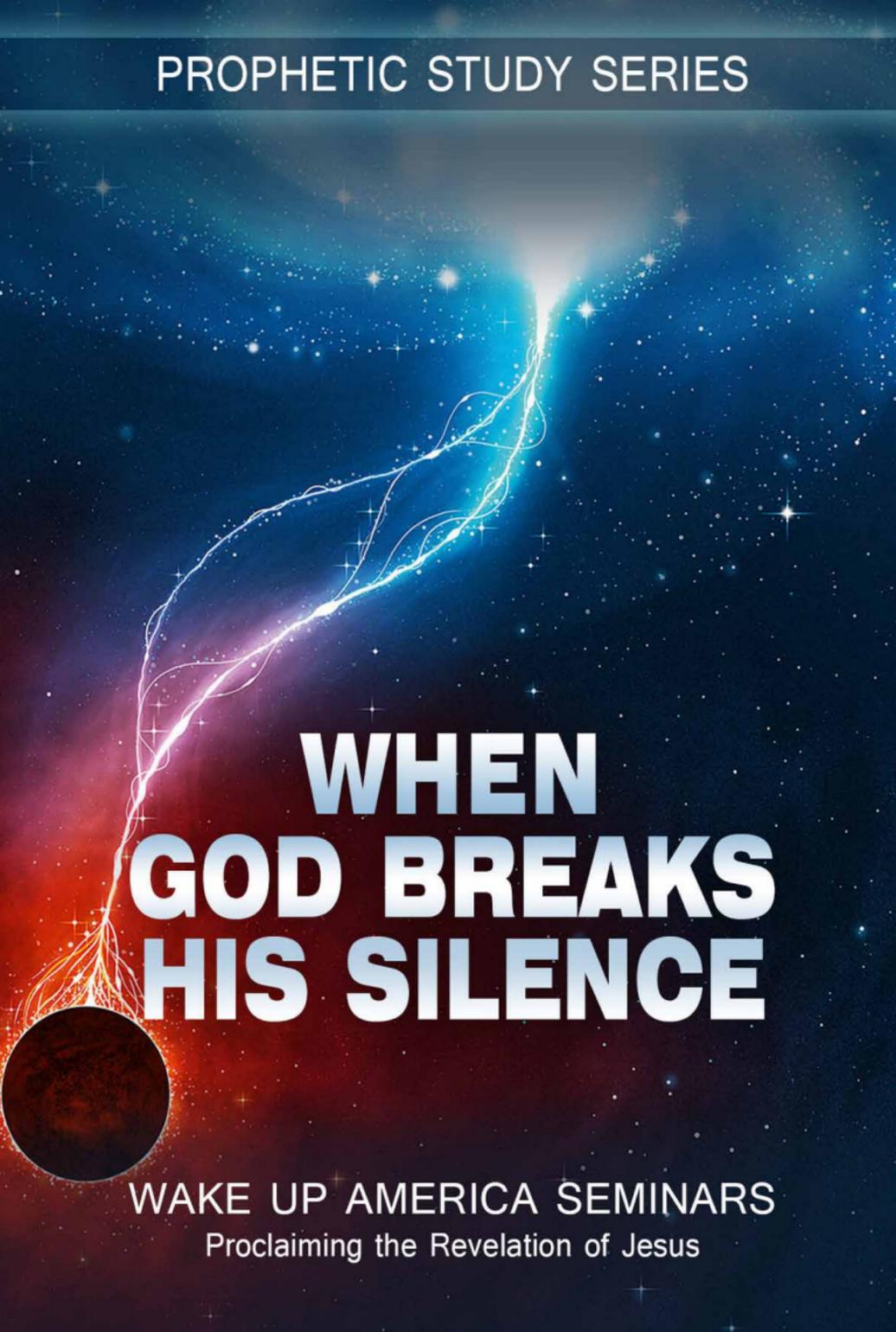


PROPHETIC STUDY SERIES



**WHEN  
GOD BREAKS  
HIS SILENCE**

WAKE UP AMERICA SEMINARS  
Proclaiming the Revelation of Jesus

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# When God Breaks His Silence

**“I the Lord have spoken. The time has come for me to act. I will not hold back; I will not have pity, nor will I relent. You will be judged according to your conduct and your actions,” declares the Sovereign Lord.”<sup>1</sup>**

The world has never witnessed any acts like God's coming judgments. God will act suddenly and powerfully and it will crush all peoples with His swiftness and intensity.

