

Session 7 The Trumpet Judgments (Rev. 8-9)

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I. THE SEVENTH SEAL AND THE RELEASING OF THE TRUMPET JUDGMENTS (8:1-6)

- A. The seventh seal includes the release of fiery trumpet judgments on the Antichrist's empire in conjunction with the prayers of all the saints (8:1-6). The fifth seal (6:9-11) focuses on the prayer of the martyrs in heaven, and the seventh seal points to heavenly help that the prayer movement on earth receives in partnering with Jesus in the release of the trumpet judgments.

¹When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ²And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. ³Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. And 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. ⁴And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. ⁵Then 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. ⁶So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. (Rev. 8:1-6)

- B. ***Silence in heaven:*** There will be a dreadful yet glorious silence in heaven for half an hour in anticipation of God's judgments as the seven angels prepare to release them (8:1). It is estimated that it took a priest about a half an hour to offer incense in the temple (Lev. 16:13; Lk 1:10, 21). There will also be silence on the earth in light of God's end-time judgments (Ps. 46:10; Hab. 2:20; Zeph. 1:7; Zech. 2:13).

- C. An angel will be given much "heavenly" incense to offer with the prayers of the saints. This will provide a supernatural strengthening of the end-time prayer movement that results in releasing fire on earth with cosmic disturbances and an earthquake (8:3-5). The prayers of the saints are imperfect because of human weakness (Rom. 8:26). The only thing needed to be "added" to our prayers is the perfect intercession (incense) of Jesus, which may be what is given to the angel.

²⁶...the Spirit helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for... (Rom. 8:26)

³⁴Christ...at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. (Rom. 8:34)

- D. ***Prayer of all the saints:*** The prayers of *all* the saints are both accumulated from history as well as accelerated in the generation in which the Lord returns. The end-time prayer movement will be the most powerful force on earth as it functions under the leadership of Jesus.
- E. God's trumpet and bowl judgments are not released on the saints, but on the Antichrist's empire. They will destroy the resources of the Antichrist's armies. The trumpet and bowl judgments parallel the ten plagues of Egypt against Pharaoh (Ex. 7-12). The walls of Jericho fell after Joshua blew seven trumpets (Josh. 6) as a prophetic picture of the fall of the Antichrist kingdom.

- F. As Moses released the plagues on Egypt through prayer, and as the first apostles released God's power through prayer in the book of Acts, so the praying Church will be involved with Jesus as He releases His judgment on the Antichrist. The miracles of Exodus and Acts will be combined and multiplied on a global level. The Old Testament prophets prophesied that miracles like those seen in Egypt in Moses' generation would occur in the end-time (Mic. 7:15; cf. Isa. 10:22-25; 11:12-16; 30:30; Jer. 16:14-15; 23:7-8; Ezek. 38:22; Joel 2:30).

¹⁵*As in the days when you came out of...Egypt, I will show them wonders. (Mic. 7:15)*

¹²*The works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do... (Jn. 14:12)*

- G. I see the book of Revelation as being like an end-time book of Acts so that the saints worldwide may have a unified prayer focus in knowing the sequence of God's judgments on the Antichrist. It is like a "*canonized prayer manual*" that will equip the Church to partner with Jesus in prayer. Imagine hundreds of millions of saints unified with Jesus and one another. The end-time prayer movement will need the unified prayers of the entire body of Christ worldwide to release this measure of power against the Antichrist who will be the greatest oppressor in human history.
- H. A primary theme in Revelation is God's judgment against the Antichrist's empire. A secondary theme is the Antichrist's persecution of the saints (12:12; 13:4, 8). In the Tribulation, the Church need not fear that they will be powerless victims. Rather, they will be operating in power under Jesus' leadership. Only 12 of the 403 verses (3%) in the book of Revelation refer to persecution.
- I. **Principle of judgment:** God's end-time judgments are released to remove all that hinders love. The Lord will use the least severe means to reach the greatest number of people at the deepest level of love without violating anyone's free will.
- J. Christianity is more about *relating to and partnering with Jesus* to see God's glory and kingdom released on the earth and to drive evil off the planet than it is about escaping hell. The Lord wants to release His purposes on earth in context to deep partnership with His beloved people.
- K. The Lord told Moses to divide the sea rather than waiting for God to do it (Ex. 14:15-16), and He told Moses to speak to the rock to release God's provision of water from it (Num. 20:7-8).

¹⁵*The LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me?.. ¹⁶But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it..." (Ex. 14:15-16)*

⁷*The LORD spoke to Moses, ⁸"...speak to the rock...it will yield its water." (Num. 20:7-8)*

II. THE RELEASE OF THE TRUMPET JUDGMENTS (8:6)

- A. The trumpet judgments have a 3-fold purpose. First, to *hinder* the Antichrist empire's spread of evil and persecution by destroying their natural resources. Second, to *warn* unbelievers of increased judgment by God and rage from Satan, thus creating an optimum environment for people to get saved. Third, to *rally* the saints to pray with unity as they see the trumpets unfold.

