

God's Wrath Intensifies on Earth

When I was a junior in high school, I played soccer with an amazing young man named Kirk who was a sophomore. I was amazed by what Kirk could do with a soccer ball with dribbling skills, shooting accuracy, and passing ability. He was awesome! And he was a fierce competitor. One time we had a bench clearing brawl. Kirk was on the bench and ran on to the field to help his teammates. The other team's coach ran at him to stop him, and Kirk wildly flew his arms around and knocked the man backwards. I was amazed, and thought Kirk was a wild man!

Off the field, as a convinced atheist committed to the party lifestyle, I was also amazed by Kirk. I envied the way he drew girls to himself, the way he lived at 90 miles an hour, whether driving his car or drinking alcohol or doing drugs, there seemed to be no stopping him!

But about this time of year in my junior year, Kirk drank a fifth of Everclear in the middle of the night and decided to try and drive to Myrtle Beach from Charlotte, N.C. Along the way, he drove off a bridge into a lake and drowned. The unstoppable Kirk had stopped himself through wild living.

His funeral was at a Catholic church. As far as I remember, it was the first funeral I had ever been to. I can't remember a thing that was said that day, but I can remember for the first time understanding that people can and do die. And I kept thinking about death for months afterwards. About 8 months later I heard the gospel and became a Christian.

People often don't think about changing their sinful ways until they face their own mortality!

Whether it's a catastrophic event, like September 11th, or the death of someone close to us, or when the doctor tells us we have something like cancer...

Impending death makes you think about things you don't think about, it makes you realize...

Time to repent is running out! JAY: start here, use bigger fonts as we go along!

Today's passage will show us as the time of the Tribulation continues, and earth begins to get its extreme makeover before it is remodeled, judgment will intensify...

The Trumpet judgments are more intense than the seal judgments, less intense than the than the bowl judgments to come.

Discuss chart and talk about the Telescopic View

Read Revelation chapters 8 and 9 *Larry playing Trumpet each time I say "The angel blew his trumpet"*

God's Wrath Intensifies on Earth! Let's Pray!

Time to repent is running out!

8:1 The Calm Before the Storm

Chapter eight starts by telling us when the seventh trumpet is opened, John saw Heaven, up to this point full of loud praises and prayers, become silent for 30 minutes... Let's try to be absolutely quiet for 30 seconds right now...

I don't know about you, but I grow quiet when something happens that makes me want to drop my jaw and say, "Dang!"

This is the calm before the storm, the sobering realization of how intense the ext judgments are...

Time to repent is running out!

8:2-6 The Prayers of the Saints Precede the Trumpet Judgments

We are told here the Trumpet judgments the archangels hurl to the earth have something to do with the prayers of the saints.

Now there are two ways to look at this.

One is that we are to be people that pray for God's justice to be done against the evil system Satan has entrenched on earth.

But there is something else going on here...

Remember how the death of my friend Kirk made me think about death, and ultimately led to my salvation?

How does a parent pray for their prodigal child?

At first they pray, "God woo them with your love that sent Christ to the cross for their sins so they'll turn to you and not die and go to Hell."

Then they pray, "God protect them but get their attention so they turn to you and not die and go to Hell."

Finally, they begin praying, "God, do whatever it takes, even if it means hardship, so they will turn to you and not die and go to Hell."

These prayers should be seen as both prayers that Satan will get what's coming to him and that God will do what it takes to make sinners think about their need...

Time to repent is running out!

Now this should really help us as we think about the tribulation...

God's wrath in the time of Tribulation must be understood in terms of His strategy to save the world!

Even as you see these coming judgments remember God is still trying to get people to turn to Him and live! Let me share two great verses with you about this:

"For I take no pleasure in anyone's death." This is the declaration of the Lord God. So repent and live!"
-Ezekiel 18:32

"The Lord does not delay His promise, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance." -2 Peter. 3:9

There are only two places people will be after death: Heaven or Hell.

You see folks, the soul inside a person, once created, lasts forever.

Life will go on after our physical bodies are laid in the ground. Hell was created for the Devil and his demons. God went to extreme measures when Jesus died so that sinners like you and me could be with Him in Heaven.

If a person doesn't repent and turn to Jesus and secure their passport to Heaven, the only place left for their soul to go is Hell. Jesus went to extreme measures for that not to have to happen. But when a person won't repent and decides they don't want to be with God, the only option left is Hell.

It would be an affront to God's righteousness to create another place where sinners could go on sinning with impunity. So Hell it is for those who don't repent.

V. 7-13 The First Four Trumpets: The Physical Elements begin to fail

In the first four seal judgments, we saw what happens when God lets earth have what she thought she wanted---life without God. Unfortunately for earthdwellers, life without God means life without His protection. In Colossians Paul says "in Him all things hold together."

In these first four trumpet judgments we see God judging the sinful world system, but also creating a climate where sinners have to know that their...

Time to repent is running out!

And so a third of the vegetation burns up at the first trumpet...

Time to repent is running out!

A third of the sea is messed up at the second trumpet...

Time to repent is running out!

A third of the drinking water becomes wormwood, or bitter and poisonous at the third trumpet...

Time to repent is running out!

And then in the fourth trumpet the heavenly lights begin to flicker...

What's happening in these first four trumpets?

God is taking away the things the sinful world system has relied on, gifts from Him that they have taken for granted.

Let's relate this again to a loving parent.

If a grown child is living in sin, should a godly parent financially enable them to keep sinning in hopes that love will bring them back to God?

It is love to say "when you are ready, you can always come home!"

It is not love to fund a sinful lifestyle!

Many parents in trying to help their grown children unwittingly create the kind of environment where even more sin happens; what's meant in love enables a sinful lifestyle.

