

The Revelation – The First Four Trumpets

We begin this week's lesson with the opening of the seventh seal in Revelation 8:1. This verse says:

- (1) And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

Now before we get into the seven trumpet judgments let's just think about what this silence means. The seventh seal has introduced new revelations that have taken away the breath. There is an utter silence because of the new revelations. These new revelations are revealed as seven angels come forth with seven trumpets. Each angel begins to blow his trumpet individually, and a new revelation comes forth with each trumpet blow. Once again we are carried through the tribulation period with more graphic details.

Let's begin by looking at the first four trumpet judgments in the remainder of this 8th chapter. This Scripture says:

- (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.
- (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.
- (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.
- (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.
- (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!

Notice that as we enter into this period the prayers of the saints are being heard. Now remember from last week's lesson that the saints were praying that vengeance would be brought. You see, the prayers are continually before God, and God's answer is vengeance. However, there will be saints who die during the tribulation period.

When the first angel blows his trumpet we are introduced to a hailstorm like no other. This would seem to indicate an air war. The hailstones were mixed with fire and blood, just like the bombs of an air war. Once again this appears to be a great world war, with the result being a great worldwide devastation. One third of all of the trees is destroyed, along with all green grass.

Now I'm sure that there are those out there who are reading this and adamantly opposed to my interpretation. You see, while I take the Revelation as literal, I do believe that some parts of the Revelation has to be understood in the context of the days in which it was written. John couldn't have written about bombs falling from the sky or of missiles carrying nuclear devices because these things were unknown in John's day. He could describe them, though, in terms of things which he was familiar, and a bomb or missile falling from the sky might look more like a fiery hailstone than anything else. This doesn't take away from God's power or majesty. As a matter of fact, I would claim that it is even more awesome that God would be able to foretell what people would do.

The sounding of the second trumpet reveals a second facet of this war. A great naval war takes place. I could imagine the mountain of fire being John's description of a nuclear weapon being exploded in the sea. Such an explosion could certainly cause ramifications that would be seen throughout all of the earth and would destroy much life.

At the sounding of the third trumpet we find that one of man's greatest fears enters in the midst of this war. A great asteroid, or perhaps a comet, is headed straight toward earth. An attempt at destroying it only breaks it up so that the destruction is seen at various parts of the earth instead of at once central location. The result is that the drinking water systems are unable to handle the bitter chemicals which are introduced into the fresh water.

At the sounding of the fourth angel an even more catastrophic astronomical event occurs. The light of the sun is completely blocked throughout the whole earth for eight hours every day. The light is also blocked from reaching the moon. Utter panic will set forth on earth since such an event would certainly lead to a new ice age. While I suspect that Satan's forces will explain this phenomena using natural forces humanity will be powerless to fight against it. In all of this, though, there is no indication that people will come to God in any large numbers.

With all of this we're told that these are just the beginning of sorrows. The things which remain during the latter part of the tribulation are even more severe. We'll begin to look at these next week.

Yours in Christ,

Bro. John Rich