

There are two issues that should be examined up front. First, there is the issue of the potential correspondence between the trumpets and the bowls of wrath. Second, there is the issue of the meaning of each of them, specifically the question of whether their descriptions are literal or figurative.

In the introduction to this study series, we described a generic chronological model for Revelation that we called the “strict convergence” model. At that time, we stated that one example of this kind of “strict convergence” model at work would be a chronology in which seal 1, trumpet 1, and bowl 1 all occur followed by seal 2, trumpet 2, and bowl 2, etc., until all three series are completed. As we begin to examine the 7 trumpets, we should discuss the suggestion of such a numeric correspondence between the trumpets and the bowls of wrath, which are described in chapter 16.

It is true that much of the same imagery occurs in both the trumpets and the bowls of wrath. In fact, in both the second trumpet and second bowl the sea becomes blood and creatures in the sea die. Likewise, the third trumpet and third bowl both affect the rivers and fountains of water. The fourth trumpet and fourth bowl both affect the sun. The fifth trumpet and the fifth bowl both involve darkness. The River Euphrates is mentioned in both the sixth trumpet and the sixth bowl. And the seventh trumpet and seventh bowl both include voices, thundering, lightning, a great earthquake, and a hail.

We have already mentioned the numerous passages, which provide *Parallel Descriptions* and all overlap the same timeframe in the book of Revelation. This is similar to Daniel 2, 7, and 8, which as we saw earlier all ended with the same event, the coming of the kingdom of the Messiah on earth and the overthrow of the succession of ungodly kingdoms. Having the same concluding event demonstrates that the timeframe of the passages overlaps, just as the inclusion of the voices, thundering, lightning, a great earthquake, and a hail under both the seventh trumpet and seventh bowl shows that these two series have the same concluding point and, therefore, having overlapping timeframes. Thus, the correspondence between the seventh trumpet and seventh seal confirms our theory that Revelation 8:1-9:21 and Revelation 16 actually *overlap* rather than come one after the other.

But what of *the rest* of the corresponding details between the trumpets and the bowls of wrath? Do they all correspond directly just as the seventh trumpet and seventh bowl, with each number in one series corresponding to the same number in the other series? Does each trumpet and bowl, which bear the same number, describe the same basic event, albeit with some variations in detail?

Despite the similarities outlined above for trumpets and bowls number 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, the answer is “no.” Trumpets and bowls with the same number do not necessarily correspond directly in time with one another. And more importantly, trumpets and bowls with the same number do not simply describe the same event with slight variations in detail.

There are two lines of evidence leading to this “no” answer.

Reason number one: notice how vaguely we phrased the similarities above. This is necessary because when the vagueness is removed as the precise content is included, the disparity between the items is revealed and the apparent likeness between them is obstructed.

First, there is absolutely no correspondence between the first trumpet and first bowl. The first trumpet involves hail and fire mixed with blood, which burns up vegetation. The first bowl involves a plague of soars being poured out upon those who have worshipped the beast or taken his mark. So, the first trumpet and the first bowl simply cannot describe the same event with different details. And while the second trumpet and bowl both describe the sea turning to blood, in the second trumpet only a third of the sea creatures die while in the second bowl all the creatures in the sea die. How can all the sea creatures die and yet only a third of them die? Despite the similar imagery, the specific details are simply irreconcilable. The third trumpet and bowl has similar problems. The third bowl involves the rivers and the fountains of waters turning to blood while the third trumpet also has the rivers and fountains of waters affected, but instead of turning to blood, they turn to “wormwood,” which is the word for “absinthe,” and a technical reference to the Old Testament means of discern a wife’s unfaithful by giving her bitter water to drink. (We’ll talk more about this momentarily.)

And there is also disparity between what happens to the sun in the fourth trumpet and the fourth bowl. In the fourth trumpet, the sun seems to lose its power, being darkened for a third of the time alongside the moon and stars. But in the fourth bowl, the sun’s power seems to increase, so that it becomes hot to the point of scorching men. Additionally, the darkening of the sun in *the fourth* trumpet would correlate to the plague of darkness under *the fifth* bowl, which further breaks up any correspondence based upon bearing the same number. Additionally, the pain described in the fifth bowl is clearly a result of the sores, which occur under *the first* bowl rather than the torment of the locusts described under the fifth trumpet. Thus, the pain cannot result from items sharing the same number, which again breaks up any numeric correspondence. The correspondence between the sixth trumpet and bowls in both cases could very well refer to the same forward movement of angelic armies under the leadership of these four angels, but on its own, that cannot change or remove the irreconcilable disparities between the first five trumpets and bowls.

In summary, the specific details of the first five trumpets and bowls results in an irreconcilable disparity that, regardless of how much they overlap in timeframe, cannot be said to describe the same events with mere variations in detail. This is one reason why we are forced to the conclusion that although the trumpets and bowls use similar imagery and *conclude* with the same events, generally speaking, they cannot be describing the same things.

Reason number two: there are *indications in the text* that the trumpets at least are employing figurative language, which for the sake of consistency should be

maintained at least through the whole of the passage, which extends from chapter 8:6 to chapter 9:21. Flipping back and forth, taking one trumpet literally and the next figuratively within the same passage for the sake of convenience seems to strain the interpretive model. So, where we find clear evidence that part of this passage is employing figurative language, we should begin by assuming this to be the case throughout the passage, so long as it is possible to do so.

First and foremost, the very fact that the overarching theme in chapter 8:6-9:21 is “seven trumpets” indicates that this passage is primarily about an opposing kingdom and its fall, just as was the case with the seven trumpets and Jericho.

In addition, direct indications that the imagery of the trumpets is intended as a figurative description of events surrounding the final defeat of the satanic angels comes from three incontrovertible, plain statements within the text of chapter 8:6-9:21 itself.

First, there are the locusts in the fifth trumpet, which are clearly not an actual plague of locusts.

Revelation 9:2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. **3** And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power...**7** And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. **8** And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. **9** And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. **10** And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.

