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Revelation

Chapter 8 - Revealing the Forces of the Heavens

The Powers of the Air (7 Trumpets)

The 4th Calling Out - The Indictment Against the Celestial Lights

Warning! The Worst is Yet to Come (vs. 13)

Revelation 8:13: 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!”

Chapter 8 ends with a warning. It's almost like he takes a pause and then he warns us. And there is a great warning. And really, this is what the verse is all about, warning. It's the graciousness of God that warns us. This really is an act of love, isn't it? I mean, if you love somebody, you're going to warn them of things that are to come that could hurt them. The Book of Proverbs is about a father warning

his son about things that are out there that could conceivably bring him much pain and sorrow, “And so, son, don't do this. Don't go there.” The wonderful grace of God demonstrated through warning.

As we come to this verse, it changes from the trumpets to this flying eagle in the heavens. I think the King James puts it, an angel, but that'd probably be erroneous translation. The more ancient translations, the Syriac, the Ethiopian, Alexandrian manuscripts actually have the word “eagle”. It's probably kind of a, if you look in Deuteronomy 32, just to maybe give you the reason why this is being used, is because the warnings in the Old Testament in particular was oftentimes made reference to.

Deuteronomy 32, if you'll look with me in verse 10, where God says that He found His people,

“... in a desert land,

And in the howling waste of a wilderness;

He encircled him, He cared for him,

He guarded him as the pupil of His eye.

(Deuteronomy 32:11) Like an eagle that stirs up its nest,
That hovers over its young,
He spread His wings and caught them,
He carried them on His pinions.

(Deuteronomy 32:12) The LORD alone guided him..."

Interesting picture because of an eagle's point of view. And the point is, of course, obviously, that the eagle flies probably one of the highest of the birds, and as he looks out over the earth, he has this panoramic view of the meridian of the sphere almost of the earth. And he can see things way beyond what the human eye could see if he was on earth. So, we have an eagle's eye view is what the passage is making reference to.

And so, if you turn back with me to Revelation 8, we begin to see that God is declaring that He has a view of things to come. And it's not unlike Habakkuk, in Chapter 1, in which Habakkuk is praying, "God, you've got to do something about these people." And in Chapter 1, God goes, "Well, I see the Babylonians, they're on their way." So, that distant view of this horde of horrible, horrible things

coming around the bend is being conveyed, and a warning is given in the midst of this.

Now, here again, as we've come up to this point in Chapter 8, really, it's about the trumpet sounding as that final seventh seal is broken and God begins to unveil the indictments, the sins of the world, as He begins to list them upon the earth, upon the seas, upon the rivers. And so, what He's actually told us to begin with, if you just kind of go through the list with me on your outline, the first calling out was the indictment against the earth. Of course, we know that was an indictment against the abuse and the misuse of what God has given man. And unfortunately, instead of building and doing things that were helpful, he has actually destroyed and brought pain and sorrow, and as well as he has invested in that which was transitory, thus the grass picture, rather than that which was permanent. God has given us things. Scripture says that if you give a glass of cold water in the name of Christ, you'll never lose that reward. So, you can take something tangible and actually store up in heaven, wonderful treasures. But unfortunately, man has taken

the resources that God has given him and has misused these resources. So, the indictment in the first blowing of the trumpet was an indictment against the misuse and the abuse of the resources that God had given us.

The second was an indictment against the seas, which literally begins to display the fact that man was unwilling to acknowledge and refuse to acknowledge the boundaries and the limitations that God has placed on him. Because of that, there is an indictment or a curse upon the seas.

And then the third was the indictment against the rivers. Of course, man rejects God's goodness, seeking man's goodness instead.

And then the fourth was a calling out or indictment against the celestial lights, in which the indictment was that men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil and they ignore the reason why God places those stars and the planets and the moon up in the skies. I mean, as Genesis tells us, they were for signs and man ignores the glory of God; he worships the stars. But as Psalm 19 says, the heavens declare the glory of God. So,

