

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Revelation 8-9

Revelation 8-9

Dr. Mark Alan Langner



Thank God for the order in which Jesus revealed His Vision (Revelation) to John, for Chapter 6 (the interlude) shows the grace of God via His restoration of Israel and through His calling, saving, and sealing of 144,000 Jewish witnesses.

Moving into the horrors of Chapters 8-9, we will *want* to recall that grace is being extended while judgment is simultaneously coming upon those who refuse the LORD's grace and refuse to repent before God.

Revelation Rhymes

Revelation Chapter 1: A Picture of the Eternal Son

Revelation Chapter 2: Work of the Church to Do

Revelation Chapter 3: Where Should Our Church Be?

Revelation Chapter 4: God Worshiped By 24 and More

Revelation Chapter 5: Jesus the Lamb Alive

Revelation Chapter 6: Judgment and Seals Mix

Revelation Chapter 7: Two Great Multitudes (One in Heaven)

Revelation Chapter 8: Silence, Prayer, and Trumpets Great

Revelation Chapter 9: Woe, Woe, Woe: Men Seek to Die



These are days of horror and terror on the Earth, as evidenced by our Revelation Rhymes this week.

8:1 “When he
opened the
seventh seal,
there was
silence in heaven
for about half an
hour.”

“Be silent in the presence of
the LORD GOD, for the day
of the LORD is near. Indeed,
the LORD has prepared a
sacrifice, he has consecrated
his guests.”

Habakkuk 2:20; Zechariah 2:13; Zephaniah 1:7



There is an ominous sign in Heaven: absolute silence. This is incredibly different from the previous scenes in Revelation, in which there was great noise, praise, and singing.. According to some scholars, this is when the Day of the LORD begins. (That is not necessarily my view, but it is a view that some scholars posit).

Ed Hindson notes than in the Old Testament, great silence and worship followed the sacrifice of the lamb on the alter and the burning of incense, and the subsequent burning coals from the alter being placed into a golden bowl.

Other scholars believe silence this to be some form of fear, or grief, or shame. We should not be dogmatic about the cause, but we *should* note that the silence is ominous and expecting, and altogether different than other Heavenly scenes!

² Then I saw the seven angels who stand in the presence of God; seven trumpets were given to them. ³ Another angel, with a golden incense burner, came and stood at the altar. He was given a large amount of incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar in front of the throne. ⁴ The smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up in the presence of God from the angel's hand. ⁵ The angel took the incense burner, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it to the earth; there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.



Jewish tradition notes seven arch angels; John does not identify the names of the angels which would soon deliver destruction and wrath upon the Earth. Some scholars, based on Luke 1:19, believe Gabriel to be one of the angels, but again, Revelation does not record the names.

There is a beautiful picture here right as chaos is about to again erupt on Earth: the prayers of the saints – our prayers – are ever before God. We may feel at times that our prayers are bouncing off the ceilings above us, but God hears His people!

Numbers 10 – The Trumpets:

- 1) Sound the battle cry.
- 2) Move the camp
- 3) Proclaim feasts.
- 4) Are used for the coronation of kings.
- 5) Show majesty and power of God.
- 6) Overthrow the ungodly.
- 7) Lay the foundation of God's Temple.

