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Series: For the Time is Near  
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**Joy or Judgment?**  
**Revelation 8:6-13**

Please turn with me in your Bibles to Revelation Chapter 8. The title of this morning's message is: *Joy or Judgment?* It's a question.

We will go through the four trumpets as they're blown by the four angels.

[Prayer] *Father, as we come into Your word I ask that You would speak to us. Lord, that we wouldn't just gather information just to know more. We know that with much learning comes pride. I pray that we would be humbled by what we learn this morning; that we would understand why You even reveal these things to us, knowing that we are not given to wrath as children of God, and yet You reveal these things to us for a specific purpose so that we would know what is coming. For those who don't know You, that they would understand that there is wrath that is appointed for those who do not know You. Yet, for those who are Yours, who have surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ, there's an eternal covering through Your Son. I pray that we would be sober-minded, that we would be clear about the purpose of living, that we would have no doubt that we are Yours. And as we read and study, that You would speak to us, and into us, urgency of Your Son Jesus Christ to a dying world. May we have Your heart for those who are in desperate need of the Great Physician. Most of all move in our hearts. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen!*

Revelation 8:6-13:

***<sup>6</sup> Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.***

***<sup>7</sup> 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.***

***<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.***

***<sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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.***

***<sup>12</sup> 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.***

***<sup>13</sup> 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!"***

Now, this is the seventh seal. There was 30 minutes of silence in heaven. Seven angels handed seven trumpets to blow. Another angel, an eighth angel, approached the throne and he was given this golden censer filled with incense, and along with it were the prayers of the saints before God. There were peals of thunder, rumblings, and flashes of light, and an earthquake. (vv. 1-5)

The seal judgments are now over, the trumpet judgments are about to begin, which will be followed by the bowl judgments leading up to the destruction of Babylon and the coming of the Lord to the earth.

A couple of weeks ago, verses 1-6 were the preparation, which involved silence and prayer. It was the calm before the storm. Then came the desolation, as the angel with the golden censer with the incense and the prayers of the saints, fills it with fire from the altar before the throne and throws it on the earth.

This is an awesome scene that overwhelmed John. It is not like being in a movie theater, but rather like being in a live safari, in the midst of it all and he is recording it for the benefit of you and I, to know it and live lives that are expectant of Christ's return, ready in our stance before God and our movement within Him.

Isaiah said, as God called out, "Who will go?" We should say, as Isaiah said, "Here am I!" [Isaiah 6:8] Whatever it is, whatever it involves, "Here am I for your glory to fulfill whatever plans You want to fulfill in and through me."

The first four trumpets affect nature as we describe it – affecting the land, the saltwater, the fresh water and the heavenly bodies (the sun, the moon, and the stars).

The fifth and sixth trumpets which we will learn about in the next chapter, unleash demonic forces that torment and kill. And the seventh trumpet creates a crisis throughout the world.

As these things happen, I began to think what the people on earth would feel as these things took place; as they saw major portions of the earth be made barren, desolate, and sterile. I imagine they would feel desolate, miserable, sad, depressed, grieved, devastated, anguish, and even despondent. That's when people come to a point where they are suicidal.

But the question is, will it bring them to repentance? Will they feel such broken-hearts that they turn to Jesus, the only answer for such things, and come to know that there is hope in Him alone?

### The First Trumpet (v. 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.***

It's not necessary, and it may even be an unhealthy distraction and loss of the point, to try and interpret what exactly would be "hail and fire, mixed with blood" -- it's a supernatural judgment. It of course, could be a lightning storm of proportions we have never seen before, but the point is that it is a judgment that targets the earth's green vegetation. A third of the trees and grass will be burned up (though we wouldn't be able to tell a difference here in Southern California).

Seriously, how would this affect the earth? Its economy would be greatly impacted. Our food supply; the production of milk and meat. If the trees are gone then our fruits are gone, at least a third of them. It would be devastating.