Instead, the locust imagery is clearly used to figuratively describe the actions of a whole horde of spirits released from the bottomless pit and to connect their release to the effect they have on the harvest of the earth. These locusts even have a king over them who is explicitly described as an angel in chapter 9:11 and who is known by the title Abaddon or Apollyon.

Revelation 9:11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

So, since one of the trumpets is a figurative description of the last efforts of the satanic angels concerning the harvest, unless we want to be flipping back and forth between literal and figurative interpretive models in the same passage, this evidence favors a figurative rendering of the other items in the passage as well.

Second, further evidence comes in terms of the how these spirits, which are described figuratively as locusts, come up from the pit. Verse 1 and 2 describe this event.

Revelation 9:1 And the fifth angel sounded, and **I saw a star fall (4098) (5761) from heaven** unto the earth: and **to him** was given the key of the bottomless pit. 2 **And he** opened the bottomless pit...

Notice that the star, which falls from heaven, is not an actual star or even a shooting star. It is referred to immediately with the pronouns “him” and “he,” in the phrases “to him was given the key” and “he opened the bottomless pit.” Once again, we see the physical imagery, such as the locusts or the star, are figurative. They are being used to describe events that take place concerning the casting out of angels from heaven, the release of their counterparts who have already been imprisoned in the abyss, and the subsequent effect that they collectively have on the earth during this last harvest of the age.

Third, note that we have included two Strong’s Concordance numbers behind the word “fall” in chapter 9:1 above. The first Strong’s number denotes the verb and the second number denotes the conjugation of that verb. The verb is the Greek word “pipto” (Strong’s No. 4098), which basically means “to descend from a higher place to a lower” or even “to be cast down from a state of prosperity.” However, the key is the conjugation of this verb. Below are the specific details concerning the tense, voice, and mood of how “pipto” is conjugated in this instance.

5761

Tense-Perfect **See 5778**

Voice-Active **See 5784**

Mood-Participle **See 5796**

Count-193

Notice, first of all, that “fall” is in the perfect tense. The Online Bible Greek Lexicon defines the perfect tense, saying, “**The perfect tense** in Greek corresponds to the perfect tense in English, and **describes an action which is viewed as having been completed in the past**, once and for all, not needing to be repeated.” Notice also that the mood of the verb is a participle. The Online Bible Greek Lexicon defines a participles as, “The Greek participle **corresponds for the most part to the English participle, reflecting ‘-ing’ or ‘-ed’** being suffixed to the basic verb form. **The participle can be used either like a verb or a noun**, as in English, and thus is often termed a **‘verbal noun.’**”

In short, the rendering of “pipto” in the perfect tense denotes that the action of “falling” has actually occurred and been completed prior to verse 1 of chapter 9. And the fact that “pipto” is a participle, means that this verb is being used as a descriptor of the star. The Greek is actually saying, “I saw a star fallen from heaven,” indicating that John is not watching a star fall from heaven, but he is

instead watching a star that has already fallen from heaven, a fallen star, unlock the bottomless pit.

Given that the falling of this star has already been completed prior to chapter 9:1 and is now being used as an identifier or descriptor of the star, we can ask, is there a description in Revelation of this star actually falling? And there is. Not surprising, we find it among the other trumpets, particularly the third trumpet in chapter 8:10-11.

Revelation 8:10 And the third angel sounded, **and there fell (4098) (5627) 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.

5627

Tense-Second Aorist **See 5780**

Voice-Active **See 5784**

Mood -Indicative **See 5791**

Count-2138 plus 1 in a variant reading in a footnote

Revelation 9:1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star **fall (4098)** (5761 = *past tense completed, participle*) from heaven unto the earth: and **to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.** 2 And **he opened the bottomless pit**; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

Notice that the verb for fall in chapter 8:10 is *pipto*, the exact same Greek word as in chapter 9:1. However, notice also that the conjugation is different. In chapter 8:10, rather than acting as a participle, *pipto* is in the active voice and the indicative mood. This means that *pipto* is here acting as a verb normally would act in a sentence: “a star falls.” This is in contrast to chapter 9:1, where *pipto* is past tense completed and a participle: “a star fallen from heaven.” Thus, the earlier instance in chapter 8 actually describes the fall occurring and the later instance in chapter 9 simply identifies the star in verse 1 as a star which has *already* fallen. It is the same star in both cases. And from chapter 9:1-2 we see that this star is an angel to whom is given the key of the bottomless pit to release another angelic being and his army.

Once we know that the star that falls in chapter 8:10 is an angel, we find even further proof that the physical imagery in the trumpets is being employed figuratively to describe things that are occurring with the satanic angels, particularly the final fall of their kingdom, just as the trumpets suggest by referencing the fall of Jericho, which also occurred at trumpets.

However, the third trumpet also offers further support that the trumpets as whole are about the fall of the satanic kingdom, from top to bottom. By “from the top”

we mean, from the chief of the angelic adversaries. And “from the bottom” we mean those men who follow them.

In our article entitled, “Wormwood and the Falling Away” we provide a more expanded analysis of this imagery found in the third trumpet, in chapter 8:10-11. In summary, Paul states in 2 Thessalonians 2 that the return of Christ Jesus comes after a falling away and the coming of the antichrist, who Pauls calls the “son of perdition.”

2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the **coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,** **2** That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that **the day of Christ is at hand.** **3** Let no man deceive you by any means: **for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away (646) first, and that man of sin be revealed,** the son of perdition;

As Paul continues to describe these figures and events, he states the following.

2 Thessalonians 2:9 *Even him,* whose coming **is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,** **10** And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. **11** And **for this cause God shall send them strong delusion,** that they should believe a lie: **12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**

Here Paul describes the Satan himself, the chief adversary, comes before the antichrist to work miracles, preparing the way for him. However, this coming of Satan before the antichrist also serves another purpose, which Paul plainly states in verses 11-12. In fact, according to Paul, God permits these lying signs and wonders because God himself wants to provide a delusion in which those who want to believe a lie because they love pleasure, can have the opportunity to do so.

We should also take note that Paul specifically incorporates the idea of a “delusion” being provided by Satan for those who would be unfaithful. The Greek word for “wormwood” in Revelation 8:11 is “apsinthos” (Strong’s No. 894).

