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Sermon Notes

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The Seventh Seal and the Beginning of the Trumpets

Revelation 8:1-13

The wrath of God outpoured on the earth is one of the most terrifying and unsettling aspects of God's character. The overpowering aspects of it, the sheer scope and magnitude and destruction connected with it is deeply disturbing to our mindset... even if we have been Christians for a long time. As we begin these seven trumpet blasts from heaven and see the devastating effects on the human race, it is not unusual for even the most mature Christians to shrink back in horror and cry out as Moses did on Mt. Sinai,

Exodus 32:12 "Turn from your fierce anger, O Lord!"

However, we need to keep something constantly in our minds... in the present era in which we live, the era of gospel grace in which God has opened an invitation to all who hear the gospel to repent and find full forgiveness, in THIS ERA we are to love our enemies, turn the other cheek, cry out to God for forgiveness for those who are viciously persecuting us, even be willing to trade our salvation for that of our hate-filled enemies:

2 Corinthians 6:2 For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

Matthew 5:39-41 But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.

Matthew 5:44-45 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Luke 23:34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Acts 7:59-60 While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Ephesians 6:12 our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Romans 9:2-4 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, ⁴ the people of Israel.

All of these verses show the proper attitude we should have right now, in this present era of grace, when there's still time for sinners to repent and find forgiveness in Christ. No sinner is beyond redemption, no sins too grace for the ocean of God's grace to cover. That's how we should feel now...

But looming above all of this is one very famous statement:

Romans 12:19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

A deep desire for vengeance, an outcry for justice, is woven into the human heart... we saw that in Revelation 6:9-11, the fifth seal, as the martyrs go up to heaven and hide under the altar, and cry out for vengeance – not for grace and mercy for their enemies, but for VENEGANCE, for JUSTICE [we'll discuss that more in a moment!!]

To some degree, in this chapter, we will see the outpouring of God's wrath through the seven trumpets and seven bowls as a direct answer to PRAYER... the prayers of the anguished people of God for JUSTICE against their enemies... as the prayers ascend to the altar of God, the fire of wrath is flung to the earth!

In this present era of the gospel, we are restrained from taking vengeance, for we are not God... also because we know that we should "leave room for the GRACE of God"... the bitterest enemy can one day repent under the sovereign influence of the grace of God and become a precious brother or sister in Christ...

As the Apostle Paul did... breathing out murderous threats against the Lord and his disciples in the morning, loving Christ and his people that same evening!

But God has said VENGEANCE IS MINE... I WILL REPAY!!

And when the seven trumpets blow and the seven bowls are poured out on the surface of the earth, the wrath of God is poured out with unremitting fury, and literally millions of people will be tormented and will die.

This is called the STRANGE WORK of God...

Isaiah 28:21 The LORD will rise up as he did at Mount Perazim, he will rouse himself as in the Valley of Gibeon-- to do his work, his strange work, and perform his task, his alien task.

But we should not imagine that God is squeamish or embarrassed about it, as though he will be ashamed about what he will do to the sinners of the earth

But as we go carefully through these upcoming chapters, don't be surprised if it all seems too much for you, too overwhelming, too extreme... we are commanded to be gracious to our enemies and to believe in the power of the gospel to convert anyone. But let us not shrink back from the whole mind of God in dealing with sin

Yes, a river of the water of life flows from the throne of God in Revelation 22; but first a river of the fire of wrath flows from that same throne in Daniel 7 on the wicked of the earth

So today, we roll up our sleeves and begin the journey of the seven trumpets... to hear their terrifying call and see their terrifying outcome

And it all begins with SILENCE:

I. Silence in Heaven (vs. 1)

Revelation 8:1 When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

A. The Seventh Seal Opened

1. By review: Revelation 5 depicts the Lord Jesus Christ taking a scroll from the right hand of Almighty God who is seated on his throne of glory
2. He alone is worthy to take that scroll; some scholars say it represents the title deed to the earth; Christ's right to rule
3. The six seals were opened by the Lord one at a time, and as each seal is broken, powerful events happen on earth... the first four seals result in the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse... the false peace, war, famine, and death
4. The fifth seal depicts the martyrs crying for vengeance (as we shall discuss more in a moment)
5. The sixth seal depicts the beginning of the end of the physical universe, with the earth moving and the stars falling from the sky, and every kind of person

on the face of the earth crying out to the mountains to fall on them and cover them from the great day of God's wrath that has come at last...

