

Second Trumpet - Burning Mountain

Revelation 8:8-9

By Phillip G. Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2016-06-26

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Text

7 So the first one trumpeted, and there appeared hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was thrown at the earth, and a third of the earth was burned up; that is, a third of the trees was burned up and all green grass was burned up.

8 So the second angel trumpeted, and something like a great burning mountain was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. 9 And a third of the creatures with souls in the sea died. And a third of the ships were destroyed.

Introduction

Last week we saw that torrents of blood literally fell from the sky in both Italy and in Israel. Likewise, fire ravaged the cities, the brush, and the forests of both Israel and parts of Italy. Hail was felt on both sides of the Mediterranean. Though the emphasis of verse 7 is on Israel (which is what "the earth" or "the land" refers to), Rome had made a pact with Israel to exterminate the church (John will later picture her as riding the Beast), so Rome suffered right along with Israel. And the historical evidence shows that these seven trumpets impacted both sides of the Mediterranean.

I. Second Trumpet (vv. 8-9)

Today we are picking up at verse 8, which increases the judgments as the Twelfth Legion of Rome swings further south into Israel. The text says,

8 So the second angel trumpeted, and something like a great burning mountain was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. 9 And a third of the creatures with souls in the sea died. And a third of the ships were destroyed.

A. Did these symbols happen in history? Examining the evidence

I will later look at what is being symbolized by these symbols. But I want to first of all demonstrate that these symbols did indeed happen in history. I'm one of those interpreters who sees God as generally making the sign a historical reality. He doesn't have to, but He generally does. So (for example) even though the ten plagues symbolized God's judgments on the gods of Egypt, they were literal plagues. Even though the rock struck by Moses in the wilderness symbolized Christ being struck and the water symbolized the

Holy Spirit, there was still a literal rock and literal water that flowed from it. And the same is true for each of these trumpet judgments.

And you might wonder about the trumpets themselves. I pointed out last week that it was significant that Cestius' invasion of the land of Israel happened on the Festival of Trumpets. Every one of the Festivals has prophetic significance and a perfect timing. I've included a handout of the Festivals and their prophetic significance for you. I won't delve into that today, except to say that the Festival of Trumpets foreshadowed the casting away of Israel and the beginning of the times of the Gentiles. There were literal trumpets blown by the priests in the temple that called for God's armies to fight against His enemies. But in this case, the very priests who blew the trumpets were the enemies of God, so they were unwittingly calling the angels to judge Israel. And the angels ignore the earthly trumpets and blow their own trumpets from the temple to war against the church's enemies.

But I want to spend a little more time on identifying this thing that was like a burning mountain because there are legitimate differences of opinion among Partial Preterists. And part of the reason for these differences is that we are lacking much historical background on these two months of history.

Josephus didn't arrive back in Israel until shortly after the events of verses 1-9. So we have to piece things together from various sources. And I want to start by eliminating theories that are either dated too late (based on the text) or dated too early (again, based on the text). I thought that was the easiest way of reducing things down to two. By this time we have so clearly established the first century context that I am not going to waste time eliminating any futurist interpretations. There are futurists who see the burning mountain as an asteroid, but they get the timing wrong.

One theory that I have seen in commentaries is that this burning mountain was a reference to Mount Vesuvius, which was literally a mountain on fire and did indeed create death and destruction on the sea. The problem is, Mount Vesuvius did not erupt for another twelve and a half years (in AD 79). A second problem is that this doesn't say it *was* a mountain, but rather that it was "*like* a mountain." And thirdly, parts of the mountain were cast into the sea, but not the mountain itself. So I really don't see that as being the fulfillment.

Two of those criticisms also apply to a second theory, which also dates this too late (by just a few months). This is the dominant theory among Partial Preterists, and I respect it, but I still think it is wrong. This theory is that this

was Vespasian's destruction of Joppa and Tericheae on the coast of Galilee. Literally, the inhabitants of that mountain were thrown into the sea of Galilee and the mountain was torched. Likewise the sea was turned to blood and ships were destroyed in a storm. That is all documented in Josephus. But while that is a reasonable interpretation, I think the date is off by a few months, and it makes the *inhabitants* be thrown into the sea and not so much the *mountain*. But I will mention that the book of Revelation does refer to that event at a later time, but I do not believe it is doing so here. We have got to follow the strict chronology that the inspired Scripture lays out for us and not allow history to dictate interpretation. That would be the tail wagging the dog. But I definitely respect that interpretation because it does at least sync with what these symbols stand for. The mountain stands for Israel in the Gospels, and so this interpretation makes sense on several levels. It's only off by a few months, but that's not good enough for me.