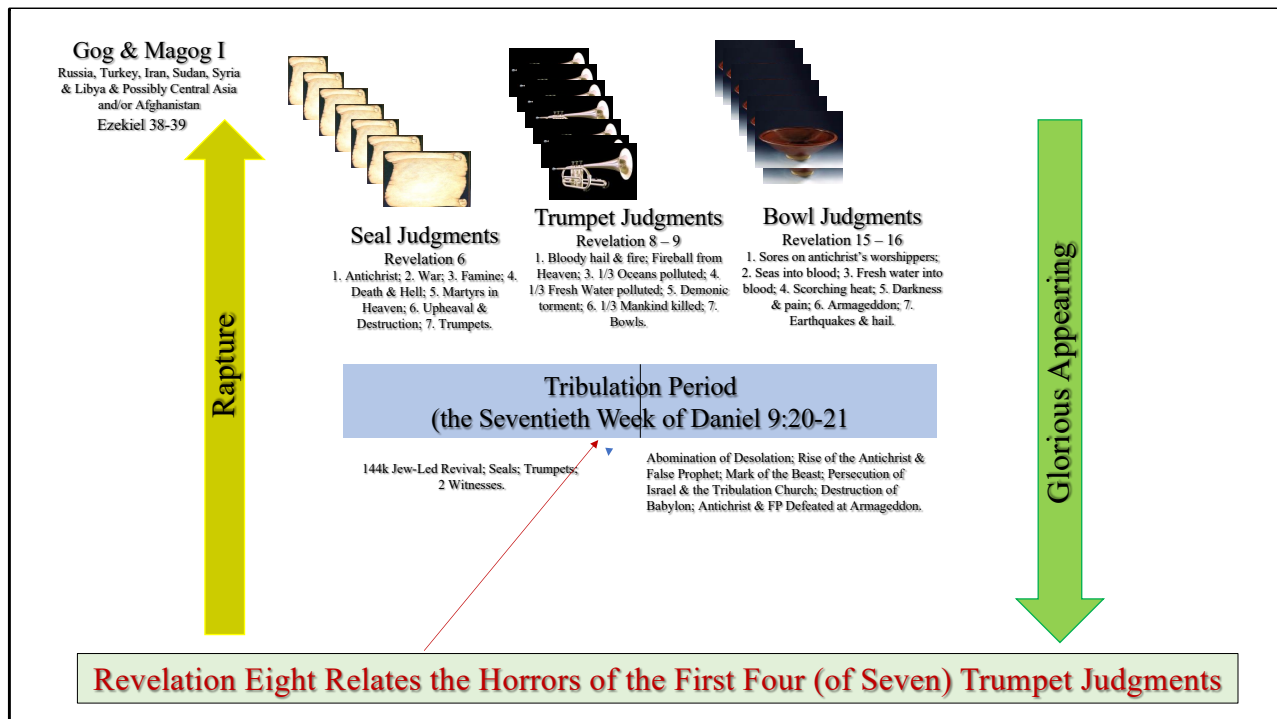
Timing of Revelation Trumpets:

Preference is to the First Half View:

- 1) The persecution of Israel; the casting of the devil and angels from Heaven & the complete tyranny of the beast are all revealed *after* the Trumpet Judgments.
- 2) Considering the second woe ends with ascension of the two witnesses & additionally considering they serve 1,260 days, it seems likely the Trumpet Judgments fall into first half.

Regarding the timing of the Trumpets, we know from Revelation 11 that the two great witnesses will die at the midpoint of the Tribulation. Since the second woe will take place at the midpoint and correlates to the two witnesses, it seems reasonable to assert the Trumpet Judgments will take place *prior to these events regarding the witnesses, i.e.*, during the first half of the Tribulation. Scholars who argue against this thought primarily do so because of the severity of the judgment which takes place.

I strongly lean to a first-half view because of the timing of the woes.



I believe the judgments are successive; that is, they follow each other in order, based upon the order of Scripture; the additional detail regarding the judgments; and the order of the "woes" John describes.

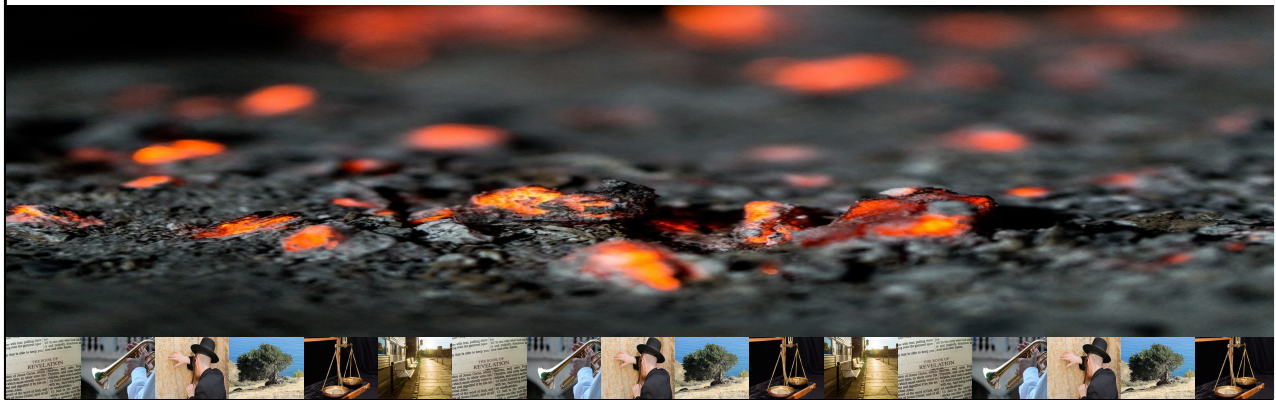
Mark Hitchcock also notes five reasons he believes the order of the Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls to be successive:

