

Hail, Fire, and Blood

Revelation 8:7

By Phillip G. Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2016-06-19

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Text

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

Introduction - note that these are judgments on both Rome and Israel

Well, I'm pretty excited about this chapter. In verses 7-13 we come to an amazing series of prophecies that were fulfilled to the "t" in AD 66. And the first important clue to interpreting these prophecies is to realize that they describe judgments against *both* Israel and Rome. There has been a tendency in recent years to try to make everything in this book into a judgment against Israel, and Israel alone. I think it is misplaced emphasis, and it ignores John's earlier hints that this book involves covenant lawsuits against both Israel and Rome.

And I believe even the *immediate* context mandates this more comprehensive perspective. Who were the persecutors? And the answer is: *both* Israel and Rome. And so last week we saw that the saints in verses 1-4 were praying against both Israel and Rome since both had been involved in the persecution. And since these trumpet judgments are God's *response* to those prayers, one would expect to see a fulfillment in both regions of the world. And I will be giving documentation that this was indeed the case.

I. The rumblings of heaven reverberate in the rumblings of war on earth as precursors to the war (v. 6) - a review of historical events that preceded verse 7.

And let's also keep in mind the first century context of fulfillment. All the way along we have been looking at detailed hints of the timing. We have already seen that verses 1-5 took place on May 18 of AD 66. And the rumblings of heaven began to immediately be heard on earth as preparations for war began to take place not only in Israel, but all over the Roman Empire.

Let me clue you in on some of the rumblings of war that happened immediately after May 18. We only touched on this last week, but the weeks

between May 18-Sept 8 were scary times. The war hadn't begun yet, but God's Great Wrath was already being felt, and the fire and rumblings on earth that were the precursor to the war were pretty bad.

Almost immediately after May 18 (in other words, almost immediately after verse 4) there were tumultuous relations between Israel and Gessius Florus, the Roman procurator of Judea. Both the Legate of Syria, who commanded Rome's 12th legion and King Herod Agrippa II tried to intervene and settle things down, but they only made matters worse. A small group of Israeli war-hawks overpowered the Roman garrison at Masada and took over that well-stocked fortress. That became a huge arsenal for the Jews later in the war. But taking over Masada was the first nail in Israel's coffin. (You don't do things like that to Rome and get away with it.) Nevertheless, there was widespread elation among the Jews at the prospects of revolt from Rome according to Jospheus (Life 17.4).

The second nail in their coffin was Eleazar's declaration of independence. His temple guard took control of the temple area and stopped the daily sacrifice on behalf of Nero that had been taking place for years. Josephus said that this act alone guaranteed the war because it was seen by Rome as a declaration of independence and a defiance that dared Rome to do anything about it. And that's the way the citizens interpreted it. Most citizens were very offended with Florus's theft and his attacks on citizens, and many celebrated this act. They thought Eleazar was a hero and a patriot who was finally standing up to tyranny. They were excited. So it was a popular act of resistance.

If you look at maps 1-3 in your outline, the rest of my summary of events will make more sense.

Herod Agrippa II, recognizing that a potential revolt was on his hands, brought 3000 horseman to seize control of the upper city, while the rebels controlled the lower city. There were seven days of fierce fighting. But this was not yet the war; this was localized rebellion. The rebels and the Sicarii forced Agrippa's troops out of the upper city, set fire to the house of Ananias the high priest and burned down the palaces of Agrippa and Queen Berenice. While they were at it, they decided to burn the public archives where all the debt records were kept. Well, that made the debtors jubilant, and they joined ranks with the rebels. So you have this motley crew of priests, Zealots, Sicarri, tax protestors, and debt protestors who were all getting excited about this rebellion.

The Roman soldiers took refuge in Herod's palace, but the Tower of Antonia was attacked on July 25 (Av 15/ Loos 15), and after a two-day siege they killed the Roman guard. New Jewish coins were minted with year one written on them, another declaration of independence. Zealots recruited Israelites into Jerusalem and kept people from leaving the city. It's like God was filling up the city with trouble. Menahem returned from Masada with arms and took over leadership. He was a pompous arrogant civilian who declared himself king and dressed up in royal robes, but his kingship was cut short after he killed Ananias the high priest. Ananias' son, Eleazar, was enraged by this murder, and he killed Menahem. So Eleazar now led the Zealots. Basically three Jewish factions were fighting against each other with sociopathic leaders leading them. It was a mess.

