

Revelation Class Week 5 – The Seven Trumpets (Revelation 8-9 and 11)

The Trumpet Judgments - Revelation 8:6-9:21; Revelation 11:15-19.

1. The first five trumpets are patterned after the Exodus plagues.

First Trumpet (8:7): Hail and fire, mixed with blood, trees, grass burned up - Exodus 9:22-25.

Second and Third Trumpet (8:8-11): Sea becomes blood, living creatures in the sea die - Exodus 7:20-25.

Fourth Trumpet (8:12): Sun, moon, and stars struck - Exodus 10:21-23.

Fifth Trumpet (9:1-11): Locusts - Exodus 10:12-15.

2. Each of the Exodus plagues are targeted at the Egyptian gods.

3. In the Old Testament trumpets were used to announce battle and to announce victory.

"It is suitable that the trumpet judgments would be placed immediately after Revelation 7, where the people of God have been portrayed as a fighting army (7:3–8) conducting victorious holy war ironically by remaining faithful despite earthly suffering (7:14)." G. K. Beale, NIGTC Revelation.

Compare: Numbers 1, 10 for armies and the use of multiple trumpets. See also Joshua 6 where 7 priests blow 7 trumpets on the 7th day to declare victory over Jericho.

4. Some view the first 5 seals as things believers will have to endure because of judgement against the world, while the trumpets are specifically aimed at the ungodly.

See also Joel and Amos 1-2 for more trumpets and judgement motifs.

5. Just like Pharaoh did not repent neither will many of the ungodly in the last days. (Revelation 9:20–21)

6. "Sorceries" (Revelation 9:21) is not a prophesy about modern day pharmacies. Pharmakon had a wide use of meaning in ancient Greek. (φάρμακον - pharmakon: poison; magic potion, charm; medicine, remedy, drug.) Because a word was eventually used to make an English word doesn't mean it informs the passage. In most languages the word for drugs is not anything related to pharmakon. To believe English is the ultimate language of Biblical interpretation is extremely self-center and is not proper Bible translation. In context pharmakon clearly means sorcery. **Sorcery can be thought of as engaging in the supernatural/spiritual apart from Yahweh.**

Revelation 8:7 - First Trumpet: Exodus and Judgment Imagery Introduced

1. The first trumpet is going to start things off by giving us an idea of what we are going to be looking at for the rest of these judgments.

2. First we are introduced to Exodus judgment imagery with plague language.

3. Second we are given judgement language from the exile judgement. The 1/3 language is from OT judgement language: Ezekiel 5, Zechariah 13:8-9.

Revelation 8:8 - Second Trumpet: Babylon, The Burning Mountain Thrown into the Sea

Compare Revelation 8:8 to Jeremiah 51:24-25. See also Revelation 18:21.

The Burning Mountain that is thrown into the sea is a clear reference to Jeremiah 51:24-25. Babylon, in Revelation, is going to represent the world system. While we have seen and will continue to see Rome is in view as the world system, John will use "Babylon" to describe it. Primarily for its allusions to the Old Testament but also to avoid unneeded attention to his letter. Had John spoken blatantly and openly against

Rome there could have been further consequences for John and his message to the churches. There is some evidence that the church would use “code words” to avoid persecution in the early days.

Revelation 8:10-11 - Third Trumpet: The Stars and “Wormwood”

See Psalm 78:44; Jeremiah 9:15, 23:15.

1. Wormwood is the name of a plant that has a bitter tasting extract that comes from it. The stars falling to make the waters bitter parallels the second trumpet’s mountain. This can likely be interpreted as famine compared to the 3rd Seal.
2. The 2nd and 3rd Trumpets recapitulates (*recapitulate - summarize and state again the main points of*) the 3rd Seal and shows that judgement is not only coming on the unrighteous but also upon their gods, the fallen angelic beings of the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 32, Psalm 82, Daniel 10, Ephesians 6).
3. The judgment that is to come will indeed be very “bitter” for those who do not follow the Lamb.
4. In Jeremiah 9:15 and 23:15 the Lord will feed backsliden Israel “bitter food and poisonous water” because of their idolatry, particularly with the Canaanite god Baal. The idea is the “punishment fits the crime.” Because Israel has polluted the land and the temple with Baal worship Yahweh will pollute the food and water for their judgment.

