. 156) said this: "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." And that's just the beginning.

One thing to notice in these judgments is the destruction to the earth. Although a great deal is being said about how we are destroying the earth now that is bogus, much is, in reality, being done in a destructive way. God gave us this earth, and its beauty to enjoy and we do have a God-given responsibility to care for it (an illustration of that is found in the Levitical Law as it related to planting a field and letting it rest every seventh year so as to not destroy it for good with too much cultivation). However, man won't destroy the earth – God will. He won't let us do it because it isn't ours to destroy – it's His.

John Walvoord wrote this, and I thought it would be good to read to you as a conclusion:

"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 thanksgiving 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 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.”

(In his book "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" – page 156-157)