

Study 18: Revelation 8:8-13

8 The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood,

9 a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

- This second trumpet seems to bring economic hardship. Since the sea was one of the main ways for goods to pass from one country to another, a loss of one third of the ships (not to be taken literally) would bring about a drastic reduction in commerce. Plus the sea was a major source of defense and food for the people of the times.
- God controls the economic affairs of men. Keep these things in mind:
 1. He owns all the money. – 'The silver is mine and the gold is mine,' declares the LORD Almighty (Haggai 2:8). There is no such thing as good or bad money, dirty or clean. It belongs to Him. Bad men may abuse and misuse it, but it is ultimately God's.
 2. He decrees economic hardship in certain seasons. – "He called down famine on the land and destroyed all their supplies of food; and he sent a man before them-- Joseph, sold as a slave. They bruised his feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons, till what he foretold came to pass, till the word of the LORD proved him true" (Psalm 105:16-19). God uses hardship to prove His people, to show that His work in them is real.
 3. God does this so men will cry out to Him for help. – "Others went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters. They saw the works of the LORD, his wonderful deeds in the deep. For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away. They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their wits' end. Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress" (Psalm 107:23-28). People always ask, "Why would God do that or allow this?" The answer is so that people will come to their senses and seek Him.

10 The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water—

11 the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.

- Now this trumpet and the resulting calamity intrigues me. A star fell from the sky. That made me think of the star that announced Jesus' birth. It appeared in the sky and led the magi to the home of Joseph and Mary. Jesus' star was steady but not spectacular. The star in this verse is drawing attention to itself.

- The Roman emperor at the time of Revelation was considered a god. He was worshipped. This cult polluted the spiritual climate on earth, symbolized at times by the waters of the seas. Consider this reference from Isaiah: **“They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).**
- This second trumpet polluted those “spiritual” waters. Why would God allow this to happen? I think of Paul’s words:

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

- If men reject the truth, God will send them teachers who will tell those people what they want to hear. There has been heresy in every generation because men are sinful and don’t want the truth. They prefer darkness. At times, God gives them over to their darkness and even helps them find what they are looking for!
- Doctrinal error should not surprise us. It should only encourage us to be faithful to the truth, to seek and obey it.

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

- This is an eerie scene! I once encountered a solar eclipse and the darkness was very strange. It gave everything a green tint from my perspective. Jesus is the light of the world by His own declaration. This seems to mean that His light and presence will not be felt and the church, His body and agent, will be rendered ineffective to the world at certain times.
- I don’t think this pertains to any one era or historical context. It is a general phenomenon. For instance, during World War II, there was great darkness over the earth. The Church seemed impotent to make much of a difference. People were praying for sure, but the world was crazy. At the end of the War, the climate changed and light seemed to be restored. There have been many others time like that since Revelation was penned. There will be others should the Lord tarry.

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

- If things aren’t bad enough, an eagle appears and warns of the next three trumpet blasts.

- I do think the Church should be aware of what God is doing on the earth. He wants to tell the Church (symbolized by the high-flying, regal-looking eagle that soars with the help of the Spirit's wind) so the Church can tell the unchurched and unsaved.

“Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7).

- The prophetic today is an interesting phenomenon in the modern church. There are some who revel in prophets who can tell you “what you had for breakfast.” My question is: Why do I need to be told that? I already know what I ate for breakfast. I need to hear what God is saying without the fanfare and hoopla.
- I believe in the prophetic but it must always be judged! There are no exceptions. In my opinion there aren't enough “prophets” taking responsibility for sloppy and incorrect prophetic utterances. But the prophets must be released to speak no matter how messy it can get. Paul addressed this:

Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good (1Thessalonians 5:19-21).

Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets (1 Corinthians 14:29-32)

- I am in favor of prophets and prophecy. (It doesn't really matter what I favor or don't. It's God's church and He can and will use whomever He wants whenever He wants to do whatever He wants.) But I don't think prophets are infallible and if they deliver in public, what they say should be judged in public and not just on the day they deliver the word. Their word should be tracked to prove its validity or error.
- There are some what I call “upchuck” prophets. They have some “word” on their stomach and feel they have to “spit it up” and make a mess with no regard to the place or situation. They do not feel led, however, to clean the mess!
- Some churches give prophets a free rein and others avoid them like the plague. Both are wrong.