

Mother Earth's Labor Pains

I. Slide1 Intro: Mother Earth's Labor Pains

- A. Even in the days of *wrath*, only *a person's hardness of heart* can keep God's love out.
1. The book now continues with descriptions of more judgment on earth. Again these pictures are *cataclysmic*, so immense they seem unreal.
- B. A story is told of **two monks on a pilgrimage** who came to a shallow place of a river. There they saw **a girl** dressed in all her finery, obviously not knowing what to do since the river was high and she didn't want to spoil her clothes. *Without much discussion, one of the monks took her on his back, carried her across, and put her down on dry ground on the other side.* The monks then continued on their way. But the other monk started complaining, "Surely it isn't right to touch a woman. It's against the commandment to have close contact with women. How could you go against your rules as monks?" The monk who carried the girl walked along silently, but finally he remarked, "*I set her down by the river and hour ago. Why are you still carrying her?*" [judging others!]
1. *F.B. Meyer once said* that when we see a brother or sister in sin, there are **2 things we do not know**: **First**, we do not know how hard he or she tried not to sin. **Second**, we do not know the power of the forces that assailed him or her. We also do not know what we would have done in the same circumstances.
 - a) *Now*, what's the different from me & you trying to **judge** something or someone versus **God** judging someone? [His judgment is perfect, right, fair, & good]
- C. *Also*, The predominant thought behind **judgment** in **Ps.96** is not punishment, but *peace & praise & perfect government*. **Read** Ps.96:11-13.

II. Slide2 7th SEAL – SILENCE (1)

- A. Last week we talked about the 7th Seal already.
1. *Silence is Golden?* **No**...Silence is **eerie**.
 2. The silence is the lull before the storm. **A dramatic pause**.
 3. Again, even the Heavenly Hosts *stop worshipping*.

4. Think *suspense, expectancy, anticipation*.

III. Slide3a **SAY IT WITH A SENT (2-5)**

- A. 7 angels who stand before God - These may be the 7 **archangels** spoken of in Jewish tradition. 1 Enoch 20 (is not part of the biblical canon as used by Jews).
- B. Slide3b Ever wonder what happens to your prayers when they reach heaven?
1. God hears our prayers. **ALL** our prayers.
 2. Their destination? His throne...right before Him.
 3. We need to pray, really pray. Happy to hear it was *much*.
 4. He doesn't miss your prayers. They go up *certified mail*.
 5. Slide3c George Mueller used to say about prayer, *answers are always coming*.
- C. Prayers mixed with **incense** is a message with a **sweet gift**.
1. You can send a note, or a note with flowers, or a perfumed note.
 2. Think of prayer as a message with *a scent attached*. It's *saying it w/a scent*.
- D. Ask: What's your favorite fragrance? *a perfume, a certain food/bbq steak, X-mass Trees, certain flower, fresh soil/working in garden, working on cars/grease, horse manure, gasoline*.
1. Ever walk into *a candle store* & get a **number of scents** that start blending together? I wonder if that's the bouquet of heaven like with all our prayers coming to His throne together.
- E. God sees our prayers as *perfumed love letters* when his children pray to Him.
1. And I'm sure He anticipates them like *military personnel do overseas*, finally receiving *long overdo letters* from family & friends.
 2. Does He smell them, and then read them again & again...from His *not-so-secret admirers*?
 3. Don't you communicate *more* with friends than ever before? w/email, texting, & other social media platforms.
 4. As we learn more & more *how easy it is to access God's throne...do we take advantage of praying more?* (maybe start at least texting God - *just 160 characters*)

- F. Slide3d (5) **The world** will not come to **the altar** for forgiveness (9:21), **so the altar** comes to **the world** w/judgment.
1. **Interesting:** this formula (*Lightening, thunderings, earthquakes*) 1st seen in 4:5, now here rt after the **Seal** judgements, then right after the **Trumpets** (11:19) & then rt after the **bowls** (16:18).
- G. Slide3e (6) **Trumpets** - This is **not** the shofar/rams horn, **but** instead *a metal trumpet* (salpinx) It's **a war trumpet**, used 11 x's [1 Thes.4:16; Mt.24:31; Rev.1:10, 4:1]
1. Num.10 gives the 3-fold use of Trumpets: **Gather** the people. Announce **War**. Announce special **Events**.
 2. Slide3f Joel 2:1 *Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming; it is near.*
- H. *Now these 1st 4 Trumpets bring *desolation on the: Land, Saltwater, Freshwater, & the Heavenly bodies*. [these trumpets **announce war**]

