

The Trumpet Calls for Repentance

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 January 2024

Preacher: Shawn Woo

[0 : 00] Good evening, guys. If you don't have a Bible, we'd love to give you a copy that you could take with you. If you don't have a Bible, please raise your hand. We'll be able to get you a Bible. And if you would turn to Revelation chapter 8.

Revelation is the last book in the Bible. We've been going through this book for a few months now. Now, I was originally going to go all the way from chapter 8, verse 6, to the end of chapter 9, verse 21.

But when I was done writing the sermon, it was really long. And there was enough material there for two sermons. So I'm just going to cut it in half.

Especially because we're trying to keep this service a little shorter for the sake of parents have young kids who are staying past their bedtime to be here to worship God together. So Revelation 8, verses 6 to 13 is all I'm going to read today.

But let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's word. Yes, Father, all the power, all the glory belong to your name.

[1 : 22] So magnify your name to us this evening as we humble ourselves before your word. And address us as you always do.

Speak to us from your word. So that instead of having the purposes and priorities of our lives being dictated by our circumstances and by the world around us, that we would align ourselves to your will, to your revealed will in your scriptures.

And so that we might be faithful stewards who announce the coming of the King Jesus and who invite others who don't know him to join his kingdom.

And mature us and grow us as such witnesses even now, Lord, as we listen to your word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Please stand as we read God's word, if you are able. Revelation chapter 8, verses 6 to 13. Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

[2 : 51] 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. 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. A third of the living creatures in the sea died. And a third of the ships were destroyed. 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. The name of the star is warm wood. A third of the waters became warm wood.

And many people died from the water because it had been made bitter. The fourth angel blew his trumpet. And a third of the sun was struck. And a third of the moon.

[3 : 52] 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. Then I looked.

And I heard an eagle 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. This is God's holy and authoritative word. You may be seated. Nowadays if you read the news you see all kinds of calamities and disasters, wars.

How do we as Christians make sense of these things? Earthquakes, famines, hurricanes, epidemics, wars. That are constantly ravaging our world.

What should as Christians our response be to such things? What we know from scripture is that not all natural disasters are a direct result of sin.

[5 : 04] For example, the disasters that happened to Job and to his children are not a direct result of sin. But scripture also tells us that some natural disasters are a direct result of sin.

For example, in Ezekiel 14.21 it says that God's four disastrous acts of judgment are sword, famine, wild beasts, and pestilence that came upon Jerusalem.

Because the city was, quote, full of blood and full of injustice. Similarly, Jeremiah 3.2-3 tells us that the drought that God inflicted Israel with was because they had polluted the land with their whoredom.

That's a reference to their idolatry. Genesis 15.16 says that Israel's conquest of the Amorites in the promised land in Canaan was at least in part because their iniquities had been filled up.

So scripture does, even though we are perhaps not always comfortable making these connections between, you know, idolatry and drought. Between violence and epidemics.

[6 : 07] Scripture does in some places make very clear connections like that. And even when we can't be certain that all calamities are directly connected to sin. We do know from Romans 8 that in a general and ultimate sense.

All of the futility and brokenness that we witness in our world is a result of sin. Every injustice, every disaster, every loss, every death is at least in part a result of sin that has corrupted our world from top to bottom.

Why? Because it says the whole world, the whole creation has been subjected to futility. It says in Romans 8. And that it's in bondage to corruption. The world is corrupted so that it's groaning in the pains of childbirth.

Awaiting God's redemption. So when you read in the news of earthquakes and famines, hurricanes, epidemics and wars, these are all signs that tell us that this world is not the way it's supposed to be. There's something wrong with the world as it currently is. We live in a world that is corrupted. We live in a world that is under the sentence of divine judgment.

[7 : 16] Not only humans, but all of creation is groaning under the weight of that sin. And we know also, as we've been in the book of Revelation, that since Jesus' first coming, he has ushered in the last days or the end times as scripture speaks of it.