The third interpretation that I reject is dated too early. This one attributes all of this to the volcanism, earthquake, and tsunami that destroyed 200 ships in Rome's main harbor of Ostia and was immediately followed by another 100 being burned.¹ It was a massive loss of ships - not nearly 1/3, but still massive. While it is another interesting judgment on Rome, it is four years too early to fit into Revelation's timetable here. My reading of Tacitus is that the Ostia disaster occurred in AD 62, and by verse 8 we are in late September of AD 66. So that does not fit.

Let me give you a fourth interpretation that fits most of the evidence and may in fact meet all the evidence (but I am still skeptical). This is labeled Theory #1 on the back of your outlines because it is the first one that perfectly fits the timetable. There *was* a literal mountain on fire in AD 66 that created catastrophe. This was the eruption of the volcano called Thera on the island of Santorini southeast of Greece.² The mountain very literally did disappear into the ocean after that blast. So in one sense you could say that it was cast into the sea. In your outlines you can see a picture of where the volcanic mountain used to be on this aerial photo of the Santorini of today. All that is left is a round area filled up with sea water. That is the remains of where the hollow cone of the volcano used to be.

1 There are many sites that speak about this tsunami -

<https://camws.org/meeting/2014/abstracts/individual/018.TempestasTsunami.pdf> <http://www.ostia-antica.org/portus/clauius.htm> http://www.pharology.eu/history/antiquity/A10_portusromanus.html

2 There are many articles that deal with this event. <http://maajournal.com/Issues/2006/Vol06-1/Full6.pdf> https://www.academia.edu/5610522/Natural_Catastrophes_in_the_Greek_and_Roman_World_curse_or_blessing_Four_cases_of_seaquake-generated_tsunamis http://www.seahellarc.gr/files/20091123154851Papadopoulos_et_al.JET.pdf And many others.

The Greek historian, Philostratus, recorded that it not only shook the island of Crete, but that it resulted in the sea receding seven stadia, or about 1.2 km. This resulted in a massive tsunami, which could easily have been destructive to Rome's ships. The eruption itself could have killed many sea animals. So that theory fits most of the evidence, if not all of it. The reason I was looking for something else is that the text says it was "something *like* a great burning mountain." It appears that John didn't quite know what it was. I take it that it was similar to a mountain, but it wasn't a mountain. And secondly, it seems that this mountain is being cast into the sea from above; it's not on the sea and being blown up into the sea. The direction is down. I agree with many Futurists that this was an asteroid. Their timing is off but their identification of what is being described is correct. And my theory explains both the Santorini phenomenon as well as the fact that John was comparing it to a mountain but distinguishing it from a mountain.

My view is that this was a huge asteroid that fell into the ocean in the Mediterranean. The heat generated would scientifically explain why a third of the Mediterranean had a red tide, or what scientists now call an HAB (or Harmful Algal Bloom). It also helps to explain the destruction of the ships. Based on similar impacts studied by scientists today, this would also explain both the tsunami that happened in AD 66 and the volcanism that happened. An asteroid hitting the ocean floor would generate further movement in what we have already seen were very unstable Mediterranean fault lines. And because I discussed those fault lines at length in chapter 6:12, I won't go into them again.

This theory would also be perfectly consistent with Josephus's mention of a bright light that flashed over Jerusalem with a long streaming tail.³ Nothing but a meteorite or an asteroid fits that description. If such an asteroid hit the ocean floor of the Mediterranean near a fault line, it would almost certainly have triggered more earthquakes and could easily have triggered the eruption of the unstable Thera on the island of Santorini. Both events

