

A BRIEF INTERLUDE

Over the past two weeks, we’ve looked at the sequence of events referred to as “The Seven Seals.” We saw the judgments pronounced upon the earth and those who live there. First, war, famine and death broke out across the world. Then, a series of “supernatural disasters” brought us to the day of the Lamb’s wrath. But, even in the midst of these terrible events, God saved a people for Himself. John saw the 144,000—a great multitude from every tribe, nation and people.

- Uriel
- Raphael
- Sariel
- Raguel
- Remiel
- Gabriel (Luke 1:19)
- Michael (Daniel 10:13; Jude 9)

As we’ve been talking about, this series of judgments takes us right up to the end. The vision of the seven seals, in fact, ends with the people of God in heaven with Him. This is the first such glimpse of heaven we get in the book.

Notice that all seven names end in *-el* → A reference to _____

“To them were given seven trumpets.”

Revelation 7:15-17: **“Therefore, ‘they are before the throne of God and will serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; He will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe every tear from their eyes.’”**

These seven trumpets will serve as the dominant image for the next judgments. These archangels before God’s throne will blow these trumpets when the end nears.

Well, why trumpets? What’s so significant about something we consider an instrument? Well, in biblical times, the trumpet had several uses. A trumpet blast could mean three things:

John’s vision of the end, however, is far from over. Though he could have ended here in Revelation 7, he continues on with some other visions, filling out the picture of what the end is going to be like. The second vision he has centers around seven trumpets. This series of judgments is introduced in the context of the seventh seal being opened.

- Sounds the _____
- Fanfare Announcing _____
- Summons to _____

Revelation 8:1-5: **“When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. And the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth, and there came a voice from heaven saying, ‘Bliss is he who does the will of God.’”**

Exodus 19:16: **“On the morning of the third day there was th**

in the Old Testament, trumpet blasts could also be heard at times of dedication. An interesting OT parallel to these trumpet blasts comes from the book of Numbers. In Numbers 10:1-10, the archangel Uriel is given the Law:

- Because of this, some see this angel as referring to Christ and God's ultimate redemptive plan. Thus, he presents the end of the world and the beginning of the "second Exodus" for the people of God. A few parallels to note: this way would have been unique (and somewhat confusing!).

- The offering this angel has to offer is a unique one:
 - **"He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand."**
- We need not wonder, then, if God hears our prayers. Revelation assures us they go before His throne. They are offered up as a sacrifice to Him.
 - *Barclay: "Here we have the idea that prayer is a sacrifice to God; the prayers of the saints are offered on the altar and, like all other sacrifices, they are surrounded with the perfume of the incense as they rise to God. A man may have no other sacrifice to offer to God; but at all times he can offer his prayers and there are always angelic hands waiting to bring them to God."*
- There's an interesting contrast here in the imagery of _____
 - Here, it stands for worship.
 - Later (14:11; 19:3), it will refer to judgment.

"Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth..."

- The priestly angel suddenly becomes an _____ angel
 - The coals as a symbol of fiery judgment has its roots in a vision from Ezekiel 10.
 - The judgments that are about to occur are God's response to the cries of His people for justice. All that is about to happen stems from the mistreatment of the just and the wickedness of this fallen world.
 - With this, the seven archangels prepare to sound their

- THE OPPRESSION OF "_____"
 - **Exodus 3:7: "The Lord said, 'I have indeed seen the affliction of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned for their suffering.'"**
 - **Revelation 8:5: Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake."**

- THE TEN _____
 - God sent ten plagues on Egypt in order to convince Pharaoh to let the people leave. Those plagues were (in order) the Nile turning to blood, frogs, lice, flies, livestock, boils, hail and thunder, darkness, and the death of the firstborn.
 - As we'll see in a bit, trumpets one through six explicitly mirror some of the plague judgments.

- THE HARDENING OF _____
 - **Exodus 8:15: "But when Pharaoh saw that there was no relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said."**
 - **Revelation 9:20: "The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the works of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk."**

- THE DESTRUCTION OF GOD'S _____
 - **Exodus 14:27: "Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the Lord drowned them."**

salvation. He is my God, and I will praise Him, my Father's God, and I will exalt Him."