Because the spirit of God has been poured out upon all flesh as Joel 2 prophesied would happen in the last days. And so we are living presently in the last days. We are not at the end of the end times, but we are at, at least, the beginning of the end times began with Jesus.

And that means the groaning and the pain of childbirth of all creation that Romans 8 speaks of is only getting worse. So to use that analogy further, the contractions are getting more intense and more frequent as time goes by.

And the nearer we get to the time of Jesus' return, his second coming. So then what should be our response to these kinds of disasters that afflict the earth?

Jesus gives us the answer in Luke 13. There, his disciples ask him a couple of very relevant questions that I think we could see ourselves asking. There were these Galileans, Jews, who were offering sacrifices to God.

[8 : 29] But then Pilate, the Roman officer, killed them and then mingled their blood with the sacrifice. So not only desecrating the sacrifice, but using the humans that he just slaughtered, the Jews slaughtered, which was a huge, tragic, horrible incident.

And then in addition to that, there were 18 men during that time who died when the Tower of Siloam collapsed upon them. And so they were asking Jesus this question.

These kinds of horrible events, surely they must have done something terribly evil for those things that happened to them, right? That's their question to Jesus. And Jesus tells them, I'm paraphrasing, no, that's not necessarily the case.

But unless you repent, you all will likewise perish. That's Jesus' answer. Jesus does not allow his disciples to retroactively, you know, cast moral judgment on people just because some calamity fell upon them.

He says, no, you can't do that. That's not allowed. However, he does use this opportunity to teach that every misfortune and every calamity in the world points to the reality that we are living in a sinful world that is under the sentence of divine judgment.

[9 : 51] So we should see every single one of these things as opportunities for self-examination and repentance. Instead of denouncing the world when these things happen, we need to call them to repentance.

It says in Romans, I mean, Revelation 9, 20 to 21, we're not actually going to get there today, but I'll read here. It says, the rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues did not repent of the works of their hands, nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk.

Nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts. So that's kind of the conclusion after these seven trumpets, or at least six of them, are blown.

That they should have repented when these things happened, but they didn't. And that's the main point of our passage this morning, that the sovereign judgments of God should lead us to repentance.

I read a helpful article that actually Ed shared with me this week from a theologian named Thomas Schreiner. And he helpfully compares these judgments in Revelation to fire alarms that warn us of looming disaster.

[11:02] And they alert us to flee, right? However, if you're like me, and I live in a condo, so fire alarms go off all the time. I think I set them off half the time. It's, you know, put something too wet on a hot thing, and it just smoke comes up, and the fire alarm goes off.

And I think, and also there's drills, because we need to be trained to know what to do. So people are just kind of desensitized to fire alarms. I don't think I've ever seen anybody run from a fire alarm. And that's kind of the unfortunate reality that we are, I think, all familiar with. In 2000, there was a freshman residence hall in a college, a Seton Hall University campus in New Jersey.

I don't know if you guys know about this incident in 2000. I guess that's kind of a while ago. So, and there were a couple drunk students that decided that it would be a good idea to set something on fire inside the common room.

And because it was really cold outside, I thought it would be funny to make the fire alarm go off and make people have to go wait and shiver outside. But the fire spread. Thankfully, the fire alarm worked, and it was ringing all over the building.

[12:06] However, the students, because they had gotten so used to the alarm, the false alarms going off all the time in the dorm, that they didn't do anything. And three of them ended up dying.

And 58 people were injured. This was one of the worst incidents of campus fire in recent memory in United States history. And that's kind of a cautionary tale for what we're seeing here in the book of Revelation.

The trumpet judgments of God that we're going to see, the four of those today, are not a drill. They are not a false alarm.

They are real and urgent warnings that call a sinful world to repentance. So instead of getting accustomed to ignoring them, we need to pay attention to them.

And so let's pay attention to them and look at them in turn, the divine fire alarms together. We're going to look at the first four. They affect four different spheres of the created world. First trumpet affects land.