3 In War 6:289 he says, "Thus there was a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet, that continued a whole year." The comet is now recognized by virtually all scholars as being Halley's comet which would have appeared in AD 66. But the star resembling a sword and standing over the city did not remain in place. This bright light appears to have left a trail as it streaked over Jerusalem and landed somewhere in the Mediterranean. To the ancients, any bright object in the sky (even moving ones) were called stars (the word Josephus used was *ἄστρον*) and the best fit for his description would have been a meteorite or asteroid flaming across the sky. The consider the following points: 1) a literal star could not stand over a city as they are too far removed to have any point on earth as a reference point. 2) It must be closer than Halley's comet since Halley's comet was not said to stand over Jerusalem. 3) It was something unusual and would have brought fear into their hearts. 4) An asteroid or meteorite entering our atmosphere would glow with great intensity and would also have a trail behind it that could be likened to a sword.

happened around the same time, and both involved the Mediterranean sea. This double impact would have brought wave destruction to both the northern and southern parts of the Mediterranean. Now, whether this destruction of ships and large sea creatures was the result of one or both of these situations together, I won't be dogmatic, but we certainly have evidence for both. If this was accompanied by a Harmful Algal Bloom, that alone could account for the deaths of many breathing sea creatures like dolphins or whales as well as fish. So, let me examine the evidence.

Would this asteroid have looked "like a mountain" (v. 8)? Yes. Several of the pictures of asteroids orbiting near earth look surprisingly like a large mountain in shape and obviously in composition.

But verses 8-9 also speak of enormous damage to sea, sea creatures, and ships. What kind of destruction would an asteroid bring? It depends on the size of the rock and whether it exploded *before* hitting the water, immediately upon hitting the water, or whether the asteroid was stable enough to penetrate the water and hit the ocean floor with all of its force. NASA has computer generated scenarios for all three situations. And believe it or not, this is not uncommon. I was reading the press conference of the B612 Foundation at the Seattle Museum of Flight and several NASA astronauts gave a fascinating discussion of asteroids.⁴ They pointed out that between 2001 and 2013 (interestingly, the same starting dates for the weird blood rains that we looked at last week) there were 26 super explosions on Earth ranging in energy from 1-600 kilotons, and the NASA website shows many more strikes in 2014 to the present.⁵ Just by way of comparison, the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945 was 15 kilotons, so a 600 kiloton hit is enormous. And the meteorite that produced the 600 kiloton impact in Chelyabinsk, Russia in 2013 was actually a small meteorite (65 feet wide). It was hardly a mountain, yet it blew out windows, knocked over people, and sunburned people. And the sunburn came because it glowed 30 times brighter than the sun.⁶ But many of these asteroids are not noticed by anyone other than scientists because they hit far from land out in the ocean. But scientists say that an asteroid big enough to destroy a city (if it landed on

4 <http://thewatchers.adorraeli.com/2014/04/22/new-surprising-data-26-multi-kiloton-asteroid-impacts-detected-since-2001/>

5 In addition to NASA's website, here is an unofficial tracking website that is useful: <http://lunarmeteoritehunters.blogspot.com> Also see <http://www.amsmeteors.org/meteor-showers/2016-meteor-shower-list/>

6 There are many sites that give good information on this event, but here are some short summary ones: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/11/131106-russian-meteor-chelyabinsk-airburst-500-kilotons/> <http://www.space.com/28568-russian-meteor-mystery-2-year-anniversary.html> <http://articles.latimes.com/2013/nov/06/science/la-sci-sn-chelyabinsk-meteor-asteroid-impact-risk-nasa-earth-20131106>

a city) has fallen in the ocean about once every 100 years.⁷ That would be an asteroid like a mountain. Animations of the tsunamis that result are fascinating, to say the least. I've had a fun couple days of research on this project.

Could it have destroyed a third of the ships in the Mediterranean?

Depending on the size, angle of entry, speed, and place of impact, it could have destroyed all the ships, half the ships, a third of the ships, or very few. I've studied NASA's descriptions of such impacts, and there is no reason why the asteroid or meteorite that blazed over Jerusalem in AD 66 could not have done this. Some people have way overhyped how much damage such an asteroid would bring, but a study done by the Journal of Earth and Planetary Sciences found that even the massive asteroid that left a huge crater off the coast of Chile did not create the apocalyptic earth-destroying waves that movies like to portray. And that was despite the fact that that asteroid was somewhere just under a mile in diameter to one and a quarter miles in diameter.⁸ It would have been a huge mountain. So there is no reason to say that such an asteroid would destroy planet on the one hand or that it could not destroy 1/3 of the ships on the other hand.

