

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS ARE BLOWN

Scripture Reference: Revelation 8:6 – 11:19

In last session, we discussed the great and terrible Day of the LORD that had been prophesied about numerous times in the Old Testament and in the New.

QUESTION?	From last session, what all takes place on the Day of the LORD?

Last session we discussed how that “just prior” to the Day of the LORD there would be a great gathering of forces in the “Valley of Jehoshaphat” where Antichrist would try to destroy Judah and Jerusalem, but God would prevail. On the Day of the LORD, the cosmic disturbances take place, the faithful are gathered together with Christ, and one angel sends a censer (or bowl) of fire and brimstone upon the earth. **Read Revelation 8:6.** Then the seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets. Thus has begun the **wrath of God** against ungodliness and the sinfulness of the earth.

The First Trumpet: Read Rev. 8:7

Describe what happens when the first angel sounds his trumpet. _____

In this first trumpet, God strikes the *vegetation*. Interestingly, if not in verse 7 of your translation, you should have a footnote or margin note that in many NU or M manuscripts this verse also contains the phrase, “*and a third of the earth was burned up.*” This would mean that God not only struck vegetation, but all the *land*. This makes more sense as we’ll see. This thought also fits with **2 Peter 3:10.**

How do these two passages fit together? _____

If we were to try to fathom the amount of land destroyed (1/3 of the earth) that would be slightly more than the entire western hemisphere being destroyed.

The Second Trumpet: Read Rev. 8:8-9.

Describe what happens when the second angel sounds his trumpet. _____

In this second trumpet, God strikes the *seas*. No one really knows what this “something like a great mountain” is. Many speculate it could be an asteroid or comet. Though those are certainly possible, it could also be something especially formed by God for this purpose.

In the first trumpet we saw that one third of the trees and earth were burned up. Here in the second trumpet we see that one third of the sea is turned to blood killing one third of the sea-life and ships.

Again, just for us to gain a mental picture, the Pacific Ocean itself comprises more than 1/3 of the earth’s water. So, imagine the globe now with no Pacific Ocean or western hemisphere.

The Third Trumpet: Read Rev. 8:10-11.

Describe what happens when the third angel sounds his trumpet. _____

This trumpet is very similar to the second. This time “a great star” falls from the heaven and this time, instead of impacting the seas, the rivers are struck, or all the *fresh water bodies*. This star is even named, “Wormwood.” Wormwood is a bitter, poisonous substance derived from a root that causes drunkenness and eventually death. In **Deuteronomy 29:18** Moses uses wormwood and bitterness as an example of what happens when a family turns away from the living God. How appropriate that in the end, God’s wrath against those who have rejected Messiah consists of, in part, bitterness and wormwood.

As with the second trumpet’s “something like a great mountain” Wormwood could most likely be an asteroid or comet.

Again, we see that as before 1/3 of all fresh water bodies are made bitter and poisonous by Wormwood. So far, 1/3 of the land is burned up, 1/3 of the Oceans are turned to blood, and now 1/3 of the fresh water is bitter and poisonous.

The Fourth Trumpet: Read Rev. 8:12-13

Describe what happens when the fourth angel sounds his trumpet. _____

In this trumpet, God strikes the *heavens*. Again we see the ratio of 1/3 used. In this trumpet 1/3 of the light giving/reflecting objects are destroyed resulting in less daylight and more darkness.

QUESTION?	How will the first four trumpets impact life on earth?

At the end of the fourth trumpet, John sees and hears another angel who is flying crying out a woe.

WOE #1: As we'll see there are three woes that are declared during God's unleashing of His wrath on the earth. This is to signify to the inhabitants of the earth that despite what they've experienced, events even worse are coming. This first woe announces that the next three trumpets are worse than the first four.

QUESTION?	In experiencing the first four trumpets, how would you take this announcement?

This woe will bring about perhaps the most fear of the people at large than at any other time in history.