why is he not seeing the sign of the great glory of God? Why is he perceiving that these are objects that I need to worship? And instead of literally seeing these planets and these stars as directives that God gives us as a place to go and the right way to go, instead what man does is he perceives that this is something to worship and he worships the stars. So, you have the lunar, the moon, of course, what a wonderful thing that is. When you consider, was it 1 Corinthians 10, in which Paul begins to write about the children of Israel, and they built the golden calf? Well, if you understand, the golden calf had a direct connection to the moon. If you take the horns of a bull and put it sideways, it kind of looked like horns when the moon is a sliver and one of the reasons why they may have put the two together. But the picture of worshiping the calf was a picture of worshiping pleasure. And so, what man has turned the moon into is a worshiping of pleasure rather than God had actually made the lunar calendar. In fact, the Jews go by a lunar calendar to plant and to harvest and then to feast and to worship God. But they misused that. And of course, all of these are making reference to the fact that they do that. Of course, man

has a way of listening to the astrology, which is perversion, horoscopes, as lies; which even in our day is, that we proclaim that by getting in this little capsule where we cram oxygen in it and put some food, from the earth, just want to let you know, it's from the earth. The oxygen's from the earth; the food's from the earth. We put it in this little capsule. And then we go out into space, and we say we have hope of finding life and finding a purpose to life in this little capsule where we stuck life in it from the earth and purpose for life here on this earth. So, here it is, man shooting for the stars and seeking hope in those things rather than perceiving that God's grace has been displayed and His love is so vast and deep. But of course, man pursues all kinds of other things.

So, the indictments are against these things. And so, as you go through the first few of the trumpets, they resound indictments against the earth and the worshiping of the wrong things. By the time you come to this point, he now says the worst is yet to come. So, the worst has not yet come. As horrific as some of these things were,

the moon, the stars, things falling from the sky, we're not there yet.

And so, the statement is, if you look with me,

(Revelation 8:13) “Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven...”

Now, once again, midheaven is that flying in the meridian of the sky, able to see what lies beyond the horizon for the purpose of warning.

“Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, “Woe, woe, woe...””

And I looked and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven saying with a loud voice, woe, woe, woe. So, you have three “woes”. Now, the three woes are yet to come. The first “woe” is going to be seen in Chapter 9 and basically verse 1-12.

And then the second “woe” is going to be seen in Chapter 9, if you look in verse 13,

(Revelation 9:13) “Then the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice...”

Verse 12 ends this way,

(Revelation 9:12) “The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming...”

So, now verse 13 begins with the sixth angel and now the second “woe”.

And then by the time you come to the third “woe,” you're in Chapter 12, verse 12, and it actually proclaims that this is the third “woe”. So, they are seemingly directly attached to, well, like the fifth angel resounds in Chapter 9, verse 1, the sixth angel resounds in Chapter 9, verse 13, the seventh angel resounds in Chapter 11, verse 15. And then they begin to proclaim the great “woes”. The point of the next three trumpet blasts is, “This is the worst.” And it almost gives us a sense of we're going into what would be called the “Great Tribulation.” If you were trying to find a line of demarcation, it almost seems as if this is proclaiming this. The worst is yet to come.

So, the proclamation is,

“... “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!”””

In other words, things are going to get much, much worse.

Verse 13 is all about warning, and it's warning those who are on the earth, but not just on the earth. If you look with me, as it says, “Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth.” Underline that. Those are those who have willingly settled down and made this earth their home.

Why does Scripture tell us, “don't love this world, nor the things that are in the world?” Because there's a point to where you can't let it go. You just can't let it go. And so, the warning is to those that have embraced the things of this world, have loved the world itself. Now, I've oftentimes heard people, they come up to me and they say, “Well, if somebody knew what hell was like, they would never reject God.” And I go, “Well, Revelation talks against that.” Revelation proves that that's not true. And what you're going to see with these three woes, if I could just kind of summarize them, the first “woe” is going to be full of pain and torture. So, would pain and torture make you follow Christ? Well, we're going to find out. Would plagues and death, which would be the second “woe,”

make you follow Christ? We're going to find out. And the last “woe” is going to be the total loss and total defeat. So, if you understood that you were totally going to lose, would you finally just surrender? And what you're going to find out, surprisingly and amazingly, is no, you wouldn't.

In fact, if you look at the end of Chapter 9, it talks about, (Revelation 9:18) “A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths.

(Revelation 9:19) For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents...”

Of course, the scorpions are earlier in the text.

But it says this in verse 20,

(Revelation 9:20) “The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues...”

Okay, so, you've been allowed to live.

“... did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of

brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk;

(Revelation 9:21) and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.”

They would not repent. “Oh, yeah, if they went through hell, they would repent.” That's not true. So, what Revelation reveals for you, for me, is what would make a person repent? What would cause them to repent? And in this particular setting, there's just this brief moment in which God, through this messenger, proclaims, “I see what's coming around the horizon, and it's far worse than what has already been. This is the time to get right with God.” And yet, they don't.

