

Four Trumpets

Revelation 8:1-13

“Woe! Woe! Woe to those who live on the earth ...”

^{8:1}Now when the Lamb opened the seventh seal there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ²Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

³Another angel holding a golden censer came and was stationed at the altar. A large amount of incense was given to him to offer up, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar that is before the throne. ⁴The smoke coming from the incense, along 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 on the earth, and there were crashes of thunder, roaring, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

^{8:6} Now the seven angels holding the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

^{8:7} The first angel blew his trumpet, and there was hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was thrown at the earth so that a third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

^{8:8} Then the second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain of burning fire was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea became blood, ⁹and a third of the creatures living in the sea died, and a third of the ships were completely destroyed.

^{8:10} Then the third angel blew his trumpet, and a huge star burning like a torch fell from the sky; it landed on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹(Now the name of the star is Wormwood.) So a third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from these waters because they were poisoned.

^{8:12} Then the fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of

them were darkened. And there was no light for a third of the day and for a third of the night likewise.

¹³Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying directly overhead, proclaiming with a loud voice,

“Woe! Woe! Woe to those who live on the earth because of the remaining sounds of the trumpets of the three angels who are about to blow them!”

Lord,

Help us to learn this week how faithful you are in answering our prayers. What a delight it is to us to take our impossible situations to you. How amazing it is to know that you consider it a joy to hear and to accomplish your will through them! There are wrongs that you alone can deal with and make right. We ask you to do just that in your perfect timing.

Amen

Monday

Today we finally see the opening of the scroll by the release of the seventh seal. After the tremendous earthquake and the world’s response to it (6:12-17), it seems a little anticlimactic that there should be silence *“silence in heaven for about half an hour”* (8:1).

What do you think the silence means?

Consider what *silence* means in these passages:

“But the LORD is in his majestic palace. The whole earth is speechless in his presence!” (Habakkuk 2:20)

“Be silent before the Lord GOD, for the LORD’s day of judgment is almost here. The LORD has prepared a sacrificial meal; he has ritually purified his guests.” (Zephaniah 1:7)

“Be silent in the LORD’s presence, all people everywhere, for he is being moved to action in his holy dwelling place.” (Zechariah 2:13)

“When the commanding officer had given him permission, Paul stood on the steps and gestured to the people with his hand. When they had become silent, he addressed them in Aramaic,” (Acts 21:40)

In contrast to the half-hour of silence is the noise which comes from the trumpets. The word *trumpet* indicates an instrument made of animal bone, bronze or iron which was used in a variety of ways.

How have “trumpets” been used before in Scripture (8:2)?

“On the third day in the morning there was thunder and lightning and a dense cloud on the mountain, and the sound of a very loud horn; all the people who were in the camp trembled.” (Exodus 19:16)

“You must sound loud horn blasts – in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, on the Day of Atonement – you must sound the horn in your entire land.” (Leviticus 25:9)

“Make two trumpets of silver; you are to make them from a single hammered piece. You will use them for assembling the community and for directing the traveling of the camps.” (Numbers 10:2)

“At that time a large trumpet will be blown, and the ones lost in the land of Assyria will come, as well as the refugees in the land of Egypt. They will worship the LORD on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.” (Isaiah 27:13)

“Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm signal on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land shake with fear, for the day of the LORD is about to come. Indeed, it is near!” (Joel 2:1)

“And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet blast, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (Matthew 24:31)

“Listen, I will tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – in a moment, in the blinking of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.” (1 Corinthians 15:51–52)

“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

Tuesday

In the Tabernacle, there was an altar of incense located before the curtain which separated the holy place from the holy of holies where the mercy seat was on the ark of the covenant. This altar was as close as a priest could get to the throne of God. When he offered up incense, he was representing the prayers of God’s people.

What is the significance that the censer (an instrument for offering incense) and the altar are made of gold? (1 Kings 10:16-17; 14:26-27; Daniel 2:37-39)

What do you think is the connection between the prayers that go up and the judgment that comes down (8:5; cf. 6:9-11)?

Take time today to pray about injustice you see in our world.

Wednesday

What are the contents of the seven trumpet judgments?



1. (8:7)
2. (8:8-9)
3. (8:10-11)
4. (8:12)
5. (9:1-11)
6. (9:13-19)
7. (11:15)

Today we consider the first four of these judgments (8:6-13).

What do they have in common?

What do the following verses tell you about God's purpose in a judgment that involved hail, fire, and blood (8:7)?

