

Faithwalkers

Saturday, March 3, 2018

Revelation 8:6-9:21 The Six Trumpets

(Bruce will do 7th Trumpet the following week)

Key Verse

"They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads." Revelation 9:4

Table Questions

1. Are you worried about the coming angels and trumpets and what they will deliver? Why or why not?
2. What will you do today in light of these upcoming events? How can your brothers at Faithwalkers help you to accomplish this?
3. Why do you think God allows such drastic and even torturous measures to be inflicted on mankind?

As we begin, and especially since this week we find ourselves looking at one of the nastier and less appetizing portions of Scripture that describes where we are headed...let's again remind ourselves that Revelation gives a symbolic representation of what will happen between God and the spiritual forces that oppose Him.....all that to say that we should not get overly caught up in interpreting or visualizing or explaining the symbols that are used...for example, will the "locust" be a new Russian helicopter, or will the fire from the sky be from a volcano, etc.....but that we should continue to focus on and emphasize the message and purpose of the message that is being given to us.

Charles Spurgeon, one of my favourites from that "great cloud of witnesses" that has gone on before us, put it this way....

"A man says to me, "Can you explain the seven trumpets of the Revelation?" and I responded, no, but I can blow one in your ear, and warn you to escape from the wrath to come."

It was interesting to hear President Trump say earlier this week that, in response to calls for greater gun control, we should consider what impact movies and video games that are growing increasingly violent are having on our children and youth, and indeed ourselves.

Well it's always a good thing to connect our current "reality" to Scripture, and as believers, to see where we are in God's timeline....and perhaps the increasing violence we see in the world is the evil one's attempt to desensitize us to what is about to come....

A good reminder given to me as I listened to a sermon on this topic by the young pastor of the Orthodox Presbyterian church that my son attends in Houston, Tx is that we should always remember as we look back to history, or look forward to the future, that nothing that happens should be viewed as secular, that is, outside the purpose and plan of God.

Before we get into Rev 8:6, let's remind ourselves that immediately before this passage in Rev 8:3-5 we read...

"Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God's people, on the golden altar in front of the throne. ⁴ The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God's people, went up before God from the angel's hand. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake."

Note that this angel hurled a censer filled with fire from the altar upon which the prayers of God's people had been offered up...so these terrible judgements are God's response to the prayers of his people...who can say that prayer is ineffective!

Also, as precursor to the Trumpets in Revelation, in Joshua 6 we read about trumpets as well...

"The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets went forward, marching before the ark of the LORD and blowing the trumpets. The armed men went ahead of them and the rear guard followed the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets kept sounding."

Joshua had 7 priests carry 7 horns for 7 days and circle Jericho 7 times, then the priest sounded the horns, the people shouted and the walls of the city that stood between God's people and His promised land came down.

Let's begin to look at Rev 8:6....and I will read through the entire passage a section at a time since we need to constantly remind ourselves that "faith comes by hearing"...

The Trumpets

⁶ Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them.

⁷ The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down on the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and **all the green grass was burned up.**

No people died as a result of this warning

As we will find with all of the trumpets except one, they are each reflective of the plagues used by God in Genesis and Exodus...

This trumpet reminds us of the 7th plague used against the Egyptians

Also, hail and fire used here is similar to what the Lord used to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah in Gen 19:24-25...

²⁴ Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the LORD out of the heavens. ²⁵ Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, destroying all those living in the cities—and also the vegetation in the land.

Only a third of the earth was affected which means that this is a limited or provisional judgement, not the final judgement. OT reference to thirds is given in Ezekiel 5.

⁸The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something **like** a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, ⁹ a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

No people died as a result of this warning that we can tell

Jesus used a mountain being thrown into the sea in Matthew 21:21 and Mark 11:23 as signs of faithbut also as reference to the apostate nation of Israel (or a kingdom of man) being destroyed and cast or dispersed into the sea of humanity.

As evidence of God's ability to "cast mountains into the sea", we have already seen the rise and fall of man's kingdoms such as with Babylon, Egypt, Greece, Rome and the 3rd Reich.

Hebrews 12 refers to a mountain burning with fire as the Israelites encountered in Exodus 19 at Mt Sinai

Some believe this refers to a meteorite from space the size of a mountain colliding with the earth

This trumpet reminds us of the 1st plague where water turned to blood was used in Exodus 7 against the hard hearted Pharaoh when God turned the waters of the Nile to blood and all the creatures that lived in it died....

Again, only a third of the sea and living creatures and ships were affected meaning that this is a limited or provisional judgement, not the final judgement. God is restraining Himself so that more may repent.

¹⁰The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water— ¹¹ the name of the star is Wormwood.^[a] A third of the waters turned bitter, and **many people died** from the waters that had become bitter.

Finally people are beginning to die as God turns up the heat and emphasis of His warnings...many people

I believe it was CS Lewis that wrote "God whispers to us in our comfort, then speaks to us in our conscience, and finally shouts to us in our pain.". Who said that God wasn't gracious and merciful and

patient, not wishing that any should perish, but all we like sheep have gone astray and refuse to listen to the Shepherd's voice, and yet He continues to call, and increases the emphasis until we listen....but many still refuse to....and will perish without Him.

