

Revelation Bible Study

Remember, Revelation is a book of comfort to the Christian!!

Chapters 8:6-11:19

Camera angle Two

Remember – What happens in these verses has been going on since the beginning of time and will go on until the Judgment.

Now view the picture labeled 8:6-11:19. It describes the actions of the Seven Trumpets.

The Seven Trumpets:

As was true with the breaking of each of seven seals, so also here successive calamities are unleashed by trumpets blasts. (TLSB)

Trumpets 1-4

8:6-13:

(Notes to help understanding)

The first four trumpets of the seven angels are God's warning to the church that the degeneration of the natural world signals its final destruction on Judgment Day. This thought aligns with what Scripture teaches. "*We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time*" (Romans 8:22). It is not hard to see how sin has taken its toll in the created world with forest fires, pollution of waterways, the destruction of wildlife, and sun-darkening smog. (CC)

Trumpet 1

8:7 hail and fire mixed with blood. This recalls two of the plagues visited upon Egypt. They were a clarion call to repentance, yet went unheeded by Pharaoh.

8:7, 8, 9, 11, 12 a third. "A third" suggests partial, not total destruction. The expression "a third" appears in the OT with a similar meaning. (CC)

Trumpet 2

8:8 mountain ablaze...sea turned into blood. This probably symbolizes natural events that strike the earth's seas, that is, volcanic eruptions. The earth's bodies of water will be so affected that much of the marine life will be destroyed. It symbolizes maritime death and destruction.

8:9 ships were destroyed. This further evokes the Nile plague, since when that river turned to blood, the creatures living within it died (Ex. 7:21). Amazingly, the people surviving this plague do not repent. (TLSB)

Trumpet 3

8:10 great star ... fell. Some scholars see a parallel with Jesus' seeing Satan falling from heaven like lightning (Luke 10:18; cf. Rev. 9:1-2; 12:9). Others argue that this simply refers to the kind of celestial disturbances that will accompany the final days (cf. 6:13; Mk. 13:25). (TLSB)

8:11 Wormwood. A plant with a strong, bitter taste. It is used here as a metaphor for calamity and sorrow. It is not poisonous, but its bitterness suggests death. (CSB)

8:11 waters turned bitter. The reverse of the miracle at Marah, where bitter waters were made sweet (Ex 15:25). (CSB)

Trumpet 4

8:12 sun, moon, stars. In the ninth plague on Egypt, thick darkness covered the land for three days (Ex 10:21–23). 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, signifying final deliverance for God's people and much suffering for the people of the world.

8:12 dark. Throughout the Bible darkness is often used as a metaphor for human sin and wickedness and for God's judgment, in contradiction to light, which symbolizes God and the purity and holiness he would graciously give to mankind. In Is 13:9-10, when the day of the Lord comes, the sun and moon and stars will be darkened and not shine forth. The partial darkening is visible sign which urges all people to repent while there is still time, for the total darkness of God's final judgment will soon envelope the earth, and then repentance will no longer be possible. (CC)

Verse 13 is a transition from the first four trumpet blasts to the last three. The cry of a bird of prey also emphasizes the horror of what is being unleashed. (TLSB)

Implying that the three remaining trumpets will usher in developments (physical calamities or false teachings) even more dangerous than the first four. The threefold woe suggests that the situation is very, very grave.

8:13 eagle. In this context it might be best understood as a vulture which feeds on carrion. Jesus refers to an eagle or vulture in connection with the finality of God's judgment.

Summary of verses 8:6-13

The warnings in in this section are primarily physical signs to warn people about the coming Judgement Day. There are many similarities to the Egyptian plagues. In both cases the physical events were to bring the offending parties to repentance. In both situations very few if any did so.

(Meditation/Discussion)

1. What lessons did you learn from this section? How will they impact your life?
2. What comfort can you take from this section?
3. What is a favorite verse in this section?

9:1-12

Trumpet 5

(Notes to help understanding)

9:1 Fallen star. This is identified as the devil.

9:2 Abyss. This is about unleashing demonic forces (TLSB)

9:2 Smoke from the Abyss. The smoke evokes memories of the smoldering remains of Sodom and Gomorrah and thus symbolizes God's wrath against evil. (TLSB)

9:3 Locusts. They are a foreshadowing of the devastations that accompany the day of the Lord. Locusts traveled in enormous swarms and could strip a land of all vegetation. In 1866, 200,000 people died in a famine in Algiers following a locust plague.

9:4 scorpions. These are large spider-like organisms that injure or kill by means of a poisonous barb in the tail. (CSB) They were emblematic of satanic power (cf. Luke 10:18-19). (TLSB)

9:4 No Sea! The first woe does not affect the "servants of God." Cf. the Israelites, who were protected from the Egyptian plagues. This does not mean that God's people will not suffer at all from the onslaught of Satan and his hordes of demons.

9:5 Five Months. A limited period of time suggested by the life cycle of the locust or the dry season (spring through late summer, about five months), in which the danger of a locust invasion is always present.