[13:10] Second trumpet affects the seas. Third affects the fresh waters. Fourth affects the sky or the heavenly bodies. Third affect the fresh waters. I mentioned to you last week that there are three series.

I've been saying this multiple times, that there are three series of seven judgments in Revelation. I know for some of you who are really good listeners and remember everything I say, this might be a little repetitive. But Revelation is a very complicated book, so I don't think it hurts to repeat things. So hopefully you can learn the structure of the book as we go. So there are three series of seven judgments. The seven seals, the seven trumpets, and seven bowls. And these judgments are not intended to be occurring in a linear chronological fashion, but rather in a cyclical way.

If you try to understand them in a linear way, then you run into problems. There's contradictions and there's duplicates within these series of judgments. Each of these are cyclical, but the seventh judgment in each of these cycles is the final climactic judgment of God, where God himself appears in all his glory, so that there's flashes of lightning and rumblings and peals of thunder, which are marks of a theophany when God appears in his glory and power.

So then the three series of judgments are different angles or viewpoints of the same divine judgments that occur throughout church history. However, there's a reason why John has three.

[14:30] He has three of them in turn instead of one to convey the fact that while these judgments do occur throughout all of church history, that there is a progressive intensification throughout church history of God's judgments that fall upon the earth.

So I've been using the analogy of the Russian doll, right, to explain this. When the seventh seal is broken open, instead of seeing something, I mean, you do see the glory of God coming in his final judgment, but there's not a lot of explanation for what happens.

Instead, it gives way to the seven trumpets. And when the last trumpet, the seventh trumpet, is blown, then it gives way to the seven bowls. So it's like you open a Russian doll and there's another one inside that looks just like it.

But instead of getting smaller like the Russian dolls, the judgments actually get bigger and more intense with each cycle of seven judgments. So to give you the example that we see here, so earlier in chapter 6, verse 8, in the seals, death and Hades were given authority to kill a fourth of the earth.

But then here in the trumpet series, God's judgments affect a third. You see that again and again and again in all these verses, a third, a third, a third. And then later in chapter 9, 15, four destroying angels are released to kill a third of mankind.

[15:52] Then still later in the bowl series, the third of the seven series of judgments, the three series of judgments, God's judgments affect all of creation. So he says in Revelation 16, 3, and every living thing died that was in the sea.

So you can see the escalation, a fourth and a third and then all of creation. I don't think these fractions are precise figures that we're supposed to try to calculate and to figure out whether these things have occurred or not.

But however, they're general numbers intended to convey that escalation. So as I mentioned earlier, the birth pains, the groanings of the pains of childbirth that this creation is under, it's getting more intense.

The contractions are getting more frequent and more intense before Jesus' return. And when the first angel blows the first trumpet, it says in verse 7, 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. So I mentioned last week that these trumpet judgments borrow heavily from the images from the Exodus, the plagues in Egypt.

[17:01] And this is no exception. This is taken from the image of the seventh plague of the hail that comes to kill or destroy all the crops and stuff in Egypt.

And that's recorded in Exodus 9, 23 to 25. It says that the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt.

There 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. And the hail struck down every plant of the field and broke every tree of the field.

So if you take the cue from that passage in Exodus 9, the fire that's mentioned here along with the hail is most likely lightning, because it says in Exodus 9 that the fire flashes, and it's accompanied by thunder.

And there is a difference, however, in that in Exodus 9, it's the hail that seems to cause most of the destruction in the crops. But here in Revelation 8, the fire seems to be doing most of the damage.

[18:08] Three times it uses the phrase burned up and tells us that a third of the earth and a third of the trees and all green grass were burned up. But I did some Googling to figure out if these kind of things have ever been seen and observed before.

And it does seem like it's actually not unusual for these things to happen, because for me it seems a little contradictory that hail would come with fire or cause fire because hail's water. I mean, it's frozen, but it's still water.

