

Revelation Chapter 8

After the opening of the 6th seal in Revelation 7, St. John sees the Great Divine Liturgy in Heaven, the 144,000 of the Israel of God and the martyrs previously seen under the heavenly altar are standing among all the faithful -- a great multitude, all of whom have made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. All are **standing before the throne** even as we Orthodox stand before our altars in our parishes. They cry out in a loud joyful voice: *Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb* -- it is the joy of their salvation and their immense gratitude toward toward God for it. They hold palms in their hands as did ancient Israel at the appointed Feast of Tabernacles, as we Orthodox Christians do on Palm Sunday when we cry out, *Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord, Hosannah to the Son of David, Hosannah in the highest.*¹ They are gathered together around the angels, who surround the 4 living creatures [the seraphim] and the elders. The angels worship and prostrate before the Father and His Son the Lamb while chanting a 7-fold doxology. It is the Church gathered together in the Heavens. -- And now there is an absolute silence at the opening of the 7th seal:

Revelation 8:1 *And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. 3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. 5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. 6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. 7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. 8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. 10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; 11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. 12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. 13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!*

Revelation 8:1 *And when he had opened the ~~seventh~~ seal [the seventh (one)], there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.*

1. Compare during Sukkot: the Jewish priests would say, *Give thanks to HASHEM (THE LORD), Please HASHEM bring salvation now*, and *Please HASHEM bring success now*. On the *Great Hoshanna*, this would be repeated over and over again! הוֹשִׁיעָה הוֹשִׁיעָה *hoshiah* = *bring salvation* is a verb form of יְשׁוּעָה; *Yeshua*, Jesus' name in Hebrew. Here in Rev. 7, in Heaven, the LORD has brought salvation in the person of His Son יְשׁוּעָה; *Yeshua*, Jesus.

Revelation Chapter 8

Archbishop Averky: “This silence in heaven signifies the concentration of reverent attention on the part of the angels and men who stand before the throne of God in expectation of the fearful signs of the wrath of God before the end of this age and the manifestation of the kingdom of Christ.” A silence of worship, adoration, and anticipation by the multitudes.

Revelation 8:2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

The seven angels who were given 7 trumpets is reminiscent of the seven priests in the conquest of Jericho who blew the seven trumpets/shofars resulting in the destruction of Jericho. The silence is also reminiscent of the silence which preceded the blowing of the shofars there. At Jericho for the first 6 days the Israelites processed around the city bearing the the Ark of the Covenant and the priests blowing 7 shofars/trumpets of animal horn. However, on that 7th day at Jericho, the Ark of the Covenant with the priests bearing 7 shofars processed silently around Jericho 6 times -- and then blew the shofars and with a shout the walls came a tumbling down and the city and its inhabitants destroyed, save for Rahab and her family -- just as the spiritual walls of the Antichrist at the end of time will come tumbling down as destruction rains upon him and his menions but the members of Christ’s family protected by the seal of the Holy Spirit will be saved.

By this comparison we are given to understand that the Lord is preparing to pour out His chastisement (His divine wrath) upon the ungodly -- and specifically, on those not sealed with the sign of the cross, the old Hebrew *tav*. Just as Rahab and her family (one family of believers among the Canaanites in Jericho) were protected by the red rope hanging out of her window, just as the Jews who painted the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and lintels of their doors in Goshen/Egypt were protected from the angel of death, who consequently *passed over* them -- so will the faithful be protected with the sign of the cross (the *tav* in its old Hebrew form) --. Remember, we too are sealed with the seal of the Holy Spirit, a cross painted in oil on our foreheads, eyes, ears, nose, lips, chest, hands, and feet at our baptisms and chrismations, and repeated in the service of healing during Holy Week, or when the elders are called together for a healing service for a very ill person, and on our foreheads at our Vigils throughout the year.

Revelation 8:3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer [shall give] it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

St. Ambrose *Isaac 5.44*: “The incense is offered through the angel and is, as it were, fragrant with the sweet ointment of pious prayer, because it had been prepared from prayer for things eternal and invisible, and not for bodily things. And above all, the soul is fragrant with frankincense and myrrh, because she is dead to sin and alive to God.”

Revelation 8:5 And the angel ~~took~~ [hath taken] the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar,

Revelation Chapter 8

and cast it into the earth: and there were ~~voices, and thunderings~~ [thunderings and sounds], and lightnings, and an earthquake.