But then just as the people on earth are beginning to get a grasp on what took place at the blowing of the first trumpet, here comes the second trumpet.

### The Second Trumpet (vv. 8-9)

***<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.***

"Something **like** a great mountain, burning with fire." It's target is the sea, making it bloody with a third of the sea creatures dying, and a third of the ships being destroyed.

Again, further ecological and economic disaster. Consider that three-fourths of the earth is covered with oceans, this impact will have devastating effects on the balance of life and lead to unimaginable problems.

According to Statista.com, as of January 1, 2015: 50,420 merchant ships are trading internationally.

What would happen if 15,000 ships were suddenly destroyed today? What would happen if a third of our fishing industry was suddenly gone?

But just as the people are dealing with this event, the third trumpet is blown.

### The Third Trumpet (vv. 10-11)

***<sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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.***

According to Job 9:9-10, God has each star numbered and named. The name of this star is Wormwood, or "bitter". It's the name of a plant that has a bitter tasting extract that is taken from it.

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There are about 165 major rivers worldwide and God's wrath would affect a third of them; or about 54. They would be made bitter, polluted and undrinkable, but this is where we see death beginning to take place.

In order for a great star to affect one-third of the rivers throughout the world, it would need to break up. A direct hit from such a star would be so devastating that it would completely destroy the earth.

The point is that one-third of the world's fresh water would be undrinkable, and if one did drink of it, they would die.

Proverbs 5:3-5 says: ***"For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil,<sup>4</sup> but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. <sup>5</sup> Her feet go down to death; her steps follow the path to Sheol..."***

Amos 5:7 says: ***"O you who turn justice to wormwood and cast down righteousness to the earth!"***

Warning of Idolatry – Deuteronomy 29:18: ***"Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the Lord our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit..."*** [bitter fruit – brings death]

Wormwood is making something consumable, inconsumable; making something useful into something useless and even deadly.

The perversion of a woman; injustice; and the heart, are deadly things and we are strictly warned of the consequences.

Then to top it all off (up to this point), the fourth trumpet is blown.

### **The Fourth Trumpet (vv. 12-13)**

***<sup>12</sup> 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.***

***<sup>13</sup> 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!"***

The other three trumpet judgments impacted a third of the vegetation, a third of the seas, and a third of the fresh-water. But this judgment impacts the whole earth as the sun will only give light for two-thirds of the time that it does now. There will be one-third less energy to support life systems of man and nature.

Again, further impact on the ecology and economy of the world – utter chaos!

But then there is this fantastic messenger that appears in the skies proclaiming woes to all the people on the earth. It's as if this messenger is saying, "If you thought that was bad, wait until you see what comes after!" Still, please notice that the Lord is communicating with the people on earth and forewarning them of the devastation of what is to come.

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Now, the seal judgments and the trumpet judgments are taking place during the Tribulation Period. It's interesting that although the people on earth experience these kind of cataclysmic events, many will hold on to hardened hearts toward the Lord and not repent!

It reminds me of Exodus when Moses and Aaron went before Pharaoh to request that the Israelites be allowed to go and worship the Lord for three days. **"But Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and moreover, I will not let Israel go."** [Exodus 5:2]

Throughout the 10 plagues that hit Pharaoh and the Egyptians, all it did was to serve to harden his heart. He never repented, but rather came to despise the Israelites and their God that much more.

I know that there are people that believe that not only is it finally time for judgment to come, but are hoping it comes soon. I understand this kind of thinking when it comes to personal comfort and well-being, but then there is another type of thinking that we should be careful not to fall into and this is the attitude of Jonah, who wished judgment to fall on Nineveh and not God's grace, affording them the opportunity to repent.

This prophet was called to preach repentance to the Ninevites and instead he rebelled and went in the opposite direction (Joppa to Tarshish) because he couldn't even stand that thought of offering them any opportunity to repent and be made right before God. He would've liked to see them be judged and burn!