Revelation's description of the opening of the fourth seal explains what Jesus is about to do. **“When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, ‘Come!’ I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.”<sup>2</sup>**

The opening of this seal marks the beginning of

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<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel 24:14

<sup>2</sup> Revelation 6:7-8

the Great Tribulation. The cataclysm is so extensive that God has promised that this tribulation will not last longer than 1,335 days.<sup>1</sup> However, during this time period, 25% of Earth's population will perish. Such an assault on human beings can only occur by Jesus' direct order.

Isaiah explains why Jesus is about to act, **“See, the Lord is going to lay waste the earth and devastate it; he will ruin its face and scatter its inhabitants.”**<sup>2</sup> **“The earth will be completely laid waste and totally plundered. The Lord has spoken this word.”**<sup>3</sup> **“The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore earth's inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left.”**<sup>4</sup>

### **Symbolic or Literal – Past or Future?**

Some people argue that the four judgments of the fourth seal are symbolic and not literal. Others say that the fourth seal happened long ago. Many argue

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1 Daniel 12:12

2 Isaiah 24:1

3 Isaiah 24:3

4 Isaiah 24:5–6

that God does not kill people. What does the Bible say?

God commented to Ezekiel, **“Son of man, if a country sins against me by being unfaithful and I stretch out my hand against it to cut off its food supply and send famine upon it and kill its people and their animals.”**<sup>1</sup> **“Or if I send wild beasts through that country and they leave it childless and it becomes desolate so that no one can pass through it because of the beasts.”**<sup>2</sup> **“Or if I bring a sword against that country and say, ‘Let the sword pass throughout the land,’ and I kill its people and their animals.”**<sup>3</sup> **“Or if I send a plague into that land and pour out my wrath on it through bloodshed, killing its people and their animals.”**<sup>4</sup> **“For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: How much worse will it be when I send against Jerusalem my four dreadful judgments—sword and famine and wild beasts and plague—to kill its men and their animals”**<sup>5</sup> **“They will come to you**

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1 Ezekiel 14:13

2 Ezekiel 14:15

3 Ezekiel 14:17

4 Ezekiel 14:19

5 Ezekiel 14:21

[Ezekiel], and when you see their conduct and their actions, you will be consoled regarding the disaster I have brought on Jerusalem—every disaster I have brought on it. You will be consoled when you see their conduct and their actions, for you will know that I have done nothing in it without cause, declares the Sovereign Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

No one can reasonably say that God’s four judgments of plague, famine, sword, and wild beasts are symbolic. Furthermore, God personally claims responsibility for sending these judgments. God also justified himself to Ezekiel for doing such things as He said, **“I have done nothing in it without cause.”** Understand that God has used these four judgments in the past and He is going to use them again.

### **The Full Cup Principle**

What causes God to send judgments upon human beings? Today, many people interpret God’s silence with our behavior on Earth as proof that He is indifferent or disinterested in what we do. For this reason, people commit horrible deeds of evil thinking God does not care. The truth is most of

<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel 14:22–23, insertion mine

us do not realize the strict accountability we must each give to God for every action.

Solomon warned, **“Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.”**<sup>1</sup>

Christians often talk and sing about God’s mercy and His saving grace, but few openly talk about His anger or wrath. Why are we afraid to know what makes God angry? To put God’s wrath into perspective, we have to review Bible history and observe that God deals with rebellion in a consistent manner, called the full cup principle. The concept is so simple that anyone can understand it. When a person, city, nation, or body of people reach a certain level of wickedness, God’s patience expires and He breaks His silence with divine judgments. If the situation is redeemable, His judgments are redemptive. If the situation is beyond redemption, His judgments are utterly destructive.

