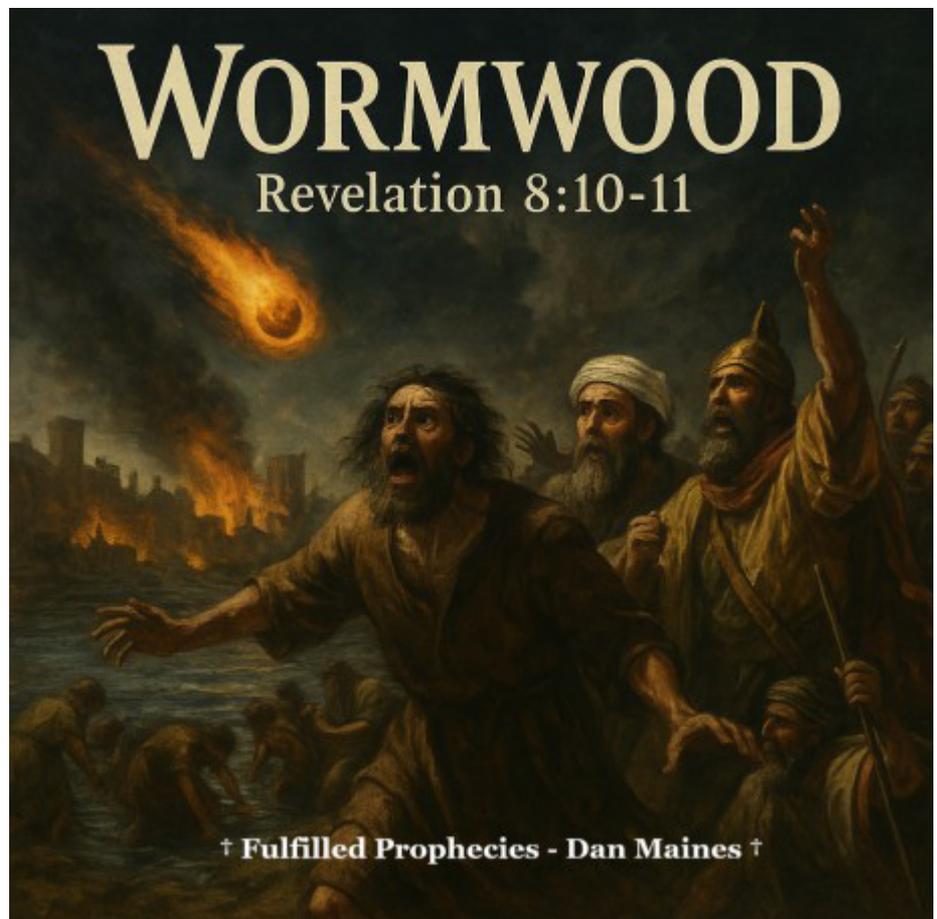


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## Wormwood – Revelation 8:10-11



By Dan Maines

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### Revelation 8:10-11

And the third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters. The name of the star is called Wormwood, and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.

† The third trumpet describes a falling star named Wormwood. In the symbolic language of Revelation, stars often represent

rulers or leaders (Isaiah 14:12, Daniel 8:10). This star falling from heaven points to a great leader or authority figure who'd bring bitterness and corruption upon the people through false teaching, apostasy, or judgment (Revelation 1:20, Matthew 24:11-12, 2 Peter 2:1-3, Jude 12-13).

† The term "wormwood" in Scripture always signifies bitterness and divine judgment. In Jeremiah 9:15 God says, Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will feed them, this people, with wormwood and give them poisoned water to drink. The same imagery appears in Lamentations 3:15 and Amos 5:7. Wormwood was a symbol of moral decay and the bitterness of divine retribution (Jeremiah 9:15, Jeremiah 23:15, Lamentations 3:15, Amos 5:7, Deuteronomy 29:18, Proverbs 5:4).

† From the fulfilled perspective, the third trumpet corresponds to the period following the Jewish revolt (AD 66-70) as corruption spread within both the Jewish leadership and the apostate church. This "star" that fell can be seen as a symbolic representation of those in spiritual authority who turned away from the truth, spreading bitterness through false doctrine and rebellion against God (Revelation 8:10-11, Acts 20:29-30, 2 Thessalonians 2:3, Matthew 24:10-13).