- 1) The content of the plagues is not identical or similar (suggests different judgments).
- 2) The seventh seal introduces the seven trumpets.
- 3) There are interludes between both the seal and trumpets, and between the trumpets and bowls.
- 4) The bowls are called seven *last* plagues (suggests *previous* plagues).
- 5) The seventh bowl indicates a "finish," or the "last in a series."

⁶ And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

The First Trumpet

⁷ The first angel blew his trumpet, and hail and fire, mixed with blood, were hurled to the earth. So a third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.



Although many respected scholars posit nuclear war, etc., to be the catalyst for the Trumpets, others (including me) believe the Trumpets are direct judgments of God on those who fail to heed his call to grace, and for those who follow the will of Satan (and eventually, the antichrist and false prophet).

There is little reason to suggest that the Trumpets judgments are not literal in nature; after all, there is precedent for such plagues during the Exodus. In fact, five of the Egyptian plagues are repeated in various forms during the Tribulation Period.

The Second Trumpet

⁸ The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain ablaze with fire was hurled into the sea. So a third of the sea became blood, ⁹ a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

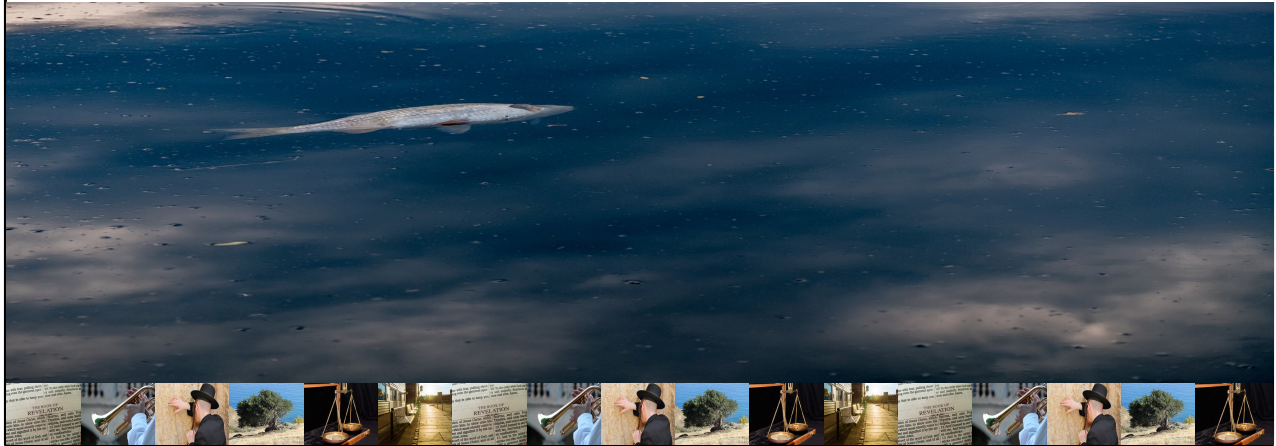


Genesis 19:24; 2 Kings 1:10, 12, 14; Psalm 11:6

Generally, the “sea” in Scripture refers to the Mediterranean Sea.

The Third Trumpet

¹⁰ The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from heaven. It fell on a third of the rivers and springs of water. ¹¹ The name of the star is Wormwood, and a third of the waters became wormwood. So, many of the people died from the waters, because they had been made bitter.