While Jonah was "directed" back to Nineveh through being thrown overboard from a ship and vomited up by a great fish, he was considered the Reluctant Prophet who did what God called him to do, in preaching repentance to Nineveh, but in his heart he still wanted them to be judged.

It's like the Sons of Thunder who were asking if Jesus could give them authority for fire to come down from heaven and consume the Samaritans who had rejected Jesus (Luke 9:51-56). Don't have that heart.

To know this is to have the opportunity to not only get right before God, but also be people who are used to pointing people to the only way to get right before God – pointing them to Jesus! John 14:6 says, **"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."**

How do we respond to the life that we've been given? Completely sacrificial, surrendered to His will, that's how!

How do you wake up in the morning? Do you wake up dreading the day? Or do you wake up rejoicing? **"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."** (Psalm 118:24) You should wake up with purpose in your heart saying, "Today I get to live for God!"

Or are you still wrapped up in yourself? How are you responding with the life that God has given you? Joy or judgment? You need to choose. God gives you choices all the time! It's up to you.

Joel 2:30-32 - <sup>30</sup> **"And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. <sup>31</sup> The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. <sup>32</sup> And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.** [So the gospel was preached even then! It didn't say for those who follow the Law, or those who have

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membership at the local church. It didn't say any of that.] ***For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls.***"

We are told in the New Testament that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved (Romans 10:9). Just like Joel said, ***"And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."*** That's amazing! No longer are the woes of any importance, but simply God's mercy and His grace. That's what important.

What's the importance of what we're learning? It's not just like we're trying to figure out all this weird stuff. What does it mean? God's telling us that we don't need to be given to this wrath! You can choose today! You can look at this and realize that we need to pray for our neighbors, for our family members, for our co-workers, for other people who are lost.

The question that I asked at the beginning: Joy or Judgment? One or the other. It's your choice.

Proverbs 21:15 - ***"When justice is done, it is a joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers."*** It's a joy because we are not ones who will be overcome with condemnation, with this judgment.

God desires mercy, and even grace, over judgment and offers it through repentance of sins and surrender to Jesus Christ. But, as I've been saying, it's ultimately your choice.

If we belong to the Lord already, if we've surrendered our lives to Jesus Christ, that we have this sense of urgency. The Lord is coming soon! We see all the signs of His return all around us. The world is getting darker, but there's still this light; and it's the church here on earth. Go confidently and boldly throughout the world and proclaim, not the woes, but God's grace and mercy through Jesus Christ.

Understand the mercy that He's extended out to you. Today is the day of salvation for you. You're not like Pharaoh or like these people that don't want to respond. It's not something to be played with.

If you don't know the Lord, I'll give it to you really simple. "Forgive me of my sins, they are an offense to You and have separated me from You. Please save me!" If you genuinely mean that, your life will be new, everything will be different. Everything! Then there's the fruit that comes from that.

[Prayer] *Father, we thank You that You continue to communicate to us. I pray that we will respond to it, and that no one here chooses judgment, that would be silly to do. To a logical person, if You gave them the opportunity to choose one over the other, of course everyone would choose joy! I want to experience joy, I want to know joy! Yet with blinders on, or with these scales on our eyes, we make these choices that sometimes lend not to joy, but to judgment. Why?! It's because we're blind. Father, remove those scales from our eyes. I pray for anyone here who does not know You, and has not surrendered their life to Jesus Christ, that today be the day of salvation, that today they completely surrender their lives to You. I know that they will be overjoyed by the removal of their burdens. I pray that Your Spirit will continue to nudge them right now toward You. May they see Your love and how You extend it to each and every person, shedding Your blood for us who were enemies of You, and yet You died for us. Lord, let them see that! Thank you, Lord, for Your love, thank You for being here, and thank You for stirring us up. We praise You, in Jesus' name. Amen.*