“ As they fled from Israel on the slope leading down from Beth Horon, the LORD threw down on them large hailstones from the sky, all the way to Azekah. They died – in fact, more died from the hailstones than the Israelites killed with the sword. ” (Joshua 10:11)

“ Have you entered the storehouse of the snow, or seen the armory of the hail, which I reserve for the time of trouble, for the day of war and battle?” (Job 38:22–23)

“ O fire and hail, snow and clouds, O stormy wind that carries out his orders,” (Psalm 148:8)

“ I will judge him with plague and bloodshed. I will rain down on him, his troops and the many peoples who are with him a torrential downpour, hailstones, fire, and brimstone. ” (Ezekiel 38:22)

“ I will produce portents both in the sky and on the earth – blood, fire, and columns of smoke. The sunlight will be turned

to darkness and the moon to the color of blood, before the day of the LORD comes – that great and terrible day!” (Joel 2:30–31, NET)

Thursday

It has been suggested that there a connection between these judgments and the plagues upon Egypt (1st trumpet (*hail* - 8:7; Exodus 9:24-25); 2nd and 3rd trumpet (*water to blood* - 8:8-11; Ex. 7:20-21), 4th trumpet (*darkness* - 8:12; similarly in Ex. 10:21-23), and the 5th trumpet (*locusts* - 9:1-11; Ex.10:12-15). The 6th trumpet is a prelude to 16:12 where the Euphrates is dried up. This is paralleled in God’s opening of the Red Sea and more particularly the Jordan.

The Old Testament prophets clearly understood that the God who worked the miracles in Egypt would do similar things in the future (see Isaiah 10:22-25; 11:12-16; Jeremiah 23:7-8; Ezekiel 38:22; Amos 4:10; Joel 2:30; and Micah 7:15).

What was the purpose of the plagues in Egypt?

How is that similar to God’s purpose here?

Friday

As bad as these first four trumpets have been, they are nothing compared to what will come with the sounding of the three remaining trumpets. This trio is described as three future ‘woes.’

There is some confusion reflected in the translations as to whether these ‘woes’ are given by an *angel* (NKJ) or an *eagle* (NET). These differences reflect a problem that ancient interpreters had with an eagle speaking. Many interpreted this to be describing the form of an angel as is indicated by the variant *angel* and subsequent attempts to write this as an *eagle*.

The symbolism of the eagle is fulfilled in that it is capable of flying overhead. But this eagle does something no eagle does. What?

What are the three woes (8:13; 9:12; 11:14; 12:12)?

Worldwide Earthquake Statistics Since 1900 to 2009¹

Magnitude	Annual Avg.
8+	1
7-7.9	15
6-6.9	134
5-5.9	1319

¹ <https://www.usgs.gov/programs/earthquake-hazards/lists-maps-and-statistics>

Unrepentant Sinners

Revelation 9:1-21

The rest of humanity, who had not been killed
by these plagues, did not repent ...

^{9:1}Then the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the abyss. ²He opened the shaft of the abyss and smoke rose out of it like smoke from a giant furnace. The sun and the air were darkened with smoke from the shaft. ³Then out of the smoke came locusts onto the earth, and they were given power like that of the scorpions of the earth. ⁴They were told not to damage the grass of the earth, or any green plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their forehead. ⁵The locusts were not given permission to kill them, but only to torture them for five months, and their torture was like that of a scorpion when it stings a person. ⁶In those days people will seek death, but will not be able to find it; they will long to die, but death will flee from them.

^{9:7}Now the locusts looked like horses equipped for battle. On their heads were something like crowns similar to gold, and their faces looked like men's faces. ⁸They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. ⁹They had breastplates like iron breastplates, and the sound of their wings was like the noise of many horse-drawn chariots charging into battle. ¹⁰They have tails and stingers like scorpions, and their ability to injure people for five months is in their tails. ¹¹They have as king over them the angel of the abyss, whose name in Hebrew is *Abaddon*, and in Greek, *Apollyon*.

^{9:12}The first woe has passed, but two woes are still coming after these things! (see 8:13)

^{9:13}Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a single voice coming from the horns on the golden altar that is before God, ¹⁴saying to the sixth angel, the one holding the trumpet,

“Set free the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates!”

¹⁵Then the four angels who had been prepared for this hour, day, month, and year were set free to kill a third of humanity.¹⁶The number of soldiers on horseback was two hundred million; I heard their number.¹⁷Now this is what the horses and their riders looked like in my vision:

The riders had breastplates that were fiery red, dark blue, and sulfurous yellow in color. The heads of the horses looked like lions' heads, and fire, smoke, and sulfur came out of their mouths.

¹⁸A third of humanity was killed by these three plagues, that is, by the fire, the smoke, and the sulfur that came out of their mouths.¹⁹For the power of the horses resides in their mouths and in their tails, because their tails are like snakes, having heads that inflict injuries.²⁰The rest of humanity, who had not been killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so that they did not stop worshiping demons and idols made of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood – idols that cannot see or hear or walk about.²¹Furthermore, they did not repent of their murders, of their magic spells, of their sexual immorality, or of their stealing.

