

Creation or Creator?

Introduction

Revelation is easy to understand if you have studied the previous 65 books. It is a complete narrative from beginning to end. All of the themes that run through the Bible culminate in Revelation.

One Revelation and it is Jesus Christ

John trying to find the words to express what he is seeing.

We are almost half way through the 7 year tribulation. Believers have been raptured. New Believers have been martyred. The seal judgements have been completed. People are literally trying to kill themselves and cannot. They know that they can't stand against the wrath of God and yet it hasn't even really started yet.

Both Heaven and Earth have stood still in a collective gasp about what is going to be revealed in the trumpet judgments. An overwhelming sense of impending doom and devastation. Almost as if even those in heaven can't believe what must happen next.

The seventh seal has been loosed. The scroll can now be opened. The seventh seal contains within it the seven trumpet judgements. [Picture](#)

Each judgment more severe than the ones prior to it. Millions have died. Millions have been martyred for Jesus. We saw a multitude too numerous to count of those who came out of the first half of the tribulation.

God has identified 144K Jewish Witnesses who are poised to oppose the lies of the AntiChrist.

During the first half of the tribulation...during the first 3.5 years....the world has been at peace. The temple in Jerusalem was rebuilt. Even though many catastrophic events occurred as the seals were released, the AntiChrist has been a world leader....has signed a peace treaty...has consolidated the economy, the armies and weapons of the world, and has promoted a one world religion out of Rome. A religion that we have discussed at length called Humanism. The worship of ourselves and the power of human achievement.

Many see the AntiChrist as a humble world leader and many of the Jewish people will see him as the long awaited Messiah. World peace....religious differences no longer exist...the judgmental Christians were removed by God for being intolerant....The Jewish temple rebuilt...sacrifices and feasts being celebrated again....these are the things that they think the Messiah will do.

With the blowing of the trumpets the true nature, purpose and intent of the AntiChrist will be revealed to the world.

One of the key themes that we have been repeating is that these judgments are measured....The Story of Revelation is not that God is out of control and attacking the earth in His rage. He is

orchestrating everything that happens on earth and in heaven. He is sovereign and in control of it all.

In fact, these judgments are not random...they each attack a false idol. Very similar to the plagues of Egypt as God revealed to Pharaoh who He really is.

You may not know this, but each of the ten plagues released by God on the Egyptians targeted a specific god that they had placed their trust in.

They Worshiped a god of the Nile so God turned it to blood.

They worshiped the god of the Sun so God turned the Sun dark.

They worshiped themselves so God struck their firstborn..

Essentially we see with each plague....a false god brought down as if God was saying to them....who is God now?

You want to worship creation as your god? Watch who is really in control of creation.

As the time for the trumpet judgments to begin approaches, the world will have already experienced for years the frightening and relentless reality of God's wrath. As that seven-year tribulation period unfolds there will be wars, famines, plagues, devastating earthquakes, fiery celestial objects smashing into the earth, and a worldwide reign of terror by Antichrist. But the trumpet judgments will be even worse

The serial judgments the trumpets unleash will hit the earth and its wicked people just as they are crawling out of the caves and rocks where they futilely attempted to hide from the fury of God's wrath during the sixth seal. Thinking that things are returning to normal, they will be hit with the terrifying, rapid-paced trumpet terrors, followed by the bowl judgments.

We are going to see that the Trumpet judgments each cause damage to 1/3 of creation.

At the end of the trumpets, 1/3 of the land, 1/3 of the sea, 1/3 of all freshwater rivers, and 1/3 of the sun, moon, day and night. There has been a lot of speculation of the meaning of 1/3. I think the best way to look at this is that the judgments are increasing in severity. Remember that back in Chapter 6 the horses were allowed to kill 1/4.

Revelation 6:7–8 (ESV) 7 When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" 8 And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.

So the judgments have increased in impact.

As we move from the seals to the trumpets to the bowls the intensity increases.

