

Series: *A Walk through the Book of Revelation*

Revelation 9 "The Judgment Continues—the Trumpets, part 2"

I'm a person that likes to have everything in order (okay, that's a matter of perspective, because your sense of "order" and mine may differ; but that's another story!). I don't like loose ends. I like systems that are neat and tidy and predictable and organized. Again, I'm not saying my life is that way, but that's what I like. Some of you can relate.

And that's why the book of Revelation can frustrate us. The further we move into the book the more questions it raises, hard questions. Yes, the main point is clear—Jesus is coming back and He's going to have His way with His world and His people will enjoy His presence forever! But what about all the details and particulars in this book? What's the point of all the specific images?

I'm learning to live with tension. There are going to be unanswered questions in this study, and that's not a bad thing.

Discuss: What biblical principles should guide us in this study? One is humility. Another is comparing Scripture with Scripture. A third is the resolve to affirm emphatically no more than, and no less than, what the Scriptures clearly teach. Any others?

Review:

*The Seven Trumpet Judgments--Preliminary Observations:*

1. The trumpet judgments are so called because they are initiated by seven angels in God's presence who were given seven trumpets.
2. As with the seal judgments, there is a parenthesis between the sixth and seventh trumpet judgments (from 10:1-11:14).

*A quick review of the first four 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. 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.

Key: These judgments seem to reflect the judgments God inflicted upon the Egyptians as described in the book of Exodus. (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.")

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

*New Material...*

### **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.

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.

- On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold.
- Their faces resembled human faces.
- Their hair was like woman's hair.
- Their teeth were like lion's teeth.
- They had breastplates like breastplates of iron.
- The sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses...
- They had tails and stings like scorpions.

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? The name means "Destroyer."

- C. John clarifies that this is the first woe (12).

The second woe--which is the sixth seal--is next...

## **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.

Discuss: Do even wicked creatures fulfill the plan of God? What does this say to us about God's sovereignty?

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.

These verses raise several questions that are difficult to answer...

Q: Who are these mounted troops? And why are we told their number?

Q: What's the relationship between verse 15 and verse 16? Are the mounted troops in verse 16 part of the one-third who were killed in verse 15?, or are they part of the force that does the killing, or something else?

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

1. He describes the horses and riders (17).

Q: What horses and riders? Those mentioned in verse 16?

Notice their description...

--Concerning their breastplates--fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur

--Concerning the heads of the horses--resemble the heads of lions

--Concerning what came out of their mouths--fire, smoke, sulfur

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).

Q: Where was the source of their power? In their mouths and tails

Q: What were their tails like? Snakes (The *NIV Study Bible* suggests this emphasizes the demonic origin of the horses--see also 12:9)

Discussion: Is John describing angelic beings? Is he using metaphoric language to depict modern warfare

machinery? I believe it's the former.

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

Q: What are three things the survivors did not do? John tells us...

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.

Discuss: As with Pharaoh in ancient Egypt, these plagues do not change the hearts of rebels. What do we learn about the human heart from this account?

*Next Time...*

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

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

### Reflection Questions:

Last time we concluded with a couple of questions I'd like us to consider again...

1. What lessons do we learn from this vision? What does it teach us about God? About God's plan?
2. Why does God want us to know what He's going to do to this world? What effect should this portion of His Word have on us?