

Revelation 10 "The Judgment Continues--the Trumpets," part 3

Welcome back to our continuing journey through the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. This is a revelation of a person, Jesus Christ (1:1). It's also a record of what this person will do--it's a vision of future events (see 4:1).

The drama has to do with a scroll which represents the plan of God for His universe. The Lamb begins to open that scroll, and thus enact its contents in chapter 6 (see 6:1). Thus, the scroll represents what God is going to do in the future to judge His rebellious world.

In chapters 6-7, the Lamb cuts the seven seals on the scroll, and a series of judgments occur. Out of the seventh seal comes seven more judgments which take place as seven angels blow their trumpets.

Review: (last two week's material)

A quick review of the first six trumpet judgments...

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

A. Here's the event.

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

B. Here's the effect.

- One third of earth's vegetation was burned up.

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.

B. Here's the effect.

- One third of the sea turned to blood.
- 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*.

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.

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.

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

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.

Something similar happened with the Egyptian plagues. God protected His people from the effects which devastated Egypt and the Egyptians (Ex. 8:22; 9:4, 26).

- 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.
2. They look like horses prepared for battle (7-10).
 3. Their king's name is Abaddon (11).
- C. John clarifies that this is the first woe (12).

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

A. John heard a voice (13-14).

1. It came from the horns of the altar.
2. It told the sixth angel to release four angels.

B. John gave information about the four angels.

1. They were previously bound at the Euphrates River.
2. They were prepared for this very hour, day, month, and year.

C. John explained what happened when the angels were released (15-16).

1. They killed a third of mankind.
2. John heard the number of mounted troops: 200 million.

D. John elaborates on the details of his vision (17-19).

1. He describes the horses and riders (17).
2. He describes how one third of mankind was killed (18).
 - By plagues of fire, smoke, and sulfur
3. He describes the power of the horses (18).

E. John gives the response of the survivors (20-21).

1. They did not repent of the works of their hands.
2. They did not stop worshiping demons and idols.
3. They did not repent of their sins.

New Material...

Before coming to the seventh trumpet judgment there is a break--as there was between the sixth and seventh seal judgments.

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

Here's what happened in the interval...

I. John saw another angel (1-7).

The book is full of angels performing the plan of God...

A. Here's what the angel looked like (1).

Q: What are we told about him?

1. He was robed in a cloud.
2. He had a rainbow above his head.
3. His face was like the sun.
4. His legs were like fiery pillars.

Note: The imagery speaks of this angel's might. He's awe-inspiring.

B. Here's what the angel did (2-4).

1. He was holding a little scroll (2a).

Q: What is it? It's not the same as the scroll in 5:1.

Q: What's different about this scroll than the one in ch 5? It's open.

2. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land (2b).
3. He shouted (3).

Here's what happened when he shouted...

4. His shout produced a response (3b-4).

Q: What was the response?

- Seven thunders spoke.

Note: In 8:5, 11:19, and 16:18 thunder is connected with divine punishment (*NIVsb*). We can conjecture this was some message of impending punishment.

- John wanted to write it down but was not permitted.

Remember John was told to write down what he saw (1:19), so that's what he intended to do--until he was told not to.

Q: What was John told to do with the message? Seal it up.

Q: Why this prohibition?

Q: Who else was told to seal up a prophetic message? Daniel in 12:4, 9

C. Here's what the angel announced (5-7).

Q: What did this angel do before he spoke? Verse 5--raised his right hand, thus preparing to take an oath

Q: Who did he swear by? Verse 6

1. "There will be no more delay (6)."

Q: Delay for what? For what's about to happen...

2. "In the seventh trumpet the mystery of God will be accomplished (7)."

We'll come back to this key verse in a moment...

II. John interacted with the angel (8-11).

A. A voice told John to take the scroll (8).

B. The angel told John to eat the scroll (9-10).

Q: Why would he be told to eat a scroll? Perhaps the idea is "digest it thoroughly" (*NIVsb*).

Q: What happened?

C. Then John received another message (11).

1. He was to prophesy again.

2. He was to prophesy about many peoples, nations, languages, and kings.

Q: Where is this prophesy recorded? Beginning with the seventh trumpet?

Key Question: What is the "mystery of God?"

In 10:7, the angel referred to the "mystery of God" and said it was about to be "accomplished." He said this mystery was what God had announced previously through His prophets.

Q: What message had the prophets given? Actually, they gave many messages. They were reformers who called the people of God to repent and return to the Torah of God. But a theme common to all the prophets was this theme--*judgment*. First, God is going to judge His people. Next, God is going to judge the wicked nations of this world.

Q: What phrase do the prophets use to refer to the times of the Lord's judgment in their days as well as to the ultimate time of judgment? It's the "Day of the Lord." The prophets delivered this message over and over, "Yes, man is having *his* day now, but the time is coming when the *Lord* will have *His* day."

Isaiah referred to it (13:9). So did Jeremiah (46:10). And Ezekiel (13:5; 30:3). As did Zephaniah (1:7, 14) and Zechariah (14:1), and Malachi (4:5).

A Sampling: "The Day of the Lord" in the OT prophets

Amos 5:18 "Woe to you who long for the day of the LORD! Why do you long for the day of the LORD? That day will be darkness, not light."

Amos 8:9 "In that day, declares the Sovereign LORD, I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight."

Obadiah 15 "The day of the LORD is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head."

Joel 2:1-2 "Blow the trumpets in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand--a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness."

Joel 2:11 "The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it?"

Joel 2:31-32 "The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved..."

An interpretation challenge: It's not always easy to determine just what day the prophets have in mind when they speak of the "Day of the LORD." Sometimes Joel uses it to refer to the judgment that was about to come on the Israelites in his day, while at other times he has in mind the ultimate Day (such as in the 2:31 text which he says will happen *after* the Spirit has been poured out on all people--2:28).

In my estimation, though Daniel does not use the phrase "Day of the Lord," he was given a vision of that day in Daniel 9, and refers to that day as "the seventieth seven (or "week")." (see 9:26-27)

When we come to the NT, we find the phrase as well. Paul used it (1 Thes 5:2; 2 Thes 2:2). So did Peter (2 Pet 3:10). Peter actually quoted Joel 2 in his Acts 2 sermon (Acts 2:20).

Plug all this in to the angel's announcement to John in Revelation 10:7. The "mystery of God" which God previously announced to the prophets is this. God will have His day! The *NIV Study Bible* offers this explanation (footnote, p. 1936), "In apocalyptic thought mysteries were secrets preserved in heaven and revealed to the apocalypticist. Here the mystery is that God has won the victory over the forces of evil and will reign for ever and ever (cf. 11:15)."

For Discussion:

It's easy to get lost in the details of the book of Revelation and miss the point. So let's jot down...

1. What is clear from this message of Revelation so far?
2. What's not clear? What questions does the book raise that are difficult to answer?

Next Time...

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