Let me explain another line of study that adds additional information to add credibility to either my interpretation or to the Santorini volcano interpretation. There have been extensive studies on sedimentation and coastal tectonics in the Mediterranean in recent years, and these studies consistently show that there was a massive tsunami generated by something in AD 66, and some scientists insist that there were two tsunamis that year.⁹ There are two layers of ocean sediment on the mainland that came in AD 66. We already looked at one possible cause of the first layer in chapter 6. This would be the cause of the second layer in the same year. Based on the sedimentation, this tsunami may well have been as severe as the one generated in AD 365, for which we have much more information. Since we

7 Some of the links in other articles affirm this as well. Here are more:

<http://www.nasa.gov/content/nasas-search-for-asteroids-to-help-protect-earth-and-understand-our-history/> https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/asteroids/news/asteroid20130215.html

<http://www.nss.org/legislative/testimony/2008-05-07.html>

<http://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-asteroid-attack-video-20140422-story.html>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-space-asteroids-idUSBREA3L1O420140422>

8 For a free discussion, see <http://www.livescience.com/49298-asteroids-causing-tsunamis.html>

9 Gerassimos A. Papadopoulos is still open to the theory that there was one tsunami in AD 66 and one in 365. See his *Tsunamis in the European-Mediterranean Region: From Historical Record to Mitigation*, (Waltham, MA: Elsevier, 2016), p. 41. But see Dale Dominey-Howes, Alastair Dawson, & David Smith, "Late Holocene Coastal Tectonics at Falasarna, Western Crete: As Sedimentary Study," Coventry Centre for Disaster Management, School of the Built Environment, Coventry University, UK. He gives evidence that all of the sedimentation had to have occurred in AD 66.

have so little documentation from the months when the AD 66 tsunami hit, let me read what happened as a result of the AD 365 tsunami (and we have only one report of that disaster). This is comparing apples with apples since they were probably of equal size. The Roman historian, Ammianus Marcellinus wrote,

Slightly after daybreak, and heralded by a thick succession of fiercely shaken thunderbolts...

Let me stop there for a moment and point out that he was not talking about a storm, but a sonic boom that came out of the clear blue sky. That too may have been generated by an asteroid. Some people think that a lot of the seaquake tsunamis that have happened in recent years have been generated by large meteorites or asteroids hitting the water out in the ocean creating both the earthquake and the tsunami. And asteroid impacts have often been accompanied this enormous sonic boom or succession of thunderous booms. In any case, I find it interesting that he heard sonic booms in the air before feeling anything in the earth. That is totally consistent with another asteroid hit. But he goes on:

... the solidity of the whole earth was made to shake and shudder, and the sea was driven away, its waves were rolled back, *and it disappeared*,

This statement is absolutely astonishing. He said that the Mediterranean Sea disappeared from view. Well, we have already seen that something similar happened in AD 66. The sea receded by 1.2 km. He goes on:

...so that the abyss of the depths was uncovered and many-shaped varieties of sea-creatures were seen stuck in the slime;...

Let me stop there for a moment. Keep in mind these sea creatures, like whales, dolphins, etc being stranded could be one of several processes that killed 1/3 of sea creatures that had souls or breath in verse 9 - verse 9 is not talking about all fish, but large sea animals. But the Harmful Algal Bloom that would follow the heating of the water could appear within hours or days and kill many sea creatures as well. But anyway, the ancient historian goes on:

... the great wastes of those valleys and mountains, which the very creation had dismissed beneath the vast whirlpools, ... [now] looked up at the sun's rays. Many ships, then, were stranded as if on dry land, and people wandered at will about the paltry remains of the waters to collect fish and the like in their hands; then the roaring sea as if insulted by its repulse rises back in turn, and through the teeming shoals dashed itself violently on islands and extensive tracts of the mainland, and flattened innumerable buildings in towns or wherever they were found. Thus in the raging conflict of the elements, the face of the earth was changed to reveal

wondrous sights. For the mass of waters returning when least expected killed many thousands by drowning, and with the tides whipped up to a height as they rushed back, some ships, after the anger of the watery element had grown old, were seen to have sunk, and the bodies of people killed in shipwrecks lay there, faces up or down. Other huge ships, thrust out by the mad blasts, perched on the roofs of houses, as happened at Alexandria, and others were hurled nearly two miles from the shore, like the Laconian vessel near the town of Methone...¹⁰

Since the tsunamis of AD 66 and AD 365 were probably almost identical in impact, that gives you a bit of a feel for what might have happened in AD 66. It was a destructive tsunami. It's not at all hard to imagine 1/3 of the ships on the Mediterranean being destroyed.