Eleazar tricked the Roman garrison into leaving the three palace towers promising to spare their lives if they laid down their arms. But as soon as the Roman soldiers came out and laid down their arms he slaughtered them. That was on August 26, or Elul 17.¹ That was yet another nail in Israel's coffin. Rome was honor bound to punish such acts very severely and to show no mercy. And anyone who knew a Roman policy knew that Israel was in trouble.

But before Rome had time to take action, there were other catastrophes that became the prelude to war. On the same day and hour that the Roman garrison was killed there were 20,000 Jews killed in Caesarea by the Graeco-Syrian population and Caesarea was completely emptied of Jews. Now, that was not war; that was the result of citizen riots - like the LA riots, only worse. The next two weeks resulted in more riots between Jews and non-Jews in many cities in Palestine and throughout the empire. Jews in numerous cities and districts retaliated by killing massive numbers of non-Jews. The Syrians retaliated and killed all the Jewish inhabitants within their cities. Just to give you a bit of a head count of how many Jews we know for sure were killed in these riots, let me give you the figures that I have scoured from Josephus. (And keep in mind that this isn't the war yet; this is the prelude to war.)

Scythopolis - 13,000 Jews killed Ashkelon - 2500 Jews Ptolemais - 2000 Jews Tyre - a great number of Jews Hippos - a great number Gadara - a great number Alexandria, Egypt - 50,000 Jews killed Damascus - 10,000 killed in

¹ See Gaalya Cornfeld (gen. ed.), *Josephus The Jewish War: Newly Translated with extensive commentary and archeological background illustrations*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), p. 189, commentary 456[a], where he identifies this as Elul 17. I am using Faltich's conversion program to arrive at the date of August 26.

one hour Joppa - 8400 killed Asamon - 2000 killed

In fact, the numbers of dead were so great that some commentaries place all of these things under the first and second trumpets. While that is possible, I see verses 5-6 as the preparations for war and I see these historical rebellions and riots as the precondition that made Israel's destruction an absolutely inescapable fact. These were the rumblings, shakings, and fire of verse 5 that preceded the trumpets. Obviously on May 18 there was a literal earthquake, a literal fire that fell from heaven, and literal noises that first century witnesses recorded. We looked at those things. But those were symbols of the troubles that happened from May 18-Sept 8. The symbols happened on May 18 (we looked at those last week) and I am describing what was symbolized.

And it wasn't just Jews who were killed during that time. Riots resulted in massive numbers of Romans and other nationalities dying. Keep in mind that both populations were ripe for God's judgments. And even though massive numbers of people died between verses 5 and 7 (in other words, between May 18 and September 8), the killings that would *later* happen during the seven trumpets or during the first three and a half years of the war make these 100,000 or so deaths seem mild by comparison. I know it is hard to believe, but this is just a tiny foretaste. There were millions of Jews and millions of Gentiles who would be killed in the next three and a half years of God's Great Wrath.

But today we won't get beyond verse 7. Verses 1-3 were at the festival of Pentecost. Verse 7 is the Festival of Trumpets, which my computer program dates as September 8 of 66, Cestius, the head of Rome's 12th Legion, had no choice but to invade and inflict massive punishment upon Israel. In one sense everything after May 18 is God's Great Wrath, but verse 7 is the War proper. So the Great Wrath starts in verses 1-5, but the war proper starts with the first trumpet blast.

II. The timing of the first trumpet?? - Sept 8, AD 66 (Feast of Trumpets)

And I find it interesting that Cestius rolled out his war machine right around the Feast of Trumpets, and the first trumpet blows in verse 7. Tishri 1 (which my computer program says is September 8) was the first day that the trumpets would be blown in the feast of Trumpets.

III. First Trumpet (v. 7)

And because I am giving a bit of an overview today, we will only have time to get to the first trumpet. Verse 7 says,

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

When Cestius' 12th Legion came through, his 35,000 soldiers devastated the cities and the land, pillaging and then burning anything that remained in his way. What made it easier for him is that a lot of the Israelites were in Jerusalem to attend the Festival. He attacked Galilee, then city after city in Judea. And many commentaries attribute the blood and fire to Cestius. I agree that this is what the symbol was pointing towards, but the symbols themselves appear to have fallen from heaven, and we need to take account of the symbols. Both Rome and Israel suffered enormous losses in the next three and a half years. And both had supernatural signs that would symbolize those enormous losses.