- Revelation 11:15: "The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever.'"

• THE COMING OF GOD'S _____

- Exodus 25:8-9: "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you."
- Revelation 11:19: "Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within His temple was seen the ark of His covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm."

These parallels become even more meaningful when we consider some of the parallels the book of Revelation as a whole has with the story of Joshua and the Israelite conquest of the Promised Land:

• LEADERS NAMED " _____ "

- Jesus is a shortened version of the Hebrew name for Joshua, pronounced "Yeshua" in our language.

• WICKED _____

- In the Joshua narrative, the Israelites must first face the wicked city of Jericho, a city they are to have nothing to do with. Later in Revelation, believers will be encouraged to keep away from the wicked city of Babylon.

• THE PRESENCE OF A _____

- The "whore of Babylon" is, in some respects, the antithesis of Rahab, whose faith saves her from destruction

Revelation 8:7: "The first angel sounded his trumpet, and hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were killed, and all the green grass was burned up."

- Reminiscent of the _____ plague on Egypt
 - Exodus 9:23-24: "When Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, the Lord sent thunder and lightning flashed down to the ground. So there fell a great and bitter hail on the land of Egypt; hail fell and flashed back and forth. It was the worst storm to hit the land of Egypt since it had become a nation."

- Burns up a third of everything, except the _____
 - Probably just a symbol of the widespread nature of the destruction.

- The vegetation being burnt up may explain the _____

- Different ways of interpreting this trumpet:

- Preterists see it as a reference to the Romans burning the trees around Jerusalem during the siege.
- Historicists see the first four trumpets as references to barbarian hordes who brought down the western part of the Roman Empire.
- Hal Lindsey (and other futurists) see these trumpets as the byproduct of nuclear war.

Regardless of what it is, the imagery is intense. Grant Osborne pictures it this way: "Think of all the firefighters of the world trying to contain fires thousands of times greater than anything ever known."

The Second Trumpet:

so bad that the Egyptians could not drink its water.
Blood was everywhere in Egypt.”

- The seas were called the _____ of the Roman Empire
 - Dependent on trade routes for both food and commerce
- The mountain was a natural symbol of _____
- Different ways of interpreting this trumpet:
 - Preterists see it as a reference to a great sea battle, where many Israelites died in the water.
 - Futurists are split on the interpretation of this symbol:
 - Some take it figuratively, saying that the mountain represents the “re-formed Babylon” (led by Antichrist) on its crusade to take over the world. (Jeremiah 51:25)
 - Some take it literally, interpreting the symbol as a meteor or some other astrological body entering earth’s atmosphere.
 - Still others see it as another reference to volcanic activity.

The Third Trumpet:

Revelation 8:10-11: “The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water—the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.

- Again, this plague is reminiscent of the _____ plague
- Most of the water in Israel came from _____
 - Water was already scarce there, which heightens the devastating effect of this trumpet

In the Italian Alps, his soldiers killed so many people that the spilled blood polluted the springs there.

- Futurists are split on this issue. Some interpret it as a heavenly body falling to earth (which seems more likely). Others interpret it as the deception of the anti-Christ. At least one interpreter believes the falling star represents the “apostate Pope.”

The Fourth Trumpet:

Revelation 8:12: “The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars also a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and a third of the night.”

- Reminiscent of the _____ plague on Egypt
 - **Exodus 10:22-23: “So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and total darkness covered the land for three days. No one could see anyone else or his place for three days. Yet all the Israelites were in the places where they lived.”**
- The imagery here depicts God “striking” with a _____
- Throughout Scripture, darkness represents _____
- Jesus used darkness to speak of _____
 - **Matthew 25:30: “And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”**
- Different ways of interpreting this trumpet:
 - Preterists see it as a reference to the assassinations of many Roman and Judean leaders during this time.

around them, hemming them in with dangers in earth, sea, and sky. The first trumpet unleashes fire and hail...which leads to a loss of vegetation on earth (Rev. 8:7). The second trumpet turns the sea into blood...with a loss of sea creatures and ships (Rev. 8:9). In Revelation, ships are associated with the riches that the ungodly accumulate by trafficking with "Babylon," the symbol of greed, arrogance, and bloodshed (18:15-20). Thus the loss of ships means economic loss. The third trumpet brings "wormwood" and partially poisoned water... The fourth trumpet begins to enclose the world in darkness, again recalling a plague that preceded Israel's liberation from Egypt (Exod. 10:21-29). The mounting threats show that it is an illusion to think that one can find security apart from God and the Lamb."