But if you talk to farmers and firefighters out in California, they tell you that often these things happen together. They have such things called the dry thunderstorms, where thunderstorms with strong winds that are not accompanied by rain.

And when such events happen, because it's so dry, when lightning hits, it's like kindling, you know, a lit match falling upon a kindling. It just puts everything into fire.

And then because there's such strong winds, it quickly becomes a conflagration and spreads all over the place. And those things apparently create fire clouds, which are dense clouds like the kind you see after a volcanic eruption.

[19:19] And the intense heat quickly heats up the air and causing a lot of water to evaporate quickly and into the higher hemisphere where it's colder. And then that condenses and it becomes rain or hail and falls down.

And so you've seen, I even found some pictures where there was big hail all over the ground where there's fire burning in the forest. And so this could happen naturally. However, while the literal interpretation is possible, I think even more relevantly, there's a symbolic significance here. Because I think this is representative of all disasters that destroy vegetation and cause famine. I think there are several clues for this. First, the effect of the judgment is that a third of the earth was burned up and a third of the trees were burned up and all green grass was burned up. The green grass and the trees are an allusion to the creation account in Genesis 1.11, where the plants that God creates all over the world are classified into two main categories. The seed-bearing grass or the seed-bearing vegetation and the fruit-bearing trees. So you can, in some ways, describe all of edible plants and vegetables in these two terms. [20 : 32] So then the first trumpet judgment is burning up a third of all fruits and vegetables, all crops, all things that people would eat, which causes famine. Secondly, and I think this is the most compelling evidence, Ezekiel 5 describes the threefold judgment of destruction that God will bring upon Jerusalem.

And verse 2 says, a third part you shall burn in the fire in the midst of the city. But then later in that same chapter, in verse 12, when it's speaking of that exact same judgment, which earlier was called burning in fire in the midst of the city, it says this, a third part of you shall die of pestilence and be consumed with famine in your midst.

So there's a clear example there in a prophetic literature in Ezekiel 5 of fire, burning with fire, being a symbol of other disasters like famine and pestilence.

So not only is the third being affected parallel to what we have happening here in Revelation 8-7, we also have this explanation that fire can be representative of other disasters.

So then I think hail and fire are two disasters that farming communities, agricultural societies dread because of their destructive power. I think it's representing this judgment, anything that can destroy people's livelihoods and the foods that they rely on, like agriculture, and then cause famine.

[21 : 56] So maybe we can think of droughts, hurricanes, tornadoes, and the like. So then when we see natural disasters like this causing famine, so yes, of course, we should have compassion for people who are affected by these things and are going hungry.

But not only that, we must also repent. And we need to call these people to repentance. This is a blaring fire alarm warning us, a trumpet blast announcing that the king is returning in judgment with his mighty army.

The final judgment is coming. Repent of your sins and believe in Jesus for salvation. The blood that the hail and fire are mixed with too is symbolic.

Blood is often a symbol of divine judgment in Scripture as we're going to see shortly in the next trumpet judgment. The second trumpet is blown. It says in verse 8, and it says that something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea.

And a third of the sea became blood. A third of the living creatures in the sea died. And a third of the ships were destroyed. This is an allusion to the first plague in Egypt, as you might recall in Exodus 7, when all the waters in the Nile turned into blood and all the fish in the Nile died as a result of it.

[23 : 18] The Nile stank and the Egyptians could not drink the water from the Nile so that there was blood throughout the land of Egypt. Blood represents life. But when blood is spilled, it represents death.

So blood here is a sign of God's judgment upon Egypt. And the second trumpet judgment conveys the same. It's hard to say exactly what this judgment represents.

It's possible that John is seeing in his vision a volcanic eruption, as some commentators say in the sea. And whether the eruption happens underwater or by the water, volcanic activity is deadly for fish that's around because it superheats the water temperature and then it reduces the oxygen level in the water and it acidifies the ocean, all of which things can cause millions and millions of fish to die.