Revelation 8:1–5 (ESV) 1 When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

This quietness has as much dramatic impact as the sounds and colors that have dominated the vision up to this point—perhaps even more. It is not the silence of emptiness, of the yawn of boredom, but it is the silence of mystery and intense waiting. But most important of all, it is the silence of sovereignty. There is communicated in a very dramatic way in this quietness the full and awesome authority of God. Everything must wait for the King to move

Again this silence reinforces that everything is under the sovereign control of God. All of creation must wait for the Lamb and His Father to give the trumpet to the angel. History is not a jumble of chances. This interlude is the portrayal of holy restraint. The sabbath of stillness proves God's might.

Revelation 8:1–5 (ESV) 2 Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. 3 And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, 4 and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel.

It seems most likely that these seven angels are the same angels of the churches that we saw amongst the lampstands. Notice that they are given the trumpets by God. Once again, God in sovereign control of everything.

The earthly OT sanctuary had two altars, one for bloody sacrifice in the courtyard and the other for smoky incense inside, adjacent to the veil into the Most Holy Place . John sees only one altar in heaven, fulfilling both functions. As incense was associated with the prayers of the saints in the earthly sanctuary, so it is in John's visions

Like the high priest in the holy place, he has a golden censer, or fire pan, and he stands at what is apparently the altar of incense. The altar of incense was critical to the function of the holy of holies since on the Day of Atonement, the high priest, upon entering that sacred precinct, was preceded by the smoke of the incense, which provided temporary covering of the prayers of God's people until such time as he could sprinkle the blood of the sacrificial goat on the mercy seat.

A golden pan, suspended on a rope or chain, that was used to transport fiery coals from the brazen altar to the altar of incense, in order to ignite the incense, symbolizing the prayers of the people This occurred twice daily at the time of the morning and evening sacrifices.

It is likely that the silence in heaven helped all of us to focus on the prayers of the saints.

Given much incense to offer, the angel is set to offer this sweet savor, along with the prayers of the saints that ascend to God from the angel's hand. This action on the part of the angel is perfectly in keeping with the actions of the priest working each day with the altar of incense in the holy place. What makes the vision totally distinct is the next act of the angel...

Revelation 8:1–5 (ESV) 5 Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

Remember these are judgments. All the prayers of the Saints...the prayers of those crying out to God for justice....reach the throne of God. Only these prayers round trip in judgment. The angel hurls these prayers back to earth with the power of God's throne and judgment. The Fire of God returns to earth with the power of the prayers of the Saints for justice and are hurled to earth.

The silence is broken with a boom...God is now breaking the silence with the power of prayer. The prayers of the Saints have been adding up....day by day....event by event....and then empowered with the full power of God....they are hurled to earth. The prayers of the Saints are sent to earth.....the very the thunder, rumblings and earthquakes announcing God's arrival and His judgment. They cried out for justice and God is bringing it in a very real and powerful way.

Revelation 8:6–7 (ESV) — 6 Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them. 7 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.

Hail is frequently associated in Scripture with divine judgment as is fire. The combination of fire mixed with blood was prophesied by Joel.

Joel 2:30–31 (ESV) — 30 “And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. 31 The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

It sounds like John is trying to describe a huge meteor storm hitting the earth....thousands of meteors flashing through the sky....impacting the earth and starting fires all over the place.

God brings judgment. He isn't a passive bystander. This is not “nature” taking its course.

God may use whatever method He desires to bring judgment, but people on earth know these events are from God, and do not think them to be merely natural disasters.

The effects of such catastrophic fires would be widespread and devastating, including destruction of crops, death of animals on a massive scale, loss of wood for construction, and the destruction of watersheds. That is a fitting judgment for those who “exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator.”

Fallen mankind has failed to recognize and honor God as Creator, choosing instead to make a god out of the earth. But the environmental, evolutionary pantheism that devalues man, elevates animals and plants, and ignores the Creator will be severely judged.

You made your God Nature.....Who is God now?