AND WHO SHALL BE ABLE TO STAND (Revelation 6:17)

6. Revelation 7 is a powerful interlude answering that question... as it depicts 144,000 sealed from every tribe of Israel, and a multitude greater than anyone could could saved from every tribe, language, people, and nation
7. Now we come to this seventh seal
8. The breaking open of the seventh seal leads to the SILENCE IN HEAVEN and then to the seven trumpets...
 - a. It's as if the seventh seal unleashes the seven trumpets... like a telescope extending out
 - b. Perhaps like one of those Russian dolls in which you open it up and out comes the next dolls

B. The Significance of this Heavenly Silence

1. Heaven is ordinarily a place of ceaseless praise...

Revelation 4:8 Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

2. So this silence is stunning
3. It lasts for 30 minutes... a very long time for such a silence
 - a. If I were to stand here right now in complete silence, it would become awkward after 30 seconds
 - b. Though heaven is a timeless place, John was still a timebound creature
 - c. He powerfully felt the impact of this stunned silence
4. What did it signify?
 - a. Other silences in scripture are commanded by God in light of his eternal power and divine nature... the infinite gap between the Creator and all his creatures

Habakkuk 2:20 the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.

- b. The whole earth is commanded to silence when God rouses himself to execute judgments on the earth

Zechariah 2:13 Be still before the LORD, all mankind, because he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.

Romans 3:19 so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.

- c. Silence also implies submission to God's decrees, especially when they run contrary to our wisdom and plans... that we HOLD OUR TONGUES and not roil against him

Job 40:4 "I am unworthy-- how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth.

- 5. Some see it is as a CALM before the STORM... or a dramatic pause before a stunning turn of events

C. Yet, this is not an EARTHLY Silence... but a silence IN HEAVEN

- 1. The heavenly worshippers are hushed, waiting on God to initiate what only he can initiate
- 2. Heaven waits on God in silence for what is about to be unleashed on the earth

Revelation 8:2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.

These seven angels seem to be special angels, unique in their access to God... two angels are named in the Bible: Michael and Gabriel; perhaps these are archangels, ruler angels with a special role in heaven

At the end of the silence, the angels prepare to sound their trumpets

But first, another angel comes to connect the wrath about to be poured down from heaven to earth with the prayers of God's people that have ascended for centuries from earth to heaven

II. The Prayers of the Saints and the Golden Censer (vs. 3-5)

Revelation 8:3-5 Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. ⁴ The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

A. The Heavenly Altar

- 1. Moses was commanded to make a tabernacle patterned after a heavenly reality

2. The tabernacle and later the temple of Solomon were physical types and representations of a heavenly reality
3. The altar of Revelation 8:3 is the true altar in heaven of which the Old Testament altar was merely a type and a shadow
4. It is the same altar that we already saw in Revelation 6:9 when Jesus broke open the fifth seal... it was the place where the martyrs came for refuge and also to make their passionate petitions for justice against their enemies

Revelation 6:9-11 *When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰ They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" ¹¹ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.*

B. The Angel and the Golden Censer

1. Another angel, different than the ones about to sound their trumpets, makes his appearance
2. He has in his hand a golden censer
3. A censer is a metal container with holes on the side
4. Inside the censer is placed crystals of incense, usually frankincense, along with coals from the altar to make the incense burn and the sweet-smelling smoke go up before the Lord

