

We have studied the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, and examined the significance of the opening of the seven seals in Revelation 4:1-8:1. Now, in Revelation 8:2, we are introduced to yet another series of seven that is closely related to the opening of the seventh seal.



Q1 What were given to the seven angels who stand before God? Revelation 8:2

A

In this seminar we consider the message of the seven trumpets in Revelation 8:2-9:21 and 11:15-19. In Bible times trumpets were used to:

1 Call people to *WAR*: Trumpet blasts struck fear into the hearts of people for they were used to alert the cities of impending danger and warfare. (Jeremiah 4:19-21; Zephaniah 1:14-

18; Joel 2:1; Job 39:24,25; Numbers 10:9. See Joshua 6:1-20.)

2 Warn people of *JUDGEMENT* : The blowing of trumpets was also associated with the services of the sanctuary. The Feast of Trumpets announced the imminence of the day of judgement, or the Day of Atonement. (Leviticus 23:23-32; Numbers 29:1.) Trumpets were also blown on that day. (Leviticus 25:9.)

3 Announce the coming of the *KING* : The coming of Jesus Christ will be heralded with glory and the blowing of trumpets. (1 Corinthians 15:51,52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17.) Trumpets were associated with the appearance of God. (Exodus 19:18,19.)

THE SETTING FOR THE SOUNDING OF THE SEVEN TRUMPETS



Q2 After the seven angels received the seven trumpets, John saw another angel with a golden censer. Where was this angel standing? Revelation 8:3

A

In the Old Testament sanctuary there were two altars: (1) the brass altar on which the sacrifices were offered, and (2) the golden altar of incense where the priest prayed for the people and offered incense to God. Just through the veil, in the most holy place, was the ark or throne of God. (Exodus 30:1-9.) In vision, John sees the throne room of heaven.

Q3 What work is being performed at this golden altar? Revelation 8:3,4

A

At the present time the door of mercy is open to us. We can approach God in prayer. (Revelation 5:8; Hebrews 4:14-16.)



Q4 To signify the close of this ministry, what does the angel do with the censer? Revelation 8:5

A

The censer is not put aside to be taken up again at another time. It is hurled to the earth. Hereby is signified the end of Christ's ministry for us as High Priest or Mediator before the Father. The door of opportunity to accept Jesus closes - and He prepares to come to this earth the second time.



Q5 **What do the seven angels with the trumpets then prepare to do?** Revelation 8:6

A

Although many see past historical meanings - it could be that the vision of the seven trumpets opens with the end of Jesus Christ's ministry as our High Priest in heaven, and closes with His second coming. There is an obvious parallel between the vision of the seven trumpets and the vision of the seven plagues. The introductory scenes for the trumpets and the plagues seem to portray the close of the opportunity to receive forgiveness. (Compare Revelation 8:2-5 and 15:5-8.) There are other parallels, which we will also note. Both visions focus upon the events that culminate with the end of the world.

THE SEVEN ANGELS SOUND THEIR TRUMPETS

Although there is no consensus on the exact meaning of the prophecy of the seven trumpets, the following may prove helpful. However, always be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and growth in an understanding of prophecy. Explore this vision with an open heart. Avoid dogmatism.

I The **FIRST TRUMPET**



Q6 **What destructive forces are used in the first judgement?** Revelation 8:7

A

THE INSTRUMENT OF JUDGEMENT:

These are symbols of judgement. During one of the plagues that fell upon Egypt as the people of God prepared to flee from slavery, "hail fell and lightning flashed back and forth." Exodus 9:24. The parallels between Joel's prophecy and the plague of the first trumpet should also be noted. Joel wrote, "Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound an 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... a large and mighty army comes... Before them fire devours, behind them a flame blazes..." Joel 2:1-3. Before

the coming of the day of the Lord there will be "wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke." Joel 2:30. (Read Joel 2:28-32. See also Ezekiel 38:22,23.)



Q7 **What targets are devastated by these attacks and judgements?** Revelation 8:7

A

THE TARGETS OF THE JUDGEMENT:

These seem to be people who claim to be God's people - but, are not. (See Revelation 9:4. Compare Revelation 7:3; 2:9; 3:9.) Note the parallels with the vision of Ezekiel 9 where the judgements of destruction began with those who claimed to be God's people. Their claims, however, were not valid for they did not have the mark on their foreheads indicating their abhorrence of sin. (Also see Matthew 7:15-23.) The "third" seems symbolic of the fact that although devastating, these plagues will not destroy all. A third is a large part, but not the majority. This partial judgement falls on **PEOPLE WHO CLAIM TO BE GOD'S PEOPLE, EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE NOT.**

2 The SECOND TRUMPET



Q8 **What agent of destruction is revealed in this judgement?** Revelation 8:8

A

THE INSTRUMENT OF JUDGEMENT: Mountains are symbolic of nations. The destruction of the enemies of God's people is described as the casting of mountains into the sea. The symbolism comes from Jeremiah 50 and 51 where we read of God's judgements against literal Babylon. (See Jeremiah 51:25,27.) In the last days the enemy of God's people is "*BABYLON THE GREAT.*" Revelation 17:5. This evil power is the agent of destruction.