894 apsinthos

of uncertain derivation; ; n f

AV-wormwood 2; 2

1) **wormwood**

2) the name of a star which fell into the waters and made them bitter

“Apsinthos” is, of course, nearly identical to the English word “absinthe.” And this is not surprising, since absinthe is a plant that is known for its bitterness and which even today is commonly called wormwood, as the definitions below attest.

"Wormwood - NOUN: 1. Any of several aromatic plants of the genus *Artemisia*, especially *A. absinthium*, native to Europe, **yielding a bitter extract used in making absinthe** and in flavoring certain wines. **2. Something harsh or embittering.**" - The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language: Fourth Edition. 2000.

"Absinthe - 1. A perennial aromatic European herb (*Artemisia absinthium*), naturalized in eastern North America and having pinnatifid, silvery silky leaves and numerous nodding flower heads. **Also called common wormwood. 2. A green liqueur having a bitter anise or licorice flavor and a high alcohol content, prepared from absinthe** and other herbs, and **now prohibited in many countries because of its toxicity.**" - The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language: Fourth Edition. 2000.

In fact, as Britannica.com states below, absinthe, or wormwood, is a powerful hallucinogen.

"Absinthe – Absinthe came to be considered dangerous to health because it appeared to cause convulsions, hallucinations, mental deterioration, and psychoses. These symptoms are evidently caused by thujone, a toxic chemical present in wormwood." – Britannica.com

In other words, by using the Greek word "apsinthos" to denote wormwood, Revelation 8 is clearly invoking not only the imagery of bitterness put into water to detect unfaithfulness of a spouse, but it is also invoking the delusion mentioned by Paul when he speaks in 2 Thessalonians 2 of Satan producing deception to lead astray even those who have committed themselves to Christ Jesus. On that point, we should note that this process whereby some believe the delusion brought forth by Satan is referred to here by Paul as the "falling away" in verse 3. The Greek word for "falling away" is simply the feminine form of the Greek word for "divorce."

646 apostasia

feminine of the same as 647; TDNT-1:513,88; n f

AV-to forsake + 575 1, falling away 1; 2

1) a falling away, defection, apostasy

647 apostasion

neuter of a (presumed) adj. from a derivative of 868; ; n n

AV-divorcement 2, writing of divorcement 1; 3

1) **divorce, repudiation**

2) **a bill of divorce**

The idea of divorce here is highly significant due to the fact that it is coupled directly with God sending a delusion to test the faithfulness of men. First, the very notion of divorce specifies that Paul is talking about those who are under covenant with God. They are those who have professed and committed their lives to Christ Jesus and are now defecting.

Second, the Old Testament prescribes a particular course of action when a husband suspects the fidelity of his wife and wants to test her. That process is described in Numbers 5.

Numbers 5:11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him, 13 And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she be defiled, and there be no witness against her, neither she be taken with the manner; 14 And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled: 15 Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance. 16 And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the LORD: 17 And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put it into the water: 18 And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering: and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse: 19 And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness with another instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse: 20 But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee beside thine husband: 21 Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, The LORD make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the LORD doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell; 22 And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot: And the woman shall say, Amen, amen. 23 And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot them out with the bitter water: 24 And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse: and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter. 25 Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the offering before the LORD, and offer it upon the altar: 26 And the priest shall take an handful of the offering, even the memorial thereof, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward shall cause the woman to drink the water. 27 And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, that, if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot: and the woman shall be a curse among her people. 28 And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed. 29 This is the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside to another instead of her husband, and is defiled; 30 Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall

set the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law. 31 Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity, and this woman shall bear her iniquity.

As we can see, when a husband suspected his wife of unfaithfulness, a priest was to put something into the water to give the wife to drink. This water is then referred to as “bitter water.” If the wife was faithful, then she would be fine. If she was a wayward wife, it would become bitter, she would swell and rot. This was to satisfy the husband’s jealousy. But as Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 10:14, 22 and 2 Corinthians 11:2, God is a jealous God and so Paul desires for us to not follow after strange teaching or strange gods, but to be present to Christ as chaste virgins. So, it is not surprising that in Revelation 8, we see that the coming of the fallen angel, who works lying signs to deceive some to divorce their commitment to Christ, is depicted in terms of a bitter and delusion-causing agent, such as wormwood, being put into the water, resulting in a third of the water turning bitter.

Furthermore, notice that Revelation 8:10-11 specifically uses the imagery of “rivers” and “fountains of waters,” which is simply a reference to those who have the Holy Spirit in them. For, Jesus himself uses this very same imagery in John 4:9-14 and 7:37-39 as well as Revelation 21:6. In effect, Revelation 8 is conveying that many of those who have committed to Christ and who have received the Holy Spirit will turn bitter. During the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24:9-12, Jesus himself spoke of men’s love of God growing cold in the last days. In verse 9, Jesus connects the coming of false prophets to deceive, the love of many growing cold, and men being killed by their own brothers for Jesus’ name’s sake.

Matthew 24:9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, **and shall kill you:** and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake. **10** And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. **11** And **many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.** **12** And because iniquity shall abound, **the love of many shall wax cold.**

This is why, when describing the waters turning bitter after the coming of Satan to deceive, Revelation 8 states that many men die as a result of the bitter waters. Revelation 8 is simply describing what Jesus and Paul have described, that deception will come causing the love of many Christians to grow cold and they will betray other Christians to death.

In short, Revelation 8:10-11 is describing the same thing as Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2: the coming of Satan to lead astray many who are committed to Christ. Our article, “Wormwood and the Falling Away” provides additional details of this process, but for now, this summary is sufficient to demonstrate even further that the physical imagery in Revelation 8:6-9:21 is meant to figuratively describe the falling of the satanic kingdom, not actual physical events.

Additionally, the sixth trumpet provides more evidence that despite their uses of physical imagery, the trumpets are describing the fall of the satanic kingdom. As we can see below, the sixth trumpet sheds all symbolic language and plainly states that it is describing events pertaining to the satanic angels and the efforts they undertake in the final days of their kingdom.

