

Revelation 8: 10 and 11; "The Sounding of the 3rd Trumpet",
Sermon # 69 in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness", Delivered
by Pastor Paul Rendall on August 26th, 2007,
in the Afternoon Worship Service.

In the sounding of each of these trumpets we find that great dangers to the Church of Jesus Christ are being announced in this second period of the history of the Church in relation to the Roman Empire. The political Roman Empire would fall during this time period of 323 -756 A.D. And many Postmillennial commentators attempt to portray the sounding of the trumpets as related to this awful event. No doubt the Empire's political fall does relate to the trumpets in terms of the judgments of God that fell upon the Empire in the form of the invasion of many warlike hosts. But I believe that as great and as awful as the invasions of the Goths and the Vandals were in their devastation of the Roman Empire, that what is being portrayed here in the word pictures that I just read to you has its primary reference to the dangers to the true Church from the heresies and the false doctrines of those days, which crept into the visible Church to turn her entirely away from the truth of God's word, if possible. This was not possible with regard to the Elect, but many people and many churches were severely tried by this spiritual invasion. The Roman Empire's influence in matters related to the Church and the doctrines that she held and taught would increase. Church being joined to state would have this flaw; that if Arians or others came into power politically, that the counsels and synods called, would attempt to make orthodoxy a heresy, and heresy would be established as truth. Then punishments could be enacted against true Christians again. This was Satan's strategy during that time period and it still affects us today.

The Church is here being warned of the corruptions of doctrine and practice that would occur; and they would threaten the Church with great loss, and the souls of men with eternal destruction. We have seen thus far the first trumpet announced the propagation of heresies related to the God-head itself and Arianism. The Second trumpet announced more of the same kind of heresies; heresies related to the Deity of the Holy Spirit and heresies concerning the two Natures and the one Personhood of Christ. These were the beginning of Satan's attempts to attack the foundations of the True Church of Jesus Christ by infiltrating her with men who would, by false doctrine, build a false visible church which would serve Satan's purposes of undermining the forward progress of the gospel and all truth. He would not ultimately succeed, but there would be many souls destroyed and churches destroyed because of his efforts. When the teaching of an eminent and respected minister of the gospel falls from proclaiming grace, and falls into the error or heresy of thinking that man is better than he is by nature, it is as a great star falling from heaven. And the effect of his fall will be to pollute the many rivers and waters of spiritual life which only come through the pure doctrines of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. I

believe that the star being referred to in this passage is Pelagius and the other men who have followed after him in his false teachings. Instead of bringing sinners to saving faith and making them strong in grace, the teaching of these men will gnaw away at the truth of the gospel and doctrines of grace, and the souls of many people will be destroyed and made bitter.

So what I want to do this afternoon is first to think about the awful significance of a this star falling from heaven. 2ndly, we will look at the terrible effects of this stars fall. And third, we will look at the name of this star.

1st - Let's look at the awful significance of a great star who fell from heaven.

(verse 10a)

A star, if you will recall from Chapter 1, verse 20 of this book, is a picture word for a minister. There was "a mystery" in the seven stars which were in the right hand of Christ. "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which saw are the seven lampstands." If you recall, I labored in those verses to prove to you that the angels of the churches were the pastors called to labor over the churches in prayer and the preaching of the word. I will not go back through all of that again here. I will let you go back and look at what I have written at that place. Here in our text in Revelation 8, we find that one of great calamities of those times was the fall of one of these "great stars". As James Durham has well said, "By stars are understood ministers in the visible church, who, by receiving light from Christ should hold it forth to others." "A great star burning like a lamp, is, one eminent for parts, gifts, place, or in estimation for holiness, making a great show, yet not having much reality, but (as it were) a glancing counterfeit light, not proceeding from a right principle as that of the Stars doth from the Sun, but kindled from some external thing as that of a lamp is, nor so solid as the former, though having more glorious and pompous appearance." He fell from heaven, our text says. This means that he fell from the orthodox teaching of the church. He departed from it. He abandoned it.