C. The Incense and the Prayers of the Saints

1. The text tells us the angel offers up the prayers of ALL the saints... so the martyrs of Revelation 6 should not be understood to be just a small number of those killed during the Great Tribulation, but the totality of God's people who have cried out against their tormenters and persecutors in every era of church history
2. The fragrant smoke of their prayers rises before the throne of God; this represents the sovereign power of God to DO SOMETHING about their fervent cries for vengeance and justice
3. As Jesus said in his parable of the Persistent Widow:

Luke 18:7-8 *And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly.*

4. I'm thinking of all the seemingly UNANSWERED PRAYERS of the persecuted people of God
 - a. Prayers that rose for imprisoned pastors in Communist countries... and the pastors were not released, but were tortured and killed
 - b. Prayers that rose for missionaries in the jungles of Africa, that they would be protected and be fruitful; but rather tribal chieftains seized them and slaughtered them
 - c. Prayers that rose for those captured by Muslim extremists like ISIS, that they would be released and spared; but they were not, but rather beheaded
 - d. Prayers that rose for the martyrs during the Roman era, but the Emperors went ahead and crucified them or burned their bodies to light their garden parties
 - e. Prayers that rose for Dietrich Bonhoeffer to be released by the Nazis as World War II was in its final days; but instead he was maliciously executed by the direct command of Adolph Hitler despite the fact that Hitler knew the war was irretrievably lost... two weeks after Bonhoeffer's execution, Allied soldiers liberated the Flossenbergl prison where he was executed; a week later, Hitler was dead in his bunker by his own hand... we may well ask WHERE IS THE JUSTICE? What happened to all the prayers for Dietrich Bonhoeffer's release?
5. What happened to all those cries for JUSTICE? What happened to the deep desire for VENGEANCE that those individuals and churches felt when it seemed like their prayers were unanswered... the persecutors got off scot free, blaspheming, cocky, arrogant... some of the worst persecutors died in their beds of old age, wealthy and self-satisfied
6. The spirit of those blasphemous persecutors will live virulently in the final regime on earth, that of the Antichrist

D. The Prayers of the Saints RISE CONTINUALLY Before the Throne of God

1. And he hears every one of them
2. The angel mixes ALL the prayers of ALL the saints for justice and vengeance and FILLS the golden censer with coals of fire from the altar and HURLS IT DOWN to the surface of the earth
3. This is a clear symbol of the connection between the prayers of the saints and the fiery wrath unleashed by the seven trumpets

4. Though we have to acknowledge that we are sometimes mystified at God's seeming inaction at the wicked persecutors of his people, God has a wise and powerful plan for all these persecutors
 - a. First, we must realize that some of these vicious persecutors are actually elect, future children of God, like Saul of Tarsus... who beat up men and women Christians and dragged them off to prison
 - b. Therefore, God's patience with these violent persecutors is for their final salvation

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

- c. However, Peter continues by saying that the Day of the Lord will most certainly come...

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

- d. Most of the persecutors of the world will NEVER come to Christ... they are reprobate servants of the devil... and the Lord is noting very carefully everything they have ever done to his people
 - i) Most non-Christians do not actively persecute the church... they just ignore them and do not love them or serve them...
 - ii) So the in the sheep and the goats passage, Jesus condemns them for what they DID NOT do
 - iii) But others are active persecutors; they have slandered, insulted, hindered, gossiped against, and done hurtful things to other Christians... the office politics have conspired against Christians; others in powerful positions of government have instituted policies against Christians and have arrested them, imprisoned them, tortured them, and even killed them
 - iv) God has carefully noted everything they have ever done; the anguished prayers of his people have risen before his throne; all these wicked acts have been carefully noted

Romans 2:5-6 because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶ God "will give to each person according to what he has done."

5. The Seven Trumpets are open manifestations of the wrath of God against the sinners on earth... they come as a direct answer to the prayers of all the saints
6. The angel takes the golden censer, fills it with coals, and hurls it to the earth
7. The earth reacts with

peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

And now comes the actions of God through the angels:

Revelation 8:6 Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them.