Wormwood indicates bitterness, and this is likely a particular meteorite that pollutes the waters. Thomas & Macchia determine this wormwood meteorite or star to consist of something similar to the Apsinth plant which contains a bitterness that may be tasted if there is one ounce diluted into 524 gallons of water. This meteorite's bitterness, as a judgment, is lethal (unlike Apsinth).

The Fourth Trumpet

¹² The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day was without light and also a third of the night.



God, who created the earth, moon, and stars, will use His heavenly bodies as a form of punishment on the Earth.

“Woes” in Scripture are divine warnings, or dire threats.

A night sky with the Milky Way galaxy and a forest silhouette. The text is overlaid on this image.

“...as well as the stars.”

“What supports its foundations?
Or who laid its cornerstone
while the morning stars sang
together and all the sons of God
shouted for joy?”

Genesis 1:16c; Job 38:6-7

“This is what the LORD says: The one
who gives the sun for light by day, the
fixed order of moon and stars for light
by night, who stirs up the seas and
makes its waves roar – the LORD of
Armies is his name...”

“When I observe your heavens, the
work of your fingers, the moon and the
stars which you set in place...”

Jeremiah 31:35; Psalm 8:3

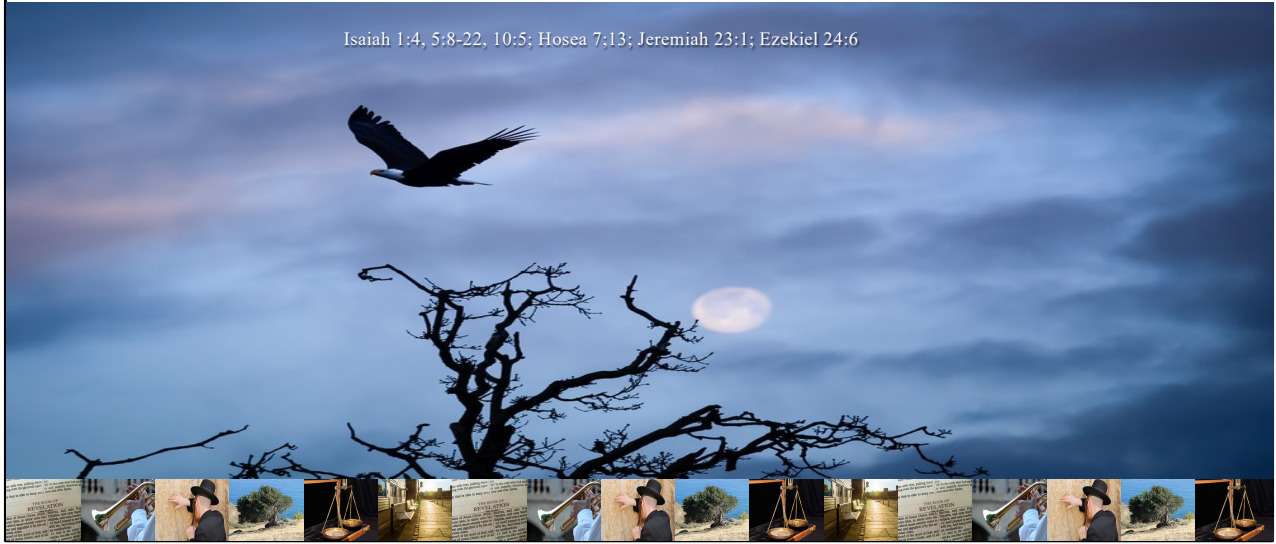
“Although the moon may be described as a ‘light reflector’ and the sun—as great as it is—as a ‘medium-sized star,’ it remains clear in the biblical author’s description that the great lights were orderly created by God, reflective of his own glory and purpose.”

Mark Langner

We should always remember that it is our God who ordered the Cosmos and keeps it in order. The same One who spoke the world into existence (Genesis 1; John 1:1-3) holds the Heavenly bodies in place.

8:13 I looked and heard an eagle flying high overhead, crying out in a loud voice, “Woe! Woe! Woe to those who live on the earth, because of the remaining trumpet blasts that the three angels are about to sound!”