But, were the waters turned to blood? Yes. Again, we don't have much evidence of anything for these months. But what we *do* have indicates that the waters not only turned to blood at this juncture, but turned to blood again in a few months. And we will look at that later in the book. But let me remind you of last week's evidence of blood. Cassius Dio speaks of a storm over Italy during this time and says, "at Albanum it rained so much blood that rivers of it flowed over the land..."¹¹ Last week I showed that the same had happened in Israel, where Josephus reports that "the whole district was deluged with blood."¹² And the Greek word he uses for "deluged" indicates a flood of blood was poured out.¹³ With rivers of blood flowing over Italy and a deluge of blood in Israel, it is not at all inconceivable that 1/3 of the waters became bloody. We actually have references to this period of time that shows even the springs of water had turned to blood, so this may well have been a miracle of turning water to blood - much like happened in Egypt under Moses. I am open to a totally literalistic interpretation. For example, in AD 66 Nero was in Greece building a canal. The Roman historian, Cassius Dio, writes, "[W]hen the first workers touched the earth [with their hoes], blood spouted from it..."¹⁴ Blood spouted up out of the ground. It appears that at least some springs of water were contaminated by or turned to blood. And Cassius Dio is a very respected Roman historian.

This may relate more to the third trumpet than this trumpet, since that one explicitly mentions the springs being polluted. But when we have seen blood

10 Gavin Kelly, "Ammianus and the Great Tsunami," *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 94, p. 141.

11 Cassius Dio, *Annals of Rome*, translated from Greek by Herbert Foster, (New York: Pafraets Book Company, 1906), p. 80. Dio clearly makes this a reference to something earlier in Nero's reign that was a warning of impending judgment - a warning that Nero ignored.

12 Gaalya Cornfeld (gen. ed.), *Josephus The Jewish War, p. 194.

13 The Greek word that Josephus used for "deluged" (ἐπικλοσθῆναι) is defined in Brill's dictionary as to be submerged, flooded, or completely overflowed. It also indicates something coming down to create this flooding.

14 http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cassius_Dio/62*.html

red rain in India, Sri Lanka, and other countries coloring the water a long ways off from shore with a deep red color, there is no reason to think that the blood rains of AD 66 that I preached on last week could not have done the same. Now some asked me after last week's sermon, "Does it have to be literal blood?" And my answer is, "No." It may have been, but it doesn't have to. For example, Acts 2 speaks of the moon being turned to blood. I don't know any reliable commentaries that think moon rock became liquid blood. They believe it became blood red - what is known as a blood moon. And for skeptics who question whether bodies of water can become blood red overnight, I have pictures of large bodies of water becoming deep red overnight in Lebanon, Africa, Russia, Turkey, France, China, Canada, two areas of the USA (Texas and Florida), Serbia, Beirut, Australia, Czech Republic, Switzerland, and England. And that's all in the last 15 years. I've included a small sampling of pictures in your outline.

B. What did the historical symbolic acts symbolize?

So we have seen that we do indeed have historical records or hints that every detail of the second trumpet symbol was fulfilled in AD 66. Either Santorini or (as I believe) the asteroid or a combination of the two could account for every detail. But let's look next at what this symbolized. And on this there is much more agreement in the commentaries.

Burning mountain cast into the sea = Israel (Jer. 51:25 with Matthew 21:18-22 in context of Rev. 8:1-5; cf. also 2 Sam. 5:7; Ps 9:11,74:2, 87:2, 137:3, Isa 2:3, 51:11 , Je 50:5, Am 6:1, Mic 4:2, Zee 9:9, Ro 9:33,11:26)

What does the mountain symbolize? Partial Preterist commentaries are generally agreed that it symbolizes Israel, a nation that has become a new Babylon. Listen to what God said about the old Babylon in Jeremiah 51:25.

Jer. 51:25 "Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, [Notice he is calling a nation a "mountain."] who destroys all the earth," says the LORD. "And I will stretch out My hand against you, Roll you down from the rocks, And make you a burnt mountain.