One of my favorite books is *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stephenson.

Unfortunately, Robert Louis Stephenson is an example of exactly what I am talking about. Having grown up in a Christian home with a loving mom and dad, RLS went off to school and fell in with the wrong crowd and became an awful sinner. He became a convinced atheist, partied hard, and had more than one affair with married women. To one of those ladies he wrote about a time he was home with his godly family...

“It was really pathetic to hear my father praying pointedly for me today at family worship, and to think the poor man’s supplications were addressed to nothing better able to hear than the chandelier.”

-Robert Louis Stephenson, quoted in *The Undercover Revolution*, Iain Murray, page 13

Despite his growing sinfulness, his dad Thomas Stephenson often gave RLS huge financial bailouts, allowing him to live in this world he had created for himself free of any real responsibility. Even when his actions caused the breakup of a woman’s marriage and then his marriage to her, RLS’ dad gave him a huge annual allowance. Even so, he was destroying himself with his sinful lifestyle. When a doctor confronted RLS about his drinking and recurring depression, RLS wrote:

Of that lean, feverish, voluble and whiskyfied young Scot, who once sparked through France and Britain, bent on art and pleasures of the flesh, there now remains no quality but the strong language. That, at least, I shall take gravewards: my last word, it’s like, will be an excretion. -RLS, 19

The day came when his dad died. RLS attended the funeral, but even then was thinking of himself and his own comforts. When he discovered a letter from his dad was to be read at the funeral, he left his own dad’s funeral before it was over.

There is no doubt that Thomas Stevenson loved his son, but inadvertently he allowed him to continue a sinful lifestyle that messed up more than one home.

During the first four trumpets, God will stop paying the power bill, the water bill, and the light bill for a people that reject him.

Time to repent is running out!

Now look at verse 13. We see a flying eagle who talks!

There were talking animals in Narnia, maybe there will be in Heaven also! In chapters four and five we saw what Heaven is like and we said “WOW!”

Now in these fifth and sixth trumpets we see what Hell will be like and we cry out “WOE!”

9:1-19 Fifth and Sixth Trumpets: Hell on earth

The 5th and 6th trumpets are very intense.

In the fifth trumpet we see the angel of the abyss, perhaps Satan himself, allowed to open the abyss where other scriptures tell us many bad demons are held.

As John struggles to relay what he saw this chapter has more occurrences of the words ‘as’ and ‘like’ than any in the Bible.

There are eight parts to the description of the demons of the 5th trumpet. Most notably they ravage like locusts (people instead of crops), they are fast as horses, and sting like scorpions.

As they sting those who aren’t sealed by God, those people feel intense pain and torment but cannot die.

Verse six tells us people want to die but cannot.

Now folks, what’s really going on in that fifth seal?

God shows people bound for Hell what Hell will really be like if they don’t repent.

Why doesn’t he let them die by the sting?

Because He’s not willing that any should perish but all have every opportunity to turn to Him and live.

Time to repent is running out!

Now the sixth trumpet also has torment that is like Hell on earth.

Some believe the army of 200 million is going to come from China. I took a class on Revelation that had 4 Chinese brothers in it – they rejected that interpretation!

I think these are more demons. Look at verse 17.

Fire, smoke, sulfur? Sounds a lot like descriptions of the Lake of Fire.

I believe during this 6th trumpet, as in the 5th trumpet, the world will see firsthand what Satan is really like. But things intensify as these judgments go along.

During the fifth trumpet, people could not die, but during the sixth Trumpet Death is everywhere, with a third of the planet dying. Everywhere the circumstances will scream...

Time to repent is running out!

9:20-21 Many people still did not repent!

John was mystified...despite all of this, they still wouldn't repent...

Sins mentioned: Idolatry, Murder, Magic Arts/ drugs, Sexual immorality, Theft

John wondered, "Why wouldn't they repent?"

My greater concern right now: why won't you repent?

I was intrigued this past week over the TEA parties that went on around the country. I too am very concerned over the financial debt we are putting on our children and grandchildren.

I was going to go to one. Then I prayed, and I felt God was saying to me, "No, Pastor, keep your hand on the plow. Repent of your sins and encourage others to do the same."

I am still concerned about the financial debt we are putting on our children and grandchildren...

But I am more concerned about the spiritual debt Americans are putting on their children and grandchildren.

I read recently that of the 4.3 million children born this year, 40% were born out of wedlock. Children need a father and a mother who are married to each other.

Statistics show that the majority of people who live together outside of marriage either won't marry or won't stay together long term. And it's the children that suffer.

For those other children born into a home where the parents were married, statistics say half of those marriages won't last. And it's the children who will suffer.

Even in those marriages that do last, probably about half of those children will be born into homes where the parents don't act and communicate with Biblical love and respect and where one or both parents may have unrepented of sins that are destroying the home...

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Had Robert Louis Stephenson stayed until the end of his dad's funeral, he would have heard this letter read:

May I be allowed to say very humbly – God knows how humbly – that, believing in Christ, I confidently trust I shall not be disowned by Him when the last trumpet shall sound.

My good friends! I hope our friendship is not ended, but only for a time interrupted, and that we may all meet again in that better land which has been prepared for us by our Father and our Saviour, the blessed passport to which has been freely offered to all. Amen

Thomas Stevenson

This I desire to be read at my funeral

Robert Louis Stephenson died suddenly at the age of 44 of a cerebral hemorrhage in 1894, his writing broken off in the middle of a sentence. As far as we know, he never repented.

Friend, God is not willing that you go to Hell, but you can't be forgiven of your sins until you repent of them!

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Sinner's Prayer