III. The First Four Trumpets (vs. 6-12)

These first four trumpets are all judgments on the ecology of the earth

The earth was entrusted to the human race to rule over it, to fill it, to subdue it, to maximize its fruitfulness and bring it fully to the glory God had intended

Instead, man fell into sin: Adam ate the forbidden fruit and the earth was CURSED because of him:

Genesis 3:17-18 Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you

The earth has been groaning under this curse ever since:

Romans 8:21-22 the creation [is in] bondage to decay [and] has been groaning

Many people are extremely concerned about the ENVIRONMENT, and are fanatically committed to ecology, and the careful balance of ecosystems... this is in some sense right, and Christians should be good stewards of the environment

People talk a ton about GLOBAL WARMING caused by the burning of fossil fuels; the destruction of the OZONE LAYER; people also are concerned about the LANDFILLS and about FRACKING and its effect on the subterranean water supply; people worry about AIR POLLUTION and WATER POLLUTION; you hear stories about the destruction of the rain forests and the effect that will have on the atmosphere

Others worry about the disposal of nuclear wastes; or the extinction of species like the Giant Panda, the Polar Bear, the Sumatran Tiger, or the Javan Rhino

But nothing man has ever done to destroy planet earth and its ecosystems is anything compared to what God will do with these first four trumpets

These four trumpets will wreak such devastation on the interbalanced ecology of the earth that we can hardly comprehend it

A. The First Trumpet:

Revelation 8:7 The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

1. This brings a powerful reminder of the plague God brought on Egypt under Moses, the hail that pounded the lush irrigated fields of Egypt to a smithereens
2. But this plague also includes fire and blood...
3. Hail, of course, is ice that falls like rain from the sky onto the earth; it is caused when thunderstorms combine with cumulonimbus clouds and powerful updrafts, along with freezing temperatures; hail begins as droplets of water rise with the powerful updrafts and freeze in the low temperatures; they continue to grow like layers of an onion; it's not unusual for hailstones to be as large as a half inch in diameter; and even stones that size can do instant damage to roofs, glass, airplanes, and crops; however, one hailstone found in South Dakota reached 7.9 inches in diameter and weighed just under two pounds; hail has been known to kill people... and average hailstorms can totally devastate crops like wheat, corn, and soybeans
4. BUT THIS hailstorm will be no ordinary hailstorm; it is mixed with fire and blood... perhaps the blood flows because of injuries caused by massive falling rocks of ice
5. The hail alone would beat down all growing things... but the fire seems to do the real damage here: 1/3rd of all the trees on earth are burned up, and all the green grass is consumed
6. The ecological effects of this plague will be absolutely overwhelming; but it could have been far worse; the destruction of only 1/3rd of the trees shows God's restraint... we will see this again and again in these trumpet judgments... God is restraining his wrath to give sinners time to repent

As God said to Pharaoh:

Exodus 9:15 For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth.

God holds back his FULL POWER in these trumpets to show mercy and give time for repentance

Yet the devastation just by this first trumpet will be overwhelming... a scorched and smoldering earth, with the forest fires just barely able to be extinguished and the air dark with billowing smoke

B. The Second Trumpet: A Fiery Mountain Crashes into the Sea

Revelation 8:8-9 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.