Q9 **What is the target of this destructive, evil power?** Revelation 8:8,9

A

THE TARGETS OF THE JUDGEMENT: The sea, or waters, represent the "peoples, multitudes, nations and languages" controlled by the evil woman named Babylon. (Revelation 17:15.) This partial judgement falls upon *THE MULTITUDES OF BABYLON*, devastating them.

3 The THIRD TRUMPET



Q10 **What is the name of the destructive "star" that fell from the sky?** Revelation 8:10,11

A

THE INSTRUMENT OF JUDGEMENT: Once again the destructive agency is obviously symbolic. Stars represent angels. (Revelation 1:20.) The

"great star," or leading angel, who has fallen is Satan. (Revelation 12:9,10; Luke 10:18; Isaiah 14:12.) Wormwood is a bitter, intoxicating and poisonous herb. If used freely it can cause convulsions, paralysis and death. In Bible times wormwood was symbolic of bitter suffering and sorrow. (Deuteronomy 29:18; Jeremiah 9:15,16; Lamentations 3:19; Acts 8:23; Hebrews 12:15.) Satan, the cause of all bitterness, is the agent of destruction. Satan attacks. This imagery also reminds us that those who have not participated in the "bitterness" of Jesus experience - will receive the bitterness that results from deception.



Q11 **Upon what target does the great star Wormwood fall?** Revelation 8:10,11

A

THE TARGETS OF JUDGEMENT: In the Bible pure springs and rivers of water represent Jesus Christ and His faithful people. (John 4:13,14.) However, when people corrupt the Word of God and the gospel, when they accept error, they are themselves a source of bitterness. In Old Testament times, God declared, "My people have committed two sins: they have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water." Jeremiah 2:13. (Compare Isaiah 12:3 and Jeremiah 17:8,13.) The wise man wrote, "Like a muddied stream or a polluted well is a righteous man who gives way to the wicked." Proverbs 25:26. Those who are harmed by the death star are those who could have been God's people. They die because they drink of the streams of error and wickedness. They are *PEOPLE WHO ACCEPT AND TEACH ERROR.*

4 The FOURTH TRUMPET



Q12 **What is the target when the fourth trumpet is sounded?** Revelation 8:12

A

THE TARGETS OF JUDGEMENT:

When the sun, moon and stars are referred to in the Bible as light-bearers they are used to represent God and His people. (See Genesis 37:9-11; Matthew 5:14,16; John 9:5 and Philippians 2:15.) In Revelation 12 God's people are represented as being "clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head." Revelation 12:1. However, darkness follows when people turn from Jesus, "the light of the world." (John 9:5.) While there was light where the Israelites lived, the plague of darkness came upon the Egyptians who denied the true God. (Exodus 10:21-23. Compare Ezekiel 32:7.) Isaiah recorded God's words concerning the destruction of literal Babylon, in Old Testament times. God declared, "The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. I will punish the world for this evil, the wicked for their sins." Isaiah 13:10,11. (Also see Jeremiah 8:1,2,5.) There is light where God's true people are found. However, when people reject Jesus Christ darkness prevails. Those who are devastated are the *PEOPLE WHO HAVE REJECTED JESUS CHRIST THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.*



Q13 After hearing and seeing the warnings of attacks and judgements of the first four trumpets, what does John hear an eagle cry out? Revelation 8:13

A

THE THREE WOES:

The first four trumpets warn of terrible judgements. However, the destruction warned of by the last three trumpets far exceeds the devastation of the first four and so they are called three woes. (See Revelation 8:13; 9:12; 11:14.) The EAGLE, a symbol of both deliverance and doom, warns in a loud voice so that people may find deliverance from these judgements. (See Revelation 12:14 where the eagle is a symbol of deliverance, and Deuteronomy 28:49 and Hosea 8:1 where the eagle is a symbol of doom and judgement.) The only escape from these plagues is to respond to the warnings of the trumpet blasts now, and to take our stand on the Lord's side.

5 The FIFTH TRUMPET

Q14 Who is the devastating foe exposed by the warning of the fifth trumpet? Revelation 9:1-3

A

The fallen star is Satan. (Revelation 12:9,10; Luke 10:18; Isaiah 14:12-14.) At this stage he is given the keys to the Abyss. His activities darken the "sun and sky." Revelation 9:2. Later, at the second coming of Jesus Christ, Satan will be bound in the Abyss. (Revelation 20:1-3.)

Q15 Who is the target of the attack by Satan and his evil hordes? Revelation 9:4

A

Only those who are sealed by God are safe from the darkness of deception and the onslaughts of Satan and the evil angels. Those who are sealed by the Holy Spirit have taken the name of Jesus Christ and the Father. They belong to God and are obedient overcomers. Those who are attacked have the mark of the beast. They are *PEOPLE WITHOUT THE SEAL OF GOD.*

6 The SIXTH TRUMPET

Q16 Who is the devastating foe exposed by the warning of the sixth trumpet? Revelation 9:13,14.