The Fifth Trumpet: Read Revelation 9:1-12

Describe what happens when the fifth angel sounded. _____

This trumpet is a little more involved, so let's break it down a little at a time.

- 1) *A star fallen from heaven.* Most understand this "star" to refer to an angel because in the very next sentence John writes, "To him was given..." A meteor,

- asteroid, or comet cannot be given a key and an ability to unlock the abyss. So, an angel descends to earth with a key.
- 2) *The bottomless pit.* This phrase or concept is referred to 7 times in Revelation. **2 Peter 2:4** and **Jude 6-7** also refer to this. Read those now. According to those passages and the 7 in Revelation, we can understand the bottomless pit (literally *pit of the abyss*) to refer to the prison where some of the demons are held and subjected to severe torment and isolation.¹
 - 3) *Smoke arose.* Once this angel opens the pit of the abyss, a great smoke rises up. This smoke is so dense that the 1/3 of the light left gets darker and the air becomes harder to breathe.
 - 4) *Out of the smoke, locusts came upon the earth.* The rest of this passage deals with the locust and their tasks(s).
 - a. *Power of scorpions.* Most assume this is the painful and non-deadly poisonous stings.
 - b. *Commanded only to harm men not bearing the seal of God.* Their purpose is only the torment of non-believers. We know that the 144,000 are sealed and most hold that anyone that becomes believers through the message and witness of the 144,000 will also themselves be sealed. The locusts, unlike the locusts we see, will not harm any plant life – only mankind.
 - c. *Not given authority to kill.* No men or women will die on account of the locusts, but will be in absolute torment for *five months*.
 - d. *Men will seek death but will not find it.* Tragically, the suffering will be so great that countless will pursue suicide, but will be unable to accomplish their desired task, resulting in more torment.
 - e. *Shape of the locusts...*
 - i. *Like horses prepared for battle.* As you read this (vs. 7-10) you quickly realize these are no ordinary locusts. They are prepared for intense battle. This is an army – a nation of locusts prepared by God for this one act.
 - f. *And they had as king...* These locusts are ruled. There is a plan and strategy. They are carrying out orders. This king is referred to as “the angel of the bottomless pit”. His name in Hebrew is *Abaddon* and in Greek *Apollyon* both of which mean, “Destroyer.” There is some discussion as to whether Apollyon is a fallen angel or the appointed angel of God to keep the bottomless pit and carry out this trumpet’s wrath. We don’t know for sure. However, it seems more reasonable to this writer that Apollyon is carrying out the orders of God not Satan.

John ends the details of the fifth trumpet with the statement, “*one woe is past... still two more woes are coming after these things.*” This is a reminder that it gets even worse.

¹ MacArthur, John F. *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Word Bibles: Nashville, TN. 1997) pg. 2003.

The Sixth Trumpet: Read Rev. 9:13-21

Describe the events that unfold when the sixth angel sounds. _____

As the sixth angel sounds, four angels that were “*prepared for the hour and day and month and year*” were released from the Euphrates (one of the major rivers for the region of Israel and flowed in the Garden of Eden).

These four angels seem to lead a major cavalry of 200 million horses and horsemen. Out of the horses’ mouths came three “plagues.”

What are the three plagues that come out of the horses’ mouths?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

We see that these three plagues kill a ratio of mankind. **What ratio of mankind dies as a result of these three plagues?** _____.

QUESTION?	According to Rev. 9:20-21, what is the reaction of the survivors of this trumpet?

The Small Scroll: Read Rev. 10

How does John describe this angel? _____

After hearing the voices of the seven thunders, John was commanded not to write down what they said. Then this angel with one foot on the sea and one foot on the land proclaims the power of the Creator God and swears by His name that the mystery of God would be finished.

QUESTION?	To what ‘mystery’ is the angel referring?