So there is one of several passages where a nation is likened to a mountain, and in this case, a burning mountain. Since the imagery of Babylon is applied to Israel consistently throughout this book, that is a very apt image for the destruction of Israel. In chapter 18 John changes imagery and speaks of Israel's destruction by Rome as being a stone that was something like a big millstone being cast into the sea. Well, that could be an asteroid as well.

Something like.

A. Sea = Rome (Rev. 10:2,8,10,11; 13:1; 17:15)

So the mountain represents Israel and the sea represents Rome. The nation across the Mediterranean from Israel was Rome. So this image shows that Rome would consume the kingdom of Israel. That is what is being symbolized. And of course there is a lot more background than just Jeremiah 51:25. In Matthew 21 and Mark 11, while in sight of Mount Zion in Jerusalem, Jesus cursed the fig tree (which everyone acknowledges was a symbol of Israel), and He cursed it as a prophecy that Israel would be cursed. When the disciples were astonished that the literal fig tree was withered so quickly, Jesus said these amazing words:

“Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ it will be done.

Notice that he didn't say that about any mountain. He said that about "this mountain" - the mountain right in front of them (Mount Zion - Jerusalem). Kevin Davis correctly points out on this passage:

Israel had been symbolically connected with God's holy mountain. Jerusalem itself was located on Mt. Zion (2Sa 5:7) and the temple was built on that original fortification. So Jerusalem, Israel and Mt. Zion were equivalent terms and every Israelite was familiar with their meaning. (Ps 9:11,74:2, 87:2, 137:3, Isa 2:3, 51:11, Je 50:5, Am 6:1, Mic 4:2, Zee 9:9, Ro 9:33,11:26). The disciples knew exactly what Jesus was asking them to do. They were to pray for the destruction of Jerusalem. This point is verified when the story of the fig tree and mountain are put within their context in Matthew 21-24, most of which hammers home the same point: the destruction of apostate Israel. The point being made here in Revelation is that the prayers of the early church would soon be answered, Jerusalem (Mt. Zion) would soon be thrown into the sea.¹⁵

That interpretation perfectly fits the context of the prayers of the saints in verses 1-4 resulting in these seven trumpet judgments. They had faith to pray that mountain into the sea.

So, whether you take the burning-mountain symbol as a volcano that explodes and disappears into the ocean or as a large meteorite or asteroid that was flashing across the skies of Jerusalem into the ocean, it was a perfect symbol of what the saints were praying for.

¹⁵ <http://setfreeseminars.com/revelation/chapters-8-11-the-seven-trumpets-part-1/>

Bloodied Mediterranean Sea, destruction of sea life, and destruction of 1/3 of ships

But if the Mediterranean Sea represents Rome, then it is quite obvious that Rome does not emerge unscathed from this conflict. Keep in mind that the saints were persecuted by both Israel and Rome and that these judgments are God's answer to those prayers. What happens when this "something like a burning mountain" is cast into the sea? The sea suffers too, right? A third of the seas becomes bloodied, a third of the sea creatures with souls die, and a third of the ships are destroyed. And while that all literally happened, it was a prophetic symbol that God was about to also deal a devastating blow to *Rome's* own life and kingdom. The Twelfth Legion was about to be decimated by Israel. And as a direct result of this war, Nero would die, the Roman empire would die and would fall apart into three factions, and civil wars would take the lives of millions. Rome may have entered into these conflicts with a great deal of confidence, but God was already foreshadowing Rome's destruction. So just as God punished Israel in the Old Testament with his tool of Babylon and then proceeded to destroy Babylon itself, God was going to destroy Israel by means of Rome, and then give a third destruction (though not complete destruction) to Rome itself (to the Mediterranean power). These were perfect images of God's sovereign judgments over both kingdoms. Even the proportionality is perfect.

C. What can be applied today?

Well, let me end with some applications. The first application is that all of creation is a tool in the hands of Jesus. In verses 7-9 we have seen Jesus unleashing hail, fire, blood, asteroids, seaquakes, fish kills, and tsunamis as part of His weaponry against His enemies. Let's consider each of these parts of creation and apply it to today.

The moment this second angel sounds his trumpet, his legions of angels go into action and guide the asteroid to the perfect spot to make enough damage but not too much. That asteroid has to land very precisely. If it came in at too shallow of an angle it wouldn't do enough damage. If it came in at too sharp an angle or was too large of a rock, it would create too much damage. Later in the book there will be much worse damage brought to Israel, but at this juncture God ordains that only 1/3 of the Mediterranean sea-life and ships be destroyed.

