

The Book Of Revelation - Chapters Eight & Nine

THE SEVENTH SEAL

And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. 3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer [it] with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, [which came] with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. 5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast [it] into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. 6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

THE FIRST TRUMPET

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

THE SECOND TRUMPET

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

THE THIRD TRUMPET

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; 11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

THE FOURTH TRUMPET

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. 13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

SILENCE ANNOUNCES SEVEN TRUMPETS

- note that judgments intensify through book: seals, trumpets, vials
- seals, trumpets in first 3.5 years / vials in last 3.5 years of Tribulation
- trumpet & vial judgments (ch. 16) very similar, but vials more severe
- seventh seal - contains seven trumpet judgments
- silence - in awe of terrible Day of the Lord (Zeph. 1:7)
- half an hour - singing throughout OT temple sacrifices, but absolute silence during the offering of incense (prayers of saints - Ps. 141:2)
- God is silencing Heaven's praise to hear the prayers of His Saints!

TRUMPETS IN THE BIBLE

- Trumpets announced war, gathered people together (Num. 10:1-10)
- Trumpets sounded when the law was given (Exodus 19:16-19)
- Trumpets sounded when a King was enthroned (1 Kings 1:34,39)
- Trumpets sounded at the conquest of Jericho (Joshua 6:13-16)
- Jesus' voice was like the sound of a trumpet (Revelation 1:10)
- John was summoned to Heaven by a trumpet (Revelation 4:1)
- The rapture will be signalled by a trumpet (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

- for centuries the saints have been praying, "Thy Kingdom Come" - those prayers are about to be answered through God's judgments!
- on Day of Atonement (Lev. 16), incense placed on coals in censer; here, incense placed on altar and coals cast to earth (Ez. 10:2)

JUDGMENT ON THE LAND

- similar to seventh plague in Egypt (Ex. 9:24-25)
- 1/3 of trees burned, all green grass burned
- balance of nature & world food supply affected
- these may be events prophesied in Joel 2:30

JUDGMENT ON THE SALT WATER

- similar to first plague in Egypt (Ex. 7:20-21)
- 1/3 of oceans blood (1/4 of earth's surface), 1/3 of fish & ships (approx. 15,000) destroyed
- unprecedented ecological & trade disaster!
- mountain burning with fire - meteor, volcano (?)
- blood - appearance only, or literal (ie: Exodus)

JUDGMENT ON THE FRESH WATER

- 1/3 of earth's drinking water poisoned
- similar to event at Marah (Ex. 15:23-27), but this time no supernatural purification available!
- wormwood - a bitter, often poisonous herb (literally "undrinkable") - perhaps a meteor (?)
- wormwood associated with punishment for sin (Jer. 23:15, Prov. 5:4, Amos 5:7, Deut. 29:18)

JUDGMENT ON THE HEAVENS

- similar to ninth plague in Egypt (Ex. 10:22-23)
- 1/3 of sun, moon & stars darkened
- absolutely black for 1/3 of day! (Amos 5:18)
- man's way of life & climate drastically affected
- supernatural darkness at Calvary (Matt. 27:45)

- angel - "eagle, bird of prey" - could be beast like an eagle (Rev. 4:7-8) sent by God
- last three trumpets judgments are so severe that they are also called "the three woes"
- message: "The Worst Is Yet To Come!"

THE FIFTH TRUMPET

And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. 3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. 5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment [was] as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. 6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. 7 And the shapes of the locusts [were] like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads [were] as it were crowns like gold, and their faces [were] as the faces of men. 8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as [the teeth] of lions. 9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings [was] as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. 10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power [was] to hurt men five months. 11 And they had a king over them, [which is] the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue [is] Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath [his] name Apollyon. 12 One woe is past; [and], behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

THE SIXTH TRUMPET

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. 15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. 16 And the number of the army of the horsemen [were] two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. 17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses [were] as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. 18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. 19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails [were] like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. 20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils,

and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: 21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

AN ARMY OF LOCUSTS

- "a star fall from heaven" - a person ("him") identified in verse 11 as a fallen angel with names - Satan
- Satan compared to morning star (Isaiah 14:12-14), seen falling as lightning from Heaven (Luke 10:18)
- he has to be given the key to loose his own army!
- this army now incarcerated, awaiting their release
- "bottomless pit" - (Greek: "the shaft of the abyss"), an intermediate place of punishment for demons (ie: in Luke 8:31, they begged not to be sent there)
- "smoke" - Jesus said hell like furnace (Matt. 13:42)
- sky darkened even more during this judgment!
- locusts, similar to eighth plague in Egypt (Ex. 10:12)
- Joel prophesied such a plague (Joel 1:6-7, 2:1-11)
- ordinary locusts devour vegetation, but these are demonic beings sent to torment sinful mankind
- scorpion sting a most intense pain (1 Kings 12:11)
- "torment" - not destroy, but lead to repentance
- men will seek death, but will not be able to die!
- plague will last 5 months, the lifespan of a locust
- 5 months (150 days) like flood judgment (Gen. 7:24)
- this plague will not touch the 144,000 sealed Jews (in the church age, Satan cannot touch those sealed by the Holy Ghost - Eph. 1:13) - note that there is no immunity for those "converted" in the Tribulation!
- appearance of locusts similar to Joel's prophecy (locusts actually resemble little armored horses)
- some commentators suggest a human army here, but that is unlikely since these are ruled by an angel
- could be "demon-possessed locusts" (Luke 8:33)
- this king is the angel of the bottomless pit (Abaddon - "the lowest depths of the earth, realm of the dead") and is called Apollyon ("Destroyer" - 1 Cor. 10:10)

AN ARMY OF HORSEMEN

- four fallen angels are loosed from Euphrates River, the cradle of civilization (Gen. 2:14), as well as one of Israel's original boundaries (Gen. 15:18)
- Euphrates River was later a boundary of the Roman Empire, symbolizing restraint on the forces of evil
- "hour...day...month...year" - specific time set by God
- 1/3 of mankind killed (since 1/4 of men killed earlier in Rev. 6:8, this results in 1/2 of mankind now dead)
- this army numbers 200 million horsemen, and some commentators identify this as the Chinese army
- while we know from Rev. 16:12,16 and Rev. 19:19 that great human armies from the East will cross the Euphrates River for the Battle of Armageddon, we cannot definitely identify them here in chapter nine
- this is most likely another demonic army, only this time they are sent to kill rather than torment
- the most frightening thing about the Tribulation is not God's judgments, but the fact that men persist in sinning even while God is judging them!
- these sins will still be prevalent: devil worship and idolatry, murder, sorceries (Greek "pharmakia" - the use of drugs), fornication (sexual sin), theft

- society will be in utter chaos as man's sin increases and God's judgments continue to be poured out
- seventh trumpet will be sounded at Rev. 11:15
- we are approaching the midpoint of the Tribulation