Louis Berkhof states, "Pelagius deviated much further from the Scriptural representation of the application of redemption than any of the earlier Church Fathers." "It may even be said that he forsook the biblical foundation which was sacred to them, and re-asserted the self-sufficient principle of heathen philosophy." "His conception of sin and its results led him to deny the absolute necessity of the grace of God in Christ unto salvation, and to consider it quite possible for man to obtain salvation by keeping the law." "He did not altogether despise 'the help of grace' or 'divine assistance', but even considered this desirable 'in order that what is commanded by God may be more easily fulfilled'." So we must understand how serious a problem exists when one believes, as Pelagius did, in the strength and ability of the natural man to keep God's commandments and to please him. Pelagius believed that "the real Christian is one who knows God, believes that he is accepted

by God, obeys the precepts of the Gospel, and imitates the holiness of Christ rather than the sin of Adam." In other words, he has the power to do these things by nature already. The grace of Christ is not absolutely necessary.

John Gill says, "Pelagius was a man of great eminence in the church, of much learning, and made great pretensions to religion and holiness, and, like a star and lamp, shone forth awhile, with great luster and splendor, but fell into very great errors." "He denied original sin, and asserting the purity of human nature, crying up the power of man's free will, and asserting that human nature, without the grace of God, was able to keep the whole law, even to perfection..." You can see what the Apostle Paul would have thought of this doctrine of Pelagius' if you turn with me to 1 Corinthians 2: 14. "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Notice the words "does not" and "nor can he". These are words which are related to the stubborn resistance of the natural man's will in connection with his mind which is set against doing God's will in the way that God commands it. He does not know them because he cannot know them apart from God's revealing of them to him by the Spirit of God. Pelagius, with these false doctrines, was undermining the whole teaching of the Bible from beginning to end. This is why he is pictured as a great star, which fell from heaven, burning like a torch. A torch is supposed to be the means of leading the way in the darkness; lighting the way and blazing the trail to the right destination. But the only place that the doctrines which he holds leads to are to discouragement, to being cursed, and to end up in hell. How precious is the grace of Christ and the preaching of His grace. How full of comfort and blessing and certainty; because it proclaims that Jesus has done something which no sinful man, descended from Adam, could ever do. Jesus could fulfill the law because of his righteous nature and his determination to do the Father's will from a pure heart. But no man, born of Adam has a pure heart, and so, "Cursed is the man who does not continue in all the things that are written in the law of God, to do them." But Pelagius thinks that we can. What damnable nonsense. And yet I am able to get on line and Google the name Pelagius. And what do I find? An article by a man named Lewis Loflin who claims that Pelagius was right and Augustine and the orthodox were wrong. Listen to the lies that he puts forth. "Pelagius and his Christianity are more in line with the teachings of Jesus while those of Augustine are derived from a Gnostic cult known as Manicheism, a form of Gnosticism." "Augustine would define the Original Sin for the Latin Church but Pelagius saw through this appalling nonsense." "The whole argument is over the question of original sin a concept invented by Paul and later expanded by St. Augustine in the West." "Due to the politics of Augustine, Pelagius was convicted of heresy in the West, but was cleared by the Eastern Churches while Augustine himself was rejected later on." What lies! He later says, "Both Martin Luther and John Calvin would base their theology on Augustine and Paul, rejecting Jesus' moral

teachings as irrelevant." Again, this is a blatant lie! But this leads me to my next point.

2nd - Let us look at the terrible effects of this star's fall on the rivers and springs of water. (Verse 10b)

It says,"it (the star) fell on a third of the rivers and the springs of water." The springs of waters here are the life-giving streams of grace which flow to us from believing in Christ and the doctrines of His having fulfilled the law in our place, and his having born the punishment due our sins in our place on the cross. There were many ministers and Christian people who believed in doctrine of God in an orthodox fashion, but yet they were totally deceived in the way that they viewed the way of salvation. A river is water in a channel, water in motion; it is the way that God's grace is communicated unto men that was in question in those days that Pelagius came on the scene. Turn with me to Isaiah 41: 17 and you will see the way that God comes with His saving grace to needy sinners. "The poor and needy seek water, but there is none, their tongues fail for thirst." "I, the Lord, will hear them; I the God of Israel, will not forsake them." "I will open rivers in desolate heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water." The prophet is speaking of God's giving of grace through the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 14 says, "Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel!" "I will help you," says the Lord and your Redeemer, the Holy one of Israel." But Pelagius does not sense at all that he is a sinner and he will convince others that they can be moral and keep God's law and be Christians in this false way of self righteous attainment and merit. In other words, he poisons the waters and the rivers so that no man can drink of them and live. Listen to Louis Loflin again. He says, and I quote -