Were there such symbolic things happening in Rome? Yes there were. The Roman historian, Cassius Dio, speaks of a storm over Italy during this time and says, "at Albanum it rained so much blood that rivers of it flowed over the land..."² That's a lot of blood. This Roman historian was not talking metaphorically of people killing people; he was talking about literal blood falling out of the sky - raining blood in such quantities that it gathered into rivers all over the land. So this Roman historian speaks of a storm that happened around this period that would have literally had hail, lightning, and blood colored rain falling out of the sky.

Was there evidence of blood covering the ground and waters in Israel? Yes there was. When we get to the second trumpet next week, I will give quotes of so much blood flowing that a third of the sea became blood, but for now let me mention what Josephus saw at the very beginning of Cestius' campaign (which is what verse 7 is describing). Josephus describes such massive amounts of blood on the ground at the site of Cestius' first attack, that he was either using exaggeration or he may well have been indicating that a similar rain of blood happened in Israel. In any case, Josephus says, "the whole district was deluged with blood, and fifty thousand corpses were heaped up..."³

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

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

The Greek word that Josephus used for "deluged" (ἐπικλυσθῆναι) is defined in Brill's dictionary as to be submerged, flooded, or completely overflowed. It also indicates something coming down to create this flooding. Take all the blood of 50,000 corpses and it is still not going to deluge or flood that entire district. Something else is going on. So Cassius Dio speaks of literal blood pouring out of the sky and forming rivers of blood in Rome, and Josephus speaks of the first city being deluged (or flooded) with blood. And next week I will be giving quotes that show that this blood came in such quantities that it turned the sea red for quite a distance out from shore.

Likewise both Rome and Israel were devastated by raging fires and by fierce hail storms. Fredric Farrar points out that the vineyards of Lombardy (for example) were destroyed by hail in a few hours.⁴ That is an entire industry wiped out in one region.

Now, it is not hard at all to document the hail and fire falling out of the sky and-or being ignited by the Romans. It is not at all hard to document a third of the trees being destroyed during the raging fires of this period or the grass being burned up. That's not the part that is hard to believe. What skeptics question is the blood falling from the sky. I have read numerous essays and books that insist that this kind of thing must be speaking about a calamity at the end of history. Who has ever seen blood falling from the sky? "Come on!?? That just seems too hard for some people to believe. So they just discount the testimony of the first century historians. Many Premillennial websites say categorically that this did not and could not have happened in the first century. In fact it is one of their main proofs that partial Preterism is wrong. Apparently in their minds any miraculous thing can happen at the end of history, but it is too hard to believe such miracles could happen in the first century, even though historians said that it did. So I want to spend a bit of time showing how this symbol could have happened literally in history just like the other symbols of this book happened literally in history. Just like the Rock struck by Moses in the wilderness, they are historical facts even though they symbolize something. So when we say that this is a highly symbolic book, we are not denying that the symbols happened in history.

I've already read from the Roman historian Cassius Dio, who claims that it did happen - that literally rivers of blood formed as a result of blood raining from the sky. He knew what blood looked like, and it could well have been a rain of blood rather than simply the red rain that has been documented so well recently. Several authors have documented cases of blood and even

⁴ William Fredric Farrar, *The Early Days of Christianity, volume 2*, (London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin, and Co., 1882), p. 261.

small pieces of meat falling out of the sky - one of the cases being the Kentucky meat shower of 1876 that had flakes of red meat and blood falling from the sky for 15 minutes. Scientists identified two of the samples as lung tissue from a horse, three as muscle, and two as cartilage. I have found over 400 reports of blood raining from the sky (or at least what the witnesses thought was blood falling out of the sky) over the past 1000 years.