## **Full Cup Examples from the Old Testament**

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<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiastes 12:13–14

The Bible reveals stark measures of when God's patience ended and He initiated His judgments.

The Antediluvians:

**“The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. So the Lord said, ‘I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them.’”<sup>1</sup>**

God destroyed the world with a flood in Noah's day because the antediluvian's cup of iniquity had reached full measure. God broke His silence by first warning the world through Noah of what He was going to do. He then proceeded to destroy the inhabitants of the world as warned. When divine love and mercy no longer produced repentance and reformation, God's justice demanded destructive action.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 6:5–7

The Amorites:

**“Then the Lord said to him [Abraham], ‘Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. You, however, will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.’”<sup>1</sup>**

Notice the last sentence of this text. God would only give Canaan to Abraham’s offspring *after* the sins of the Amorites had reached full measure. God does not steal land from one nation to give to another. Canaan belongs to the Creator, and He would only give Canaan to Abraham’s descendants *after* the Amorites had exhausted their chance of possessing that beautiful land. Keep in mind that God based ancient Israel’s possession of Canaan on the *same* conditions applicable to the Amorites. Moses knew possession of Canaan was conditional

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 15:13–16, insertion mine

and he warned Israel:

**“But be assured today that the Lord your God is the one who goes across ahead of you like a devouring fire. He will destroy them; he will subdue them before you. And you will drive them out and annihilate them quickly as the Lord has promised you. After the Lord your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, ‘The Lord has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness.’ No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is going to drive them out before you. It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations.”<sup>1</sup>**

God destroyed the Canaanites when their cup of wickedness became full. When God’s patience with the Canaanites reached its limit, God broke His silence by sending His wrath upon them. Ancient Israel and Babylon filled up their cups.

The Children of Israel:

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 9:3–5

At the time of the Babylonian captivity, God told Israel, **“‘But you did not listen to me,’ declares the Lord, ‘and you have aroused my anger with what your hands have made, and you have brought harm to yourselves.’”**<sup>1</sup> **“‘Because you have not listened to my words, I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,’ declares the Lord, ‘and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin’”**<sup>2</sup> **“‘This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians, for their guilt,’ declares the Lord, ‘and will make it desolate forever.’”**<sup>3</sup>

Israel was to be destroyed for provoking God, *and* He was also going to destroy Babylon. This is proof that God deals with the heathen just as He

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1 Jeremiah 25:7

2 Jeremiah 25:8-9

3 Jeremiah 25:11-12

deals with those who know Him. In God's eyes, wickedness is wickedness. Each person, city, nation, and kingdom has a cup of iniquity; when it is filled, God breaks His silence.

The Babylonians:

The Babylonians filled their cup and it resulted in sudden judgment. When the mysterious handwriting appeared on the palace wall, Belshazzar—king of Babylon—suspected that God was sending the sword against him and summoned the prophet Daniel to interpret the handwriting. Before giving the interpretation, Daniel recounted the divine judgments the Most High had sent on his arrogant grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel then said, **“But you, Belshazzar, his son, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your**

**life and all your ways. Therefore he sent the hand that wrote the inscription.**

**“This is the inscription that was written:**

**Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin**

**“Here is what these words mean:**

***Mene:* God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end.**

***Tekel:* You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.**

***Peres:* Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”<sup>1</sup>**

## **New Testament Examples of the Full Cup**

The full cup principle is also found in the New Testament. Paul warned the immoral Romans, **“But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God’s wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God ‘will repay each person according to what they have done.’ To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are**

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel 5:22–28

**self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.”<sup>1</sup>**

Compare these verses with Paul’s statement, **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”<sup>2</sup>** Paul clearly understood why God’s wrath was coming.

Paul told the believers in Colossae, **“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.”<sup>3</sup>**

Paul encouraged the believers in Thessalonica to be patient in their suffering until the enemies of Jesus had filled their cup. **“For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of God’s churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own people the same things those churches suffered from the Jews who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to everyone in their effort to keep**

1 Romans 2:5–8

2 2 Corinthians 6:10

3 Colossians 3:5–6

**us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.**”<sup>1</sup> When Paul wrote this epistle, he knew the Jews had filled their cup and were doomed. The Romans destroyed the Jews in AD 70.