Revelation 8:12-13 - Forth Trumpet: Zeus Polemic (No the Eagle is not the United States)

1. It is probably no accident that the 4th trumpet contains imagery against what God created on the 4th day of creation: The sun, moon, and stars.
2. A theme of Revelation is the de-creation of the world to prepare it for New Creation.
3. Sun, moon, and stars being darkened gives further judgment imagery against the gods of the nations. (Deuteronomy 4:19-20).
4. To conclude this set of 4 Trumpet Judgments (see also the grouping of 4 Seal Judgments in Revelation 6) an eagle speaks: “Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!”
5. The eagle is not the United States. It would be inconsistent with Bible interpretation to state so. Every part of this book meant something to John and his audience. “The Bible is written for us, not to us.” It is written to its original recipients.
6. The eagle to the original audience (people living in the Roman empire) is the messenger of Zeus.
7. Zeus is the “most high” of Greek/Roman religion the direct rival to the true Most High, Yahweh.
8. That an eagle is seen announcing, not for Zeus, but for Yahweh is another polemic against the world religious system.

Much like Yahweh is on the throne above the Babylonian living creatures in Ezekiel 1-2, 9-10, “Zeus’ messenger” is actually under the authority of the true Most High and announces His coming judgments.

Revelation 9:1-12 - Fifth Trumpet: Probably Not Apache Helicopters and Tanks

The identity of the “fallen” angel.

Fallen in this verse doesn't have to mean an evil, unrighteous angel. It could just be stating that the angel has come down from heaven. It could also speak to the urgency of its mission. Some wonder if an unrighteous angel would be given keys to open the abyss. Jesus now holds the keys; it is unlikely He would give the keys to an unfaithful heavenly being.

If we consider Jewish tradition this is likely the angel who held the keys, often called Uriel. It is likely the same angel in Revelation 20. In the tradition Uriel is: “one of the holy angels, who is over the world and over Tartarus” - 1 Enoch 20:2. While the angel might not actually be named Uriel the concept of an angel who carries out the key duties for the Lord is found in Revelation and 2nd Temple writings.

The identity of the locusts.

1. The “locusts” that come out of the pit have two options for interpretation. Either they represent a human army, or they represent a supernatural army.
2. The supernatural army is most likely. A human army, whether it be an ancient army or a modern-day army, are agents of death. An attacking army kills. These locusts are not allowed to kill anyone just torment.
3. The army comes from the Abyss and is ruled by Abaddon. Abaddon OT: Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Prov. 15:11, 27:20; Ps. 88:12.
4. Abaddon is a synonymy in the OT for “the grave.” While the unrighteous will end up in the grave if they don't repent and turn to Jesus *they don't come from the grave*, the angel opening the grave for these “locusts” to come out seems like it is stating a spiritual reality not an earthly one.
5. Many believe these are the rebellious angels of Genesis 6:4, 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6.
6. We may have to gain information from 2nd Temple Jewish writings to properly understand what John is thinking. The parallels don't seem coincidental.

Jewish tradition held that in Sheol and Abaddon there were “angels of destruction,” who were in authority over thousands of scorpions. The sting of the scorpions was lethal (Ginzberg 1967: 1:11-16). However, some of the stings do not kill, but only torment the inhabitants of hell (Ginzberg 1967: 2:312). - G. K. Beale and Sean M McDonough, “Revelation,” in Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament, 1115.