Now, what's the significance of this to the church? Okay, here's the point. That God has called us like the eagle. In many respects, God has given us an eagle's view because God has told us things are going to be different. Things are going to change.

If you take a moment, we'll look at 2 Peter, just as a reminder, a couple of passages we can look at. It tells us

in 2 Peter 3:10 that the day of the Lord is going to come, and you're not going to know when it's going to come. It's like a thief. I mean, a thief doesn't announce when he's going to come. He just comes, hopefully when you're not looking.

(2 Peter 3:10) “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.”

Okay, so I would say that was an eagle's perspective because we know what's going to happen.

(2 Peter 3:12) “Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

(2 Peter 3:13) But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth...”

So, we have a different thing that we're looking for. Part of the passage is telling us that we're set on this earth to warn people.

Hebrews will give you something similar to this if you look in Hebrews 12, and if you drop on down with me, it says, (Hebrews 12:25) “See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth...”

And he's talking about Moses with the mountain shaking and everything.

“... much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.

(Hebrews 12:26) And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, “YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN.”

(Hebrews 12:27) This expression, “Yet once more,” denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken...”

Okay, what can be shaken? Well, that would be everything that I can see.

“... as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

(Hebrews 12:28) Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude...

Now, that's another warning. The passage is telling us that if you're investing in the things of this world, well, you're invested in things that can be shaken. And as Peter will say, it's all going to burn up. It's all going to go away. Those are warnings. I would say one of the main responsibilities of a believer is to be one who warns the world of things to come. It's an act of love. It's what we do. And I know the tendency is to think, "Well, why should I warn if they're not going to listen to me?" But Scripture tells you to warn anyway.

Ezekiel, if you look with me in Chapter 2, God calls Ezekiel, not unlike Jeremiah, in which God had called Jeremiah to warn for 40 years plus, and yet the people still did not listen. Ezekiel has to go to some of the same people. They're already in captivity, but Ezekiel goes to them.

It says this, if you look with me in Ezekiel 2:1,

"Then He said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet that I may speak with you!"

(Ezekiel 2:2) As He spoke to me the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet; and I heard Him speaking to me.

(Ezekiel 2:3) Then He said to me, “Son of man, I am sending you to the sons of Israel, to a rebellious people who have rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day.

(Ezekiel 2:4) “I am sending you to them who are stubborn and obstinate children, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD.’”

Now, at this point, are they going to be receptive to Ezekiel? No.

Now, look, I know that Colossians 4 says that we have to be careful and look for those doors to speak. I know that we are salt of the earth. I understand all that. But you have to say it sometime, and to not warn; I know that after you warn, then you don't have to keep warning because you've warned them. But many times, we say, “I'm just looking for the right opportunity.” The right opportunity is now. Tell them the truth. Warn them. “Well, they're not going to listen to me.” Okay...

(Ezekiel 2:5) “As for them, whether they listen or not—for they are a rebellious house—they will know that a prophet has been among them.

(Ezekiel 2:6) “And you, son of man, neither fear them nor fear their words, though thistles and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions; neither fear their words nor be dismayed at their presence, for they are a rebellious house.

(Ezekiel 2:7) “But you shall speak My words to them whether they listen or not...”

Well, it's an act of love. To not warn would not be loving. We're in the middle of Revelation, an eagle is flying, “Woe, woe, woe!” You're going, “Why would God do that?” God would never not warn. It's the grace of God that warns us.

You see the same thing if you look with me in Ezekiel 33, which really puts on the shoulders of the one who has the message rather than the burden of the message on the people who are rejecting. In other words, you need to let them know. Now, once you let them know the burden is on them.

The passage reads, and it's only appropriate that it puts it in terms of a trumpet sounding, right?

(Ezekiel 33:4) “then he who hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, and a sword comes and takes him away, his blood will be on his own head.

(Ezekiel 33:5) ‘He heard the sound of the trumpet but did not take warning; his blood will be on himself. But had he taken warning, he would have delivered his life.

(Ezekiel 33:6) ‘But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet and the people are not warned, and a sword comes and takes a person from them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require from the watchman’s hand.’”

That’s your job.

(Ezekiel 33:7) “Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel; so you will hear a message from My mouth and give them warning from Me.”