And that is so encouraging to me. Should God bring a similar judgment in our day, we can trust Him and we can trust His angels to not give less nor more than is needed. And by the way, that means you don't need to get all

scared by the apocalyptic asteroid-movies or the youtube animations of how planet earth will be destroyed by an incoming asteroid. That's not possible because God has not ordained it. Asteroids cannot do a thing without God's permission and without angelic intervention. And its not as if there aren't plenty of asteroids out there that could destroy the earth. There are. Scientists have recently been freaked out by the millions of huge asteroids within reach of planet earth. It's almost like God stores several million of those rocks in space as one of the angelic armaments. But we don't need to be freaked out. Those cannot come in at random; they are guided by the angels of a perfect and a just King - our Lord Jesus Christ. We can trust that King Jesus will not allow one asteroid more or less to hit the planet than is needed to advance His cause.

The same is true of blood rains and red tides. Some people have been freaked out by the massive increase of these things since the turn of the century (since 2001). And it is true that they have been increasing, but we can rest assured that these things are tools that are totally subject to Jesus and His angels. Where blood rain was almost unknown, both blood rain and blood snow have been happening all over the world. We looked at that last week. And when you realize that God is sovereign over everything, you know these things are not by accident. It is not by accident that in the last 15 years there has been a convergence of increasing blood rains, red tides, tsunamis, asteroids, earthquakes, fires, and strange diseases, etc.

Since verse 8 speaks of 1/3 of the Mediterranean becoming blood red, let's consider the drastic increase of red tides caused by toxic algae (or what they call HABs - harmful algal blooms). There have been so many of them that there has been a flurry of scientific articles on the subject in the last four years trying to figure out how to curtail these catastrophes. And that they *are* catastrophes can be seen by reading the scientific and governmental literature on the subject. North Carolina said that they had a \$25 million loss from Harmful Algal Bloom or red tide in one year alone.¹⁶ Other states and countries report similar losses. These red tides are usually caused by *Karenia brevis*, an algae that kills large numbers of fish and other sea life such as dolphins and manatees and can cause significant medical problems to humans from even slight exposure.¹⁷ A research paper by one group of

¹⁶ <http://www.ncagr.gov/oeop/oneMedicine/noms/2008/Tester%20-%20Harmful%20Algal%20Blooms.pdf>
E. A. Laws said, Harmful algal blooms (HABs) pose threats to the environment, public health, and a variety of commercial interests and industries. A single bloom can lead to devastating outcomes, including large mortalities of marine organisms. E. A. Laws, ed. *Environmental Toxicology: Selected Entries from the Encyclopedia of Sustainability Science and Technology*, (New York: Springer, 2012), p. 320.

¹⁷ Symptoms such as tingling of the lip, nausea, diarrhea, ataxia, and coughing can occur from brief

scientists says that there has been an increase in the severity and frequency of harmful algal blooms worldwide in recent years with devastating impacts upon marine life and consequently upon the economies of many countries.¹⁸ These things are not random. They are part of God's providence. Now, we don't need to be freaked out by them. They are tools in the hands of a just King, Jesus. But I don't look at these things in a secular way. I see these as part of God's perfect providence.

What about fires? A groundbreaking study of global fires by the U.S. Forest Service has demonstrated a massive increase of grass fires, brush fires, and forest fires worldwide since the turn of the century. Is this coincidental? Possibly, but I doubt it. God moves the very creation as a tool of warning and judgment. Forest fires keep increasing in Brazil, with the total number of forest fires in 2015 at 235,629.¹⁹ But the first few months of this year have already seen a 40% increase over the same period last year. But this kind of an increase has been seen worldwide since the turn of the century. For example, the charts of damage by fires in the USA is about double since the beginning of the century as opposed to the previous 15 years. The amount of acreage is also about doubled.²⁰ Fires have grown 75% on federally managed land. The cost of fighting fires has quadrupled.²¹ One research paper by scientists estimated that the average world mortality rate from brush and forest fires in recent years was 339,000.²² That's the average number of people killed by fires. That is pretty significant. While it is impossible to predict the future, the National Academy of Sciences has predicted that with the convergence of dryer climates and beetle infestations and diseases that are killing trees, the next few years could see anywhere from 400% to 600% increase of fires across the United States.