“So, who are the locusts that are released upon the unrighteous? More than likely they are the angels who are in prison in “chains of gloomy darkness” mentioned in 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6. In 2 Peter 2:4 the ESV says: “4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment;”. Notice that it says the angels are cast into “hell”. The Greek word here is Tartarus, the word used most for hell is “geenna” from the Hebrew “ghenna.” That Paul uses Tartarus here is telling. Tartarus is not hell, it is the grave (recall that Abaddon is their king, and Abaddon is synonyms with the grave). Tartarus is the place where Uriel (the possible identity or at least function of the angel in 9:1) throws the “sons of God” of Genesis 6:4. 1 Enoch 19:1, 20:1.

Extra-biblical writings never take precedent over Biblical text, but it can inform, we can see pretty clearly looking at 2nd Temple texts what Peter and Jude are alluding too. John alludes to similar things, there's just too much shared imagery here for it to be a coincidence. This doesn't mean that 1 Enoch should be in the

Bible, I do not believe that at all, but it does mean that it's valuable for where these traditions come from and if the Bible supports something in another text it means we should pay attention to that part of the extra-biblical text.

These supernatural beings will torment the inhabitants of the earth, what exactly that mean we don't know, it could these unleashed beings will bring the world into further darkness. In many of the traditions the fallen angels are credited with teaching mankind to better destroy itself, teaching them how to make weapons, perform witchcraft, and do unspeakable things to themselves and others.

Further evidence that supernatural being are in sight here is the description themselves. A combination of metals, animals, and human features. Supernatural beings are commonly portrayed this way, the mixing of beings is found in religions across the world in ancient cultures including Judaism (1 Kings 6:27; Ezekiel 1:5–11; Isaiah 6:2).”

Revelation 9:13-21: Sixth Trumpet: The 200-Million Man Army from The North

1. The sixth trumpet escalates the fifth. In the fifth trumpet the locusts could only torment for 5 months. Now, in the sixth trumpet, we have mention of deaths taking place.
2. Continuing the possibility of the fallen sons of God as the identity of the enemies here is strengthened with the four angels sealed “at the great river Euphrates.”
3. The Euphrates River forced enemies against Israel and the Roman empire from the East to come from the North to get around the river and avoid the harsh desert.
4. The “North” contains spiritual imagery within it. Zion is in the “north” (Psalm 48:2-4) even though on a map it is located more south than north in Israel. The divine rebel that Babylon is compared to in Isaiah 14 says that he will conquer Yahweh’s “mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north.”
5. It is likely that what is being described here is the spiritual powers of darkness gathering their end times army to come against Israel to fight the battle of Armageddon. Amos 7:1

“That the four (presumably wicked) angels are held back at the “great river Euphrates” evokes the OT prophecy of a northern enemy beyond the Euphrates whom God would bring to judge sinful Israel (cf. Isa. 7:20; 8:7–8; 14:29–31; Jer. 1:14–15; 4:6–13; 6:1, 22; 10:22; 13:20; Ezek. 38:6, 15; 39:2; Joel 2:1–11, 20–25), as well as other ungodly nations around Israel (Isa. 14:31; Jer. 25:9, 26; 46–47; 50:41–42; Ezek. 26:7–11 [from Israel’s vantage point, the Euphrates ran north as well as east]). In both cases the invaders were characterized as a terrifying army on horses/chariots arising from the north (Isa. 5:26–29; Jer. 4:6–13; 6:1, 22; 46–47; 50:41–42; Ezek. 26:7–11; 38:6, 15; 39:2; Hab. 1:8–9; cf. Ascension of Moses 3:1). The echoes of Jer. 46 are especially strong.” - G. K. Beale and Sean M McDonough, “Revelation,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 1115.

Revelation 11:15-19 - Seventh Trumpet: The Return of Messiah Jesus

1. The kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of “our Lord and of His Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”
2. Theophany language in verse 19.
3. The ark of the covenant being in the temple shows us that God does not forget His Covenants. While Israel lost their copy of the Law, and their Ark. God has not.