These voices, thunderings, lightnings, and earthquake are like those accompanying the descent of the Lord on Mount Sinai after the exodus of Israel from Egypt, when Moses was about to receive the 10 commandments.

St. Andrew of Caesarea: “The prayers of the saints offered through an administering angel cause the censer filled with the avenging fire to be poured out on the earth. This is just as it was revealed long ago to Ezekiel (10:2, 6-7) by one of the cherubim, that he [the Prophet Ezekiel] should receive from such a fire and give it to the angels that they might send the fire for the punishment of the wicked inhabitants of Jerusalem. And every high priest is representative of such an angel, for as a mediator between God and people, he carries up their petitions and brings down God’s redemption, and he turns sinners to repentance either by word or by a harsher discipline.”

Revelation 8:6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

And now, all hell is about to break loose in plagues on the earth and godless mankind. This is to punish and remove some of the wicked from the face of the earth, and to encourage the others to repent at seeing God’s just judgment on the wicked. From this chapter forward is where the interpretation of the ***Book of Revelation*** becomes very complicated, confused, and very subjective--when various heretical Christians, non-Christians, academics, and many orthodox try to relate these events/plagues, etc., with past, current, or specific events. Thus, even what Christ has unsealed from the scroll can be greatly misinterpreted. When these events happen for real, in the magnitude that the scriptures proclaim, then those alive at that time and have the seal on their foreheads, will be able to recognize them correctly. Until then, we have to be extremely wary of correlating current events with Biblical prophecies as so many do and prove to be false prophets. As St. John said in the beginning of this book, *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

Revelation 8:7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. 8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. 10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; 11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. 12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a

Revelation Chapter 8

third part of it, and the night likewise. 13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!



Revelation Chapter 8

Now we come to the progressive pouring out of the wrath and chastisement of the Lord represented in the 7 Trumpet Judgments and the seven Vial / Bowl Judgments which follow. Looking back a few weeks, we saw the rejoicing in heaven of all the saints, martyrs, i.e., witnesses for Christ washed clean with His blood and sealed on their foreheads with the seal of the Holy Spirit. All of those, known and unknown, are the Saints we celebrate with the Commemoration of All Saints today, among whom we all struggle to be numbered with. Now, today, in contrast to them, we will begin to see the torments and plagues poured out upon the ungodly, looking at the first 4 today. And here it is where the interpretation of Revelation becomes difficult and many introduce speculative opinions not consistent with the text.

***Revelation 8:7** The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. 8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. 10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; 11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. 12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. 13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpets of the three angels, which are yet to sound!*

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

”

This judgment, except the the blood, is very similar to the 7th plague upon the Egyptians: Exodus 9:23 *And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. 24 So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. 25 And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.*

Ecumenius: “Were someone to think that this will happen literally, he would not be interpreting this passage incorrectly. But if we were to understand the passage figuratively [allegorically], we will also not be saying anything wrong, for the passage speaks of fire when it refers to the distress and profound grief of the sinners who see the saints *caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord*, while they themselves remain dishonorable on the earth and are regarded as worthless. The passage refers figuratively to sinners as trees and grass that are on fire because of

Revelation Chapter 8

their folly and the insensitivity of their souls, which are hard as dry wood and are suitable for burning.”

St. Andrew of Caesarea: “...this passage shows the plagues that will occur before the consummation. [Allegorically] The hail indicated the scourgings that will come from heaven for righteous judgment, and the fire mixed with blood indicates the destruction by fire and slaughter at the hands of the barbarians that will occur almost daily. And as we see, by these torments not less than one third of all the creatures on earth will be physically killed [by all 7 plagues], for wars destroy not only human beings but also everything produced on the earth. And the blessed Joel confirms our understanding of what will come when he says, *Blood and fire and vapor of smoke will come before the great day.*”

Archbishop Averky: “The chastisements of God follow gradually, indicating the mercy and long-suffering of God, calling sinners to repentance. At first the chastisement of God strikes a third of the trees and all the green grass. Wheat and other grasses are burned to the root -- those things which are necessary for the feeding of men and animals. By *hail and fire mixed with blood ... cast upon the earth*, many commentators understand a war of extermination. Does this not refer to an aerial bombardment with its destructive and incendiary bombs [subjective].

“The fire mixed with blood indicates the destruction of cities ... their fires and blood-letting, during which, as we see, there will be killed not less than a third part of all the creatures living on earth: wars exterminate not only men but also everything produced on earth. Our suppositions and opinion regarding this is confirmed by the blessed Joel for he says that before the coming of the dread day there will be sent on earth *blood and fire and vapour of smoke* (Joel 2:30).