Now, He's already told him, “This is a wicked people, they're not going to listen to you.” But God has called you

to warn. I know a lot of times we think in terms of, we kind of calculate, “Well, how are they going to respond? I don't know how they're going to,” so, we try to psych them out. “Oh, I know how they're going to respond.” And you don't know how they're going to respond. Some people I've shared with, I said to myself, “They're not going to listen,” and they just embrace me and love the message, and I go, “Okay, I was wrong.” And how many times have I been wrong about it? Other times I go, “They're going to receive the message,” and then they got really mad at me and didn't want anything to do with me. I don't know how they're going to respond. That's not my responsibility; their responding or not responding. My responsibility is to warn them, to care enough to warn them.

Now, here's the main point of the passage that we're looking at in Revelation. What you're going to see is the warning of doom, “Woe, woe, woe.” So, it's an interjection of great warning, of great intensity, and terrible and horrific things are coming. The thought is that by virtue of the horrific thing that's coming, people are

going to get on their knees and they're going to change. Revelation is going to show us that's not true. Now, here's the point to the church. The point to the church is that we have the greatest impetus for people to change. It is the gospel. The point is, if they don't change with the gospel, they're not going to change. You understand? So, He's virtually telling us that the eagle is seeing all the terrible things that are down the road. We know these things to be true as a church, but we have a greater message. Our message is not, "Woe, woe, woe." Our message is, "Good. Good. Good." And the Bible tells us, according to Romans 1, that the gospel is the power of God to save men.

"Woe" can't save men. The proof is here in Revelation. It cannot save men. No matter how terrible things get, man will not, by virtue of the warning, embrace God. But the gospel is more powerful.

So, if you look with me in Hebrews, to kind of give you an idea of this. Hebrews 2. Hebrews 1 is all about the difference between the angels and the Son of God. Which of the angels did He ever call "Son"? He then begins to describe that the angels are messengers of God, and of

course, with the Law, there was just recompense in the Old Testament when somebody did something wrong. So, the angels came upon them with terrible plagues or whatever.

In Hebrews 2:1, he writes this,

“For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.

(Hebrews 2:2) For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty,

(Hebrews 2:3) how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard,

(Hebrews 2:4) God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders...

In other words, the marvelous gospel. If you reject the gospel, how shall we escape? There is no escape. “Oh, I'll just wait till the tribulation. I'll be able to escape.” If you didn't receive the gospel, you're not going to turn

because of the terrible things that are happening in the tribulation.

Well, before you leave Hebrews, if you look at me in Chapter 6. Hebrews 6 reminds you of something very similar.

It says in verse 4,

(Hebrews 6:4) “For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

(Hebrews 6:5) and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come...”

In other words, have been a part of this, have been in church, have seen the things of God, and then have fallen away.

Watch what it says in verse 6.

(Hebrews 6:6) “and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.”

In other words, if you reject the saving power of a loving Savior, it's impossible to renew you to repentance. Repentance is not going to come.

If you look with me in 2 Thessalonians, the same thing will be said in 2 Thessalonians, and we'll just pick up in Chapter 1. The time will come when God comes with His mighty ones, according to 2 Thessalonians 1:7,

“... from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,
(2 Thessalonians 1:8) dealing out retribution to those who
do not know God and to those who do not obey the
gospel of our Lord Jesus.”

(2 Thessalonians 1:9) These will pay the penalty of eternal
destruction...”

“Well, if they felt the destruction, they would certainly repent.” No, they turned away from the gospel. They're not going to receive it.

“...away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory
of His power.”

If you drop on down, he goes on and talks about the mystery of lawlessness in Chapter 2, verse 7, and he talks

about the lawless one that's going to be revealed. Of course, that's Satan, according to verse 9. He's going to have false signs and wonders and things like that.

But it says in 2 Thessalonians 2:10,

“And with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish...”

Why are they perishing according to verse 10? Underline it.

“...because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.”

If you neglect so great a salvation, there is no hope. Now, we believe that there are going to be people that turn to God during the tribulation, but these aren't going to be people that have heard the gospel.

In fact, he's going to go on to say, in this time, verse 11,

(2 Thessalonians 2:11) “For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,

(2 Thessalonians 2:12) in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.”