⁶*So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. (Rev. 8:6)*

- B. The seven trumpets are *literal* (not symbolic), *future* (their fulfillment is still in the future), *progressive* (increasing in intensity), and *numbered* (released in a sequential order).
- C. They are *supernatural* acts of God released against the Antichrist's empire through nature (first four trumpets) and demons (fifth and sixth trumpets). I do not believe they are to be understood as merely *natural* acts portrayed in symbolic language.
- D. The trumpet judgments are "limited" to one-third as highlighted twelve times (8:7-12). In other words, they are warnings of more to come in the seven bowls (16:1-21). The limitation of the trumpets to a partial judgment warns and gives opportunities to repent.
- E. The *first four trumpets* punish the Antichrist's empire by destroying their natural resources that support life (yet without directly touching people). The *fifth and sixth trumpets* will directly afflict humans by demonic torment and then killing one-third of the human race.
- F. In the *first four seals*, God lifts restraints off humans so that they destroy one another's resources. In the *first four trumpets*, God will destroy the resources of Antichrist's empire.
- G. In the *fifth and sixth seals*, the heavens will be opened to release supernatural activity (6:9-11). In the *fifth and sixth trumpets*, God lifts His restraints off the demonic realm (9:1-21).
- H. The first five trumpets (8:7-12) parallel the plagues of Egypt. The first (8:7) parallels the seventh plague of hail with fire and blood (Ex. 9:22-26). The second and third (8:8-11) parallel the first plague of the Nile turning to blood (Ex. 7:19-25). The fourth (8:12) parallels the ninth plague of darkness (Ex. 10:21-23) and the fifth (9:1-11), the eighth plague of locusts (Ex. 10:12-20).

III. THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS: DESTRUCTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES (8:7-12)

- A. The first four trumpets will destroy the resources of the Antichrist's empire (8:6-12), affecting the *environment* (trees, grass, sea, rivers, sky), *food supplies* (vegetation, meat, fish), *sea trade*, *water supplies*, and both *light and heat* (sun, moon, stars). Their purpose is to destroy, not kill.
- B. **First trumpet:** It will destroy food supplies by burning one-third of the earth's vegetation (8:7). A supernatural event, like a meteor storm, with hail and fire will burn the earth's trees and grass.
⁷The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. A third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up. (Rev. 8:7)
- C. **Second trumpet:** It will destroy food supplies and sea trade (8:8-9). A huge burning object like a mountain will fall from heaven turning one-third of the sea into blood and destroying one-third of the sea and ships. Some see this as referring *only* to the Mediterranean Sea (18:18; Isa. 2:12-16). The second trumpet corresponds to the first plague of Egypt where the rivers became as blood, causing the fish to die and polluting the land (Ex. 7:14-25; Ps. 105:29; 78:43-44).
⁸The 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. ⁹And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. (Rev. 8:8-9)

- D. **Third trumpet:** It will poison one-third of the earth's fresh water supply (8:10-11). A great burning star or meteoric mass will fall from heaven poisoning fresh water (rivers and springs). The saints will be protected as they were during the Egyptian plague on the Nile (Ex. 7:14-25).
¹⁰The third angel sounded: And a great star fell...burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹The 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. (Rev. 8:10-11)
- E. **Fourth trumpet:** It will destroy light and heat by darkening one-third of the sun, moon and stars (8:12). This supernatural work of God will affect heat, health, agriculture, navigation, etc. Our lack of understanding of how this will occur is not a sufficient reason to see this as symbolic. This trumpet corresponds to the ninth Egyptian plague from which Israel was spared (Ex. 10:23).
¹²The 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. (Rev. 8:12)
²¹The LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt." ²²...there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days... ²³But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. (Ex. 10:21-23)

IV. UNDERSTANDING THE FIFTH AND SIXTH TRUMPETS (REV. 9)

- A. The fifth and sixth trumpet judgments will release two demonic armies on the earth. In one sense, the demons come in response to the worship of their loyal demonized followers (13:8). In the fifth and sixth trumpets, God lifts His restraints off the demonic realm so that their hatred for humans is manifest. The demonic realm beneath the earth is opened, releasing them (9:1-21).
- B. Demons hate the people who worship them as much as they hate Christians—they hate them *all* because they were made in God's image. Satan is a murderer from the beginning (Jn. 8:44). He never changes. His hatred will not be openly seen on earth until the fifth and sixth trumpets. Many will be deluded in thinking that Satan will give them favor for their loyal service to him.
- C. People will be turned over to Satan to experience the terrors of his hatred in order to give them opportunity to repent before progressing in evil by taking the mark of the Beast, which will be blasphemy. God wants unbelievers to see the truth about Satan, but He will honor the choice of the wicked by turning them over to the sin they love (Rom. 1:24-28).
¹⁹Some...whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. (1 Tim. 1:19)
⁵Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. (1 Cor. 5:5)
²⁴Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies...²⁶For this reason God gave them up to vile passions...exchanging the natural use for what is against nature...²⁸God gave them over to a debased mind... (Rom. 1:24-28).