People today are very concerned about saving the environment. Fears about the depletion of the ozone layer, pollution, the destruction of the rain forests, and global warming are constantly in the news. There is a passionate concern to save endangered

species, For many, protecting the environment has become far more than a concern for health and safety; it has become an issue of idolatry, as they worship “Mother Nature” by trying to protect and perpetuate the earth.

There is no question that fallen man has failed in his responsibility to properly care for God’s creation. But the damage man has done to the earth pales in comparison to what God will one day do to it. The powerful judgments of the future time of tribulation will utterly devastate the earth, causing wholesale, unimaginable destruction of the environment.

The first four trumpets are described in a brief and straightforward manner; far more detail is given about the last three. The first four trumpets all deal directly with the earth. They do not symbolize political, social, or economic judgment; those types of judgment come later in Revelation. Nor do they describe any judgment that has ever happened in history in some locale or region. The trumpet judgments are actual, literal, physical events that will affect the whole earth. God will use nature to punish sinners in that day.

We are going to see a similar pattern with the trumpet and bowl judgements.

You want to worship the stars and get your guidance from them? Let me show you who is really in charge of the stars.

You want to worship the demonic? Let me show you what they really will do to you and who it is that has power over them.

Everything God does is done with intent and purpose. These are not random judgments. They are specific judgments about specific idolatries.

A few weeks ago we looked at what Peter had to say about the end times. Remember he spoke of scoffers who would say that Jesus is never coming back. He spoke about how a thousand years are like a day. And then he spoke of water being stored up for the destruction of the earth.....and in the last days...

2 Peter 3:7 (ESV) — 7 But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

The day of judgment that Peter said was coming.....is here now. Fire from heaven is stored up and being hurled to earth.

God was being patient hoping that all would come to Christ, but remember Peter's warning...

2 Peter 3:10 (ESV) — 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

This is exactly what we are witnessing with the trumpet judgments.

Revelation 8:8–9 (ESV) — 8 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. 9 A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

The judgment of the first trumpet fell on the land, that of the second trumpet on the sea.

God created the sea to be a blessing to mankind, to provide food, oxygen and water from the rainstorms on the land that is originally gathered up by evaporation from the oceans. But people have repaid God's gracious provision with idolatry. Suggesting that man evolved from some creature in the sea. Denying God's creation and giving the sea credit for life. As He had devastated the land environment, the true God judges the sea.

This is evidently a giant meteorite or asteroid, surrounded by flaming gases set ablaze by the friction of the earth's atmosphere, on a collision course with the earth. The current doomsday scenarios about an asteroid hitting the earth will come true with a vengeance

Everyone will see it, either live or on television, and as the world's telescopes see it coming, many predictions will no doubt be made about whether it will hit the earth or not. It will hit, striking somewhere in the world's oceans with an explosive power far greater than that of an atomic bomb. Because all the world's oceans are connected, the devastation from that hit will spread across one-third of the ocean waters, causing a third of the sea to become blood.

The impact will also generate unimaginably huge tsunamis (tidal waves). Those giant waves will destroy a third of the ships on the world's oceans, capsizing huge ocean-going vessels and completely swamping ports. The resulting disruption of commerce and transportation will cause economic chaos.

So the first two trumpets will bring devastating judgment on both the land and the sea, which are the beginning of the final catastrophes God will unleash on the sinful, rebellious world.

Revelation 8:10–11 (ESV) — 10 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. 11 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.

As the third angel sounded his trumpet another flaming object hurtled toward the earth. John described this latest of the "terrors and great signs from heaven" (Luke 21:11) as a great star that fell from heaven.

Luke 21:11 (ESV) — 11 There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.