Revelation 9:13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, **Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.**

And the seventh trumpet as well simply describes the coming of the kingdom of God and the destruction of the satanic kingdom in plain language.

Revelation 11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, **The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ***; and he shall reign for ever and ever. 16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. 18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth. 19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Thus, we have seen two of the first five trumpets clearly are employing physical imagery, such as stars and locusts, to figuratively describe the initiation of the fall of the satanic angels. And we have seen how two more trumpets (trumpet numbers 6 and 7), likewise openly describe the last efforts undertaken by these angels against the harvest in the dwindling time of their kingdom and the coming of the kingdom of God to earth.

So, out of the six trumpets described in this *Long Series* in chapter 8:6-9:21, we know that three of them are describing the satanic angels, even when employing figurative language. Consequently, when we turn to the three remaining trumpets found in chapter 8:6-9:21, we are safe to presume that they, too, describe events relating to the fall of the satanic kingdom, even though they employ physical imagery. And, of course, the idea that the first two trumpets are really describing the fall of the satanic kingdom, despite their use of physical imagery, is also demonstrated by the overarching framework of trumpets, which infer likeness to the fall of the city of Jericho.

What remains is simply to identify what the physical imagery in the first, second, and fourth trumpets represents.

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.**

There are two aspects that need to be identified. First, what does the hail and fire mingled with blood represent? Second, what does the trees and grass being burned up represent? The answer to the second question is perhaps more prominently displayed in scripture. We've noted above that the book of Revelation often uses the imagery of a harvest to refer to the end times. We've also noted that Revelation 8:6-9:21 is one example of this including the use of the locust imagery in chapter 9. In fact, in employing the imagery of the trees and grass as well as the locusts to depict the casting of the satanic kingdom to earth and the resulting falling away of mankind, Revelation 8-9 is simply borrowing and fulfilling imagery found in Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 28:15 But it shall come to pass, **if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God**, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; **that all these curses shall come upon thee**, and overtake thee...42 **All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume.**

In addition, John the Baptist spoke of men as trees bearing fruit in Matthew 3:10. And Jesus also often spoke of the end of the age as a harvest (Matthew 13:39, Mark 4:26-29), of men as trees bearing fruit (Matthew 7:16-20, 12:33-34), and of some disciples having little root and being burned up.

Matthew 13:3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; 4 And when he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: 5 **Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth:** and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: 6 **And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.** 7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them...19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. 20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21 **Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.** 22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he **becometh unfruitful.**

Notice that those with little root are burned up or dried up by the sun and, of course, losing any fruitfulness in the process. This is the difference between the trees and the grass in Revelation 8. The trees have more root than the grass and so the proportion of the grass, which is affected, is much greater.

Notice also that in this parable in Matthew 13, Jesus also describes two other categories of crops. The first has the word stolen by Satan and the second becomes unfruitful because the cares for material things choke out the “love of the truth,” to use Paul’s word in 2 Thessalonians 2. So, Jesus’ parable here indicates what we’ve seen in Revelation 8 and 2 Thessalonians 2 already, that Satan will come and deceive many, ruining portions of the harvest in that way. And, Jesus’ parable here also indicates that cares for the things of this world will be another means by which portions of the harvest are lost, a factor that will most certainly be described in Revelation 13 concerning the rise of the mark of the beast for buying and selling.

Likewise, the New Testament uses grass to speak of men in the context of the harvest at the end of the age, to describe a less developed state, and to describe those who are concerned with material wealth.

Matthew 13:24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, **The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:** 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26 **But when the blade (5528) was sprung up,** and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 30 **Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.**

Mark 4:26 And he said, **So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;** 27 And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. 28 **For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade (5528), then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.** 29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, **because the harvest is come.**

(NOTE: The word translated as blade in the passages above is the same Greek word as is translated as grass in the passages below.)

James 1:10 But the rich, in that he is made low: because **as the flower of the grass (5528) he shall pass away.**

James 1:11 **For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass (5528), and the flower thereof falleth,** and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

1 Peter 1:24 For **all flesh is as grass (5528), and all the glory of man as the flower of grass (5528). The grass (5528) withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:**

Furthermore, Revelation 9 provides additional demonstration that the grass and trees here in the first trumpet are figurative references to men, particularly godly men.

Revelation 9:3 And there came out of **the smoke locusts upon the earth:** and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. **4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only (3441) those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.**

Here in chapter 9:4, we see the grass and trees directly contrasted to “those men which have not the seal of God.” In fact, as we can see by the Strong’s number in the text above, the word “only” does actually occur in the Greek in the phrase “but only those men.” The occurrence of only here right after the grass and trees have been excluded indicates that the grass and trees *are* the other men who cannot be harmed. In direct contrast to the men which do not have the seal of God, the grass and trees *are* the men who do have the seal of God.

And lastly, the interpretation that “trees” represent men, particularly mature, deeply rooted Christians is supported directly by Revelation 11:3-4, which refers to the two witnesses as the “two olive trees.”

Revelation 11:3 And I will give *power* unto **my two witnesses**, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. **4 These are the two olive trees**, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

In the end, it is not difficult to identify what the burned up trees and grass represents in Revelation 8. This imagery simply represents Christians of greater and lesser maturity and depth losing their fruitfulness and love of the truth.

This leaves the question about what the hail and fire mixed with blood represent. The first thing to note concerning this question is that the description of the hail and fire relates directly to its affecting the trees and grass. Let’s consider the contrasting forms of precipitation. The arrival of rain means the growth and fruitfulness of a harvest. The arrival of hail means the destruction of crops. In scripture, rain’s capacity to mature and bring forth fruit in a crop is used to symbolize the work of the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 6 provides a prominent example.

