

Revelation 8:6FF
The Trumpets of Heaven

This morning we come back to Chapter 8 of Revelation.

LOTR – Some of the “Fellowship” GROUP ARE OVERTAKEN BY ORCS Boromir SEEKS TO defend the Hobbits. He blows his horn of Gondor to sound an alarm and it resounds with hope in the battle.

In chapter 8 of Revelation the trumpet blasts actually give hope to believers that God will come and bring justice and relief.

The book unfolds with a series of 7's – SEALS, TRUMPETS, HISTORIES, BOWLS OF WRATH, AND SEVEN various visions.

The seven cycles retell the same story dealing with the period between the first and second coming of Christ. They glimpse the reality from different angles but are all dealing with the same time frame.
Parallel visions

I'm not the only PCA pastor who has preached on Revelation during the past two years. Some started before the pandemic, others after it started.

I know that some pastors have been asked, “Are you going to preach on the Corona Virus?”
“Yes and No”.

By the time we get to chap 8, it has already been alluded to 6:7-8- the fourth Seal – Horseman ‘Death’.

These things unleashed in the 7 Seals, Trumpets, Bowls of wrath come from, and are limited by, the will of God. They are not simply random events of natural catastrophes, disease, plagues, etc. God is sovereign over them.

That is the lesson that Job learned in one of the earliest books of the Bible. Job and his friends tried to decipher the “why?” and Job learned that the real concern is the ‘WHO?’.

WHO DO YOU TRUST?

So too for us today.

Helpful reminder: There is a reason why **Charles Spurgeon said that “only fools and madmen are positive in their interpretations of the Apocalypse.”**

While I seek to understand the book, I admit that I may be wrong. There are diligent sincere scholars and men of faith with varying opinions. So, while I'm not trying to PROVE one view over another, I do hope to offer some clarity.

As we think of the “timeline” involved we can admit that in a sense there's not much difference if the judgments announced are spread throughout the church age or if there is a distinct intensification right before the return of Christ. In our minds' eye it may seem to be a long time, but to God it is all just a dot of time in light of eternity.

However, you view the timeline of events, the purpose of God is the same. He sends His judgments upon the world because of rebellious idolatry. The church does get caught up in the process as God is purifying the faith and hope of His people. (1 Pet 1)

Rev 8:...

6 And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them.

7 The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

8 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 creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.

10 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 waters. 11 The name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter. 12 The fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way. 13 Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in mid-heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

We need to see the trumpets in light of 8:3-5 – prayers of martyrs thrown down to earth.

With the first 4 trumpets we see that the damage is pervasive – it affects every sphere of the created order: dry land, sea, fresh water, and the sky above.

The damage is also LIMITED – 1/3 is repeated over and over – 11x

The headline disasters that sound like the plagues and trumpets are a preview of judgment to come. They are the "two minute warning" or the "bell lap" designed to wake up complacent sinners.

Eph 5:13 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. 14 For this reason it says,
"Awake, sleeper,
And arise from the dead,
And Christ will shine on you."

God is all about us being "woke" regarding eternal things. One problem with our current cultural "woke mantra" is that it is focused on temporal things and leaves God and eternity out of the picture. **What good is to be woke to the world but asleep to God?**

CS Lewis – pain is God's megaphone. The trumpets are God's spiritual alarm clock.

God restrains his own justice and righteous wrath as well as the destruction caused by human evil in order to give rebels time to repent.

SPOILER ALERT – ch 9, 16 we'll see that many did NOT repent following the judgments.

Revelation gives a contrast between earth dwellers vs those who dwell in heaven. The "earth dwellers" are those who oppose the kingdom of God and kill His saints. The woes coming in 8:13 – ch 9 are directed to the earth dwellers

Christians need not fear (9:4) the judgements of the trumpets. Those sealed by God are protected, i.e. totality of all believers. The protection does not cover ALL physical harm, but it is eternal spiritual protection.

The trumpets are aimed at those who refuse to worship God, the Creator

1st – storm of hail, etc. bloody electrical storm sets a 3rd of earth ablaze – symbolic language. Burning the land of enemy was typical in war, i.e. the Burning of Atlanta

Results destroy trees – olives, vineyards, wheat, crops etc NO OIL, WINE, BREAD. All are hungry – people and animals.

2nd – judgement on oceans – blood, marine life dies, ships destroyed. The burning mountain?? The audience did not have a modern view, but look at OT.

THE Mediterranean Sea was crucial in their lives – a 3rd is destroyed – Economic collapse, supply chains

80 AD volcanic eruption and Pompeii is destroyed and the Bay of Naples

3rd Trumpet – star falls from heaven- Wormwood, rivers and water – made bitter.

A Flaming meteorite?? Who knows?

Remember that apocalyptic language is very symbolic.

Wormwood is a bitter herb, a poison or medicine to kill intestinal germs.