Astēr (star) can refer to any celestial body other than the sun and moon. The massive object that smashed into the ocean remained intact, but this object (possibly a comet or a meteor because of its fiery tail) disintegrated as it reached Earth's atmosphere. The fact that it is described as burning like a torch supports that interpretation, since lampas (torch) was used in ancient times to describe meteors and comets

This also is reminiscent of the polluting of Egyptians' drinking water

We have this eruption under the sea and now what appears to be a gigantic meteor striking the earth and crashing in to it. Something huge. Not like the size of a car like has been seen before, more like the size of a country.

Think about the craters on the moon. They are from the impact of meteors. There is an impressive meteor crater in Arizona. That crater was made by a meteor that was only 5 feet across.

This is like the earth being struck by a Q ball.

Wormwood translates *apsinthos*, a word used only here in the New Testament. Wormwood is a shrub whose leaves are used in the manufacture of absinthe, a liqueur so toxic that its manufacture is banned in many countries. Wormwood is mentioned eight times in the Old Testament, where it is associated with bitterness, poison, and death. In three of those uses, wormwood is connected with poisoned water.

Whatever the poison represented by the name Wormwood is, it is lethal, since a third of the fresh waters became poisonous like wormwood. This is the reverse of the miracle at Marah, where the Lord made bitter waters sweet. It is also reminiscent of the first plague on Egypt, when “all the water that was in the Nile was turned to blood” and became unfit to drink.

No human deaths were mentioned with the first two trumpet judgments, although they undoubtedly will take a severe toll of human lives. But with the third trumpet judgment, John records that many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.

The devastation caused by the first three trumpet judgments will leave the earth’s inhabitants in a state of shock and fear. Still, God has not finished pouring out His wrath on sinful mankind. The death of many is only an indirect result of these first three blasts. The direct killing of sinners comes later.

Revelation 8:12 (ESV) — 12 The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and 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.

As the fourth angel sounded, the focus of divine judgment shifted from the earth to the heavens. Still reeling from the effects of the first three ecological judgments, people will be desperately seeking answers to the crisis. There will no doubt be seminars, conferences, emergency sessions of the United Nations, discussions among scientists—all desperately and futilely seeking to cope with the damage to the earth’s ecosystems.

In the midst of all that frenzied activity comes a new disaster in the sky, as a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were smitten. *Plēss ō* (were smitten) is the verb from which the noun “plague” derives. The heavenly bodies are hit with a plague from God 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.

This partial eclipse, reminiscent of the ninth Egyptian plague, is temporary, as God will later increase the amount of heat coming from the sun. At this point, however, the loss of heat from the sun will cause temperatures to plunge drastically all over the world. That will severely

disrupt the earth's weather patterns and the seas' tides, leading to violent, unpredictable storms and tides, the destruction of crops, and further loss of animal and human lives.

Isaiah spoke of this day...

Isaiah 13:9–11 (ESV) — 9 Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it. 10 For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light. 11 I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant, and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless.

So did Ezekiel

Ezekiel 32:7–8 (ESV) — 7 When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens and make their stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light. 8 All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over you, and put darkness on your land, declares the Lord God.

So did Jesus

Matthew 24:29 (ESV) — 29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

The dimming of the celestial lights sets the stage for a startling and ominous announcement. The imagery is that of a strong bird of prey rushing to consume its victim, in this case referring to the rapid approach of God's final vengeance

Revelation 8:13 (ESV) — 13 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!"

We have only seen four of the trumpets and there are three more to go. The three woes warn that things are going to get worse.

His loud voice assures that all will be able to hear his pronouncements. The eagle's dire warning is that the last three trumpet judgments will be even more devastating than the first four.

While double woes are used for emphasis, the eagle's triple pronouncement of woe, woe, woe introduces one threat for each of the remaining three trumpets about to sound. Woe is used throughout Scripture, an expression of judgment, destruction, and condemnation

God's wrath and judgment will come upon those who dwell on the earth. That descriptive phrase is used in Revelation as a technical term for those who reject the gospel

Although they will acknowledge that the disasters they have experienced have come from God, they will not repent.

