

Lesson # 31 The 4th Trumpet Judgment Revelation 8: 12-13

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Revelation 8:12-13 (ESV)

¹²The 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.

¹³Then 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!"

I. A Third of the Heavenly Bodies Struck v. 12

We are not told here by what means a third of the sun, stars & moon are darkened. It could be asteroid dust in the air or orbiting the planet (from the previous trumpet judgments); or it could be a supernatural move of God to reduce the light in some way we as yet cannot comprehend. Remember that earth has just been struck with something like a “great mountain” which hit the sea, followed by a “star like a burning torch” which struck land and decimated 1/3rd of the earth’s fresh water supply. Who knows what sort of debris is blown into the atmosphere after that? ①

The idea of darkness or darkening is no stranger to the bible & is symbolic of judgment in many places in the OT – even to the extent of the prophets calling the Day of the Lord a day of darkness – cf. **Amos 5:18**; ¹⁸Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the day of the LORD? It is darkness, and not light,

Isa. 13:10; 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.

Joel 2:2; ² a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains a great and powerful people; their like has never been before, nor will be again after them through the years of all generations.

Mark 13:24: ²⁴"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light,

The 9th Egyptian plague (**Ex. 10:21-22**) was deep darkness over the land and it led into the 10th and final plague which was the death of the firstborn at the hands of the avenging angel. Ex. 10:21-22 - ²¹Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness

to be felt." ²²So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days.

Stark darkness also covered everything as Christ was on the Cross.

Is this a literal or symbolic event? Well, first of all, the literal makes sense – it is plausible for any number of scenarios but some argue that this is merely symbolic of the removal of the light of truth. However, this results in wild speculation and very subjective opinions, such as, “this is the darkness of Islam falling on the world”, or “this is the fall of western governments”; but an actual and literal reduction of light serves as a suitable warning of more severe judgment to followⁱ.

It could be a precursor to **Rev. 16:8** where the 4th Bowl Judgment involves scorching heat from the sun – possibly a Nova – so a dimming of the sun’s power in anticipation of that could be what we are seeing here. The moon obviously generates light only as the sun gives it, so the moon losing it’s brightness would result naturally from any reduction of light from the sun. .

Imagine the effect this will have on an earth already ravaged by wars, famine, disease, death, burned up trees & grass, and earth struck by some asteroid, and water turned to blood. On top of that – hail, volcanic & seismic activity, storms & devastation everywhere & no place to hide. Every realm of life will be affected by this judgment – agriculture, navigation, health, work habits, etc. All will feel the dread this will create. ②

II. An Evangelical Eagle

v.13

Translations differ on the identification of this flying evangelist – in the KJV & NKJV – an angel; ESV, NIV, NASB – an eagle. The linguistic support is for “eagle”, although the same Greek word is translated “vulture” in Luke 17:37.

This eagle speaks, so of course critics immediately say “impossible!”. But does the bible anywhere else point us to talking animals? How about **Gen. 3:1-5** & **Num. 22:28-30**? There is certainly a biblical precedent for this being literal. Here is this regal, powerful bird of prey – if symbolic, it is symbolic of God’s judging rushing towards people – cf. **Hab. 1:8** – so this bird is associated with death, blood & decay. It’s message is one of woe and warning, and later an angel will declare the gospel from the air – **Rev. 14:6**.

It is interesting that John says, “I looked & I heard” rather than “I looked and saw. But it is the message that is the important aspect of this event, and the fact that it is an eagle is secondary. ”This eagle has a loud voice and will be heard, and it flies in mid-heaven so it will be seen. It’s message – v. 13b – Three trumpets are yet to blow and when they do, “Woe, Woe, Woe” to those who dwell on the earth (the wicked). The next 2 trumpets are directed at humanity rather

than the earth, skies or oceans, and the final trumpet signals the victory of God over the world's wicked and the forces of demonic evil.

Next lesson – Lesson # 32 Sixth Trumpet – “Demonic Locusts” or “Not Quite the Sting of Death” - Rev. 9:1-12

ⁱ Robert Thomas, Revelation 8-22, quoting John Walvoort, pg. 23