Jesus summarized the full cup principle in a discourse with the Pharisees. After pronouncing seven curses on them for their religious bigotry and hypocrisy, Jesus said, **“Go ahead, then, and complete what your ancestors started! ‘You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?’”**<sup>2</sup> Again, the point is when a nation or individual reaches the limit of divine forbearance, God breaks His silence. His mercy with sin and sinners have a limit.

## **God’s Judgments and His Covenant**

The Bible gives many instances of the full cup principle, but the heart of this matter centers upon the relationship that exists between man and God’s everlasting covenant with mankind.

Human beings are, for the most part, ignorant of

1 1 Thessalonians 2:14–16

2 Matthew 23:32–33

all the forces that affect them. Take, for example, the natural law of momentum. When riding in a car at 60 miles per hour, you do not feel the powerful force called momentum. However, when your car plows into the concrete support of an overpass at that speed, the law of momentum requires that certain reactions occur. The amount of energy released in a sudden stop like this is more than most people can survive.

In ancient times, the law of momentum was not significant because no one could reach the speed of 60 mph unless they fell from a considerable height; however, the law of momentum existed then just as it does now. My point is that momentum was once unimportant, but now it is very important.

In a similar way, God's everlasting covenant with mankind has always existed. Billions of people have lived and died ever since God created the world and most were not aware that God's covenant existed. However, God's covenant with man has always existed. This covenant, like the law of momentum, is universal and everlasting. It may have been obscure in times past, but this will change dramatically. God's covenant with humans,

in simple form, sounds like a valentine greeting; if you will be mine, I will be yours.

Paul understood the universal covenant. He clearly says that non-Jews (Gentiles) have always belonged to God if they live up to everything they know to be right. They may be ignorant of His covenant, but God accepts them anyway. Paul said, **“Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law.”**<sup>1</sup>

God always deals with humanity on the basis of His covenant. He consistently administers justice and mercy on the basis of universal law and not arbitrary whim. He is exceedingly patient, fair, and forgiving, and yet, there is a limit to divine kindness. God demonstrated His limit when He expelled Lucifer and one-third of heaven’s angels from heaven. God’s redemptive judgments fall on humanity when the covenant relationship is in jeopardy. If warning judgments do not bring repentance and reformation, God sends destructive judgments to terminate the rebellious party and to check the growth of sin.

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 2:14

God's four judgments are first mentioned as a group about the time of the Exodus.<sup>1</sup> When God called Israel out of Egypt, He laid out the terms and conditions of His everlasting covenant relationship. This relationship confuses many people and consequently, their theology. Fortunately, the terms of the covenant are quite simple. God's everlasting covenant with mankind has always been: If you will be my people, I will be your God.<sup>2</sup>

This covenant is intact today and God extends it to every man, woman, and child. In fact, the good news of salvation—the gospel—is an explanation of the everlasting covenant. The invitation to accept His covenant and its terms will go rapidly throughout the world when the first angel's message of Revelation 14:6–7 is proclaimed during the Great Tribulation. God's covenant invitation will reach every nation, tribe, and language within a very short timeframe.

## **Much Confusion**

Many Bible teachers are confused about God's covenant with ancient Israel and the everlasting

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 32:24–25

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 17:7; Exodus 6:7; Leviticus 26:11–12; Deuteronomy 7:6–8; 28:9; Jeremiah 11:1–5

covenant. The problem stems from two faulty concepts. First, they think that the covenant God gave to Abraham and his descendants in Genesis 17 was exclusive to Abraham and his direct descendants, not understanding who would be included as an heir. Second, they think that God's covenant to Abraham and his descendants was irrevocable. The result of this faulty reasoning is that the *state of Israel* today represents the chosen people of God. This is wrong.