"There were many sinless men: Numbers 14:24, **"But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully..."** 2 Kings 22:2, **"And he (Josiah) did that which was right in the sight of the LORD..."** God went so far as to referred to Abraham as "My friend" (Isaiah 41:8) and Daniel as "beloved." (Daniel 9:23; 10:11; etc.) This brought up one of Pelagius main arguments: Why would God give commands He knows nobody could carry out? His opponent St. Augustine and later Calvin, and Luther claimed just this. Again, enter Paul. Among Paul's many abuses and misquotes of the Old Testament, none stands out more than Romans 10: 8 as Paul wrote, **"But what does it say? The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach).**" This was a misquote of Deuteronomy 30:10-14 which states: **"if you will hearken to the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes...The word is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it."** Jesus Himself (whom Paul never met in the flesh) is very clear on this as well. In Matthew 19:16, **"And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have**

eternal life?" Jesus denied being God, and told the young man very specific things he could (and expected him to be able to do it) which didn't include any "faith in Jesus Christ" or blood atonement by His suffering and death. (Also see Mark 10:17 and Luke 18:18.)

Now, I believe that these are Pelagius' thoughts cropping up in a contemporary of our time. They are the words of damning heresy which we must oppose wherever we find them. They are the words of a man who will twist the Scriptures to his own destruction, even as Pelagius did.

3rdly- Let us look at the name of this star in relation to what he does to people who believe in his false doctrines. (Verse 11)

"The name of the star is Wormwood." "A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter." We have seen the wormwood in the writings of Louis Loflin. I am quite sure that many, many other people; most likely a third of Christians in the greater visible Church were, and perhaps are today, affected by this great heresy. This man and his teachings are rightly named Wormwood. What gnaws away at True Christianity more than denying the doctrines of original sin and every man's need of Christ's grace. Those who believe these perverted truths that they can be moral and accepted by God and be welcomed into heaven because their righteous works are the very ones who will gnaw their tongues for pain in hell some day. Those who have died believing those false doctrines are in that agony even now. What deception, and what great lies are told in order to establish Pelagius as a star. Listen to Loflin's words which deceive, once again: **"Adam was created liable to death, and would have died, whether he had sinned or not."** "There is nothing in Genesis that Adam was immortal." "In 2:17 we have **thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.**" "He didn't die of course from eating the fruit, but we find also this in Genesis 3:22, **"And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever..."** Adam was expelled from the Garden for the express purpose he would not be made immortal." "It seems God never intended humans to be immortal, which throws any idea of life after death (bodily resurrection) into question. Pelagius was right on this count."

And again-

"The sin of Adam hurt himself only and not the human race." "Throughout the Jewish Scriptures God says over and over that only the sinner will die, not mothers, fathers, their children, etc. (See Deut. 24:16; 2 Kings 14:6; Ezek. 18:20; Ezek.33:20; etc.) One is held liable for his/her own actions, not that of others. If Adam was the "father" of the human race, we are not responsible for his actions. Thus God said clearly the innocent are not liable for the actions the guilty.

The fact is Jesus Himself never mentions Adam or any "Fall" in any gospel. The Apostle Paul invented this entire concept of Adam causing humans to lose immortality because we are responsible for Adam. Romans 5:12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" Romans 5:19, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners..." Paul by the way never met Jesus in the flesh. The entire concept of God sacrificing His "Son" an innocent person just to make up for the "crime" of someone else is immoral in itself and contrary to God's words in the Old Testament."

These are words of blasphemy and they are words of heresy. God cannot be mocked by them. God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but shall have everlasting life. Do not let the false doctrines of Pelagius find any place in your thoughts or in your heart, for they are the reasoning and logic of the devil himself. Instead, let the word of Christ richly dwell within you; the doctrine that "no man can come to the Father except by Me," says our Savior. He is also the One who said, "Without Me you can do nothing." May each of us hold fast and hold forth these truths all our life's journey long, until we see Jesus face to face.