But I think, as I did with the last judgment, it's even more likely that more than the literal meaning, the symbolic significance is in view. For one, it doesn't say that a mountain was thrown into the sea. It says that something like a mountain was thrown into the sea. It was burning with fire. This is a simile, right? John is comparing what he saw in his vision to a great mountain because he's not quite sure how to describe it.

[24 : 41] He's comparing it to something that he knows. But he's not saying that it's a mountain that's being thrown into the sea. John also doesn't say that the sea became filled with fiery lava.

He says that the sea became blood, which is clearly a figurative expression referring to the Exodus plague. Later in Revelation 18, 17 to 21, it describes the overthrow of the wicked city of Babylon, the kingdom of Babylon.

And it describes, quote, the smoke of our burning and compares the violent overthrow of Babylon to, quote, a great millstone being thrown into the sea.

So again, this is an image, something being thrown into the sea is an image of judgment which can be compared to a burning city. And then when that happens, it says that the people mourned, saying, alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth.

So there's a lot of parallels here with our second trumpet judgment. The mountains burning with fire that is thrown into the sea can represent the overthrow of kingdoms and nations that are opposed to God.

[25 : 47] And the dead fish and the destroyed ships can represent the food source and trade, the maritime trade that are disrupted by the overthrow of such kingdoms. People's livelihoods, again, are destroyed on account of the second trumpet judgment.

And this figurative meaning of the second judgment becomes even more likely when we consider the fact that this isn't the first time that Babylon was described as a burning mountain. Jeremiah 51, 25, when God pronounces his judgment upon Babylon, he says, Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, which destroys the whole earth.

I will stretch out my hand against you and make you a burnt mountain. So I think this second seal is referring to the overthrow of kingdoms and the fact that that has on the people around them.

I know some of you guys are probably like, Oh man, Sean is kind of going out there a little bit. This seems a little far-fetched. It seems far-fetched to you that I want you to consider that prophetic visions and apocalyptic literature like Revelation are often, not seldom, often symbolic.

For example, Jeremiah 1, 13-14, when Prophet Jeremiah sees a boiling pot that's facing away from the north, what do you think that means? I mean, it's a boiling pot, right?

[27 : 05] But then God explains it to him. He says, That means, out of the north, disaster shall let be loose upon the inhabitants of land. I mean, would you have guessed that on your own? Probably not, right?

I mean, that's clearly symbolic. In Genesis 41, Pharaoh dreams that seven ugly and thin cows swallow up seven attractive and plump cows. This one's maybe a little bit better, a little bit more accessible, but still, it's symbolic of seven years of plenty, plentiful harvest, followed by seven years of famine.

That's then going to swallow up all the gains from the previous seven years of harvest. Again, symbolic language. If you look at Daniel 2, 31-45, King Nebuchadnezzar has a prophetic dream of a statue with a gold head and a silver chest and arms and a bronze belly and thighs and then iron legs and partly iron and partly clay feet.

But then this statue is then shattered to smithereens by a stone, by a rock. And then Prophet Daniel explains that these various parts of the statue represent successive kingdoms, earthly kingdoms, that decrease in glory throughout history.

And that the stone that shatters all these kingdoms is the kingdom of God that will last forever. So once again, these symbols and figures are the stuff of prophetic literature and apocalyptic literature.

[28 : 28] So why do we interpret the Exodus plagues literally, but not the Revelation judgments? Because Exodus is a historical narrative and Revelation is apocalyptic literature which traffics in symbols.

There are different genres of literature which you have to take into account. So then if you see in our lives and in the news, kingdoms being overthrown, maritime commerce being disrupted, and people going hungry as a result, again, remember, that's a blaring fire alarm, a trumpet blast.

It means repent and believe in the good news. Notice the repetition of the words fire and thrown in these two trumpet, first two trumpet blasts.

In both cases, some kind of fire is thrown upon the earth. And this is fitting because earlier in Revelation 8, 3 to 4, the prayers of God's people crying out to God, remember, came up as incense on a censer to God.