Hebrews 6:4 For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and **were made partakers of the Holy Ghost**, **5** And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, **6** If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame. **7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: 8 But that**

which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

Here in Hebrews 6, Paul speaks of those who receive the Holy Spirit but fall away right before he illustrates this concept with the imagery of crops that receive the rain but produce thorns and thistles instead of a fruitful harvest. Since the Holy Spirit is symbolized by the precipitation of rain, which helps produce a crop, it isn't difficult to understand how harmful precipitation such as hail, would likewise represent ungodly spirits, which come to destroy the harvest. And the coupling of "fire" with the hail further substantiates that the hail and fire in this first trumpet represent satanic angels, coming to ruin the crop in the last days. Coincidentally, the book of Hebrews also quotes Psalms, using fire as imagery representing angels.

Hebrews 1:7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

Psalms 104:4 Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:

Furthermore, Revelation itself uses fire as a symbol for seven prominent angels of God, (presumably the same angels who receive the seven trumpets).

Revelation 4:5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and *there were* seven **lamps of fire** burning before the throne, **which are the seven Spirits of God.**

It would seem that the apostle John, the author of Revelation, was familiar with the use of both precipitation and fire as symbols for spirits in Hebrews. But more to the point, these passages make it easy to understand the use of hail and fire as imagery signifying ungodly angels who are cast out of heaven in the last days and then proceed to try and ruin the harvest. However, what does Revelation 8:7 mean when it states that the "hail and fire" are "mixed with blood"?

There are plausible explanations for this as well. If we continue to think of "hail and fire" as ungodly spirits, the most likely indication is that this first trumpet is specifically referring to angels who mix themselves with mankind. This manner of "mixing" with mankind is described initially in Genesis 6:1-4.

As we discuss in our article "Humans and Angels: How Similar are We?" under our Cosmology section, Genesis 6:1-4 describes how certain angels, who are referred to in the passage as "the sons of God," take the daughters of men as wives and have children by them. These children are referred to by the Hebrew word "Nephilim" (Strong's No. 5303), which is a derivative of the Hebrew word "to fall" or "be cast down." Thus, the very name of the children denotes the idea that their fathers, the sons of God, are angels who come down to the earth to "mix" with mankind. Moreover, the Hebrew word "Nephilim" is translated into the English word "giant," particularly because when this same Hebrew word is

used again in Numbers 13:33, the text exaggeratedly describes that in contrast to these men, the Israelites were small like “grasshoppers.”

The important aspect of Genesis 6 is where it states that not only did angels interbreed with human women before the flood, but also that this also occurred afterward.

Genesis 6:4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

The fact that Numbers 13:33 describes the presence of such men in Canaan land more than 400 years after Abraham and more than 900 years after the Flood further corroborates Genesis 6’s statement that some angels did this *again* after the flood. Now, we know from Jude 1:6 and 2 Peter 2:4 that the angels who did so before the Flood were imprisoned in the abyss. So, either the angels in Revelation 8 have already interbred with women and simply were not cast down until to the last days or perhaps they had not done so previously but reinstate this ungodly practice one last time at the end of the age. Regardless of which is the case, the notion of hail and fire representing ungodly angels who work to destroy the harvest crop is compatible even with the idea of those angels mixing themselves with the blood of mankind. And the result of these angels being cast down is that many of the trees and all of the grass are burnt up and lose their fruitfulness.

This leaves only the question of what the imagery in the second and fourth trumpets could represent concerning the fall of the satanic angels and their effect upon the end times harvest. Here is the text describing the events of the second trumpet.

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.

There are four imagery elements in these two verses. There is the great mountain burning with fire. There is the sea into which the mountain is cast. There are the creatures in the sea, which have life in them. And finally, there are the ships.

Precedence tells us that a mountain in prophetic imagery can denote a kingdom. We cover this more in our article series, “Prophetic Symbols,” where we find that “mountain” is used to describe Israel in the present age, the earthly reign of Jesus Christ, Babylon, Cush, Media, Samaria, and the nations in general is used three times by Jeremiah, once by Ezekiel, once by Daniel, once by Amos, and once by Habakkuk, for a total of 7 times. (Jeremiah 17:3, Jeremiah 50:6-8, Jeremiah 51:24-25, Ezekiel 34:5-13, Daniel 2:35, 44-45, Amos 6:1-2, Habakkuk 3:6-7). And, of course, Revelation 17 also employs this symbolic use of “mountains.” Perhaps the most prominent of these occurrences is perhaps Daniel 2.

Daniel 2:34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet *that were* of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image **became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth...**44 And in the days of these kings **shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom**, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. 45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that **the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands**, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

Daniel even uses phrase “great mountain” to describe the political kingdom of the Messiah, who will overthrow and reign over the other ungodly kingdoms. So, the interpretation of the “great mountain” of Revelation 8:8-9 as a “great kingdom” is simply matter of precedent.

Likewise, we know from our previous section how the imagery of fire is representational of angels in Psalms and Hebrews. We also saw the use of fire to refer to angels in Revelation 4:5, which states that, “there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.” Additionally, we have already established the connection between the star that falls in Revelation 8:10 and the “fallen star” in Revelation 9:1. This connection demonstrated that the star in chapter 8:10 was indeed an angel. However, the star that falls in chapter 8:10 is also described as a burning lamp, which is the same imagery applied to the seven angels in Revelation 4:5. Thus, the imagery of a great mountain, burning with fire equates very easily to the idea of the satanic angelic kingdom. And that has been our hypothesis from the start of Revelation 8:6-9:21, that the trumpets figuratively describe the fall of the satanic kingdom in terms of the fall of Jericho.

As we move forward through the imagery of the second trumpet, we see that this great burning mountain is thrown into the sea. Again, as a simple matter of precedent, a sea in prophetic imagery can represent the undefined mass of humankind. Once more Daniel provides a prominent example.

Daniel 7:2 Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, **the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.** 3 And **four great beasts came up from the sea**, diverse one from another... 17 **These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.**

Here in Daniel 7, we see the activities of the four winds, who are four angels that stir up political changes among the nations. In verse 3 and 17, we see these four angels bringing about the rise of four kingdoms, represented by the beasts. However, verse 2 tells us that these nations rise up out of the sea when the four

angels stir up the sea. Thus, the sea represents the mass of mankind, all of the nations and tribes, which the four angels stir up to bring forth the rise of four empires. Other passages in which the sea is used to refer to the mass of mankind, the nations and tribes of the earth, include Ezekiel 26:3, Isaiah 17:12-13, and Jude 1:13.