Osborne: "Each of these judgments address a different aspect of life in the ancient world and in the modern world as well. The first shows that the material world is no answer, the second and third address the sea trade, including food supplies, and the fourth focuses on life itself in the heat and light of the heavenly bodies. The four together prove that those who live only for this world have chosen foolishly, for only in God is there true life. Earthly things turn on us, and we dare not depend on them."

As bad as this has been, however, it's about to get worse...

Revelation 8:13: "As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: 'Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels.'"

The Fifth Trumpet:

Revelation 9:1-3: "The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. And out of the smoke, locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth."

Some take this trumpet as a summary judgment for the first three trumpets. It's certainly possible, since the smoke from the Abyss blankets the earth and the locusts that emerge cause terrible

The _____ that emerge from the Abyss are more than just insects. They are truly fearsome creatures:

- **Revelation 9:7-11**: "The locusts looked like horses for battle. On their heads they wore something like the crown of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like iron. They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. They had stingers, like scorpions, and in their tails they bore the power to torment people for five months. They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer)."
- These locusts have the combined characteristics of scorpions, and an invading army!

This text, though tricky, seems to imply increased _____ activity! The Abyss is open and its "prisoners" roam free.

- Notice the mention of the "Destroyer." The locusts are not just anybody... Compare that with Proverbs 30:27.
- There is a great promise for God's people in this passage, however. Revelation 9:4: "They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only the people who did not have the seal of God on the forehead."
- Why would God allow this? Grant Osborne puts it this way: "...from God's standpoint, this is a short period of time during which the people of earth are given a chance to realize their sin, following Satan, then repent..."
- If we interpret these locusts as a demonic force, the

had been kept ready for this very hour and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of the mounted troops was two hundred million. I heard their number.”

o Ironically, these forces breathe out “fire, smoke and things that will later characterize their own judgment.”

- The _____ comes from the “horns of the golden altar.”
 - o Could be a reference to the prayers of the saints.
 - o Could be a reference to the angel who earlier carried the censure.

A couple of weeks ago, we noted that the judgments of the seals seem to be God leaving us to our own devices. This series of judgments, on the other hand, seems to be His way of showing us what happens when we follow Satan. If the world is left to the hands of the Enemy, bad things occur.

- Reminiscent of the _____ plague of Egypt
 - o **Exodus 12:29-30: “At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians bowed down during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead.”**

Lest we question why God would do such a thing, this chapter ends with a reminder of the point of all these judgments...

- The fact that these four angels are “bound” likely makes them _____ Grant Osborne sums it up best:
 - o Mark 3:27 and Revelation 20:2 shed some light on this word.
 - o Apocalyptic tradition believed in “angels of punishment.”
 - o The Euphrates separated the Romans from the Parthians.

“The entire desire of the fallen angels is to torture and kill all who are in the image of God. Yet the great sadness here is that depraved men and women are so ensnared and deceived that they fail to realize this truth and repent recklessly... These horrible events will prove to the nations beyond a doubt that God is supreme, that the demonic forces hate the Lord, and that God is giving them a final chance to repent. Yet they not only reject His offer but prefer to worship the very demons who have so mistreated them.”

- **“...very hour and day and month and year...”**
 - o God has a specific timeframe in mind!
- The number of the mounted troops was _____ million.
 - o An incredible fighting force—a thousand times bigger than the Roman army at this point in time!
 - o The phraseology here is literally “two myriads of myriads.” This would imply $2 \times 10,000 \times 10,000$
 - o Somehow, these four angels turn into an incredible fighting force! The number speaks of an insane battle!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Which of these symbols of judgment is most terrifying to you? When would you describe this time when God stops restraining evil and allows it to run its course?

- Once again, the description of this force is _____