And these were prayers that reached to God that was a pleasing aroma to him. And then God is now answering that prayer and he answers that prayer by sending an angel to take that same censer upon which prayer was lifted to God, filling it with the fire from the altar and then throwing it upon the earth.

[29 : 48] And so that's what you're seeing with the first two trumpet judgments, fire being thrown upon the earth. It's an answer to the prayers of the saints. And when the third trumpet is blown, it says in verses 10 to 11, 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. 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.

Once again, a literal interpretation is possible. And I'm telling you this even though I don't think that's really what the main point of this is because I might be wrong and these things could happen. And so this is, it could be, some people say, the great star could be meteorite. As it enters the earth's atmosphere, it burns up and then it falls somehow upon a third of all the fresh water and springs and then it poisons them, turns them bitter, right?

Wormwood is a plant known for its bitter taste, but once again, I think the symbolic meaning is more prominent here. This judgment, if you keep going back to the Exodus story, is the exact opposite of what God does for his people Israel in Exodus 15, 22 to 25.

[31 : 04] Remember what happened at the waters of Marah, right? The water was so bitter that the Israelites couldn't drink any of it and they're crying out to God because if they don't have water to drink in the wilderness, they perish.

And because they cry out to God, God instructs Moses to throw a log into the bitter waters of Marah and then the water turns sweet and then it gives life to God's people.

This here is the exact opposite of that, right? And that miracle in Marah was particularly meaningful, if you remember from our series in Exodus, because we were told early in Exodus chapter one that the Egyptian slave drivers made the God's people's lives bitter with hard labor.

And so that bitterness of slavery is what they remember during the Passover when they eat bitter herbs. And then that bitterness that is again represented in the waters of Marah when God finally turns it and makes it sweet and gives life to his people.

But here, with warm wood falling upon them, this is, it's the exact opposite happens. Fresh, drinkable water, sweet waters of the rivers and the springs become bitter and deadly.

[32 : 15] So if you drink it, you die. Warm wood is often used in scripture as a symbol of suffering and affliction. For example, Lamentations 3.19 says, remember my affliction and my wanderings, the warm wood and the gall.

Similarly, Proverbs 5.3-4 says that lips of a forbidden woman drip honey. Her words are sweet. She's attractive. But then when you commit adultery with her, it says, in the end, she is bitter as warm wood.

Right? Warm wood's representative affliction and suffering. So what then does this third trumpet judgment represent? I think warm wood is an angelic being.

Stay with me for a little bit. A demon, basically, that turns the sweetness of the pleasures of the world bitter. Why?

Because the star has a name. And the Bible mentions many stars. Never does it mention a star having a name, except when I think it has personal agency.

[33 : 21] This star has a name. It's called warm wood. Moreover, in Isaiah 14.12, the fall of Babylon is connected to its representative angel, which is named Day Star, falling from heaven.

So this is also corroborated by the fact that a star often represents angelic beings in the book of Revelation. Remember from Revelation 1.20, we are told that the seven stars that Jesus holds in his right hand represent what?

Seven angels that represent the seven churches of God before God's throne. Later in Revelation 9.1, which we're not going to get to yet, is John sees another star fall from heaven to earth, and then it refers to that star as he.

He received the key. So this star knows how to take keys from places and open doors. And later that star, later in chapter 9, I think it's verse 11 or somewhere, I think it's called explicitly the angel who rules over the abyss.

So sometimes the connection is explicit, sometimes it's implicit, but the consistent pattern suggests here that the star that falls from heaven is likely a fallen angel.

[34 : 34] I think C.S. Lewis would agree, because if you have read the Screwtape Letters, which is an imagined, it's fictional, but it's very helpful theologically, of letter exchanges between Screwtape, the senior demon, and his nephew, I think, junior demon, and the junior demon's name is Wormwood, which C.S. Lewis didn't come up with by himself.