Father,

Show me the things I need to change as I study this week. Correct my wrong image of you, my dependence upon other things as gods, and the sins that I harbor and keep as my own in spite of the damage they are doing to me and to others in my life.

Amen

Monday

One of our rules that guides us in interpretation is ... “when the plain sense, makes sense, seek no other sense.” A corollary of that is that when it doesn't make sense, it is a clue we might be dealing with a figure of speech or a symbolic use of the word.

Often we have seen ‘shooting stars’ that fall from the night sky, but have you ever seen a falling star being given a key to anything (9:1)?

Classify the following uses of 'star' in the Revelation as referring to literal stars (L – whether shooting stars, planets, or real stars) and symbolic (S) with the understanding that the literal ones may also have a symbolism attached to them:

- 1:16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.
- 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.
- 2:1 "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:
- 2:28 and I will give him the morning star.
- 3:1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.
- 6:13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.
- 8:10 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.
- 8:11 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.

- 8:12 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.
- 9:1 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.
- 12:1 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.
- 12:4 His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.
- 22:16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."

It seems apparent that this 'star' is not a real star, but a symbol for a powerful angel.

Who do you think this being is (*compare 9:1 with 12:3-4, 9*)?

The word translated *abyss* (*bottomless pit*) refers to an unfathomable depth. It was used to translate the oceans as *the deep* (Genesis 1:2). Working from this usage ...

What do you discover about this place (9:2,11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1-3,10; Luke 8:31; compare 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6)?

Tuesday

Today we will continue our research into the symbolism presented in this description.

How are the “locusts” similar to and different from regular locusts (9:3-5, 10)?

<i>Similar</i>	<i>Different</i>

Do you think these are literal locusts, a figure of speech, or symbolic descriptions of demons? Why?

What overall impression do you get of what life will be like during this time?

Wednesday

God has made use of locusts before in Egypt (*Exodus 10:1-20*) as well as in a previous prophecy. This will help us to understand the mind of the author as he tried to put together what he was seeing. There is also an image of locusts in the prophet Joel.

What eight characteristics does John reveal about these locusts (9:7-11)?

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|----|------------|
| 1. | (Joel 2:4) |
| 2. | |
| 3. | (Joel 2:2) |
| 4. | |
| 5. | (Joel 1:6) |
| 6. | |
| 7. | (Joel 2:5) |
| 8. | |

When you have completed your list compare them with the references from *Joel 1-2*.

In order to understand the symbolism, we need to picture a swarm of locusts with individual locusts that have the features described. We need to recognize that John has given us clear indications that these are not real locusts, but demonic forces. He clearly tells us that the king over these forces is a being he calls *the angel of the abyss* who in Hebrew would be called *Abaddon* and *Apollyon* in the Greek language. Both mean *destroyer*.

What does the name of their 'king' tell you about their purpose?

Where do you see the destroyer at work today?

Notice that the proclamation of 8:13, "Woe, woe, woe" is being carried out in this fifth trumpet and in the ones to come (9:12).

Thursday

When the sixth trumpet sounds, a voice commands the release of four angels to bring about a destructive purpose. This voice is associated with the *“horns on the golden altar that is before God.”*

What do you think was John’s point (compare 6:9 and 8:3-5 with 14:18; 16:7)?

Consider the connection that these angels have with “the great river Euphrates” (compare Genesis 2:14; 15:18; Exodus 23:31; Isaiah 8:7-8; Jeremiah 26:10; Ezekiel 38:15-16; Joel 2:3).

How does this inform you about their preparation for this hour, day, month, and year?

Compare the description of this army (9:16-19) with that of the previous army (9:7-10):

If the earth’s population were 8.1 billion at the beginning of the Tribulation, then how many people would be killed in the opening of the first four seals (6:8)?

How many people would be killed by this army (9:18)?

How many people would be left on earth?

Such a tremendous loss of life should give us pause to pray and ask the Lord to mightily use us in reaching out to our world with the message of the Gospel. Salvation is the only hope!

Friday

It takes more than facts to convince some people. This truth seems illustrated in the ending to this chapter. The only hope is salvation which involves faith that produces repentance.

What will be the response of survivors to these terrible judgments (9:20-21)?

How does 2 Thessalonians 2:7-11 parallel these verses?

What have you learned so far in Revelation about the unsaved people of the world?

Note the five specific sins God charge them with (9:20-21)?

Give a brief definition of each.

1. Idolatry =
2. Murder =
3. Sorcery =
4. Sexual Immorality =
5. Theft =

Do any of these bring conviction to you? You need to know that all is not lost as long as you have an opportunity to trust in Jesus turning from these things! If you have faith in Jesus, you don't need idols. The simplest way is to just stop doing things to worship them. It certainly will mean not going to the places where you did these sins.