1. Just as the earth is seeking to recover from the first trumpet, something even more devastating and astounding happens
2. It defies close and accurate description, but John says SOMETHING LIKE A HUGE MOUNTAIN ALL ABLAZE...
3. We can imagine a massive meteorite or asteroid that comes through earth's protective shield, its atmosphere and becomes ignited and plunges into the ocean with a force greater than a nuclear bomb..... but the real issue is not the massive burning mountain, but the effect this will have on the ocean, and thus on the earth
4. God created the ocean to be a continual source of blessing to mankind; by a continual cycle of evaporation, the oceans supply the earth with much of the rainwater that is essential to all life; much of the earth's oxygen comes from the phytoplankton and algae that grow so abundantly in the ocean; 28% of the oxygen comes from rainforests, and 70% from marine plants... so the first two plagues strike powerfully at our air supply
5. Beyond this, the text says 1/3rd of the sea was turned to blood... perhaps from the death of 1/3rd of all living creatures in the sea... think about all the ecologists in Greenpeace doing whatever they can to protect marine life, to "Save the Whales"... and in one moment, in a cataclysm that we can hardly imagine, 1/3rd of all whales, squid, sharks, mackerel, swordfish and all others perish
6. The text also says that 1/3rd of all the ships were destroyed... we can understand this as coming from the massive tidal wave that could capsize even the mightiest aircraft carrier or cargo ship or oil tanker... these incredible level of destruction of sea commerce will cripple every economy on earth... WIDESPREAD ECONOMIC CHAOS...
7. Yet the words 1/3rd imply God is still restraining himself... the earth will recover somewhat, and life will seek to return to normal, but a new normal

C. The Third Trumpet: A Falling Star Pollutes the Fresh Water

Revelation 8:10-11 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.

1. Again, like the first two trumpets, the sounding of the third trumpet by the angel results in a fiery object FALLING FROM THE HEAVENS TO THE EARTH causing great devastation...
2. This is a recurring image... the wrath is FALLING DOWNWARD, coming down from an incensed God on the inhabitants of the earth
3. This time, it is something like a large star, again perhaps a meteorite or asteroid or comet or something... perhaps something with no name because it will be unprecedented in human history... it strikes directly at the FRESH WATER sources of the human race...
4. Again, the language is 1/3rd: God is restraining himself, showing his power and making his presence known... 1/3rd of the rivers and springs of water are polluted, turned poisonous...
5. The word "Wormwood" in the Greek is *apsinthos*, which here becomes poisonous, producing the deaths of many people who drank the waters
6. The rivers, lakes, ponds, streams are affected... like when the water in the Nile was turned to blood and no one could drink the water... the human race in the affected areas will be in deep trouble at that time... we cannot survive very long at all without water to drink
7. It is hard for us to imagine ahead of time what these three plagues will do to the human race; what level of social upheaval will result... will there be packs of armed anarchists roaming the streets in search of water they will take by force? Will nation rise against nation as a result?

John MacArthur: "There will no doubt be seminars, conferences, emergency sessions of the United Nations, discussion among scientists – all desperately and futilely seeking to cope with the damage to the Earth's ecosystems."

8. Yet, despite the suffering and the deaths of many people from drinking the poisoned waters, these deaths are more an indirect effect of these events... the direct killing of sinners on planet earth awaits the sixth trumpet in the next chapter

D. The Fourth Trumpet: A Third of the Heavenly Lights Extinguished

Revelation 8:12 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.

1. The first three trumpet blasts all struck at planet earth
2. But now the judgments extend up into the physical heavenly realms... even to outer space
3. Though far beyond the control and not under the dominion of man, the sun, moon, and stars were originally created to “give light to the earth” and to serve as markers for days, months, seasons, and years”
4. So the effects of God’s judgments on human sins on planet earth does indeed reach to the heavens
5. Though it is very hard to understand fully and speak with clear precision on what will happen with this fourth trumpet, we could imagine some reduction of the light of the sun by 1/3rd, as well as the light of the moon and of the stars... the daylight will be much dimmer, and so will the night sky
6. Perhaps it will be some kind of an eclipse, or some other way that God will effectively turn down the dimmer switch
7. As people search for answers to the first three trumpet blasts, these celestial signs will be that much more terrifying
8. The prophets have long predicted these kinds of signs from the heavens:

Isaiah 13:9-11 Behold, the day of the LORD is coming--a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger-- to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it. ¹⁰ The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. ¹¹ I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins.