He got from here. And so what does this fallen angel do? What does Wormwood do? He takes the sweet pleasures of the earth, and he turns them bitter. He takes the sweet pleasures of food, and turns them into gluttony and obesity.

He takes the sweet pleasures of sex, and turns it into porn, and masturbation, and homosexuality, fornication, adultery, prostitution, sex trafficking, and sexually transmitted diseases.

He takes the sweet pleasures of wine, and turns it into drunkenness, and debauchery. He takes the sweet pleasures of relationships, and turns them into jealousy, envy, selfish ambition, rivalry, quarrel, hatred, and murder.

Many people die from drinking these bitter waters. Do you see around you the sweet pleasures of life being turned into bitter waters, deadly waters?

[36 : 03] Maybe it's happening in your own life, and you've experienced some of that bitterness. If you try to enjoy the pleasures of life in a way that's untethered from God's word, then your pleasures will become disordered, and disproportioned, and you will, I guarantee it, experience the bitter afflictions of the Wormwood, and the gall.

This is the fulfillment of the prophecies of old, Jeremiah 9, 15, 23, 15. Not all afflictions in your life are directly caused by your sin, but every affliction in your life is a blaring fire alarm, and a trumpet blast, telling us, repent of your sins, and entrust yourself to Jesus.

When the fourth angel blows his trumpet, it says in verse 12, a third of the sun was struck, 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.

There's a reduction of light by a third, both during the day and during the night, and this is an allusion to the ninth plague of Egypt. In Exodus 10, 21 to 23, when God inflicts all the land of Egypt with palpable darkness, darkness that can be felt, and amazingly, this is a miracle, because the darkness affects only the areas where the Egyptians live, so this is not some eclipse, you know, that affects the entire part of the world.

It's a miracle. The Israelites still have light. So this, again, could happen literally. It can be fulfilled literally, but I think, again, the symbolic meaning is more significant here.

[37 : 51] Later in Revelation 12, the sun, the moon, and the 12 stars represent the covenant people of God, because that's an allusion to Genesis 37, where Jacob and his wife and his sons, and if you count Joseph, that's 12 sons, are described as the sun and moon and the 12 stars.

As Jesus said to his disciples in Matthew 5, 14, you are the light of the world. God's people are the light of the world, and the darkening of the heavenly body symbolizes the increasing spiritual darkness and blindness that will overtake the unbelieving world.

As Ephesians 4, 18 says, they are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to their hardness of heart.

So when you see people rejecting the gospel of Jesus Christ, turning away from the light of the glory of Jesus Christ, when people are desensitized increasingly and darkened toward the light of God's people, that's, again, a trumpet blast and a blaring fire alarm.

It's telling us, repent of your sins and believe in Jesus Christ. Pledge your allegiance to Jesus Christ. Scriptures from Amos 5, 18 to Joel 2, 2, from Isaiah 13, 10 to Mark 13, 24 consistently testify that the day of the Lord's judgment will be one of darkness and not light, a day of darkness and gloom, like we saw in the sixth seal in Revelation 6.

[39 : 27] The darkening of the third of the heavenly light signifies that the day of final judgment is fast approaching, that day when the sun is blotted out and the moon turns to blood that Ed preached on for Revelation 6, that day is soon approaching.

A third of the light was already darkened. On that day, it will no longer be possible to repent. So that means you need to repent today and follow Jesus when you still can.

These four trumpets together, as I mentioned earlier, they affect four different spheres of the world, right? Land, and then the seas, and then the rivers and the springs, and the sky, the heavenly

bodies.

And they together represent the four trumpets, the de-creation of the world. When God is creating the heavens and the earth, in Genesis 1, he separates various elements of creation.

He separates light from darkness. He creates the sun to occupy the domain of the day, and the moon and the stars to occupy the night. He separates the water above the expanse, that's the clouds, from the water below the expanse, which is, you know, whether any kind of water, freshwater river, the seas.