So, in simple terms, what we have depicted here is that the kingdom of satanic angels, the great burning mountain, is cast down among mankind on earth, represented here by the sea. This is spoken of in plain terms later in Revelation 12.

Revelation 12:8 And prevailed not; **neither was their place found any more in heaven.** 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: **he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.**

We will examine Revelation 12 in greater depth later on. For now, it is only significant to note that not only symbolic precedent but also plain text corroborate the interpretation that the great burning mountain cast into the sea refers to the satanic kingdom being cast down to earth among mankind.

There is one last note that should be mentioned concerning the imagery of the mountain cast into the sea in Revelation 8:8. This imagery seems to possess an uncanny parallel to Jesus' statements in Matthew. In Luke 13 and Matthew 24 we see Jesus use the imagery of a fig tree in a parable.

Luke 13:6 He spake also **this parable; A certain *man* had a fig tree** planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. 7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? 8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung *it*: 9 And if it bear fruit, *well*: and if not, *then* after that thou shalt cut it down.

Now, having previously told the parable in Luke, Jesus uses the imagery of the fig tree putting forth its leaves as a figurative expression concerning the coming of the end of the age during his Olivet Discourse recorded in Matthew 24. And, of course, further substantiates the theme that the end of the age is often depicted as a harvest.

But more importantly, the details of the vineyard owner cultivating one particular tree and having a gardener who further cultivates that tree is reminiscent of Jesus' other parables in which the vineyard owner is God, the vineyard workers are the messengers God sends to Israel, and the object of the parable is Israel itself, whom God is cultivating to produce fruit (Matthew 20:1-16, 33-46, Mark 12:1-13, Luke 20:9-19). Thus, the fig tree in Luke 13, as well as Matthew 24 below, appears to be Israel, whom God is cultivating and sending prophets to in order to get Israel to produce the fruits of repentance (Matthew 3:6-10, Luke 3:2-9). The

use of a fig tree and even edible or inedible figs as a parable for Israel has precedent in the Old Testament prophets. It can be found in at least 5 places, including Jeremiah 8:5-20, Jeremiah 24:1-10, Jeremiah 29:16-18, Joel 1:6-7, and Hosea 9:10. Hosea 9 compares the patriarchs of Israel to “the fig tree at her first time.” The passages in Jeremiah all describe Israel in a setting where the nation has been defeated by a foreign king and its people taken into captivity. Jeremiah 24:13 and 20 also identify the harvest being past and the summer ended as the point in time when there are “no figs on the fig tree,” which seems potentially correspondent to some of Jesus’ remarks about the fig tree in Matthew 21 and 24 below, particularly since Jeremiah 24:13 depicts the Lord saying that he will cause the leaves of the fig tree to pass away from it.

Matthew 24:32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer *is* nigh: 33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that **it is near, even at the doors.**

Jesus’ use of the fig tree as a metaphor here in Matthew 24 is not arbitrary. Not only is he building on the parable in Luke 13, but he is also appealing to an image still lingering in the disciples’ minds from just days before. This event is recorded in Matthew 21.

Matthew 21:18 Now in the morning as **he returned into the city, he hungered.** 19 And when **he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it,** and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, **and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.** And presently the fig tree withered away. 20 **And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!**

In Matthew 21, Jesus comes to a fig tree with no fruit on it, he curses it for lacking fruit, and it withers away. Here he provides a powerful visual reminder of his previous parable in Luke 13. The disciples are amazed. And it is with this amazing display still lingering in the background that Jesus includes the parable of the fig tree concerning the end of the age just 3 chapters later in Matthew 24.

The point here is simple. Jesus featuring of the fig tree in parables and his actual, physical cursing of the fig tree, provide illustrations of **future** events. In particular, this parable concerning the cursing of the fig tree could potentially represent the future ending of the Jewish state and casting out of the Jewish population from the land. These future events took place in 70 AD through the Roman destruction of **Jerusalem. Thus,** if the cursing of the fig tree represents future events which happen to the kingdom of Israel, there arises a question as to whether or not the statement that follows **Jesus cursing of the fig tree could also be intended to figuratively refer to future events regarding another kingdom.**

Matthew 21:18 Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. 19 And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. **And presently the fig tree withered away.** 20 **And when the disciples saw it,**

they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away! 21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

In the same way that the fig tree represents the kingdom of Israel and its cursing represents future events that took place because it failed to bear fruit at Christ's first coming, Jesus' statement about a mountain thrown into the sea could also represent future events that take place regarding another actual kingdom. From Revelation 8, we know that the mountain denotes the satanic kingdom. And together, Revelation 8 and Matthew 21 indicate that in the last days, someone with faith will indeed speak to the kingdom of the satanic angels, causing it to be cast down from heaven to the earth and the sea of mankind. Furthermore, Malachi 3-4 describes a potential cursing or blessing of Israel that would correspond to the sending of Elijah. The two witnesses are represented by Elijah. It is possible that the casting down of the satanic kingdom will also correspond to the work of the two witnesses.

We would like to note that the statements in Malachi concerning Israel are conditional leaving open the possibility that it will produce fruit and, for the record, we believe that Israel will indeed produce a great deal of fruit in the last days (including possibly by means of ministry from the 144,000), even though a portion of that fruit will fall away, as indicted by Revelation itself.

The parable of the fig tree in Luke 13 could relate to God's declarations in Malachi 3-4 regarding Israel. Interestingly, these statements in Malachi 3-4 directly relate to the sending of Elijah to the people of Israel, which like John the Baptist in Luke 1:17, represents the sending of the two witnesses in the last days. After the disciples are amazed at the cursing of the actual fig tree, Jesus' tells them that if they have faith, they will also not only be capable of doing the same to the fig tree but they will also be capable of causing the mountain to be cast into the sea.