I am not saying this to be a fear monger. I am just saying that creation is a tool of God, and Christians need to quit being Deists and seeing these things as being random and meaningless. They are not random. Jesus has any

exposure. Animals that live in such waters have their immune systems compromised and can die. Some harmful algal blooms (HABs) have caused massive loss of life to marine fish and animals.

18 Kudela, RM and Berdalet, E and Bernard, S and Burford, M and Fernand, L and Lu, S and Roy, S and Tester, P and Usup, G and Magnien, R and Anderson, DM and Cembella, A and Chinain, M and Hallegraeff, G and Reguera, B and Zingone, A and Enevoldsen, H and Urban, E, Harmful algal blooms: a scientific summary for policy makers, IOC/UNESCO, Paris, IOC/INF-1320 (2015)

19 <http://www.climatechangenews.com/2016/01/13/28134/>

20 <https://www3.epa.gov/climatechange/science/indicators/ecosystems/wildfires.html>

21 http://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/legacy/assets/documents/global_warming/playing-with-fire-report.pdf

22 See footnote 78 at

http://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/legacy/assets/documents/global_warming/playing-with-fire-report.pdf

number of things at His disposal to humble our nation and other nations - things such as solar flares having the potential of taking out electric grids, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, mudslides, weather patterns, pollution, red tides, tsunamis, asteroids, hail, fire, etc. We need not fear humanism. God can contain it. But He is certainly committed to using His *creation* as a tool for the advancement of Christ's kingdom. So that is the first major application. Christ has authority over all things in heaven and on earth. He has authority over asteroids; He has authority over algal blooms; He has authority over fires.

Second, since it was not just Israel that was judged, but also Rome, it let's us know that Jesus is about the business of judging nations today. And He only brings covenant lawsuits against nations if nations are indeed responsible to His covenant law. Many Christians think that nations should be secular and that only Israel was in covenant with God. And my objection is: then why was Rome judged? Psalm 2 is quite clear that between Christ's First and Second Comings all nations are commanded to submit to the Son and kiss Him and obey His laws, or they will suffer under His iron rod. America must submit to God's laws or America will suffer His judgments. That fact is crystal clear in Scripture. And until the church wakes up to that fact it is not going to be serious about being salt and light. Too many churches promote secularism and pluralism in civics. It's sad. By doing that they are themselves resisting the cause of King Jesus.

The third thing to note is that nature gets destroyed along with the nations who curse God. If you want to be a true environmentalist, you need to promote righteousness in civil government. Secular governments are unlawfully stealing billions of dollars in tax money to pay for environmental causes, all the while neglecting the biggest issue - submission to Christ. The more that countries rebel against God, the less the environment will be healthy and good. These red tides and fish kills came because of national unrighteousness. Socialistic programs and the Green Movement are not the solution. Indeed, those things will just guarantee further judgment because they are unlawful. The solution is for nations to bow before King Jesus and submit to His Word. It's that simple. And we play a part in promoting that solution. Scripture says, "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14)

Fourth, the destruction of ships will be picked up at length in the second half of the book. God uses economic judgments to bring nations to their knees.

Indeed, the seven trumpets and the seven bowls will show God's creativity in using creation, the demonic, economics, war, famine, and many other things to bring a nation to repentance. And it is my prayer that as things heat up in the next few years that our nation would repent rather than persisting in its rebellion. In any case, we Christians should be prepared for either scenario. If there is repentance, we should be prepared to teach our nation how to live by God's law. We need to study that law. We need to be prepared to step in the gap. If they do not repent, we should be prepared to minister to hurting people in the aftermath of God's judgments. There will be a lot of hurting people, and perhaps that will make them open to the Gospel.

And that brings us to the last and the most important application, and that is that the trumpets presuppose the Gospel. All of these trumpets are framed around the Festival of Trumpets, which is a call to national repentance. That is all that is needed for God to relent. Jeremiah says that the moment a nation repents and begins to follow God's laws, that nation will be spared. The trumpets are not only bad news; they are good news. When a nation embraces the Gospel, Christ bears God's judgments for them. Let's bring the warning of trumpets to our nation - repent or face Christ's wrath. Repent and you will receive His mercy. May it be so Lord Jesus. Amen.