Same for 1/3 of earth to drink bitter water – drought, famine. While wormwood does make the water bitter, it doesn't necessarily kill, but again, we are dealing with symbolic language. **Wormwood's bitterness is emblematic of death."** - Dennis Johnson

The word Chernobyl = "wormwood" – destruction of environment and contaminated water supply. We hear bitter water and think of industrial pollution, but that would not mean much to the original audience.

During warfare in those days, it was typical to poison or cut off the water supply. The first hearers could identify with that.

God used wormwood to chastise rebellious Israel Also for idolatry – Jer 9:15

Idolatry, like all sin makes us delusional and we think the created can rise above the Creator's throne. Power idolatry is not just nation states but ideologies – social or political, corporate power, personal relational power.

Don't put your hope in nature or the Nation State. We can't control either of those. Put your hope in God alone.

A question we should raise as we go through Revelation is. **"Where do our hearts and hopes go when difficulties come?"**

4th v. 12- 1/3 of heavenly lights darkened- galaxy is impacted- not an eclipse but lack of light – day and night. 1/3 less sunshine – vital for heat, crops, life

In OT darkness Joel is symbol of judgment vs New City – God is their light

On the cross, darkness came over the earth

Natural disasters and man-made disasters that have blocked the sun have happened and continue to happen. If we try to pinpoint every instance of that and tie it to the visionary language of Revelation, we are over thinking things.

The basic point is that NO aspect of creation remains untouched, and no kingdom or power will remain unscathed.

The original audience suffered under evil rulers. What hope did they need? THEY NEEDED to know that God would vindicate them AND HIS Kingdom AS A WHOLE.

The great empires of the world are all just pages in our history books. Cemeteries are filled with "indispensable men."

The Lion Lamb uses the evil desires of those who wish to conquer, wage war, and inflict destruction for His own purposes of judging the rebellious and purifying the saints.

EX: the template for hero or superhero stories is that there is an evil genius who seeks to dominate the world even it means destroying much of it. I've never understood that. Then the superhero or James

Bond, Jack Bauer, or John Wick type comes in and saves the day. Revelation shows us that the only true ultimate savior is Christ, the Lion – Lamb.

After the 4th trumpet we get a preview v 13 of next three. John looked and HEARD THE woes.

– Eagle flying overhead can be seen – a bad omen. Bird of prey – unclean = “vulture” Matt 24:28- message of doom to earth dwellers.

Woe= pain, displeasure

Warning of next 3 trumpets to come. Why this transition?

A shift happens as 5-7 get more intense and directly on mankind, not indirectly as in trumpets 1-4. The vulture is circling.

The message is in the math – 1/3 of earth, trees, ocean, creatures, ships 12x used. The math shows the severity of judgment.

The seals were ¼; trumpets now 1/3 ; Bowls of wrath at totality – unrepentance of earth dwellers.

Increased severity leads to unavoidable result in final judgement of 7th trumpet. The message to the enemies of God is that “no enemy of God will survive.”

These final woes are aimed at unbelievers and those who persecute God’s people.

The last 3 trumpets give a call to repentance. Now is the time to repent.

Message for the church- comfort for the saints is unveiled.

John isn’t living his “best life now” because biblical reality is messy. The Christians are persecuted, and this throws them into crisis of faith. At time of doubt, John gives hope with the Revelation of trumpet judgments.

Do these descriptions of the trumpet judgments sound familiar? – see EXodus

The chaos of the exodus plagues, therefore, comes later to be seen as the pattern for the end-time tribulation as portrayed in the plague series of the trumpets and bowls in the book of Revelation. This pattern of end-time trial is also expressed in the inaugurated trials of Jesus’s ministry and of the church, (Beale and Campbell)

As Moses gathered the 12 tribes of Israel and led them out of bondage, so too Jesus gathers the church and leads her out of bondage to sin and death.

1st trumpet = Exod 9 hail and fire

2nd & 3rd =Exod 7 poisoning of was and waters

Just as the plagues of Exod revealed the hardness of Pharaoh’s heart, so too the Seal and Trumpet judgments unveil the hardness and unbelief of the human heart in this age, even after the work and resurrection of Christ.

View Revelation through lens of Exodus – anticipate deliverance.

Israel was delivered by the army of Egypt being washed away. We are delivered by the blood of Christ that washes away our sin.

The exodus of the church is preceded by plagues on those who oppose God and His church.

How does God protect us? Blood of the Lion-Lamb.

Thought it may take more time that we like, the prayer of the saints is answered.

God proclaims hope and His love for His people as he avenges those who are killed for their witness.

The trumpets show that God's love for His people is still active. He has not forgotten or forsaken us.

The words that Jesus spoke to his disciples still apply to us today...

John 16:33 These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation but take courage; I have overcome the world."

- The ABC's of a Trust Transfer –
- A - Admit that you can't save yourself and that you need grace – That means there is GOOD NEWS FOR YOU
- B- Believe that Jesus is the only Wisdom and Savior who can forgive your sin and heal your heart
- C- confess to God that you want to trust Jesus as your savior and Lord.

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