

Series: *A Walk through the Book of Revelation*

Revelation 8-9 "The Judgment Continues--the Trumpets" part one

It almost takes your breath away to try and keep up with the rapid changes occurring in our world. Last week we began our study by pondering what's happening in Asia. This week let me share some things about Europe. The following assessment comes from *Operation World* in their daily prayer guide...

1 The massive culture-change in Europe as postmodernism and post-Christian world views predominate and control the media. Younger Europeans have moved away from the certainties of their Judeo-Christian heritage to New Age thinking, relative truth, reincarnation and the occult.

2 The political integration of Europe has gathered pace the ultimate form, the degree of democratic accountability and the extent of sacrifice of national sovereignty are matters for intense debate and concern. The EU has not been renowned for its transparent finances, democratic accountability and visionary leadership.

3 The ethnic fragmentation of Europe. Even as the EU expands the vexed issue of ethnic nationalisms in the UK, France, Spain, Central Europe, Belgium, the Hungarian minorities, and the Russian federation has grown in significance. Racism has reared its ugly head in the 'ethnic cleansing' of the Balkans and the treatment of immigrants and Roma people in many countries. This is a challenge to Christians to demonstrate Christ's love and that the power of the gospel transcends culture.

4 A steady erosion of religious freedom all over Europe. This comes from:

a) *Secular society* which regards Christian absolutes with intolerance and as the 'unpardonable sin'. Bible-believing Christians are ridiculed, marginalized and even legislated against through the insistence of secularists on equality before the law of deviant lifestyles contrary to Scripture.

b) *Governments* who have over-reacted to extreme acts of small sectarian groups and arbitrarily black-listed a wide range of innocent religious groups in France, Austria, Belgium, Belarus, Russia and elsewhere.

c) *The Orthodox Church* which, in many countries of central and eastern Europe, has reacted vigorously to minority religious groups through pressing for discriminatory legislation, harassment and misleading propaganda against them. Evangelicals in Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Belarus and Russia have had considerable difficulties in their ministry and witness.

5 The increasing flow of immigrants - both legal and illegal from outside Europe. There may now be nearly 30 million immigrants in Europe since 1945 who originated from other continents. Despite stricter controls, the rate is increasing and has become a lucrative source of income to criminal networks. Nearly 500,000 apply for asylum in Europe every year.

6 The growth of Muslim communities through immigration and a higher birth rate is such that Islam has become the second religion of Europe. Muslims are successfully pressing for legislation which favours their religious beliefs in many countries. It is the majority religion of Bosnia, and would be of potential nations Kosovo in Yugoslavia and Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Chechnya and Dagestan in the Russian Federation. It is the single largest religious group in Albania. Pray that Christians might be alerted to the need of these people for the gospel and be equipped to meet it. [\[1\]](#)

Yes, things are changing rapidly in our world. Which makes our study in the book of Revelation quite timely. This evening we'll be in chapter 8, but let's do a quick review first...

Review of highlights so far:

1. The book of Revelation is the revelation of a Person, Jesus Christ (1:3). In this book, the Lord reveals who He is and what He is going to do (4:1).

2. In recording this revelation the apostle John used apocalyptic literature as the style by which he communicated what he saw. In so doing he utilized a host of highly symbolic images. Over and over we see the phrase, "What I saw was *like* this...and *like* that..."

Our human vocabulary and experience is too limited to describe fully the supernatural sights which John was privileged to see in this vision.

3. The original intent of this book was to give hope to a persecuted church (actually seven local churches) at the end

of the first century A.D.

4. The flow of the book thus far is as follows. John was exiled on Patmos when on one Lord's day he was "in the Spirit" (1:10) and allowed to see a vision of the glorified Christ. The Lord dictated to John seven letters for seven local churches in Asia Minor (chs 2-3). In chapter 4 John was allowed to see a vision of the throne of the Almighty in heaven. Then in chapter 5 he saw the Lamb approach the throne and take a scroll with seven seals from the hand of the Almighty. In chapters 6-8a the Lamb opens the seven seals and a series of judgments occur on the earth. We're also told in chapter 7 that the Lord sealed 144,000 individuals from the twelve tribes of Israel. Following the opening of the seventh seal, there was about one-half hour of silence in heaven (8:1).

Additional Observations concerning the Judgments in Revelation:

1. In the book of Revelation there are three series of judgments, each possessing a structure utilizing the number "seven" (which represents completeness, that is, the coming judgment will be complete and final). There are seven seals (6:1-8:5), seven trumpets (8:6-11:19), and seven bowls of wrath (chs 15-16).

Note: Each of the three judgments concludes with a similar occurrence of catastrophic events: "There came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake,"--after the seals in 8:5, after the trumpets in 11:19, and after the bowls in 16:18).

2. A key question pertains to the relationship between the seal judgments, trumpet judgments, and bowl judgments. The word "then" in 8:6 and later in 16:1 seems to indicate a chronological flow. Out of the seal judgments flow the trumpet judgments, and out of the trumpet judgments flow the bowl judgments.

There seems to be a telescoping effect...