When God gave His covenant to Abraham, Abraham became a trustee of God's work on Earth. Many scholars refer to this covenant as the Abrahamic covenant. If you read Genesis 17, you find that God calls it His covenant. It is not an Abrahamic covenant. Rather, God placed His everlasting covenant with mankind in trust with Abraham. Abraham and his descendants became trustees of the everlasting covenant and, as long as they met the terms of trusteeship, they would be especially blessed to carry the good news to the Gentiles. The everlasting covenant was not given to them exclusively. Neither was their selection as trustees irrevocable. The descendants of Abraham became arrogant believing they were the exclu-

sive objects of God's affection. This led to their downfall.

When ancient Israel violated the terms of trusteeship, they lost their election as the chosen people of God. New Testament theology is clearly based on the fact that soon after Christ's death, the disciples recognized Israel had lost its trusteeship of the gospel. The distinction between Jew and Gentile disappeared. Instead, for those who now receive Christ, there is neither male or female, nor Jew or Gentile.<sup>1</sup>

To prove that Israel's election as God's representatives was conditional, take notice of what Moses says in Deuteronomy:

**“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”<sup>2</sup> “If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God.”<sup>3</sup> “However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not**

1 Galatians 3:28, Romans 11:17 and Ephesians 2:14; 3:6

2 Deuteronomy 6:5

3 Deuteronomy 28:1-2

**carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come on you and overtake you.”<sup>1</sup> “The Lord will send on you curses, confusion and rebuke in everything you put your hand to, until you are destroyed and come to sudden ruin because of the evil you have done in forsaking him.”<sup>2</sup>**

The point to remember is that God’s covenant is everlasting. Trusteeship is conditional.

### **The Truth About the Consequences**

The Lord forewarned ancient Israel that if they turned from the terms of trusteeship, there would be severe consequences because His holy name would be profaned in the sight of neighboring nations.

**“Therefore say to the Israelites, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among**

<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 28:15

<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy 28:20

**them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I am proved holy through you before their eyes.”<sup>1</sup>**

God is jealous for His name. No one can willfully dishonor Him and His covenant without suffering His consequences. Also understand that God’s covenant is not a covenant between equals. It is a covenant between almighty God and mortal man—the Creator and the created. So, the everlasting covenant, first given to Adam, renewed to Noah, and extended to Abraham and his descendants contained a great privilege, but also a great responsibility.

The Bible makes it very clear that this covenant is still intact today. Paul says, **“If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”<sup>2</sup>** In other words, the covenant God gave Abraham is still valid, and the gospel’s good news is that this covenant is available to all.

When Jesus opens the fourth seal and God’s judgments begin, the gospel or good news of the covenant will come into sharp focus. This is why

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<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel 36:22–23; See also Malachi 1:14; Leviticus 20:3; Jeremiah 34:16; Ezekiel 20:9.

<sup>2</sup> Galatians 3:29

**Jesus said, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”<sup>1</sup>**

This gospel is identified in Revelation 14 as the everlasting gospel: **“Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.’”<sup>2</sup>**

## **God Warns of His Four Judgments**

At the time of the Exodus, God warned Israel about the consequences of violating the covenant. **“But if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands,”<sup>3</sup> “then I will do this to you: I will bring on you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and sap your strength.”<sup>4</sup> “I will break down your stubborn pride and make the sky above you like iron and the ground beneath**

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1 Matthew 24:14

2 Revelation 14:6–7

3 Leviticus 26:14

4 Leviticus 26:16

**you like bronze. Your strength will be spent in vain, because your soil will not yield its crops nor will the trees of your land yield their fruit [famine].”<sup>1</sup> “I will send wild animals against you, . . .destroy your cattle and make you so few in number that your roads will be deserted.”<sup>2</sup> “I will bring the sword on you to avenge the breaking of the covenant. . . .I will send a plague among you.”<sup>3</sup> “I myself will lay waste the land.”<sup>4</sup> “I will scatter you among the nations.”<sup>5</sup>**

Look closely at the text and find the four judgments. In addition to the four judgments, verse 16 specifically mentions terror. This is how God usually breaks His silence. His judgments begin with sudden terror upon nations when their cup of sin and rebellion becomes full. Paul tells us what God is going to do in the last days. **“While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.”<sup>6</sup>**

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1 Leviticus 26:19-20

2 Leviticus 26:22, insertion mine

3 Leviticus 26:25

4 Leviticus 26:32

5 Leviticus 26:33

6 1 Thessalonians 5:3

## **God's Four Judgments**

The Bible does not leave us wondering how God uses His four judgments of sword, famine, plague, and wild beasts.