Ezekiel 32:7-8 When I snuff you out, I will cover the heavens and darken their stars; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not give its light. ⁸ All the shining lights in the heavens I will darken over you; I will bring darkness over your land, declares the Sovereign LORD.

Jesus Christ himself spoke of these heavenly signs:

Luke 21:25-26 "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. ²⁶ Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.

It is hard for us to stretch our minds far enough to imagine what the cumulative effects of these signs and judgments will have for those alive on planet Earth at that time

They should be enough for people to repent of their wickedness and cry out to the Lord for salvation...

Joel said it plainly:

Joel 2:30-32 I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. ³¹ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. ³² And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

But for others just comes one more sign of the terrors to come

IV. The Warning of Woes Yet to Come (vs. 13)

Revelation 8:13 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!"

A. A Speaking Eagle in Mid-Flight

1. A massive bird of prey... but sent as an act of grace and mercy by the God who is pouring out these judgments on earth
2. As we have seen again and again, the 1/3rd language shows that God could have destroyed the earth by then... these unfolding judgments give people an opportunity to repent and find salvation in Christ
3. But if they don't the eagle's warning should wake them up

B. Woe = "Warning!!"

1. This word is used again and again by the prophets to speak of imminent judgment from Almighty God
2. It is like a shot across the bow, a last chance to take warning, to flee to the only refuge there is

C. The Three Trumpet Blasts About to Come... They Will Unleash a Form of Hell on Earth

V. Applications

A. Take Warning NOW and Flee to Christ!

1. One of the central questions from the Book of Revelation is found after Christ opens the sixth seal:

Revelation 6:15-17 *Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶ They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!" ¹⁷ For the great day of their wrath has come, and who shall be able to stand?"*

2. When God's wrath comes pouring out on the Earth, there is no refuge, no hiding place, no invention or religion or offering or good work or bomb shelter or cave that will enable sinners to stand
3. Christ alone is the refuge, he alone can rescue us from the coming wrath!
4. Flee to Christ now, while there's time!

B. See the Connection Between Human Sin and the Destruction of the Earth

1. The ecology of the earth is tied directly to the human race
2. We were put in charge of this planet, and because of human sin, the whole creation on planet earth has been groaning in bondage to decay... that is, to a cycle of death
3. By destroying this beautiful planet as a direct result of human sin, we can see the original link God made between us and the fragile ecosystems of earth
4. Already once, God was willing to destroy much of planet earth because of human sin... during the worldwide flood of Noah
5. The next destruction will come by fire... and we see that already beginning in these first four trumpet plagues
6. People in Noah's day thought the judgment would never come... they heard Noah, a preacher of righteousness, warning them of the judgment to come... but they scoffed and denied it because they refused to believe his word

2 Peter 3:3-7 *in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. ⁴ They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." ⁵ But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. ⁶ By these waters also the*

world of that time was deluged and destroyed. ⁷ By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

But despite the fact that there is NO EVIDENCE for these coming trumpet judgments, they will certainly come... only those God grants the gift of faith can see them coming based on the Word

John Newton: "'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved"

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family.

C. Live a Holy Life Now as a Clear Show of Repentance

1. It is because of sins that these judgments are coming
2. These words should make us yearn to put sin to death by the power of the Spirit

Colossians 3:5-8 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸ But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

D. Warn Others, Even if they Mock

1. Peter called Noah "a preacher of righteousness", and all those years he was building the Ark, he was proclaiming the coming flood and warning people to believe and to repent and flee
2. In the same way, we have a responsibility to warn those of our present generation to flee the wrath to come
3. Talk to lost people about these things
4. Tell them that the Book of Revelation makes it plain that a time of terrible suffering is coming on the earth
5. Tell them also that Hell is a far worse degree of suffering than anything the inhabitants of planet Earth will experience in the Great Tribulation
6. Use this to make the issues of the gospel perfectly clear