

# THE WORST IS YET TO COME

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*Revelation 8:6-13*

## Introduction:

Begin with a bit of a summary of the end-time events. (*Show chart*) The next event on God's prophetic calendar is the Rapture of the Church. As we read and study the Bible regarding the time of the end, there is nothing that needs to happen before the Lord Jesus appears in the clouds to take the believers out of this world.

At that time there will also occur the resurrection of the saints who have died in Christ. Their spirits will be reunited with a new and glorified body, and together we will be caught up to be forever with the Lord.

Now there are many events which need to happen before the return of Christ to establish his kingdom on earth. During the first months of the 7-year Tribulation period the world will see the rise to power of the Antichrist, the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem, the establishment of a covenant between Israel and the Antichrist, and the formation of a world-wide government and religious system.

But the Rapture of the church is an imminent event which could occur at any moment. The realization of that fact ought to create in us an urgency, as we realize that, at any moment, this great catching away may occur and anyone who has not put their trust in Christ, will be left behind to face the horrible events of the Great Tribulation.

There is another event that will occur at some point soon after the Rapture, which is not actually mentioned in the Book of Revelation. This is what Paul refers to as the Judgment Seat of Christ. In 2 Cor. 5:10, he says,

*"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil."*

Back in his first letter to the Corinthians, he also spoke of this judgment. In 1 Cor. 3 he speaks of how important it is to be careful how we build on the foundation that has been laid for our lives. *1 Cor. 3:10-15.*

In Revelation 4, in that scene of worship around the throne in heaven, John speaks of seeing the elders, who are symbolic of the saints, casting their crowns before the throne in an act of worship. I see those crowns as being the rewards that have been given out for the faithful service of the saints when they stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

However, as the months go by, and the mid-point of this 7-year tribulation period approaches, everything is beginning to unravel. In chapters 6-7, we have seen great disasters taking place as the world faces times of war, famine, earthquakes and destruction. Great persecution is encountered by anyone who refuses to worship or support the rising Antichrist. Choosing to trust Christ means almost certain death, yet thousands and even millions are choosing to do so.

This first volley of disasters and judgments are shown in John's visions as the unrolling of a scroll which was sealed by seven seals. As each seal is opened a new and more frightening calamity is unleashed. In chapter 8 the seventh seal is broken, and with its opening John sees a whole new series of catastrophes poured out on the earth. The intensity of what was about to occur was so overwhelming that all the hosts of heaven fell silent for a period of time. The Bible says there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

But following that silence, seven angels appear in John's vision. They are each given a trumpet with which they are to introduce or announce each of the next series of catastrophes. The first four are given in rapid succession in the remainder of chapter 8. Then two are in chapter 9, and the seventh is given near the end of chapter 11, after another interlude to fill in some other details and events.

Before looking at these first four trumpets, let me just comment for a moment on the common structure of these visions. In both of these first two sets of judgments, there is a clear pattern. Four judgments, following a similar pattern, followed by three others, with a break or interlude before the seventh. (*Explain briefly.*)

Well, with all of that background in mind, let's have a look at these first four trumpet judgments that we find in Revelation chapter 8.

## The Trumpet Judgments

There is little to indicate what sort of time period these disasters cover. The first four trumpets and their accompanying calamities are described in 6 verses (vv. 7-12) in our Bibles. But whether each of these happened over a period of weeks or months we are not told. All four of these disasters had a direct effect on nature—some aspect of the physical earth. Obviously this would indirectly affect all human life on earth as well.

1. The first trumpet – v. 7 (*read it*). When the first trumpet sounded a large portion of the plant life on earth was destroyed. Hail and fire mixed with blood begin to pour down on the earth.  
A third of the earth is burned up. A third of the trees are burned, all of the grass is burned up. Talk about an environmental disaster. But as we read on we realize that, as bad as this is, with each trumpet call it will just get worse.
2. The second trumpet – *read vv. 8-9*. When the second trumpet sounds the sea and all that lives in it is affected. We read that “...something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea...” In the Bible, the reference to “the sea” usually represents the Mediterranean Sea. Also, the “huge mountain” is probably a giant burning meteorite that falls into the Mediterranean Sea. A third of the animal life in the sea died and a third of the ships were destroyed.  
With this blazing meteorite hitting the sea and all of this death a third of the water will be turn to blood.
3. The third trumpet – *read vv. 10-11*. With the sound of the third trumpet, disaster comes on the rivers and springs of water. “...a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch...” This sounds very much like another great meteorite, which hits the earth and is going to bury itself so deep at the right spot that it will pollute the water supply of a third of the world’s rivers.  
It is interesting that “Wormwood” is the name of a family of plants, which are extremely bitter, but are also used in various herbal remedies. But when this “Wormwood” meteorite hits, it will embitter great rivers and affect a great many sources of water.

Without water there will soon be many casualties and many will die because of the wormwood.

4. The fourth trumpet – *Read v. 12*. When the fourth trumpet sounds it affects all of the light giving bodies of our earth. The Moon and stars are darkened. The day and night are affected. All natural order is going to disappear and the world will be in chaos.  
I don’t know exactly what all of this means, but it appears that the intensity of the sun and moon will be cut by a third. Imagine what that will mean for the earth. Believe me that will mean climate change like we have never seen yet.  
Now we know that this will be reversed later on. In the fourth bowl judgment in chapter 16 the sun will be intensified so that it scorches people. Then at the close of the tribulation, the sun and the moon will be darkened again to announce the Savior’s return.

It seems, as we go through the events of the Tribulation Period that things continue to get worse and worse. As bad as things are in the world today, they will only get worse when the church is taken out and the Spirit is removed.

Even then, after the first 3 ½ years, when it seems everything is as difficult and as evil as it can be, John’s visions show us that the worst is yet to come.

## Conclusion

As we wrap this up, look for a moment at v. 13 – *read it*.

This verse introduces the three woes of the book of Revelation, which tells us that as bad as the first four trumpets have been the worst is yet to come.

We will look at these woes in a couple of weeks, but let me just make a couple of comments here.

It is announced that these judgments are intended for the inhabitants of the earth (those who dwell on the earth), those who have rejected God’s offer of salvation and forgiveness through Jesus.

That phrase “...inhabitants of the earth...” (Those who dwell on the earth) is seen several times in the book of Revelation. It appears to

mean more than just a reference to all those who live on this planet we call the earth. It refers to those that live for the world and for the things of the world.

This is opposite of believers, who live on the earth, but have their citizenship in heaven. We read in Philippians 3:18-21...

*"For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself." (Phil. 3:18-21 ESV)*

The writer of the book of Revelation is the same man who wrote the book of 1 John, and there he says in chapter 2:15-17...

*"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever." (1 John 2:15-17 ESV)*

No one can ever say he has not been sufficiently warned of coming judgment. God is infinitely patient and compassionate toward those deserving of His wrath.