I know that proclaiming the gospel can sometimes be trepidatious, and I know that people have their fears about talking to people about things. But we have this great gospel that literally is warning. We're warning people, “If you reject the love of God, there is no hope. There is no hope.” And I know that the tendency may be in some to look for that perfect moment, that right moment, when all the planets are aligned, and maybe the person's in a good mood, and we're just going to kind of slip it in, and maybe we'll bribe them with a piece of cake and coffee. But that's not salvation. And it's the gospel that is powerful enough to change the heart. It's the only thing really that can change the heart. All of the judgment in the world will never change the heart.

That's why Revelation, the way it ends, it's such a bizarre way to end when you consider it. If you look at the end of the Book of Revelation with me, which is really easy to find because you just go to the end of the Bible. But in

Revelation 22:10, he comes to the end of the book and he says, “Okay, here's the deal...”

(Revelation 22:10) “... “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

(Revelation 22:11) Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.””

What do you think he's saying? Well, what he's saying is, once again, in the context of Revelation, that it doesn't matter what happens; nobody's going to change. Once this thing is ignited, the only ones that are going to come to Him are the ones that just hadn't heard, but are seeking truth, and the 144,000 are preserved in the midst of it. Those are the righteous ones. But his point is, nobody's changing. You think that the terrible things that are about to happen is going to change everything; if people just got what they deserved, they would surely change. Now, it might wake them up, but they're not going to change. They're not going to change their desires. They're not going to change what they want to

do. But what is going to change things is that gospel of God. And so, he's stirring in the heart of the church, "The time is coming," he says, "when people aren't going to change. But you have that ability to proclaim this wonderful word of repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And people will change by the power of the Spirit of God as they hear the gospel of Jesus Christ that begins to move men to reality. And once a person genuinely receives Christ, they will never be lost. I can't chase a person away that loves God. I can't. They just will always keep loving God. You can't offend people to not love God anymore. They won't dust their hands off and say, "I don't want to have anything to do with it because my feelings were hurt at church or this thing happened to me at church." Listen, it can't happen. You have the Spirit of Truth within you, you can't leave; you can't not be faithful because the Spirit of God just constrains you. It's the power of God, and you're just so in love with Christ, that will hold you during the worst of times and will change your whole way of thinking. It does. It does. And that's why passages like Titus says, "You were once this way. You were full of hate. You were full of bitterness. But

when the love of Christ came, I mean, He saved you, not on the basis of deeds which you have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy. And the mercy of God just changed your heart.” This is why we've got to get this gospel out. We are agents of warning, and if we keep quiet, well, the blood is on our hands. You say, “Well, are you saying it's up to me to save?” No, I'm not saying that. I'm saying it's up to you to warn. God saves. But if you don't warn... It's the grace of God when I read a passage like this because I go, “Isn't it just like God to warn, knowing that they're not going to turn?” But He's still going to warn them anyway. And so, the angel says, “I see terrible things coming around the bend.” And they still do not listen. Take it to heart as we begin, and we're going to see these “woes” that begin to come. And the first is going to be, in fact, He's going to open up the pit of hell. So, people say, “Well, what if they went to hell?” Well, hell's coming to you. And the pit of hell is going to open up in Chapter 9, and we're going to see these creatures coming out, and they're going to have the ability to sting. And God says, “Don't kill them.” But man's going to wish he was dead because he's going to cry to

God, "Kill me." And surely if somebody was full of pain and torture, they would repent, right? Well, you read the end of Chapter 9. They don't repent.

Closing Prayer:

Well, Father, we come before You today and we just thank You for this wonderful, glorious gospel that You've given us that is far greater than the sorrow of the pain, of the woes that are about to come in the Book of Revelation. You are revealing to us that the pain and the sorrows and the death and the loss could never change a heart. But we have this gospel. And how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? Is there an escape? Is there any hope? But You have given us this time of immense opportunity in which we as Your messengers can proclaim, "Be warned, don't reject the love of God. He loves you. His desire is for you. He wants you to live forever with Him. He wants you to be His child." What a message we have. And as we look at Your love on that cross, Your willingness, Your desire to go do that for us,

we have to stand back and say, “This is something I want more than anything else.” Lord, help us to be faithful to proclaim this message.

Your head's bowed and your eyes closed. I'm asking you, look, I don't want to make this trite, but make commitments when you come. God stirs within our hearts that we have a responsibility. We have this truth. We know what the truth is. That there is no other name whereby men can be saved but the name of Jesus Christ. We have this truth. We know that there is salvation in no one else. We know that if, in fact, someone will believe, they will not perish, but they will have everlasting life. We know this to be true. You've got to tell them. Make a commitment.