Next, we see that as a result the sea becomes blood. This simply refers to the rise of violence, which is brought about by the ungodly angels, even as Revelation 6:4, which states that one of the angels known as the four winds (or four horsemen), takes "peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword." Now, the statement in Revelation 8:9 that the creatures in the sea die can have two possible meanings. Both meanings require an understanding of what individual creatures in the sea refer to in prophetic imagery.

While the sea itself represents the mass of mankind as a whole, the imagery of creatures in the sea represent individual persons, often great men as can be seen in Ezekiel 32 below.

Ezekiel 32:2 Son of man, **take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt**, and say unto him, Thou art like a young lion of the nations, and **thou art as a whale in the seas**: and thou camest forth with thy rivers, and troubledst the waters with thy feet, and fouledst their rivers.

Here in Ezekiel 32, the Pharaoh of Egypt is referred to using the imagery of a whale in the sea. In addition, notice that Pharaoh is first compared to a young lion of the nations and then to a whale in the seas. The lion and the whale are parallel imagery for Pharaoh. And more to the point, the nations and the seas are parallel imagery to each other. This is yet another precedent when the word “seas” in prophetic passages can refer to the nations, the mass of mankind as a whole.

Moreover, in his epistle, James uses the same Greek word as Revelation 9 uses for “creatures.” The Strong’s Concordance number is denoted in each of the passages below.

James 1:18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, **that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures (2938)**.

Revelation 8:9 And the third part of **the creatures (2938) which were in the sea**, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

As we can see, James uses this same Greek word “creatures” to refer to individual Christians. The basic idea concerning Revelation 8:9 is simple. The creatures of the sea refer to individuals. However, that still leaves us with two possible interpretations.

The interpretation hinges on what is meant by the statement that the creatures of the sea “die.” The idea of the sea turning to blood indicates violence and death, as we saw by comparison to Revelation 6, where the red horseman takes peace from the earth, resulting in men killing each other. But, if the blood indicates the physical death of many men, does the imagery of the creatures in the sea dying also indicate physical death? Or, does the death of the creatures in the sea *figuratively* represent something else?

Our examination of the first and third trumpets has already demonstrated that the great falling away, which results from the fall of the satanic kingdom, is in view during the trumpets. This fact, combined with the grammar of Revelation 8:9 and other New Testament imagery supports, provides an alternate interpretation in which the death of the sea creatures refers to Christians losing eternal life as they participate in the falling away. In other words, the fall of the satanic kingdom causes violent death among men, represented by the sea turning to blood, and as a result of this rise in violence, many lose faith and turn from God.

So, how does the grammar of the verse and existing precedent support this interpretation? First, notice that Revelation 8:9 lists the attribute of “having life” separate.

Revelation 8:9 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.

It does not just say “the creatures that were in the sea.” Nor is the trait of being alive simply included as an adjective, such as “the living creatures.” Instead, the life of the creatures is included in its own phrase. John is specifying that the creatures he has in view are creatures that are not just in the sea but creatures in the sea *that have life*. And by phrasing the description this way, John is distinguishing creatures that have life from those who do not. Or, more appropriately, John is distinguishing individuals that have life from those individuals who do not.

Now, in literal, physical terms, this makes very little sense. For, what point is there to specifying that the creatures which die are the creatures that were alive? Physically dead creatures cannot die, so why specify that the creatures which die are those which had life? But, if this is figurative, then it makes sense. And this is where New Testament precedent provides important insight.

In 2 Corinthians 5 and Galatians 6, Paul speaks of how every Christian is a new “creature” or “creation” in Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore **if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (2937)**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Galatians 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, **but a new creature (2937)**.

In both passages, Paul uses the Greek word “ktisis” (Strong’s No. 2937), which is related directly to Strong’s No. 2938. As we saw above, Strong’s No. 2938 is not only the Greek word for “creature” in Revelation 8:9, but it is the word used in James 1:18 to refer to individual Christians.

Additionally, the idea of “having life” denotes eternal life through communion with the Holy Spirit. It should be noted that the word “life” here in Revelation 8:9 is the Greek word “psuche” (Strong’s No. 5590), instead of the Greek word “zoe,” (Strong’s No. 2222). “Zoe” (or a derivative of it) is virtually used universally in the New Testament whenever eternal life is in view. In contrast, “psuche” is never used in this capacity but instead is used to denote the soul or the mortal, animal, physical life imparted by God in Genesis 2:7 and restated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:45.

Thus, if “eternal life” is in view here in Revelation 8:9, normally we would expect “zoe” to be used. However, the use of “psuche” instead of “zoe” isn’t really a problem for the interpretive model for Revelation 8:9 specifically because the interpretive model *already* supposes that physical things are being used figuratively to denote spiritual things. Mountains denote kingdoms. The sea denotes humankind as a whole. Fire and stars denote angels. Trees and grass

denote Christians. And similarly, physical, animal “psuche” life denotes eternal, spiritual “zoe” life.

To be blunt, John could *not* have used “zoe” to denote eternal life in Revelation 8:9 because doing so would mean breaking from the figurative language format. Instead, John *must* use “psuche,” a word which literally denotes animal life, to represent eternal life to remain within the framework of the passage. In that context, the use of the literal expression for eternal life would be as out of place as John suddenly saying, “the fountains of the Holy Spirit” instead of “the fountains of waters” in verse 10, “all green grass lost its faith” instead of “all green grass was burnt up” in verse 7, “Christians which were in the sea” instead of “creatures which were in the sea” in verse 9, or “a great mountain of angels” instead of “a great mountain burning with fire” in verse 8.

In summary, the creatures in the sea losing their “psuche” life when the sea of mankind has peace removed and suffers an outbreak of violent death, figuratively denotes Christians losing their faith and “zoe” eternal life as a result of the rise of violence. And, the mountain burning with fire denotes the satanic kingdom being cast down into the sea of mankind, which is responsible for unleashing the outbreak of violent death, even as Revelation 6:4 plainly states.

All that remains is to discuss the imagery of the ships in the sea being destroyed. At this point, it might be possible to think that ships being destroyed is far too specific to escape being literal. How in the world could something as clear as ships in the sea be interpreted as figurative without relying upon outlandish speculation and subsequently stretching the normal reading of the text?