V. FIFTH TRUMPET: TORMENT BY DEMONIC LOCUSTS (9:1-11)

- A. The fifth trumpet will release an army of demonic locusts who will inflict pain on people (9:4).
¹The fifth angel sounded: I saw a star fallen [descended] from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. ²He opened the bottomless pit...³out of the smoke locusts came on the earth. To them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. ⁴They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth...but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months...like the torment of a scorpion...⁶In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them. (Rev. 9:1-6)
- B. **Star fallen:** The word for *fallen* here can be translated as *descended*. I see this as a good angel descending or coming down from heaven with the key to open the bottomless pit to judge the wicked. The activity of this angel parallels the actions of a good angel with the key to the bottomless pit to bind Satan (20:1). Jesus has all authority in the spiritual realm (1:18; 3:7).
- C. **Opened the pit:** Some demons are bound by chains (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6) being kept or reserved to be instruments of God's end-time judgment to inflict torment on those who worship the Beast. The bottomless pit or the abyss (Greek) is a temporary prison for fallen angels who will be released in the end times. This passage implies a "huge shaft" extending from the earth's surface to the depths of the earth where demons are imprisoned. This "shaft" is currently sealed.
⁴For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment... (2 Pet. 2:4)
- D. **Seal:** the saints receive a seal resulting in them being protected from God's judgments (9:4).
³...to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. ⁴They were commanded not to harm the grass...but only those men who do not have the seal of God... (Rev. 9:3-4)
¹⁹I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy [physical and spiritual], and nothing shall by any means hurt you. (Lk. 10:19)
- E. **Men will seek death:** The anguish of a scorpion sting will drive people to such despair that they will seek suicide. This refers to the eighth plague—yet without inflicting pain (Ex. 10:12).
- F. John described this demonic locust army (9:7-11) by comparing them to horses prepared for battle wearing golden crowns with human faces. These locusts are supernatural, demonic beings, not natural locusts. They can distinguish between unbelievers and believers (who have God's seal). The details here include the names, rank, description, and torment of demons. I believe we are to interpret these details at face value. Satan's hierarchy includes a demonic king named Abaddon (Hebrew) or Apollyon (Greek) or *destroyer* (English).
⁷The shape of the locusts was like horses...on their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men...¹¹They 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. (Rev. 9:7, 11)

VI. SIXTH TRUMPET: DEATH BY DEMONIC HORSEMEN (9:12-21)

- A. In the sixth trumpet, four demons will be released to lead a demonic cavalry to kill one-third of the human race. In the fifth trumpet, people will seek to die (9:6). Their prayer will then be answered as the demons they worship kill them. This parallels the tenth plague (Ex. 12:29-32).
¹³The sixth angel sounded: I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, ¹⁴saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels [fallen demonic beings] who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” ¹⁵So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. ¹⁶Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million... ¹⁷I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them...out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. ¹⁸By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed... (Rev. 9:13-18)
- B. The sixth trumpet will be commissioned by the angel who serves at the golden altar of prayer to release the four angels of death in answer to the end-time prayer movement (8:3-5; 9:13). The horns of the altar was a place of asylum to cry for mercy. Good angels are not bound, only evil angels (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6) until the end times to be released as instruments of judgment.
- C. God will commission them to kill one-third of the human race. They are demons *prepared* for a specific work of judgment in the end times. The four angels give leadership over part of the demonic army of 200 million horsemen. Possibly each commands 50 million demonic horsemen.
- D. The four primary demonic strongholds in society will be murder, sorcery, immorality, and theft (9:21). There will be more demonized people on earth than any time in history.
²⁰The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent...²¹They did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or thefts. (Rev. 9:20-21)
- E. Sin will reach its greatest heights in history. The Antichrist’s empire will be like a “corporate Pharaoh” with hardened hearts. Sin will become ripe (14:18; 17:4; 18:5). The wheat and the tares, or the righteous and the wicked, will mature together at the end of the age (Mt. 13:29-30). People will love sin and the Antichrist and will deeply hate Jesus, the truth, and the saints.
²³In the latter time...when the transgressors have reached their fullness... (Dan. 8:23)
- F. Many in the nations will become very “spiritual” following right after a season of being very secular. Perversion will escalate, being dynamically connected to the spirit realm. Immorality will be more than sexual hedonism; rather it will express demon worship with a dark spirituality.

VII. QUESTIONS FOR SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION (E.G., FCF FRIENDSHIP GROUPS)

1. Identify one point that inspired or challenged you. Why? What will you do differently to apply it?
2. Identify one point that you want to impart to a younger believer. Why? How will you approach this?
3. Identify one point that you would like to gain more understanding of. How will you seek to gain it?