The word “mystery” is often used in the New Testament to refer to truths God had revealed, but only in part. Paul uses this terminology about the “mystery of Christ” where he refers to God revealed there would be a Messiah, but then later reveals that to be Jesus. In this case, the mystery refers to the consummation of all things as God destroys sinners and ushers His kingdom in full on earth.²

One last interesting section of this passage is that John is then commanded to eat the small scroll. When he does, the taste is sweet in his mouth but bitter in his stomach. Although we don’t know for sure, this probably refers to the bitterness of God’s remaining wrath but the sweetness of the consummation of His kingdom on earth.

The TWO WITNESSES: Read Rev. 11:1-14

This section begins with a command to John to measure what? _____

What does this imply? _____

The angel then commands John to leave out the court of the Gentiles. Why would the angel make such a command? _____

At this time God is pursuing the redemption of Israel. Read **Romans 11:25-26**. When is the “fullness of the Gentiles” complete? _____

Upon the coming of the Day of the LORD, the fullness of the Gentiles is complete at the rapture and now God passionately pursues Israel to fulfill His covenant with Abraham. Thus, He sealed 144,000 Jews for the purpose of evangelizing Israel. This truth is even further substantiated in this passage of Revelation where the court of the Gentiles is excluded and they will “tread the holy city underfoot.”

We also see that the Gentiles will tread Jerusalem underfoot for “forty-two months.” This is precisely 3 ½ years. Thus, at the midpoint of the tribulation, the enemies of the Jews (led by Antichrist and His desecration of the temple) begin to trample Jerusalem.

² MacArthur, 2005.

At the same time (midpoint) we are introduced to these “two witnesses” whom God will empower to prophesy for “1,260 days” clothed in sackcloth (a symbol their urgency and burden and mourning). Remembering that the Hebrew year is based on a lunar calendar of 360 days, how many years is “1260 days?” _____

So we see that these two witnesses prophesy for the duration of the last half of the tribulation in and around the temple in Jerusalem.

QUESTION?	How does the angel describe the two witnesses in vs. 4-6?

The angel’s reference to the two olive trees and two lampstands goes back to **Zechariah 4:11-14**. What two Biblical characters had the same powers described here for the two witnesses? _____

As we read the Scriptures, we see that Elijah the prophet was called by God to shut the heavens so that no rain fell during the days of King Ahab of Israel. We also see God worked through Moses to turn the Nile River into blood and send the ten plagues on Egypt. Also, interestingly, Elijah never died and no one say Moses buried since God Himself buried him. Finally, who were the two witnessed by Peter, James, and John at the Transfiguration (read **Matthew 17**)? _____

Though we don’t know for sure, it is most likely that these two witnesses could be Elijah and Moses.

QUESTION?	According to Rev. 11:7-10, what happens to the two witnesses?

At the end of their 1,260 days, God permits them to be killed. Who is that kills the two witnesses? _____

Here, of course, the “beast” refers to the Antichrist. He kills the two witnesses and, as a result, many continue to worship him and rejoice at the death of these two trouble makers.

QUESTION?	According to Rev. 11:11-13, what happens 3 ½ days later?

After 3 ½ days, God raises the two witnesses back to life at the terror and awe of all who see. If that weren't enough, John records here that when they resurrect, they will also ascend into heaven in a manner similar to that of Jesus in **Acts 1**. This ‘ascension’ will be succeeded by a great earthquake resulting in the destruction of a tenth of the city and the death of 7,000 people. But the most remarkable and important result is revealed in **Revelation 11:13** at the end of the verse.

What is the most important result of these events according to this verse? _____

WOE #2: The five months of locusts, the two witnesses, and the great earthquake compose the second woe. Unfortunately for the inhabitants of the earth, the third one is coming quickly.

The Seventh Trumpet: Read Revelation 11:15-19

Describe the events when the seventh angel sounds: _____

The blasting of this (the last trumpet) signals the beginning of the consummation of the kingdom of God on earth. There is worship and the inhabitants of the earth remaining experience more cosmic disturbances at the opening of the Temple of God in heaven. This scene sets the stage for the Seven Bowl judgments which will complete the wrath of God.