† Josephus records how the zealot leaders defiled the temple, shed innocent blood, and deceived the people. This caused a bitterness throughout the nation as moral order collapsed. The spiritual waters of Israel, their teachers and priests, had become polluted. The result was death, not life. The Wormwood star represents this poisoning of Israel's spiritual life before her destruction (Isaiah 1:21-23, Hosea 4:1-9, Ezekiel 22:26-28, Malachi 2:7-8).

† Historically, the trumpet judgments symbolize successive stages of judgment upon Israel leading up to AD 70. The first trumpet burned the land, the second struck the sea, and the

third poisoned the rivers, the internal corruption spreading through every part of their society. Wormwood captures that inner rot that preceded their physical destruction (Revelation 8:7-11).

† The name Wormwood also points to the bitter consequences of rejecting Christ. When Israel refused the living water offered by the Messiah (John 4:14, 7:38), their remaining waters became poison. The light of the world had come, but they preferred darkness. The fall of this great star marks the moral and spiritual fall of Israel's leaders, which brought ruin to the people they guided (Jeremiah 2:13, John 4:14, John 7:37-38, John 3:19-20, Matthew 23:37-38).

## **What Wormwood Is Not**

† Wormwood isn't a literal asteroid or comet crashing into Earth as some futurists claim. Revelation's language is symbolic, describing spiritual judgment, not physical space events (Revelation 1:1, Revelation 1:20, Revelation 12:4). Jesus spoke of His coming in symbolic terms that represented judgment upon that generation, not cosmic disasters (Matthew 24:29-34).

† Wormwood isn't a modern disaster like nuclear fallout, as some interpret from the word "Chernobyl" meaning wormwood. The text of Revelation deals with first-century Israel and Rome, not twentieth-century politics. The trumpet judgments align with the events leading to Jerusalem's fall (Luke 21:20-22, Revelation 8:7-13).

† Wormwood isn't Satan's fall. While Satan's called a fallen star in Luke 10:18, the context here shows judgment upon Israel's leaders and false prophets, not the original fall of Lucifer. This "fall" represents apostasy among those who were once in spiritual light but turned to darkness (Matthew 23:13-16, 2 Peter 2:1-3, Jude 12-13).

† Wormwood isn't a future global poisoning of literal waters. In prophetic language, "waters" represent people, nations, and teachings (Revelation 17:15, Isaiah 8:6-7, Jeremiah 2:13). The "bitterness" refers to spiritual corruption that spread through Israel before her end (Amos 8:11-12, Hosea 4:1-3).

## **Historical References**

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 4, records the corruption, deceit, and infighting among the zealots, priests, and rulers within Jerusalem before its destruction.

† Tacitus, Histories 5.12-13, describes the same period as one of internal madness and bitterness that brought ruin from within.

† Clement of Rome, 1 Clement 1-2, laments the envy and strife that led to the downfall of many within the early community, a spiritual reflection of this same bitterness.

## **How it applies to us today**

† Wormwood warns us of the danger of turning the pure water of God's Word into bitterness by mixing it with human traditions or self-righteousness. Whenever spiritual leaders fall, when truth's corrupted for personal gain, or when pride replaces humility, the same poison flows (Mark 7:8-13, Galatians 1:6-9, 2 Timothy 4:3-4, Hebrews 12:15, Ephesians 4:14-15).

† The judgment of Wormwood reminds believers that God's truth must stay pure. When we reject His living water, bitterness follows. The lesson's eternal, only by abiding in Christ, the true source of living water, can we stay free from the corruption that destroys nations and hearts alike (John 15:4-5, Psalm 1:1-3, Proverbs 13:14, Revelation 22:1-2).

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

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## Source Index

† Revelation 8:10-11; Isaiah 14:12; Jeremiah 9:15;  
Lamentations 3:15; Amos 5:7; John 4:14; John 7:38  
† Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 4  
† Tacitus, Histories 5.12-13  
† Clement of Rome, 1 Clement 1-2

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