A

These angels are not the same as those who hold back the winds of strife in Revelation 7:1. These angels, which are bent on evil, are those

who are being held back. (Revelation 9:15.) They have been "bound at the great river Euphrates." Revelation 9:14. The Euphrates is symbolic of the multitudes of the evil woman, Babylon, just as the literal river Euphrates was the literal river of the literal city of Babylon. These angels are evil. They are demons. (Compare Revelation 16:12-14.)

A

Those attacked are *WICKED PEOPLE* who are involved in violence, idolatry, magic and immorality.



Q17 **Who is the target of this attack by these evil angels?** Revelation 9:15,16,20,21

THE TARGETS OF JUDGEMENT - THE SEVEN TRUMPETS & THE SEVEN PLAGUES: The judgements of the seven trumpets and the seven last plagues fall upon the same people:

The SEVEN TRUMPETS	Revelation 8 & 9	The SEVEN PLAGUES	Revelation 16
1. Earth	8:7	1. Earth	16:2
2. Sea	8:8,9	2. Sea	16:3
3. Rivers and springs	8:10,11	3. Rivers and springs	16:4
4. Sun, moon and stars	8:12	4. Sun	16:8
5. People without God's seal	9:4	5. The beast's throne & kingdom	16:10
6. Euphrates and mankind	9:14,15	6. Euphrates and the world	16:12-14
7. Those who destroy	11:18	7. Babylon	16:17-21

THE INSTRUMENTS OF JUDGEMENT:

In the final conflict on earth, evil overflows to engulf itself. Even when Satan receives the allegiance and support that he covets, he offers no salvation or protection. In fact, except for the judgement of the seventh trumpet, the agents or instruments of judgement warned of by the trumpets are evil powers.

We have noted the parallels between the judgements of the seven trumpets and the seven last plagues. We should also note two major differences: (1) the attacks and judgements of the seven trumpets are those of evil powers, whereas the seven last plagues are from God, and (2) the destruction of evil caused by evil agencies is "a third" or partial destruction, whereas the final judgements of God are complete. It would seem the seven trumpets and the seven plagues are similar plagues. The seven last plagues reveal God's justice and judgement of evil, whereas the seven trumpets warn of Satan's attacks upon his own allies.

WHERE ARE GOD'S PEOPLE?

As with the visions of the seven seals and the seven last plagues there is also an interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets. Between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals John saw the 144,000 and the great multitude who will be able to stand when Jesus Christ comes in glory. (Revelation 7:1-17.) Between the sixth and seventh plagues is a brief interlude urging God's people to remain faithful until Christ comes suddenly "like a thief." (Revelation 16:15.)

The interlude between the sounding of the sixth and seventh trumpets is found in Revelation 10 and 11. The visions of the open little scroll in Revelation 10 and the two witnesses in Revelation 11 portray attacks upon, and the victory of, God's *MESSAGE* and *MESSENGERS*. Although persecuted, God's people are secure and safe from the plagues of the trumpets.

5 The SEVENTH TRUMPET



Q18 **What event does the sounding of the seventh trumpet announce?** Revelation 11:15-18.

A

The conflict portrayed in Revelation is not fought over the kingdoms of this world, but the *KINGDOM* of this world. (Compare Matthew 4:8,9.) The conflict is over worship and obedience. Who, how, why and when we worship and obey are the real issues. In Revelation 4 God is worshipped because He is Creator. In Revelation 5 He is worshipped because He is Saviour. Now He is worshipped because Jesus Christ has begun to

reign as King. He comes to reward His "servants" and destroy "those who destroy the earth." (Revelation 11:18.) The seventh trumpet heralds the *SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST*.



Q19 **Just as with the seven last plagues, (Revelation 16:17,18) the seven trumpets conclude with a glorious display of supernatural power. What is seen in heaven?** Revelation 11:19

A

The "ark of his covenant" is God's throne. God rules from His throne. The basis of His rule is His character that is reflected in the eternal ten commandments.

my

response...

The trumpets describe an ecological disaster - the undoing or reversal of creation -

Creation

Day 1 light is created
 Day 2 the air is pure
 Day 3 vegetation is made
 Day 4 the sun shines
 Day 5 sea creatures are created
 Day 6 humans live
 Day 7 there is *REST*

Trumpet Judgements

Trumpet 5 darkness falls
 Trumpet 5 the atmosphere is polluted
 Trumpet 1 vegetation is destroyed
 Trumpet 4 the sun is obscured
 Trumpet 2 sea creatures are destroyed
 Trumpet 3 humans die
 Trumpet 5 & 6 there is *TORMENT*.

The only ones who will escape the last plagues and the attacks of Satan are those who respond to the warnings of the seven trumpet blasts and take their stand as the "servants" and "saints" of God. (Revelation 11:18.) The people of God are sealed with the seal of God. (Revelation 7:1-3.) They have accepted the name of Jesus Christ their Saviour and also of the Father. They count it a privilege to honour and worship God by their obedience to His eternal commandments.



What are the main impressions that you have gained from the vision of the seven trumpets?