The eagle's message will give people one last opportunity to repent before the rising crescendo of divine judgment reaches its apex in the final three blasts of God's holy anger. Indeed, it appears that those who go through the fifth trumpet judgment without repenting may be confirmed in their unrepentant state

The angel's woes are well founded, because one-third of the earth's population will die in the next three trumpets.

The 5th trumpet appears to be their last chance to repent and turn back to God.

We see in the trumpet judgments that God is systematically dismantling all the things that people have placed their trust and faith in. These are not random acts of supernatural displays of power. They are specific, targeted, appropriate, at times limited, JUDGMENTS from God.

God is not out of control full of anger spiraling in rage....He is careful, calculated, measured, just, and appropriate.

These first four trumpets reveal the severity of God's judgment. He attacks all the ordinary means of subsistence, such as food and water; and He attacks all the ordinary means of comfort, and knowledge, such as light and the regular rhythm of days.

Man has come to see these aspects of the created order as impersonal, perpetual forces. During the great tribulation, God proclaims His Lordship through their agonizing disruption.

When there is a great earthquake or natural disaster....there is a moment....where people realize that something is going on bigger than ourselves....that someone is in control....that feeling will be magnified greatly here and everyone will know that God is sovereign over all the things of earth.

The first four trumpets also reveal the mercy of God's judgment; these are partial judgments striking only one-third, and are meant to warn and lead a rebellious world to repentance before the final curtain. For now, God spares more than He destroys.

Each of the first four trumpet judgments affect the physical universe in some way, but with the sounding of the fifth trumpet the focus will shift from the physical to the spiritual realm

We are moving with the fifth trumpet from events on earth...to supernatural wars in the heavens.

We have 4 of 7 trumpets blown. These first four bring judgment to creation. The land, sea, rivers, sun and moon.....all feel the weight of God's judgment. Calculated, appropriate, restrained and just.....each one trying to get the attention of those on earth who have not yet pledged loyalty to the Antichrist and may be open to surrendering to God.

So after all that God has done for them....The witnessing....the warnings....the obvious acts of God....how could they continually pull away and harden their hearts? Think about it....they have experienced the rapture....the seven seal judgements and now 4 trumpet judgments...yet still they

have not surrendered to God. God keeps showing them what He wants them to do.....and they refuse....how can they do that?

Tread carefully here.....is there an area of your life....where you are pulling away from what you know God wants you to do?....Are you trying to go your way.....tightening that knot that is your heart?Is God trying to draw you toward Him in an area of your life....but you are resisting? Is God trying over and over to get you to pay attention to what He wants you to do?

It seems obvious to see when it is in its extreme....like during the trumpet judgments.....or when it is in someone else. But what about when it is you?....when it is subtle? What area of your life is God poking His finger at right now? In what area of your life is the tension increasing and the ugliness in your heart becoming evident?

Is there an area of your heart....that is keeping you from First Love? Maybe in a relationship.....a sin that only you and God know about and you keep trying to forget?.....maybe in your finances.....maybe your resistance is in a call to ministry.....or to forgive someone.....or to confess a wrong you did to someone....maybe you need to ask your kids for forgiveness.....or maybe you need to honor you father and mother.....whatever it is....God is waiting...

And every day that you keep resisting....your heart toward God in that area of your life....just gets a bit stiffer.....

In Revelation people who don't know Jesus will harden their heart past the point of no return.....but for His children....Jesus is showing you the areas of your life where your heart is hardened.....so that you will return....this is your moment....given to you by God....to allow Him to soften your heart as you confess, ask for forgiveness, and return to His way in that area of your life....

If you are having a difficult time surrendering everything to God....remember the power of prayer when it reaches the throne of God.

James tells us that the prayer of the righteous man availeth much. If you pray for God's power to surrender...if you pray and ask God to change your desires...your desires will change and you will be transformed by God.

I want us to end today lifting up our prayers and being fully surrendered to God's will. What does He want to change in you today? If you don't know...just ask Him..the altar is open. Lift your prayers to the throne.