

Wednesday Teaching Series
Revelation 8:2-11:19

The Book of Revelation
Lesson #12-The Seven Trumpets (Part I)

Tonight: Begin looking at the second series of judgments described in Revelation (7 Trumpet judgments).

NOTE: Will be two parenthetical passages

- Chapter 10; Little Book
- Chapter 11:1-14; 2 Witnesses

OVERVIEW OF VIEWS:

*What Events Do the Seven Trumpet Judgments Represent?
When Do These Events Occur?*

 **Historicist Approach:**

- The trumpets speak of a series of invasions against the Roman Empire (Vandals, Huns, Saracens, and Turks).
- The sixth trumpet brings the fall of Constantinople to the Turks (1453).
- The little book represents the Bible being made available to the masses of Europe after the invention of the printing press.

 **Preterist Approach:**

- The first four trumpets correspond to disasters inflicted by the Romans on the Jews in the Jewish War (A.D. 66-70).
- The fifth trumpet probably depicts the demonic spirits rendering the besieged Jews irrational and self-destructive.
- The sixth trumpet refers to the Roman armies, who destroyed Jerusalem and slaughtered or deported all the Jews.

✚ Futurist Approach:

- Either literally or symbolically, the trumpets represent calamities that will be endured by the unrepentant inhabitants of earth during the coming seven-year Tribulation.
- These may be supernatural judgments direct from the hand of God or merely the disastrous effects of man's improper stewardship of the earth and his abuse of technology (e.g., nuclear weapons).

✚ Spiritual Approach:

- Catastrophes reminiscent of the plagues of Egypt befall sinful humanity many times in history, demonstrating God's displeasure and, like trumpet blasts, warning of worse things to come upon the unrepentant.
- Sinful humanity typically absorbs these injuries with defiance, refusing to repent.

I. Preparation for Trumpet Judgments

And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. 3 Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. 5 Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. 6 So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. Revelation 8:2-6 NKJV

A. John describes what he saw:

1. "The seven angels"-The article "the" indicates a specific group.
2. Their role is to announce a series of plagues that will fall on earth and its inhabitants.
3. May also be the angels that will pour out the bowls (15:1; 6-8; 16:1; 17:1, 21:9).

B. They are given seven trumpets:

1. In the Old Testament used to call people together, move the tribes, sound the alarm in time of war, celebrate days of sacred feasts. (Numbers 10:1-10).
2. 7 priests with trumpets led Israel and Jericho (Joshua 6).
3. Trumpet regularly used at coronation of new kings.
4. These are eschatological trumpets to declare the wrath of God.

C. The angel at the altar (v. 3)

1. Some that see this angel as Christ; he is the only mediator
2. Others just a metaphor; a picture.

D. The cloud is formed by the incense (v. 4)

E. From intercession to judgment (v. 5)

1. Prayers play a role in the judgment

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Revelation 6:10-11 NKJV

2. God is now answering; indicated by demonstration of thundering, lightning, rumbling, etc.

READ: Hebrews 12:18-25

(Speaking in midst of this demonstration).

F. The angels prepare to blow (v. 6)

NOTE: A sense of expectancy

II. First Four Trumpets

The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up. 8 Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. 9 And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. 10 Then 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 water. 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. 12 Then the fourth angel sounded: 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 did not shine, and likewise the night. Revelation 8:7-12 NKJV

A. First Trumpet

The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up. Revelation 8:7 NKJV

1. Imagery of the 7th plague in Exodus 9:13-35
2. Blood probably refers to the awesome color of storm
3. Great devastation

NOTE: Lots of speculation (Hal Lindsey; nuclear; just don't know, but devastating judgment).

B. Second Trumpet

Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. 9 And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. Revelation 8:8-9 NKJV

1. First plague scorched the land; this one the sea.
2. Reminder of first Egyptian plague; water to blood.
3. Some see meteors, volcanoes; remember it is judgment designed to bring people to repentance.

"And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; 26 men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Luke 21:25-26 NKJV

NOTE: Some see this as an Anti-Christ empire falling into the sea; (Gentiles) not consistent with cosmological theme.

"Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, who destroys all the earth," says the LORD. "And I will stretch out My hand against you, Roll you down from the rocks, And make you a burnt mountain. Jeremiah 51:25 NKJV

NOTE: Great speculation but judgment for sure! (Hal Lindsey: Great meteorite or satellite).

C. The third trumpet

Then 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 water. 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. Revelation 8:10-11 NKJV

1. Burning steam that turns the water bitter.
2. Symbol of divine revelation.
3. Wormwood is a strong, bitter, plant.

For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey, And her mouth is smoother than oil; 4 But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword. Proverbs 5:3-4 NKJV

Remember my affliction and roaming, The wormwood and the gall. Lamentations 3:19 NKJV

Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will feed them, this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink. Jeremiah 9:15 NKJV

4. Reverse of miracle at Marah; bitter waters sweet.
5. Again, great devastation.

NOTE: Again, some see people here (leaders, empires). Also; "Chernobyl" nuclear meltdown is a Russian word meaning wormwood.