Isaiah 1:4, 5:8-22, 10:5; Hosea 7:13; Jeremiah 23:1; Ezekiel 24:6



The first of the three “woes,” indicative of dire, divine warnings and/or intense judgment, is announced. This woe contains the fifth, sixth, and seventh judgments.

The Fifth Trumpet

9 The fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from heaven to earth. The key for the shaft to the abyss was given to him. ² He opened the shaft to the abyss, and smoke came up out of the shaft like smoke from a great furnace so that the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke from the shaft. ³ Then locusts came out of the smoke on to the earth, and power was given to them like the power that scorpions have on the earth. ⁴ They were told not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green plant, or any tree, but only those people who do not have God's seal on their foreheads. ⁵ They were not permitted to kill them but were to torment them for five months; their torment is like the torment caused by a scorpion when it stings someone. ⁶ In those days people will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, but death will flee from them.

This is not likely a literal "star" since the star is referred to as "him" and "He." This angel is not likely a fallen angel, but one given the key to carry out God's will during this time of wrath.

Jesus Christ alone has the keys to death and hades. We do not completely understand why people will be unable to die during the Fifth Trumpet months, but it apparently has to do with God's divine will.



The "abyss" is not likely Hell or Hades, given that these beings seem demonic in nature.

Note again the grace offered to those with God's seal, and the protection from this plague. I believe these who are spared are the 144,000, and those who have accepted the hope and grace of Jesus Christ through their witness.

⁷ The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. Something like golden crowns was on their heads; their faces were like human faces; ⁸ they had hair like women's hair; their teeth were like lions' teeth; ⁹ they had chests like iron breastplates; the sound of their wings was like the sound of many chariots with horses rushing into battle; ¹⁰ and they had tails with stingers like scorpions, so that with their tails they had the power to harm people for five months. ¹¹ They had as their king the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

¹² The first woe has passed. There are still two more woes to come after this.



This is apparently a demonic invasion upon those who are not sealed by God. The “like” and “as” phrasing indicates a symbolic understanding of the Fifth Trumpet. Also note Joel 1:15-21.

“Severe symptoms [of normal scorpion stings] include muscle twitching, sweating, and drooling.”

The Mayo Clinic



The typical lifespan of locusts is five months. While these are not “normal” locusts, they cause considerable and painful damage to human beings for the same span.

Locusts routinely are indicators of divine judgment in Scripture (see also Exodus 10:12-15 and Joel 1:2-4, 2:25). The 144,000 and apparently those saved by Christ through their witness are spared.

The repetitive words “Abaddon (Hebrew) and “Apollyon” (Greek) mean “destruction.” Those who worship demons (verse 20) are plagued by those they worship.



The Sixth Trumpet

¹³ The sixth angel blew his trumpet. From the four horns of the golden altar that is before God, I heard a voice ¹⁴ say to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels bound at the great river Euphrates." ¹⁵ So the four angels who were prepared for the hour, day, month, and year were released to kill a third of the human race. ¹⁶ The number of mounted troops was two hundred million; I heard their number. ¹⁷ This is how I saw the horses and their riders in the vision: They had breastplates that were fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow. The heads of the horses were like the heads of lions, and from their mouths came fire, smoke, and sulfur. ¹⁸ A third of the human race was killed by these three plagues—by the fire, the smoke, and the sulfur that came from their mouths. ¹⁹ For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, because their tails, which resemble snakes, have heads that inflict injury.

These angels, since they are captive, are apparently demonic in nature. The Euphrates flowed from the mountains of Armenia, south of Russia, and joins the Tigris in lower Babylon. Notes Ed Hindson, "In biblical times, the Euphrates formed the border between Israel and her enemies, Babylon and Assyria."



