

False Teachings Destroy Souls

Part 1 of 2 (Seal 7, Trumpets 1-4)

Thursday, July 21 at 7 + Sunday, July 24 at 8:00 & 10:45

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost / Fifth Sunday after Trinity – 2011

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, so far in Revelation we have covered ♦the introduction (1:1-3), ♦the seven letters (1:4-3:22), ♦six of the seven seals (4:1-6:17), and ♦a picture of the church *on earth* and *in heaven* (7:1-17). We now come to the seventh seal, which introduces the seven trumpets. Some interpret the seven trumpets like the seven seals – *as more physical calamities*, but Dr. Becker interprets “**Revelation 8 and 9** ‘as a graphic portrayal of the effects of heresy [false doctrine].” (133) War and famine are bad but false teachings – *which lead AWAY from Christ and TO hell* – are much worse! Today, we live in the midst of **2 Timothy 4:3-4**, **check it out!**

Chapter 8: **1** When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour [indicating that something VERY IMPORTANT was about to happen]. **2** And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. *Trumpets were often used to warn of danger!* Amos asked: “If a trumpet is blown in a city will not the people tremble?” (3:6 NAU). *So may the Holy Spirit help us to understand and heed God’s Word of warning!*

1. **Jesus’ Finished Work Purifies Our Prayers:** **3** Another angel [identified by many Bible commentators as Jesus Himself (Kretzmann, 615-616)] came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne.

4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.

- a. Why was incense added to the prayers? Even though our sins are forgiven through Jesus, *our prayers remain tainted by our sinful natures*. Therefore, the incense MAY be added to *purify our prayers*.
- b. What is the incense? It must be Jesus' sinless life and sacrificial death! *It is only through HIS WORK that our prayers are heard by and acceptable to God* (1 John 1:7; Psalm 34:15-17; Proverbs 15:29).
- c. What are proper prayers? Prayers that agree with God's will. To pray such prayers, *we need to know God's will which is contained in God's Word!*

2. **Horrible Events which Point to False Teachings and Spiritual Ruin:**

5 Then the angel [possibly Jesus] took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake ["...all of which are symbols of God's wrath against sin." (Becker 136)]. Dr. Kretzmann commented: "The fire from the altar is a manifestation [a showing forth] of the sevenfold Spirit in the Word. The proclamation of this Word is like thunder *in shaking hard hearts...* like lightening *in revealing the innermost recesses of the heart...* and like an earthquake *in working mighty changes...*" (616). **6** And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them. (As the seals are connected to Matthew chapter 24, so the trumpets are connected to the plagues in Moses' day.)

- a. **7** The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a

third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up. A terrible, destructive storm, similar to what the LORD sent upon Egypt with the 7th plague. Dr. Kretzmann wrote: “Thus it is when a hurricane of false doctrines, especially of those of the righteousness of works, strikes the Church of God” (616). Hurricanes destroy property and lives but *teaching WORKS for salvation destroys eternal souls!*

- b. **8** The second angel sounded, and *something like a great mountain burning with fire* was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood, **9** and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.

Think about a huge volcano erupting, then exploding into the sea – devastating the water like the 1st plague sent upon Egypt. Dr. Kretzmann wrote: “Thus it is... when false teachers arise and show forth *apparently great signs and wonders... too many Christians have been led stray by such men...*” (616). It is not *a church’s size or a pastor’s persuasiveness* that saves; instead, salvation is GOD’S WORK – *by the Spirit through the Word* – to unite a sinner to Jesus!

- c. **10** The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters. **11** The name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.

Think about a large poison-filled meteor hitting earth and poisoning much fresh water (again, like the 1st plague). Dr. Kretzmann wrote: “Thus...men who considered themselves shining lights...of the Church

have been found filled with the poison of false doctrine... By such men...the pure Gospel of the Savior, is made bitter and poisonous..." (616-617).

Whether it is me or anyone else, always check what we preach and teach with God's Word (Acts 17:11).

- d. ¹² **The fourth angel sounded**, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way. LIES are darkness, TRUTH is light! Dr. Kretzmann wrote: "...as soon as speculations concerning the divine Word are introduced...the light of God is dimmed" (617).

Therefore, *let us agree with the Psalmist*: "The sum of Thy Word is truth." (119:160 NAS)

3. **God's Call to All Sinners: "Repent"**: ¹³ Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!" If you KNOW JESUS AS YOUR SAVIOR, give thanks to God and be at peace – ♦your sins are forgiven, ♦you are God's child, and ♦heaven is open for you! However, *for all others*, I conclude with these words of instruction from Acts 3:19: "Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord..." (NAS)

Conclusion: And all God's people said: *Amen!*

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