In my opinion the best interpretation of this verse is by Archimandrite Athanasios:

Archimandrite Athanasios: “The events ushered in by the first trumpet sound seem to be pedagogical in nature, which is made apparent by the fact that only *one third* of the earth is stricken. This means that the purpose of the destruction is to warn and discipline. The destructive plague of hail, heralded by the trumpeting of the first angel, brings to mind the first and seventh plagues in Egypt which display Pharaoh’s obstinacy. It is noteworthy, as we will see, that the seven plagues (that issue forth from the seventh trumpet) recall the ten historical plagues in Egypt because it is those historical plagues that provide the key to the interpretation of the plagues in Revelation

[Athanasios compares this first trumpet judgment with the 7th and 1st plagues on Egypt: This plague is only missing the blood in Revelation -- so a worse plague than that of Egypt both in scope and severity. “The plagues of the 15th century before Christ occurred not only to soften Pharaoh’s heart, but also to forewarn the rebellious and disobedient of future generation. Only God knows what awesome intensity the plagues at the end of history will have. This is because people will have rebelled against God. They will have sinned horribly and their apostasy, which is already at work, will have brought the Antichrist. I hope that we understand that we are dealing with realities here. God has fortified His truths with His previous actions -- action which

Revelation Chapter 8

are historical typologies. For this reason, no one should say that we ought to disregard any of it or that these are nothing but a collection of stories. These are not fabricated stories: they are historical precedents and the truth and harsh reality of things to come. Based on this information, every one of us should take care to structure our lives according to God's will, lest we find ourselves in the opposite camp (one of the apostates and the lawless) and away from the camp of the people of God."

"God knows how to save His own people. He saved His people in Goshen during the plagues in Egypt. The Hebrews were unaffected by those plagues. Since God knows, He will have His own method of saving His people in the midst of the apocalyptic plagues. It is a matter of faith. We only have to believe in Him with all our heart, with all the power of our souls and to begin to live our patristic Orthodox spirituality."

[Note: Victorinus and Bede have nothing to say on this verse. Vladimir Moss quotes St. Andrew and Archbishop Averky without additional comment.

Revelation 8:8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

St. Andrew of Caesarea (allegorical): "As some of our teachers think, we think that the great mountain is the devil, who burns with the fire of wrath against us but who will be bound in Gehenna. But during the time allowed to him he will destroy a third of the islands and ships in the sea and that which swims in it, even as long ago he did to Job."

Archbishop Averky mentions two speculative interpretations: "One may suppose that on the bottom of one of the oceans there will open up a volcano whose fiery lava will fill the third part of the water basins of the earth, bringing death to everything alive. Others think that what is referred to here are fearful bloody sea battles with the hope of newly invented murderous weapons." [I would ask, How does that resemble a great mountain burning with fire being cast into the sea as opposed to arising out of the sea?]

Archimandrite Athansios: "The second angel sounds his trumpet, and something like a great mountain (not a mountain, but like a mountain) of great dimension, which is ablaze, is thrown into the sea, and one-third of the seas of the earth turn as red as blood, and one third of the living creatures of the seas die. A truly terrible and remarkable plague is now before us. However, it is contained, because it only refers to one third of the sea, one third of the marine life, and one third of the ships.

"Many early interpreters, such as Saint Andrew of Caesarea, whom we follow in our interpretation, along with Saint Arethas, who also follows Saint Andrew, found it impossible to produce a more realistic interpretation because they did not live with today's realities. So they were forced to interpret some events allegorically or spiritually. Nonetheless, when we come across a particular interpretation (which had been given allegorical dimensions is no longer

Revelation Chapter 8

optional, what must we do? This issue becomes especially apparent when Saint Arethas himself states, 'Thus we must accept these things symbolically; they will not possess a definite energy.' Saint Arethas is saying that these events will not be carried out in a tangible way since these saints lived in a time when the actual physical outcome of these apocalyptic events was unimaginable.

"... Saint Andrew of Caesarea makes a very wise observation regarding interpretation, something that we should never forget, as it is the key to any attempt at interpretation. He writes, '... the times and the experience will reveal to the vigilant.' in other words, as the centuries progress, the truth will be revealed by the times themselves and the experience of those who have purified their heart and are spiritually vigilant. This is indeed an astute point; it is a key and with it we can go forward with the interpretation of Revelation, a most difficult and mysterious book ... Remember, when the fulfillment takes place we will have an amazing understanding. We will gasp open-mouthed and we will say: Look at this! This is written; it is happening right now."