9:7 Crowns of Gold. These indicate that in their battle thrust against their prey they will have what will appear to be victory. However, the fact that their crowns only seem to be of gold indicates that they are not true warriors of God; they are warriors of Satan.

9:8 Face...Hair. These demons have faces like humans and hair like that of women. They will act with human intelligence in cunning deceptions as well as with human beauty in cruel attraction.

9:8 Lion's Teeth. The demon-like creatures here in Revelation 9 will be ferocious and savage in their attack, though they will not physically tear asunder their victims. However, the fierceness of their attack in the mental and spiritual dimensions, which could affect one's physical health as well, will be as if the victim were being torn apart, but not fatally so.

9:11 Abaddon. This is the only instance in the Bible where “Destroyer” is a personal name of the devil. His more common name is Satan which means “the Adversary.” The devil also attempts to accuse God’s people in such a manner that they would believe that their sins are not forgiven.

Summary of verses 9:1-12

Satan, the devil, is here introduced into the prophetic message of Revelation. He will play a prominent role throughout the remainder of the message. Having fallen from God’s presence, Satan now unleashes his anger on the people on earth. While Christians are protected, they are still impacted by all the evil that is going on around them.

(Meditation/Discussion)

1. What lessons did you learn from this section? How will they impact your life?
2. What comfort can you take from this section?
3. What is a favorite verse in this section?

Trumpet 6

9:13-21

(Notes to help understanding)

9:13 Horns of Altar. The horns were projections at the four corners of the altar (Ex 27:2). Those fleeing judgment could seek mercy by taking hold of the horns.

9:14 Four Angels. The four angels in 7:1-3 and also here in 9:14-15 are angels of judgment and punishment. In chapter 7 it was the judgment and punishment of God inflicted by people against other people as represented by the four horsemen. In chapter 9 it is the judgment and punishment of God inflicted by the demonic forces of evil.

9:14 Euphrates. It is the longest river in western Asia (about 1,700 miles). It marked the boundary between Israel and her historic enemies (Assyria and Babylon) to the east (cf. Isa 8:5–8).

This area came to be used also as a symbol for the place from which the end time enemies of God’s people would come.

9:15 Hour – Day – Month – Year. These are apocalyptic views of God as acting according to an exact timetable which is unknown to man.

9:15 Kill a Third. Before they sought death, now death seeks them out. While only a third die, the number of people will be staggering. The remaining two-thirds, while escaping death, will live under its terror.

9:16 Two-hundred Million. The reference is most likely general, intended as an incalculable host rather than a specific number.

9:17 Heads of Lions. Conveying the impression of great courage and strength, coupled with a quick readiness for violent and bloody action.

9:19 Tails like Snakes. Satan's hosts will lie and deceive. As the pen is mightier than the sword, so also the most destructive spiritual forces are those that speak convincingly against the truth of God's Word. – Major media usually has some anti-Christian publication of news story at Easter each year.

9:21 Did not Repent. God's people are not to expect a mass conversion of mankind. The great majority of people will always turn a deaf ear to God's call to repentance. Even physical pain will not change the rebellious heart.

Summary of verses 13-21

God uses the evil in the world to bring people back as was His intent when He sent the plagues on the Egyptians. But like Pharaoh then, people now will not repent and will perish. For Christians it is a time to draw closer to God by using His Word and Sacraments. It is also an opportunity to reach out to people with the love of Christ.

(Meditation/Discussion)

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3. What is a favorite verse in this section?

Interlude

After reading chapters 8-9 Christians might begin to have a gloomy viewpoint of life. In chapters 10 and 11 we find two interlude events that give believers a chance to catch their breath.

The Angel and the Little Scroll

Chapter 10

(Notes to help understanding)

10:1 mighty angel. Because this angel is described in terms reminiscent of God's presence among His people during the Exodus (Ex. 13:21), some take this figure to represent Christ. Greek "angelos" can simply mean "messenger." However, at many places in the OT, "angel of the Lord" does refer to the pre-incarnate Christ. (TLSB)

10:1 cloud...rainbow...face like the sun. While the cloud and rainbow-like halo demonstrate a relationship with God the Father, the sunlit face suggests a relationship with Jesus Christ.