[40 : 40] He separates the dry land from the seas. He gathers the water into seas, and separates and creates dry land. And so in the series of creation, the creation narrative in Genesis 1, you see God distinguishing and separating these things.

But then in these four trumpet judgments, each of those spheres are de-created. They're undone. They're mixed up. So do you think that the tides of the sea that we're used to seeing will continue to ebb and flow like they always have?

Do you expect that the grass and the trees will always remain green and cycle through the seasons with the seed and then the sprouts and then fruits and then back to seed?

Do you think that the sun and the moon and the stars will continue to shine without fail daily like they always have? The answer is no.

They're not going to. Don't be lulled into a false sense of security. The world as we know it is coming to a definite end. And when God's creatures rebel and sin against him, all of creation becomes deconstructed.

[41 : 59] That's why the first four trumpets affect nature and the environment because they figuratively represent the de-creation of the world by the creator himself. A day is surely coming when the sun will no longer give its light and you will no longer have a chance to repent if you haven't done so already.

But there was another time previously in human history when the sun's light failed temporarily. It says in Luke 23, 45, that when Jesus died on the cross, the sun's light failed and the curtain of the temple was torn in two.

When Jesus Christ, the savior of the world, the lamb of God, the son of God, died on the cross, the sun itself as if to pay homage to him or to acknowledge the spiritual reality of what is happening, failed to shine because the light of the world was extinguished on the cross because the Lord of life expired and breathed his last on the cross.

And why did Jesus die? Why did Jesus go through that torture and death? It told us in Luke 23, 45, so that the curtain of the temple would be torn in two.

So that the curtain that separated the holy God, the God who is holy, holy, holy, was separated from the people who deserve all of us.

[43 : 33] Whoa, whoa, whoa. Threefold doom. Threefold woe. That distance, that curtain that separated God from us is torn when Jesus dies on the cross because he dies as a sacrificial lamb to pay the price for our sins, to absorb the wrath of God in our place so that we can be reconciled to God the Father.

If it weren't for Jesus dying on the cross, we would not even have an opportunity to repent. We would just have to bear that judgment and the punishment of the trumpet blasts.

And that's why we call this the good news or the gospel of Jesus Christ that sinners who deserve the wrath of God can be spared and instead enjoy the pleasure, the favor, the grace of God.

If you have not yet trusted in Jesus today and you hear these fire alarms ringing all around you in this world, don't wait for another day.

Repent. This day can be the day of your salvation. If you have already repented of your sins and you already believe in Jesus Christ, there is an urgent command in this passage here for us as well.

[44 : 49] It says in Ezekiel 33 that it is the responsibility of those who know the word of the Lord to serve as watchmen. Watchmen stay up to watch for danger that is coming and when they see doom approaching, they are supposed to sound the trumpet to warn the people.

And God says to Ezekiel, if you blow the trumpet to warn the people, but then people refuse to listen, they ignore you, then when judgment comes upon them, the blood will be on their own heads.

But he says, if you refuse to blow the trumpet and people do not hear as a result of that, and then judgment falls upon them, he says, their blood will be on your head.

And that's why Paul says in Acts 20, 26 to 27, therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

So Christian brothers and sisters, do you shrink from declaring the whole counsel of God? To your neighbors and friends, do you share the goodness of Jesus Christ with those around you?

[46 : 00] Are you shirking from your responsibility to sound the trumpet? To set off that fire alarm so that people might hear and turn from their sins and be saved?

That's the point of our passage today. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Father, we marvel at your holiness, your righteousness, and your justice, which we see in these judgments.

But Lord, we also marvel at your mercy, that you give undeserving sinners opportunities to repent. again, and again, and again, and again.

[47 : 10] Form and shape us to be faithful watchmen, O Lord, to sound the trumpet, to be attuned to the blast of the trumpet, so that we can point as many people as possible to the deliverance that can be found in Jesus Christ, your son, alone.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.