### **Sword:**

God raises up military leaders to send the sword wherever He directs. God sent His servant, King Nebuchadnezzar, against Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> At the time, Nebuchadnezzar did not know that he was a servant of the most high God. Nevertheless, God used the pagan king to destroy Jerusalem. In the same way, God overthrew the empire of Babylon through Darius, the Mede, another unwitting servant of God.<sup>2</sup> The Bible also says that Cyrus, King of Persia, was God's servant.<sup>3</sup>

It is especially interesting to know that God is able to accomplish His plans without forcing His will upon any individual. God raises up military leaders to wield the sword wherever He wants, even though they choose how the destruction will be carried out. If

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1 Jeremiah 25:9

2 Daniel 5:30–31

3 Ezra 1:1; Isaiah 44:28; 25:1

a human agency is not available, the Lord will send His own angels as necessary. The largest known number of people to be killed by the death angel was 185,000 soldiers of Sennacherib's army, although this may be less than the number of firstborn killed in Egypt at the Exodus.<sup>1</sup>

### **Famine:**

God sends famine to accomplish His purposes. In Genesis 41, God sent seven years of famine to Egypt and, in the process, removed Joseph from prison and put him on the throne. This amazing promotion for Joseph opened the way for the descendants of Abraham to move into Egypt.<sup>2</sup>

During David's reign, **“There was a famine for three successive years; so David sought the face of the Lord. The Lord said, ‘It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death.’”**<sup>3</sup> Clearly, the three-year famine came as a direct result of Saul's disobedience.

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1 Isaiah 37:36; Exodus 11

2 Genesis 15:12–16

3 2 Samuel 21:1

The Lord also sent a seven-year famine. **“Now Elisha had said to the woman whose son he had restored to life, ‘Go away with your family and stay for a while wherever you can, because the Lord has decreed a famine in the land that will last seven years.’”**<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps one of the best known famines recorded in the Bible happened during the days of Elijah and King Ahab. **“Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.”**<sup>2</sup>

Today, the combined evils of violence, idolatry, and sexual immorality have reached epic proportions and God is about to respond to this man’s wickedness.

## **Plague:**

Plague can come in numerous forms. We think of COVID-19, bubonic plague, or cholera as

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings 8:1

<sup>2</sup> James 5:17–18

a plague, but the word plague means anything troublesome or afflicting. God sent several plagues on Egypt to impress Pharaoh that He wanted His people set free. These plagues included frogs, water turned to blood, gnats, flies, boils, hail, locusts, and darkness.<sup>1</sup>

The Lord killed ten of the twelve spies with a plague for giving a bad report about the Promised Land.<sup>2</sup>

More than 14,700 people died of a plague in a wilderness rebellion started by Korah.<sup>3</sup>

On one occasion, God sent a plague that killed 24,000 people for being unfaithful.<sup>4</sup>

On another occasion, God sent a plague on Israel and killed 70,000 people because King David disobeyed the Lord and took a census.<sup>5</sup> God does send plagues on people to kill them.

## **Wild Beasts:**

Wild beasts, like plagues, come in many forms. Peter described them saying, **“I looked into it**

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1 Exodus 8–10

2 Numbers 14:37

3 Numbers 16:49

4 Numbers 25:8-9

5 1 Chronicles 21:14–16

[the sheet] **and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds.**”<sup>1</sup>

The creatures of earth are wild beasts. So how does God use them? The Lord clearly warned Jeremiah how wild beasts would be used to accomplish His deadly purpose on Israel. He said, “**‘I will send four kinds of destroyers against them [Israel],’ declares the Lord, ‘the sword to kill and the dogs to drag away and the birds and the wild animals to devour and destroy.’**”<sup>2</sup>