IV. Slide4 **1ST TRUMPET - VEGETATION (7)**

- A. **John's imagery** recalls several of the **plagues** from the book of **Exodus**.
1. Making loose parallels for **a new exodus** for the people of God. **Although this time not a promised land, but** the kingdom of God that is to come at the end of the age **and** the presence of God *among mortals*.
- B. **Like the 7th plague in Egypt...Hail, Fire, mingled w/Blood**. Ex.9:18-26
1. Possibly volcanic activity.
- C. You'll hear **1/3rd** used about **10 times**.
1. This fraction might indicate that, *though God is bringing punishment upon earth, it is not anywhere near being finished, nor near completion.*
- D. **The Target** - Green vegetation (**1/3 trees & ALL grass**).
1. This would surely upset the balance of **nature, & its food supply** (for both **man & animals**).
- E. **Trees/Fruit Trees, Grass** – It will effect *pasture lands* (hurting the meat & milk industries)

V. Slide5a 2ND TRUMPET - SALTWATER (8,9)

A. Like the 1st plague in Egypt... water to blood. Ex.7:19-21

B. Like a great mountain burning – probably a *meteorite* crashing into the sea.

1. *But interesting:* Jews viewed the unexpected eruption of Mount Vesuvius (ad 79) as **divine punishment on Rome** for the events of **ad 70** (when Titus entered Jerusalem, sacked the city, destroyed the temple, and killed many people). It destroyed the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, which were in Titus' jurisdiction.

C. 3-fold destruction - 1/3rd **saltwater** to blood. 1/3rd **marine life** dead. 1/3rd **ships** destroyed

1. Remember the oceans occupy about 3/4ths of the earth's surface.

2. Slide5b Henry Morris says, regarding marine organisms (living creatures in the sea), *These constitute the **lowest & most basic components of many of the world's food chains, so their destruction must precede a domino effect on many higher forms of life.***

3. Much of the world today depends on food supplies from other parts of the world that are **transported** on the seas.

- a) Slide6a There are **58,900** *cargo carrying vessels & all other vessels* (fishing, naval, etc) equalling another **87,483** vessels. [1/3rd of 146,383 = **48,794**]

- (1) Imagine the hit upon the shipping industry when **48,794** ships will be destroyed...w/their cargo?

- b) The Port of Los Angeles encompasses 7500 acres, and features 26 cargo terminals. Combined, these terminals handle more than **198 million metric revenue tons** of cargo annually. Last year, the Port moved an impressive **9.3 million 20' containers**. [That's only 1 Port!]

- c) Remember what happened to our ports *after 9-11* when ships had to sit out in the ocean for a few weeks?

VI. Slide7 3RD TRUMPET - FRESHWATER (10,11)

A. Another heavenly body falls to earth.

1. This **star** or **meteorite** is named *Wormwood* for its effects on the inland waters – the great rivers.

2. 1/3 of the *freshwater* is now polluted.
- B. National Geographic Society says they are **100 principle rivers in the world**.
1. Suddenly **33 rivers** become bitter/poisonous.
 2. Many species of *wormwood* grow in **Israel**. Actually 200-400 species. Belongs to the daisy family, *aka mugwort & sagebrush*. Used for treating Malaria. They all have a strong bitter taste, leading to the use of the plant as a symbol of *bitterness, sorrow, calamity*.
 3. *Artemisia herba-alba* or the white wormwood (apsinthos in Greek text).
 - a) Wormwood is mentioned 7x's in the Jewish Bible, always with the implication of *bitterness*. Mentioned only once in NT, as name of a star, also with implications of *bitterness*.
 - b) Many species of *wormwood* grow in the Mediterranean. It is also used today as an *essential oil* (*essential*, sense that it contains *the essence* of the plant's fragrance).
 - c) Prov.5:4 *But in the end she* (immoral women) *is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword*. [or as Billy Joel sang, *she'll carelessly cut you and laugh while you're bleeding*]
 - d) Lam.3:15 *He* (God) *has filled me with bitterness, He has made me drink wormwood*.

VII.Slide8a 4TH TRUMPET - HEAVENLY BODIES (12)

- A. Like the **9th plague in Egypt**...*darkness* is called.
- B. **Sun, moon, & stars** lose their luminosity, **so** both night & day are darker.
 1. Maybe this judgment of darkness is to **warn the world** to *flee to Christ* who has come as **light into the world**.
 2. Slide8b The great tragedy is that people often **stay in the dark** because their practices are evil. Jn.3:19,20 *this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed*.
 3. **And**, the final destiny of the rebellious is where? **but** a place of *outer darkness*.
- C. Slide9 When the *Krakatoa Volcano* in Indonesia exploded (8-27-1883 or *135 yrs ago this last Mon*) nearly **5 cubic miles** of rock and dust were thrown into the air.

1. The surrounding region was dark for 2 & ½ days. Dust drifted around the earth several times, causing bright red sunsets for **a year**.
- D. So 1/3rd less energy available. So many people are going solar...beware :)
1. Changes in temperature - will effect human health, & food growth.

VIII.Slide10 TRIPLE WOE (13)

- A. These 3 woe's are the *next 3 trumpets*.