Archimandrite Athanasios then reflects on the 1st plague on Egypt, where Moses turned, not only the Nile River, all their waters even the fresh waters of Egypt in ponds and pools of water, as well as water in wooden and stone vessels to blood. (However, the Egyptians were able to dig into the earth surrounding the Nile and obtain water.). The Archimandrite, however, appears to redefine the Biblical text to read *become red (like) blood*. His alteration of the text into "red like blood" allows him to misinterpret this verse to just turning the water a red color like blood as referring to the the infamous and poisonous "red tides" caused by dinoflagellates, which are very toxic and are able to kill fish, man, and beast.

Then he reverses course again and quotes Arethas: "According to Saint Arethas, who uses allegory, the mountain is the wrath of God falling on the earth to punish the ungodly. Without straying too far, we can also say that the mountain can be an actual object that falls onto the earth, and use allegory to say its fall is the wrath of God. It is through this object which the holy Evangelist describes as a great burning mountain that falls into the seas, that a third of the seas are polluted. If we assume that there are three large oceans, say the Pacific, the Atlantic, and the Indian oceans, we could say that one of these oceans, one third of the seas, will be included in this plague." [This would be consistent with the speculation of a "mountain sized" asteroid burning as it plunges down through the atmosphere and striking the ocean with great force altering its chemistry and ecology through the energy and heat released.]

Vladimir Moss: Fr. Stephen Krasovitsky writes: "The mountain could well be the melting of gigantic mountains of ice at the poles under the influence of 'the greenhouse effect' and the widening of 'holes' in the ozone layer above the Antarctic, which allows burning ultra-violet rays to pass through unhindered. As a result of the melting of the ice-caps there will be a merging of the waters of the oceans with microscopic algae of a red colour coming from the depths of the sea to the surface. These will consume oxygen, as a result of which the water will look like blood, and a third part of the living creatures of the sea will die. Scientists supposed that the approach of the greenhouse effect will take place almost instantaneously and will be

Revelation Chapter 8

accompanied by cyclones, tornadoes and floods, as a result of which not only the inhabitants of the earth will suffer, but especially those who will be on the sea at that time (the third part of the ships will be destroyed).“ [Pure fantasy which doesn't fit the text at all.]

“However, a great mountain burning with fire cast into the sea suggests another explanation. Novikova writes: "Reading the prophecies, we have often asked ourselves a series of questions: 'Can a "pillar of fire" arise in the sea after an earthquake?' 'Will the smell of sulphur spread everywhere, and will there be a toxic hail causing sores on the bodies of men and a poisoning of the water that gives the water the taste of wormwood?' These forecasts related to the future, and it just so happens that we are really confronted with the approach of an ecological catastrophe, a part of which is the poisoning of the waters of the Pacific Ocean by hydrogen sulphide... [More fantasy which doesn't fit the text.]

"The Black Sea is located in a seismically dangerous zone. During an earthquake sharp movements of the sea bottom could elicit landslips and the destruction of a thickness of sedimentary rocks. The gases released by this burst out onto the surface of the sea. The slightest spark - and the sea ignites, and a 'pillar of fire' rises over us. Then streams of fuel impregnated with the moisture of the atmosphere rise up. Gradually the moisture condenses and even in fine weather clouds are formed. Burning hydrogen sulphide spreads suffocating odours of sulphur, while the product of the burning (sulphur dioxide), uniting with water, produces sulphuric acid. A cloud is formed out of which an acid hail falls, poisoning all the fresh water. There is no doubt that the picture 'drawn' by the scientists truly signifies the end of the world..." [Where do they get these wacky ideas?]

Revelation 8:10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; 11 And the name of the star is called [the] Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

Biblical wormwood, *Artemisia herba-alba* or *Artemisia judica* has a strong bitter taste, leading to the use of the plant as a symbol of bitterness, sorrow, and calamity. In high doses it can be toxic/poisonous. And in this judgment *many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter*. But not all, not even 1/3 -- only a portion, so again for chastisement and warning of the survivors, even as the plagues upon Egypt were pedagogical. Moses used the term to show the perils of secret idolatry, as did Jeremiah in warning of the bitter punishment awaiting disobedient Israel for their apostasy.