The Bible also says that God sent poisonous vipers into the camp of Israel when they complained against Him and Moses.<sup>3</sup> One family of wild beasts that may be influential in the future is insects. Killer bees, fleas, ants, swarms of locusts and other tiny creatures can cause unbelievable damage. It is important to note God promised Israel that He would restrain the wild beasts if they would repent of their idolatry and love and obey Him. **“I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of savage beasts so that they may live in the wilderness**

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1 Acts 11:6, insertion mine

2 Jeremiah 15:3, insertion mine

3 Numbers 21

**and sleep in the forests in safety.”<sup>1</sup>**

## **Review of the Fourth Seal**

**“When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, ‘Come!’ I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.”<sup>2</sup>**

There is abundant biblical evidence that God used His four judgments to deal with peoples and nations when they filled their cup of sin. The Bible is also clear that He only uses these judgments when sin and rebellion reach a point where His love and mercy have no redeeming effect.<sup>3</sup> The judgments described in the fourth seal are literal and we should take the total of one-fourth seriously. If the population of earth is 8+ billion today, 25% of that number would be 2+ billion casualties! We can only begin to conceptualize the excessiveness of our sins by considering such extensive destruction.

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1 Ezekiel 34:25

2 Revelation 6:7–8

3 Ezekiel 5

## **Four Judgments Explained**

Revelation's story explains how and when the four judgments of the fourth seal will be suddenly released. Without getting lost in all the prophetic parts, here is a brief explanation.

God has special angels holding back the four winds of His judgments. When His 144,000 servant/prophets are prepared to proclaim the everlasting gospel, the angels will let go of the four winds. These winds symbolize the forthcoming destruction of His four judgments—sword, famine, plague, and wild beasts.

144,000 evangelists, located all around the earth, will declare the purpose behind God's judgments. They will proclaim a comprehensive message of salvation which includes the imminent return of Jesus. The everlasting covenant and the terms of salvation will be seen in their glorious beauty. Of course, this will aggravate the devil and those who love evil. World leaders will align, both religiously and politically. Eventually, the devil will physically appear claiming to be God in the flesh. To complete his dominion of Earth, the devil will demand that his followers destroy

God's evangelists and those who follow them. Every living person on Earth will be caught in the Great Tribulation.

### **Seven First Plagues**

The four judgments mentioned in the fourth seal will begin suddenly<sup>1</sup> in the form of seven trumpets. In other words, sword, famine, plague, and wild beasts are implemented by the seven trumpets. The judgments are symbolized as trumpets because God will use His judgments as harbingers of the arrival of His holy Son, Jesus Christ.

The seven trumpets of Revelation are designed to awaken the people of Earth that Jesus is coming. The first trumpet will be a great meteoric shower of burning hail which will cause enormous, unquenchable fires. The second and third trumpets will be horrific asteroid impacts, and the fourth trumpet will be great darkness caused by millions of tons of ejecta, ash, and debris put into the atmosphere erupting volcanoes. The fifth trumpet marks the physical appearing of the devil claiming to be God. The sixth trumpet is a global civil war that the devil incites to take control of the earth and the seventh trumpet marks the end of God's offer of salvation.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:3

Only God knows when the fourth seal will be opened. However, before the sudden destruction of the first trumpet, there will be an enormous global earthquake. Then, a short time later, the meteoric shower of the first trumpet will rain down on earth. This destruction may come from the effect of earth passing through some asteroid belt or a meteoroid field. This shower of burning rocks will ignite large, unmanageable fires all around the world. Thousands of square miles of rain forests and crops will be burned. Food will become scarce overnight and followed by global famine. This famine will affect every person living on Earth.

### **Listen Up!**

The 144,000 of Revelation 7 are selected individuals to whom God will give special powers.<sup>1</sup> The Two Witnesses, God's law and the Holy Spirit, will impact every person on Earth. The 144,000 servants of God will be the human vehicles through whom the Two Witnesses will reach all people. Like Moses and Elijah, the 144,000 will perform many miracles to convince people their message is from God. They will explain what God is doing and why. But just as Pharaoh hardened his heart

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 9:1-6

when Moses stood before him, many in our day will harden their hearts against God's messengers. On the other hand, many will turn from rebellion and be saved when they hear the gospel and are convicted of its truth.