Modern scientists have in the past poo-pooed these accounts as being someone's imagination run wild or as hyperbole - *until 2001*, when scientists rushed to examine blood rain falling in India. This event stunned the scientific community and gave them a change of heart. The Pakistan weather portal described this deluge of blood in these terms:

You are standing outside in rain, enjoying the cool breeze and the smell of the rain, suddenly you notice that your clothes are turning RED. The pond of rainwater is turning red, the walls of houses are red and when you look up at the sky red rain is falling on you, thick as blood!⁵

That rain completely covered two districts in Kerala province, in India. And red rain continued to sporadically fall from July 25 to September 23. Initially scientists had no idea what it was. There were many theories. Because of a sonic boom and a bright flash of light immediately before the red rain, the Center for Earth Science Studies proposed that the red came from an exploding red meteor. That was soon retracted because it continued to rain week after week - long after dust should have settled. They next explained it as a massive algae upload into the clouds. The trouble is, that kind of algae didn't occur in India. Later they identified it as a kind of algae unique to Austria. It's very strange. National Geographic did a background video on the subject.⁶ There are various other theories still current (including a weird one that says this is aliens who are seeding the earth), but the establishment theory for the most part has said that it is due to algae native to Austria somehow getting sucked up into the clouds on a massive scale and carried across the ocean to India - how, no one knows.⁷ It's a mystery. Here is picture of the first part of the National Geographic video where some of that blood rain is being poured on the ground to show how thick it is. That was July 25, of 2001.

Since that time scientists have studied similar phenomenon in another

5 http://pakistan259.rssing.com/chan-10787223/all_p3.html

6 <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/wild/stranger-than-nature/videos/its-raining-blood/>

7 BAST, F, BHUSHAN, S., JOHN A.A., ACHANKUNJU, J., PANIKKAR N.M.V., HEMETNER, C., AND STOCKER-WÖRGÖTTE, E. European Species of Subaerial Green Alga *Trentepohlia annulata* (Trentepohliales, Ulvophyceae) Caused Blood Rain in Kerala, India. *J Phylogen Evolution Biol* 3:144 February 2015

location in India (Kannur), in Sri Lanka, Kazakhstan, England, Spain, Switzerland, as well as large bodies of water becoming suddenly red in England, Netherlands, France, Russia, Australia, Ukraine, Lebanon, and other countries. And it is not always algae to blame. Sometimes it is dust, sometimes bacteria, and sometimes it is simply a thick red with no life evident. The 2014 event in China is still being investigated. Some hypothesize a dump of dye. The problem is, the whole river became red within minutes. In one sense it really doesn't matter what the source is - God is still sovereign. He is sovereign over even pollution and the poisoning of waters that we will look at under the third trumpet.

So here is the question: "Why have scientists rarely seen this before, and now all of a sudden these things are popping up everywhere?" No one knows. On November 14 of 2012, red blood-like rain fell for 15 minutes in four cities of Sri Lanka, dumping such large amounts of red rain that large bodies of water became a deep red color. Here is a picture of the red rain falling in Sri Lanka:

In 2013, Australia's main beaches were unswimmable because the blood-like water made your skin itch. Here's one picture. Here's another: Here's yet another:

In 2014 huge amounts of what even scientists described as "blood rain" fell from the sky in the Spanish city of Zamora. When samples were analyzed, it appears to have contained a microalgae - from where it came, no one knows.⁸ Normally this algae is green, but the hypothesis is that when it gets stressed it becomes red enough to dye things red. Here's a picture of it raining in a blood-red pool.

No longer are scientists discounting the over 400 reports of blood rain from the past 1000 years or the even more ancient reports going back to Ancient Greece. They still doubt the reports of *literal* blood and small pieces of meat falling from the sky at various times. But whether this was literal blood or a blood-like substance such as fell in Kerala, there is no reason to not take the words of Cassius Dio literally. As we have mentioned before, the book of Revelation is filled with symbols, but the symbols actually happened in history.

So if these things that happened in history were intended by God to be *symbols* of something (as chapter 1:1 clearly says that they are), what do

⁸ <http://www.seeker.com/blood-rain-on-spanish-village-remains-a-mystery-1770472049.html> See also <http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/lifestyle/2015/11/17/blood-rain-falling-from-sky-in-spanish-town-challenges-scientists-imagination/>

they symbolize? I believe they symbolize the same things that hail mixed with fire and blood symbolized in the ten plagues against Egypt.

Commentators point out that Revelation 11:8 declares Israel to be the new Egypt under God's judgment and Christians to be the new Israel fleeing from Egypt. So it makes sense that John would use the language of the ten plagues to show that fact.