Seven Seals

Seven Trumpets

Seven Bowls

The Seven Trumpet Judgments

Preliminary Observations:

1. The significance of the seals goes back to the scroll which apparently contains the redemptive plan of God for His universe. The scroll was sealed with seven seals. The trumpet judgments, however, are so called because they are initiated by seven angels in God's presence who were given seven trumpets.

Discuss: What is the significance of a trumpet? What was it used for in biblical times? --military significance (revelry and taps) --used in battle --signify the arrival of royalty

2. As with the seal judgments, there is a parenthesis between the sixth and seventh trumpet judgments (from 10:1-11:14).

3. Here's the outline of the seven trumpets...

I. The First Angel sounds his trumpet (8:7).

II. The Second Angel sounds his trumpet (8:8-9).

III. The Third Angel sounds his trumpet (8:10-11).

IV. The Fourth Angel sounds his trumpet (8:12).

***An Eagle brings a message (8:13).*

V. The Fifth Angel sounds his trumpet (9:1-12).

VI. The Sixth Angel sounds his trumpet (9:13-21).

***A Parenthesis (10:1-11:14)*

VII. The Seventh Angel sounds his trumpet (11:15-19).

Let's now examine the seven trumpet judgments one at a time...

I. The First Angel sounds his trumpet (8:7).

What do you do with a trumpet? You blow it and it makes a sound. So the seven angels prepare to do (see verse 6). In the structure of the first four trumpets John tells us what happened when the trumpet was sounded (i.e. the

event), and then what the effect was.

A. Here's the event.

Hail and fire mixed with blood were hurled on the earth.

Q: What previous event does this resemble? Ex 9:13-25, 7th plague

B. Here's the effect.

One third of earth's vegetation was burned up.

Q: What specific vegetation is mentioned?

Note: The fraction 1/3 will be repeated several times in this section.

II. The Second Angel sounds his trumpet (8:8-9).

A. Here's the event.

Something like a huge, blazing mountain was thrown into the sea.

Key: Notice the term "like" here and below. It's not a mountain, but "like" one.

B. Here's the effect.

One third of the sea turned to blood.

Q: What's that reminiscent of? 1st plague, Ex 7:20-21

One third of the sea creatures died.

One third of the ships were destroyed.

III. The Third Angel sounds his trumpet (8:10-11).

A. Here's the event.

A great star will fall on one third of the rivers and springs.

The star's name is *Wormwood*.

Q: Is this an actual star or a figure of speech? See 1:20 where we see stars used to represent angels.

B. Here's the effect.

One third of the fresh water turned bitter.

Many people died from the bitter water.

Observation: As I read these judgments, it strikes me that this is the *opposite* of Genesis 1. In Genesis 1, there's creation. In Revelation 8, there's destruction. In Genesis 1, God created plant-life and sea creatures and stars. Revelation 8, however, tells us that there's coming a day when God will judge His created order--plant-life will be destroyed, sea creatures will die, and stars will fall.

IV. The Fourth Angel sounds his trumpet (8:12).

A. Here's the event.

One third of the sun, moon, and stars turned dark.

B. Here's the effect.

One third of the day and night were without light.

Q: What does that mean? Is it saying that one-third of the luminaries will not shine, or that the illumination of all of the luminaries will be diminished by one-third? Or something else?

Q: Has this type of darkening ever occurred before? See the 9th plague, Ex 10:21-23; see *NIV Study Bible* note, "References to the Egyptian plagues suggest that in Revelation we have the final exodus of God's people from the bondage of a world controlled by hostile powers."

At this point, John saw something that broke the flow of the trumpet judgments.

***An Eagle brings a message (8:13).*

Q: What's unique about this eagle? It can talk!

Q: What message does the eagle give? A threefold pronouncement of woe.

Q: What's true of the following trumpets? Will they be worse than what's already happened?!

Key: God is holy. He is awesome. Here we see Him unleashing His just wrath against a world that is in rebellion against Him, a world He created and that is rightfully His.

Discuss: What kind of impact should this scene have on us?

V. The Fifth Angel sounds his trumpet (9:1-12).

A. John saw a star fall (1-2).

1. The star had a key to open the Abyss.

2. When he opened it, smoke and locust-like-creatures came out.
- B. John described the creatures (3-11).
 1. They have power like scorpions (3-6).
 - They are told not to harm vegetation.
 - They are told not to harm those with the seal of God.
 - They are told to torture but not kill those without the seal of God for five months.
 - People will want to die but not be able to die.
 - Discuss: How can this be?
 2. They look like horses prepared for battle (7-10).
 - Note: Repeated use of "like" again. Their hair was *like*..., etc.
 3. Their king's name is Abaddon (11).
 - Q: What is it in Greek?
 - Q: Why are we given both the Hebrew and Greek name?
- C. John clarifies that this is the first woe (12).

The second woe--which is the sixth seal--is next. We'll consider that next time...

VI. The Sixth Angel sounds his trumpet (9:13-21).

***A Parenthesis (10:1-11:14)*

VII. The Seventh Angel sounds his trumpet (11:15-19).

Reflection Questions:

1. What questions does this passage raise for you? Sometimes just identifying the right *questions* helps move us in the right direction to find the right answers.
2. What lessons do we learn from this vision? What does it teach us about God? About God's plan?
3. Why does God want us to know what He's going to do to this world?

[1] Taken from www.operationworld.org.