The Holy Spirit will attempt to win every heart. Signs and wonders will add credibility to the truth of God's Word. The Two Witnesses (the personification of the 144,000) will perform miracles, even striking the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.<sup>1</sup> BUT (and this is an emphatic but) don't be fooled by miracles and false prophets! Jesus clearly said, **"For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you ahead of time."**<sup>2</sup>

### **The Devil will Physically Appear**

The Bible predicts Satan will physically appear as a dazzling being on the earth before the second coming of Jesus.<sup>3</sup> Satan is the man of lawlessness. When he appears on Earth, he will make up his own laws which will have no regard for human rights or dignity. The devil will claim that he is

1 Revelation 11:6

2 Matthew 24:24-25

3 2 Corinthians 11:14-15; 1 Thessalonians 2:18-19

God and to demonstrate his divinity, he will call fire down from heaven in full view of men.<sup>1</sup> The appearance of Satan will not come as a surprise to those understanding Revelation, for the devil physically appears during the fifth trumpet.<sup>2</sup>

After Satan has appeared on earth for a few months, he will unite all his followers from the nations. When he has gained enough influence, he will move swiftly to take control of the entire world by motivating his followers to take up the sword. This world war, described in Revelation 9, is the sixth trumpet. It will be like the civil war that consumed America from 1861–1865, except this war will involve every nation.

Satan's followers intend to dominate their respective nations on behalf of the one they believe to be God. Millions upon millions will die as a result. The number of soldiers will be 200,000,000.<sup>3</sup> Currently, the entire world has over 20 million troops in uniform. From this carnage, wild animals will multiply rapidly multiply as they literally feed on the dead.

## **Seven Last Plagues**

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1 Revelation 13:13

2 Revelation 9:1–12

3 Revelation 9:16

The seven *last* plagues follow the seven *first* plagues. These plagues include the same four judgments, but the seven last plagues will be more severe. Revelation 16 explains God reserves these final judgments for those who receive the mark of the beast. The first judgment is a plague of sores that falls on those receiving the mark of the beast. The second, third, and fourth plagues deplete what food supplies remain. Famine will then be endemic. The fifth plague marks Satan's unmasking. God will expose to the world that they have been following the devil himself. The sixth plague is Satan's final attempt to destroy God's people. The final seventh plague is a great hailstorm of fire that occurs at Jesus' second coming.

When Jesus appears during the seventh and final judgment, the Bible says, **“Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.”**<sup>1</sup> The nations will mourn when Jesus appears for He overthrows them by His Word and the splendor of His glory. **“Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds**

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<sup>1</sup> Revelation 19:15

**of heaven, with power and great glory.”<sup>1</sup>** A lake of blazing fire will consume Babylon and those not thrown into the lake of fire will be slain by the brightness of Christ’s coming. Birds will gorge themselves on the flesh of the slain.<sup>2</sup>

## **Summary**

The destruction of 25% of the earth is beyond comprehension. Today, it seems like a fairy tale, but be assured of two facts. First, God does nothing without cause and purpose. We have not explored the terrible deeds that people will do to one another during the trumpet judgments. Second, the Bible reveals that God’s judgments come in two phases. The first phase is redemptive. That is, God awakens people so that they may realize the sinfulness of their course; and indeed, many will repent and be saved. The second phase of God’s judgments is utter destruction. God will send His wrath, without mercy, on all who receive the mark of the beast. God is justified in these actions. He is about to break His silence. The end of this old Earth is before us and the beginning of the New Earth lies ahead.

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1 Matthew 24:30

2 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 19:21

If you already know Jesus as your Savior, you have no reason to be afraid. The Psalmist wrote, **“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”**<sup>1</sup> If you have not given yourself to Jesus, surrender your life now by obeying His teachings and living by faith. Be willing and obedient to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. God will take care of you. Earth’s cup of iniquity is almost full.

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1 Psalm 23:4

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