But *actually seeing those plagues* would have been a powerful testimony against Israel that their siding with Rome was putting them at enmity with God, and that God was going to judge both. In Exodus 9, the hail and fire devastated the crops of Egypt, just as they did here in Israel. The blood plague killed the fish of Egypt, just as the second trumpet shows that it did in Israel and in Rome. And as you go through the ten plagues you realize that God was pronouncing His judgments against the idols of Egypt in the book of Exodus, and He was pronouncing His judgments against the idols of Israel and Rome in the book of Revelation. And people might respond, "Well, Israel didn't have idols." But the New Testament says that they did. God denies that Israel was worshiping the true God. Having rejected the Son, they had automatically rejected the Father. They had several false gods, and statism was their biggest god, with materialism coming in as a close second.

The hail and fire destroyed a third of their crops as a sign that their whole economic system was going to be coming under judgment. And Revelation will develop that much more fully in the second half of the book. And the blood rain that freaked them out and the bloody lakes of the second trumpet was a sign that the very statism they trusted in would turn on them and devour them.

To the ancients blood rain always symbolized coming death or calamity. This has been a fairly uniform interpretation in the writings from 1000 BC to AD 1700. Even pagans saw it this ways - pagans like Cassius Dio, Tacitus, Pliny, Livy, and others. This was the view of the ancient Indian System of Natural Astrology.⁹ Now, obviously we don't look to pagans for what these things symbolize, but I mention that to show that a person is really out on a limb when he denies that such blood rains are warnings from God. The church has historically been fairly unified that they are indeed warnings from God.

And though I have not studied the context of every blood rain that has fallen,

⁹ See for example, Varahamihira, *The Brhat-sanhita, or Complete System of Natural Astrology, parts 1-6*, p. 180, where the author says, "...a blood rain produces war; a rain of flesh, bones, fat, and such like, produces pestilence..."

I did find it interesting that many of the blood rains reported over the past 1000 years were followed by natural disasters, the death of a leader, plagues, or war, or some other kind of national calamity. Let me give you some examples that have been cited by Christian historians down through history.

Geoffrey Monmouth was a churchman in England who lived from 1100-1155. His history of England recorded a rain of blood followed by a decimating calamity. He saw the blood rain as the warning of the calamity. Other witnesses wrote about the same event, including Layamon, who said,

In the same time here came a strange token, such as before never came, nor never hitherto since. From heaven here came a marvelous flood; three days it rained blood, three days and three nights. That was exceeding great harm! ... Thereafter came such a mortality that few here remained alive. Afterward here came an evil hap, that king Riwald died.¹⁰

John S. Tatlock, who is himself is probably a skeptic of these things actually being God-sent portents, faithfully records history book after history book that *did* see these things as God-sent portents and *did* show a connection between blood rain and calamities or wars that came afterwards.¹¹ Blood rain in Tours in AD 582 was followed by the death of Tiberius Caesar and the horrible wars between the Angles and the Saxons. He cites the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle that records a blood rain in AD 685 (about a hundred years later) followed by death. He cites the *Polychronicon* of the monk, Ralph Higden, that records a blood rain prior to the bloodthirsty Viking invasions. Or the *Chronicum Scotorum*, which said that prior to the Battle of Killineer, "it rained a shower of blood, which was found in lumps of gore and blood on all the plains in Ciannachta, at Dumha-na-n Deisi especially." In Germany, a rain of blood was one of several portents that preceded the arrival of the Black Death of AD 1348-1349.

I won't bore you with more examples. Europe had at least 400 citations of blood rain over a 1000 year period that I studied, and the historians of that time linked those rains with calamitous death. Were they right to think of these as warnings from God? I think they were right, but who knows? I'm not going to be dogmatic, but I think it is at least worth considering.

Why have there been no recorded blood rains for so long, and now there are numerous examples cropping up ever since 2001? Coincidence? Possibly. But the countries where these blood rains occur are statist to the core. They are ripe for judgment. I'm not being dogmatic on this, but it is fascinating

¹⁰ As quoted by, on p. 44, footnote 1.