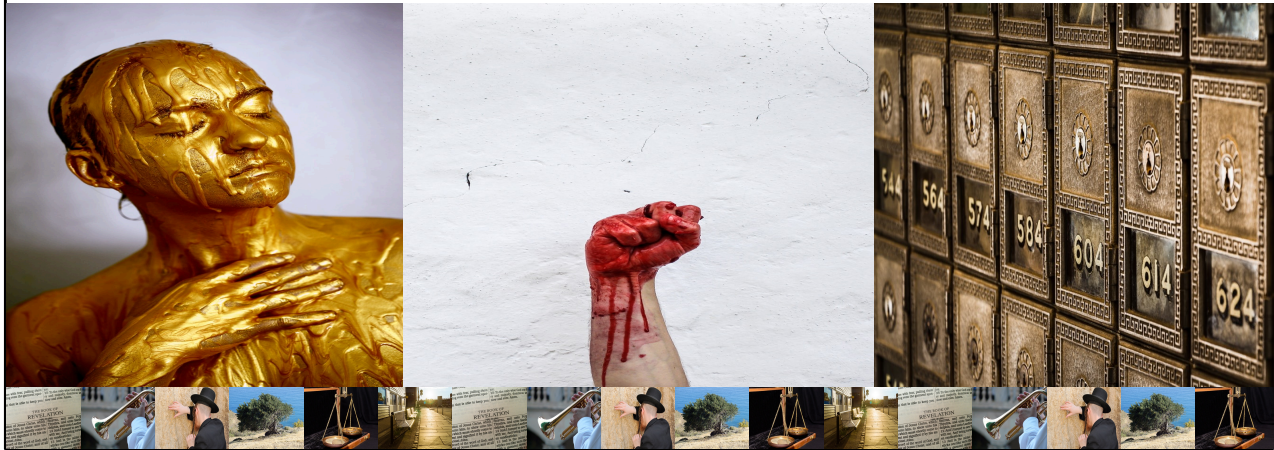
There are two main theories regarding the Sixth Trumpet:

- 1) This is a plague of demonic spirits which inflict terrible harm on the human race.
- 2) These are armies which advance a military goal. Some scholars posit that these are Chinese armies; others an alliance of Muslim nations left following several years after Gog & Magog.

My personal belief – today – is that the first option is the better option and perhaps indicates the sovereignty of God over the spirits. In any case, during these judgments, one-third of the human race will die. This means that approximately half of those alive at the beginning of the Tribulation have now died in the first two sets of judgments.

We are not told the reason for "one-third" in these judgments. However, one-third is perhaps indicative of God's grace; in that, it is not a majority which die during this time, but a minority. God is still calling people to grace during the Tribulation. Thus, regardless of such intense judgment, the inflicted pain is seemingly meant to result in repentance.

20 The rest of the people, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands to stop worshiping demons and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood, which cannot see, hear, or walk. **21** And they did not repent of their murders, their sorceries, their sexual immorality, or their thefts.



This scene is reminiscent of Mark 5:1-20, in which Jesus completely delivers a man (Legion) from demons, and the people in the area not only refuse to likewise come to Him for deliverance, but actually ask Him to leave!

The man who is delivered, however, begins to publicly proclaim the Name of Jesus.

During *this* time in the Tribulation, many will refuse to repent and to come to Jesus for deliverance (just like those in Mark 5).

“Then Job replied to the LORD: I know that you can do anything and no plan of yours can be thwarted. You asked, ‘Who is this who conceals my counsel with ignorance?’ Surely I spoke about things I did not understand, things too wondrous for me to know. You said, ‘Listen now and I will speak. When I question you, you will inform me.’ I had heard reports about you, but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore, I reject my words and am sorry for them; I am dust and ashes.”

Job 42:1-6

Repentance indicates:

- 1) Humbleness
- 2) Genuineness
- 3) Gratefulness
- 4) Selflessness
- 5) Sincerity
- 6) Ableness
- 7) Love

John 3:1-3

Mark 1:15

Luke 17:3-4

Acts 2:38, 17:30, 26:20

Revelation 2:16, 21, 3:19

...“and repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

Luke 24:47 (Jesus)

“No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will perish as well. Or those eighteen that the tower of Siloam fell on and killed – do you think they were more sinful than all the other people who live in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent you will all perish as well.”

Luke 13:3-5 (Jesus)



Repentance is always a necessary component of genuine moves of God.