The word translated "wormwood" in English, *αψιθρος* in Greek, is *Чорнóбиль* in Ukrainian, and *Чернóбыль* in Russian. However, the city of Chernobyl is named after a different type of *Artemisia* distinct from the biblical wormwood, nevertheless:

Vladimir Moss, a contemporary True Orthodox writer writes that: “This extraordinary ‘coincidence’ leads one to speculate that the whole of this passage (8.7-11, perhaps also 12) refers to the whole of that epoch contemporaneous with our own, when environmental disasters of the Chernobyl type have brought disaster to that third of the world which is, or was, under communist domination.” [Again, we have to be very careful of calling contemporary non-1/3 global catastrophic events, to be fulfillments of these plagues.]

Revelation Chapter 8

Archimanadrite Athansios notes: “The falling of the star does not exclude the possibility of chemical and biological warfare ... We will not exclude the possibility, my friends, that this falling star could be a meteorite, an object that comes from outer space.” These are what contemporary astronomers now call Near Earth Objects, or NEO (asteroids with orbits intersecting earth’s orbit), which NASA and other groups [including CA Tech at the Palomar Mountain Observatory here in San Diego County] are mapping their orbits and tracking many and worrying about collisions.

Revelation 8:12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day ~~shone not~~ [should not be manifest] for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

Ecumenius: “We have been taught by Joel the prophet that *the sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes* (Joel 2:31), namely, that all of these events will occur on that day. And in his second letter, Peter said, *The day of the Lord will come as a thief, on which the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire.* (2 Pet 3:10). And the Lord also says in the 109th section of Matthew, *Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven* (Matt 24:27). And now we are taught in this revelation that these things will occur at the consummation of the present age. And why is it said that only a third of what is on earth and in the sea and the rivers and only a third of the heavenly bodies endure these calamities that are mentioned here? This is certainly a clear proof of the goodness of God toward humankind that he calls to repentance the people [overtaken by the afflictions] of that time by the partial dissolution of the elements, rather than their total destruction. On those who do not repent He finally brings a complete destruction. And the prophet says something similar: *He made a path for his anger; he did not spare them from death* (Psalm 77:50 Lxx [said about the 10 plagues sent upon the Egyptians]). For since the wrath of God is incrementally made clear and advances and progresses as though on a road, God is opening a door for repentance and is calling people to a change of heart through fear of that which is coming to pass. But when no change came from them, *he did not spare their souls from death.*”

Note: With this 4th trumpet judgment, it should appear obvious that such an occurrence in the heavens with a 1/3 part of the sun, moon, and stars being darkened cannot be accounted for by any known natural phenomena, rather it is the finger of God, just like the 4th plague in Egypt wherein the dust turned into lice. This could not be duplicated by the Egyptian magicians. Even though it was intended to change the heart of the Egyptians and Pharaoh toward the Children of Israel, it failed to do so: *(Exodus 8:19) Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and [yet] Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.*

Revelation 8:13 And I beheld, and heard an ~~angel~~ [eagle] flying through the midst of

Revelation Chapter 8

heaven, saying with a loud voice, “Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpets of the three angels, which are yet to sound!”

St. Andrew of Caesarea: “This passage shows the sympathy and goodness of the holy angels, who, like God, are merciful toward the transgressors who are being chastised, and especially toward those who do not recognize that their suffering is for the purpose of their conversion. For these especially the woe is fitting, since they live on the earth, think earthly thoughts and exhale dust rather than the perfume that has been poured out for us. For those whose citizenship is in heaven, the sufferings become the cause of unfading crowns and rewards.”

Archimandrite Athanasios: This invitation to repentance is a sermon offered by an eagle. It is a paradox that an eagle will call people to repentance. Up to this point, we know that people were used as preachers of repentance. Noah called his contemporaries to repentance. Saint John the Baptist called people to repentance and even currently sermons of repentance are heard, but how many people respond to these sermons, these calls to repentance? God will use a paradoxical phenomenon when He sees that His preachers’ sermons of repentance fall on deaf ears. He will instruct an eagle to call out: *woe, woe, woe* from the sky so people will hear him ... the people will say: An eagle is speaking; what a strange thing. Who ever heard an eagle with a human voice? And this eagle says, ‘woe to the people who do not repent, for they will face these things to follow, unrepentant.’ God uses the eagle to cry out, just like He used Balaam’s donkey.”

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Amen.