10:1 legs were like fiery pillars. Since the exodus supplies background for this central part of Revelation, this feature may recall the pillars of fire and cloud that guided (Ex 13:21–22) and protected (Ex 14:19, 24) the Israelites during their desert journey. (CSB)

10:2 little scroll. In contrast to the sealed scroll introduced at 5:1, this one is open. However, the content of this scroll is never clearly revealed. Even when John is commanded to eat this scroll and prophesy its message in vv. 9-11, its actual content remains a mystery. (TLSB)

10:2 right foot on the sea ... left foot on the land. These phrases indicates his tremendous size and symbolizes that his coming has to do with the destiny of all creation (cf. v. 6). (CSB)

10:3 seven thunders. In 8:5; 11:19; 16:18 thunder is connected with divine punishment. Here, too, it anticipates the judgment to fall on those who refuse God's love and grace. (CSB)

As one of the most powerful sounds in nature, thunder is repeatedly associated with God's voice (cf. John 12:28-29). (TLSB)

10:4 Seal up. The prophecy voiced by the seven thunders will apply later, though when is not made clear. (TLSB)

10:6 no more delay. Previous chapters have hinted that God's final intervention in history might lie in the distant future (cf. 6:10). At this point, however, no such delay is in view. (TLSB)

10:9 Take it and eat it. John again hears the voice which spoke to him in 10:4. This time it speaks not a prohibition, but rather a command to do something. The heavenly voice tells him to take the scroll from the angel, to eat it whole, and to proclaim the prophetic message of God in Christ among all peoples on earth.

10:9 turn your stomach sour. Prophetic messages invariably contain Law and Gospel, threat and promise, judgment and grace. Thus John internalizes this Word of God, it is both bitter and sweet. (TLSB)

Summary of Chapter 10

This and the second interlude in chapter 11 picture the church in mission and God's protection of her in that mission. In this interlude there is a mighty angel from heaven that commissions John to proclaim the prophetic message to all the world.

(Meditation/Discussion)

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The Two Witnesses

Chapter 11:1-14

(Notes to help understanding)

11:1 measuring rod. Thus the instruction to John to use a measuring rod puts him in line with this prophetic tradition. His measuring of the temple of God and its dwellers indicates that God's people and His holy dwelling, will be protected as they carry out the mission given to them – the proclamation of the Gospel. (CC p, 285)

11:1 temple. Here it represents God's people. The apostles speak of the Church in this way (cf 1Pt 2:4–5). (TLSB)

11:2 outer court...Gentiles. The word Gentiles does not refer to non-Jews, but to non-Christians.

11:2 trample on the holy city. The fate Jerusalem suffered in AD 70. In the future, the world will run roughshod over the Church. (TLSB)

11:2 42 months. Three and a half years. It would not go on forever.

11:3 two witnesses. These are prophets who preach repentance. The Law of Moses required two witnesses so that each could corroborate the other's testimony (cf. Deut. 17:6; Mt. 18:16). (TLSB)

11:3 1,260 days. This was another of saying 42 months, a limited time.

11:3 sackcloth. A coarse, dark cloth woven from the hair of goats or camels. It was worn as a sign of mourning and penitence.

11:4 two olive trees...lampstands. This describes God's chosen (anointed) leaders. (TLSB)

11:7 kill them. The church will suffer as a result of completing her mission. For when the two witnesses "have completed their witness," the beast from the abyss "will make war with them and will conquer them and will kill them" (11:7). While the church is active in God's mission, the fury of the enemy and its opposition never slackens, and finally, when the church has completed the mission, this fury of the enemy will be unleashed to destroy the witness of the church.

11:8 Their bodies will lie in the street. In the Near East the denial of burial was a flagrant violation of decency.

11:9 three and a half days. A short time when compared with the three and a half years of their ministry. Cf. 20:3: "a short time." (CSB) Matthew 24:22, "If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened."

11:10 gloat...celebrate. Just as the world rejoiced at the death of Jesus, so also it rejoices here at the demise of His witnesses. (TLSB)

11:11a breath of life from God entered them. Recalls both the creation account and the vision recorded by Ezekiel where the breath of God restores life to dry bones. Though the witnesses suffer temporal death, resurrection and vindication awaits (cf. v. 5). (TLSB)

The joyful celebration over the demise of the church is short-lived, for after the three and a half days the two witnesses come back to life. The resurrection of the Christians at the End is the final and great coming back to life from death. Here the bringing to life by the Spirit of God refers more to the church being raised up again to witness after a time of persecution. From the time of Christ's ascension to his second coming (the 1,260 days or forty-two months or three and a half years), the church—at one place or another—is continually being trodden underfoot and then raised again. Here and there the voice of the witness of the church is stilled, but after a period of time (the three and a half days) the church comes back to life to continue her witness. Just when the enemy thinks the church's witness to Christ is silenced, God raises up the church again, giving to her new life by which she begins again to shout out the Gospel of Christ. (CC)

Summary of 11:1-14

Beginning with chapter 10 John's role is more than merely that of a viewer: he now becomes a witness and an active participant. The church's witness will be met by strong opposition but it will prevail. The Christian's life may be difficult but they will win eternity in the end.

(Meditation/Discussion)

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Seventh Trumpet

11:15-19

(Notes to help understanding)

11:15 were loud voices. The scene switches from earth to heaven when the saints arise (v 12). (TLSB)

11:18 judging the dead. Judgment Day is again announced (cf. v. 12). The reward of the faithful and the destruction of the impious is at hand. (TLSB)

11:19 lightning ... hailstorm.† Symbols of the destruction that God's anger finally will bring on an impenitent world population. (CSB)

(Meditation/Discussion)

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