¹¹ John S. Tatlock, "Some Mediaeval Cases of Blood-Rain," in *Classical Philology*, vol. 9, no. 4 (Oct. 1914), pp. 442-447.

that previous generations of Christians (prior to the 1800s) had no problem seeing these kinds of things as warnings from God. That was certainly the response of Protestants after the Reformation. They thought that these kinds of events were God's gracious warnings to a region or a nation that trouble was brewing if they did not repent.¹² It's at least worth considering.

It's worth considering whether there is a connection between Australia's blood tide and the apocalyptic fires, dust-storms, cyclones, and heat waves that started afterward. It's worth considering whether there is a connection between Russia's hundreds of deaths after their Azov Sea became blood. It's worth considering whether China's deadly landslides that destroyed 500,000 buildings has any connection with the Yangtze River becoming blood red over a period of minutes.¹³ Here's a picture of that mysterious event. Or Sri Lanka's unprecedented floods in December of 2012 immediately after their blood rain.

Now, whether God intends for us to continue to interpret such things this way today, it was certainly intended in the first century. Shortly after these blood rains, Rome would face massive amounts of death and destruction. In fact, Cestius' army would be devastated within two months - absolutely devastated. And so would Israel.

It's not hard to imagine an out of control fire as a result of fire falling to the earth. Israel's dry season extends from June to October, with July and August being the hottest months. So if this was September 8, the whole area was probably like a tinder box. So it is understandable that there would be brush fires and a forest fire. But the Roman empire was being devastated by fire during this very time as well. So these symbols were very timely, and if Rome and Israel had been smart, they would have repented. But they did not.

Conclusion

Let me conclude with just a few more thoughts on this first trumpet. First, it is obvious that Jesus governs history. He's not twiddling His fingers doing nothing until some time in the future when He can become King. He is king.

Second, Jesus is enforcing the rule of Psalm 2 - that nations must bow before His kingship or face His wrath. Psalm 2 declares that between the time of

12 Jaritz, Gerhard; Winiwater, Verena (1997), "On the perception of nature in a Renaissance society", in Teich, Mikuláš; Porter, Roy; Gustafsson, Bo, *Nature and Society in Historical Context*, Cambridge University Press, ISBN 978-0-521-49881-4, p. 100.

13 One article suggested that it may have been a dye company that dumped dye into the water - <http://www.livescience.com/23038-yangtze-river-red.html>

Christ's first coming and second coming Jesus would smite nations that refused to submit to His law. That is a guarantee. That's why I believe it is not presumptuous to say that America will face Christ's iron rod if it does not repent. So these warnings in Revelation chapter 8 continue to be relevant today. Jesus is on His throne, and when the church is willing to bring its persecutors before the court of heaven and ask for Christ's redemptive judgments, His iron rod goes to work. And we will sing that Psalm in a couple of minutes.

Third, Christ was very patient with Israel and Rome. He did not destroy either of them overnight. Instead, there was a time table of ever increasing judgments, with each judgment giving opportunity for repentance. To me this shows God's incredibly gracious patience. And God continues to be a God of patience. But His patience does eventually run out.

Fourth, this passage makes clear that angels are involved in such things as brush fires, destructive hail, and pollution of waters. Later these angels will make several lakes bloody with massive fish kills. Even later these angels will be involved in allowing drinking water to become poisoned. Angels are His servants and we happen to have more angels on our side than Satan does on his side. But we should not ignore the role of angels in providence. The church needs reformation on their theology of angels. And the reason I say that is that most evangelicals don't give much thought to angels being involved in our lives at all.

Fifth, the very physical creation is important to Christ's kingdom. If nations do not steward creation for Jesus, He can easily turn that creation against them. And since creation is important, it suffers when nations are judged and it is blessed when nations are blessed. The most polluting nations are the most ungodly ones - like the former Soviet Union and China and other atheistic countries. God blesses or curses the worldviews of various nations in proportion to how far they are removed from God's laws. As we continue to rebel against God's law order, we may find the very physical creation turning against this nation.

And last, though this verse only deals with judgment, it is put in contrast with the end of the book where the physical creation enters into Gospel redemption. God's grace goes far as the curse is found. Let's not be so scientific that we rule God and His gospel kingdom out of His universe. Some of the worst skeptics of a literal approach to God's hand in nature are Christians who are trying to be rational and scientific. But science could not work without God upholding all things by the word of His power. Let's praise

God that He continues to govern all things and continues to send His cherubim angels as part of that governance. Amen.