The answer, as might be expected, comes once more from New Testament precedent. And actually, the precedent, once mentioned, becomes quite compelling.

First, in 1 Timothy 1, Paul actually uses the imagery of ships being destroyed to refer to Christians falling away from the faith.

1 Timothy 1:3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, **that thou mightest charge (3853) some that they teach no other doctrine,** 4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: *so do.* 5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned: 6 From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; 7 Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm... 18 **This charge (3852) I commit unto thee,** son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, **that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;** 19 **Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck (3489):** 20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Here in 1 Timothy 1:3, we see that Paul begins by referring back to an earlier time when he instructed Timothy to “charge” some to teach no other doctrine. Then, in verse 18, Paul again uses a related Greek word for “charge,” saying that he again commits this “charge” Timothy to wage a good warfare against false doctrine. The Strong’s Concordance numbers are included behind the word “charge” in both verse 3 and 18. The first is simply the verb form while the second is the noun form of the same word.

Then comes the critical point. In contrast to the correct doctrine, Paul states that some have put away faith and a good conscience and in the process have made their faith shipwreck. Notice that the inclusion of the word “shipwreck” is not just an occurrence in the English but that the underlying Greek verb specifically means shipwreck.

3489 nauageo

from a compound of 3491 and 71; TDNT-4:891,627; v

AV-suffer shipwreck 1, make shipwreck 1; 2

1) to suffer shipwreck

Paul uses the very imagery of ships being destroyed to figuratively denote men putting away their former faith, particularly in concert with false doctrine.

Second, in Hebrews, Paul speaks of individual Christians departing from the faith. Similarly to 1 Timothy, he starts by referring to correct doctrine as our foundation.

Hebrews 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, **2 Of the doctrine of baptisms,** and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. **3 And this will we do,** if God permit.

But then, in verse 4, having just mentioned remaining in correct doctrine, Paul goes on to discuss those who fall away from the faith, just as he did in 1 Timothy.

Hebrews 6:4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, **6 If they shall fall away,** to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame...

And after mentioning how some fall away, Paul asserts his confident hope that his audience will endure.

Hebrews 6:9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak... **11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:** **12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and**

patience inherit the promises...19 Which *hope* we have as an anchor (45) of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil...

Here, in verses 9-19, after speaking of doctrine as our foundation and of some falling away, Paul speaks of enduring in hope to the end and describes that hope and faith in the promises of God as the anchor to our soul. In other words, it is the doctrine of Jesus Christ and retaining faith in the promises found in correct doctrine, that provide the anchor, which keeps our faith from being shipwrecked by falling away.

In accordance with this metaphor of ships on the sea, in Ephesians 4, Paul speaks of false doctrine as winds tossing about the immature in faith and carrying them off.

Ephesians 4:14 That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Given this precedent, it is very easy to see how even the specific imagery of ships being destroyed in Revelation 8, is really just another figurative expression concerning how the casting down of the satanic kingdom will affect the harvest by producing the great falling away, or great divorce, spoken of by Paul in 2 Thessalonians.

Finally, we arrive at the fourth trumpet and what the physical imagery in it represents.

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** for a third part of it, and **the night likewise**.

Of the three trumpets that we are now covering, the meaning of the imagery in the fourth trumpet is perhaps the easiest and most obvious to substantiate. The opening verses of Revelation 12, which we covered earlier, describe Israel in terms of Old Testament imagery. In Genesis 37:5-11, Joseph has a dream in which the sun, moon, and eleven stars bow down to him. When he tells his father Jacob (who is, of course, renamed Israel), Jacob's interpretation is that the sun, moon, and stars represent he and his wife and Joseph's eleven brothers. The use of this identical imagery in Revelation 12, concerning the woman who gives birth to the Messiah, is clearly meant to denote Israel. Thus, when the sun, moon, and stars are used figuratively, they denote the people of Israel. As such, whereas previous trumpets have discussed the falling away among the mass of humankind and the nations, the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars in the fourth trumpet in Revelation 8 similarly denotes the effects of the falling away on the people of Israel.

But while it may be easy enough to perceive how the sun, moon, and stars could represent Israel, does the idea of the day not shining or the night not shining demonstrate that daytime and nighttime are literally being discussed here rather than being used figuratively? The answer is no. And the reason is once again on the grounds of precedent.

First, the day and the night shining is clearly not a reference to daytime or nighttime themselves but to the sun, the moon, and the stars, which shine and give light during the day and the night. There is no light during part of the day and part of the night because the sun, moon, and stars, which normally would light them, have been darkened.

Second, there is quite a bit of precedent for God's people *actually shining* as the sun, which shines during the day, and *shining* during the darkness, which is the night.

Judges 5:31 So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD: **but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.** And the land had rest forty years.

Isaiah 60:1 **Arise, shine;** for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. 2 **For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,** and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. 3 **And the Gentiles shall come to thy light,** and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

Matthew 5:16 **Let your light so shine before men,** that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

2 Corinthians 4:3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest **the light of the glorious gospel of Christ,** who is the image of God, **should shine unto them.** 5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 **For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God** in the face of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, **among whom ye shine as lights in the world.**

Among the verses listed above, we can see the imagery of those who love God shining as the sun when the sun goes forth in the daytime and we can see the idea of shining forth when darkness covers the earth. So, the idea of shining during the daytime or nighttime does not interrupt the figurative nature of the imagery in the fourth trumpet. In addition, we will add further clarity to the idea of not shining in parts of the day and the nighttime below when we discuss the frequent references to "the third part," which are found in these opening trumpets. But for now, it is

important to close this segment simply by stating that the imagery of sun, moon, and stars not shining for part of the day and the night is perfectly consistent with precedent concerning God's people shining as the sun and in the darkness. Thus, the interpretation that the fourth trumpet is describing the falling away among the Jews is, once again, backed by precedent. Moreover, when we cover another *Parallel Description* in Revelation 12:7-17 later on, we will see how the falling away of the Jews during this same timeframe is depicted in that passage as well.