D. The fourth trumpet

Then the fourth angel sounded: 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 did not shine, and likewise the night. Revelation 8:12 NKJV

NOTE: 9th Egyptian plague

Amos 8:11

"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord GOD, "That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD. Amos 8:11

A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, The like of whom has never been; Nor will there ever be any such after them, Even for many successive generations. Joel 2:2 NKJV

"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; Mark 13:24-25 NKJV

For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine. Isaiah 13:10 NKJV

NOTE: Again some see this as spiritual darkness, blindness others an eclipse of sorts; others, darkness as a result of pollution from a nuclear explosion.

E. Announcement of the Three Woes

And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!" Revelation 8:13 NKJV

1. Many think angel (eagle) see footnote.
2. Announcement; as bad as the first four were, the last three will be worse yet.
 - a. 1st 4 on land; last 3 on people
 - b. 1st 4 are physical; last 3 produced by spiritual forces

III. Fifth Trumpet-Demonic Locusts (1-12)

(Also the 1st woe; horde of demonic locusts from the Abyss)

A. Star fallen with a key to bottomless pit

Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. Revelation 9:1 NKJV

1. Angel
2. Key to the Abyss

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. Revelation 20:1 NKJV

(Probably same angel)

B. Pit opened

And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. Revelation 9:2 NKJV

1. Inhabited by scorpions (9)
2. Inhabited by the prince (9:1a)
3. By the Beast; 11:7; 17:8
4. Satan's imprisonment during Millennium (20:1-3)
5. Evil spirits did not want to be sent here (Luke 8:31)

C. The Locusts emerge

Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. Revelation 9:3 NKJV

NOTE: Exodus plagues

1. Symbols of destruction

Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as destruction from the Almighty. Joel 1:15 NKJV

Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the LORD is coming, For it is at hand: Joel 2:1 NKJV

The LORD gives voice before His army, For His camp is very great; For strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; Who can endure it? Joel 2:11 NKJV

2. Scorpion-like sting. Doesn't kill but tortures so they want to die.

NOTE: In Palestine lobster-like claw on end of tail that stings.

D. Their commission:

They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. 6 In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them. Revelation 9:4-6 NKJV

NOTE: Mid/Post Tribulation people say we are protected; probably the 144,000.

1. Torture for 5 months but do not kill.
2. Locusts live about 5 months.
3. Also corresponds to the dry season.
4. Limited time for people to repent.
5. They will want to die (Lake of Fire) to get away from the pain.

E. Locusts described:

The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. 8 They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. 9 And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. 10 They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months. 11 And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon. Revelation 9:7-11 NKJV

1. Unnatural and awesome cruelty.
2. Demonic; hence the look of human.
3. Breastplate of iron; no way to strike back.
4. In flight sounded like chariots.
5. Power to punish.
6. The king is the angel of the abyss. Abaddon; "destruction or place of destruction." Appollyon-Destroyer.

F. Past the first woe; two more coming

*One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things.
Revelation 9:12 NKJV*

IV. The Sixth Trumpet-Angles from the Euphrates

NOTE: Escalation of judgment; 2nd woe will be worse than the first, Demonic Cavalry; 200 million strong;

A. Release of the four angels.

Then 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 who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." Revelation 9:13-14 NKJV

NOTE: Euphrates was boundary between Israel and her chief enemies and Egyptian boundary to Roman Empire.

B. Four angels released to kill 1/3 of the world's population

So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. Revelation 9:15NKJV

C. Huge army

Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. Revelation 9:16 NKJV

1. Irresistible force
2. As far as the eye could see

D. Description of the riders:

And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. Revelation 9:17 NKJV

1. Breastplates
2. Like lions; grotesque cruelty

E. Out of their mouths:

By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed — by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. Revelation 9:18 NKJV

F. Devastation occurs:

For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm. Revelation 9:19 NKJV

NOTE: Some see Oriental army (China from the East)

- Some see this as human army (200 million troops already; China's army 2.3 million)
- AP article in 1961: Militia of China estimated at 200 million

Conclusion: Devastation but no repentance

But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. 21 And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts. Revelation 9:20-21 NKJV

The intensity of the trumpet sequence continues to mount. From plagues of hail, and fire mixed with blood that scorched the earth (8:7), a burning mountain that fell into the sea turning it to blood and leaving death in its wake (8:8), a blazing star from heaven falling into inland waters and causing bitterness and death (8:10-11), and a darkening of the sun and moon that plunged the world into darkness (8:12), we move to a swarm of demonic locusts released from the netherworld to torment unbelievers (9:1-11). The two hundred million strong, come charging across the scene of history. From their lion-like heads come fire, smoke, and sulfur, and with their tails they inflict lethal damage. A third of the unbelieving world falls before their murderous assault. Those who remain do not repent of their idolatry and immoral lifestyle but continue their idolatrous worship of gods made by their own hands.

Nowhere will you find a more accurate picture of sinful humanity pressed to the extreme. One would think that the terrors of God's wrath would bring rebels to their knees. Not so. Past the point of no return, they respond to greater punishment with the increased rebellion. Such is sinful nature untouched and unmoved by the mercies of God.