Here again the great star could be a meteorite or other space junk colliding with the earth...always amazes me that it hasn't happened or happened in a bigger way during our lifetimes as we can certainly see the results of these collisions in the geography around the world.

Wormwood being a woody shrub (also known as hemlock) that has an intense bitter aromatic taste and is referred to in [Deuteronomy 29:18](#) ; [Proverbs 5:4](#) ;[Jeremiah 9:15](#) ; [Amos 5:7](#) [Amos 6:12](#) where it is used to describe bitterness, poison and death and so the star falling to the earth will have the effect of poisoning a third of all water.

12 The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.

No people died

Mirrors the 9th plague in Exodus

Only a third may refer to only certain geographic areas being affected or that partial light and partial darkness may prevail.

Interesting to note that God will involve not only the sun but also the moon and stars in this.....give thought to how long it takes for light from distant stars to reach the earth and therefore the awesome power of God over even the speed of light as He had on the 4th day of creation in Genesis 1:14:18 when he said "Let there be lights.." and it was so.

13 As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!"

As if the first 4 angels and trumpets didn't have a noticeable impact, God sends another messenger to forewarn what is about to happen...who says we do not have a loving God who "wishes that none should perish"!

9 The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a **star** that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. ²When **he** opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. ³ And out

of the smoke locusts came down on the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. ⁴ They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but **only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads.** ⁵ **They were not allowed to kill them but only to torture them for five months.** And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes. ⁶ During those days **people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.**

Mirrors the 8th plague in Exodus...

Curious that the “star” that fell from the sky is personified and referred to as “he” and is given a key to the Abyss.

In the Old Testament, the term Abyss means deep and bottomless pit and is found in Genesis 1:2 where it refers to the original unfinished creation and is applied both to the waters under the earth which originally covered it, and from which the springs and rivers are supplied and to the waters of the firmament which were regarded as closely connected with those below.

In the New Testament, Abyss is used to refer to the place of the dead, remember Luke 16 and the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus where there is an abyss between the righteous dead and the wicked dead in Sheol, the abyss being the dwelling place of demons and the beast and as a place of confinement unto judgment that is under God's control.

In this case, a shaft leading to the Abyss is opened and issues forth smoke like we would envision from a volcano which I think many of us still find most magical....a hole in the earth's surface, the surface which we all take for granted and walk upon, and build our homes upon, and grow food in and which to all impressions seems dead on top and with nothing below it which would be alive....yet these holes belch forth fire, and smoke and molten materials continuously from some deep dark mysterious source. How little we humans know, let alone about the world on which we live!

In the Book of Revelation, in Hebrew Abaddon and in Greek, Apollyon....which literally means “the destroyer” who is the angel and ruler and king of the abyss. Often used to describe Satan but may be one of his underlings.

The locusts are not permitted to harm the grass, plants or trees which would be their normal food, but in this case, only humans, and specifically humans without the “seal”.

The “seal” clearly refers to those who are saved, those who are “in Christ” and are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit and can be found in John 6, 2 Cor 1, Eph 1 and 4 and so on.

*For those of us who have not experienced the sting of a scorpion, it is described as being like **burning**, it produces small swellings that are sensitive to the touch, **numbness**, **blurry** vision, **twitching** muscles,*

hyperactivity, erratic eye movement....imagine experiencing that for 5 months! No wonder it continues on to say that those affected sought death but could not find it. Have you ever wondered why they could not kill themselves?

⁷ The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. ⁸ Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. ⁹ They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. ¹⁰ They had tails with stingers, like scorpions, and in their tails **they had power to torment people for five months.** ¹¹ **They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer).**

The 5th trumpet also mirrors Joel 2 which reads...

"Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill.

Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming.

a large and mighty army comes, such as never was in ancient times

⁴ They have the appearance of horses; they gallop along like cavalry.

⁵ With a noise like that of chariots they leap over the mountaintops, like a crackling fire consuming stubble, like a mighty army drawn up for battle.

⁶ At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale.

⁷ They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers."

¹² The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come. ¹³ The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the four horns of the golden altar that is before God. ¹⁴ It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." ¹⁵ And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to **kill** a third of mankind. ¹⁶ The number of the mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand. I heard their number.

¹⁷ The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur. ¹⁸ **A third of mankind was killed** by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. ¹⁹ The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury.

²⁰ The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk. ²¹ Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Conclusion

As with the plaques in the OT, the purpose of the trumpets is:

- 1. to show God's judgement, justice and victory over His enemies, those false gods, that prevent God's people from entering into the Promised Land*
- 2. as encouragement to summon and reawaken Believers to their true purpose here on earth*
- 3. as a warning to provide unbelievers with yet another opportunity to repent*

*A commentary my son Paul recommended entitled "The Returning King: A Guide to the Book of Revelation" by **Vern Sheridan Poythress** sums it up like this...*

The main message we must take from Revelation is that "God rules history and will bring it to its consummation in Christ. Read it with this main point in mind, and you will understand. You will not necessarily understand every detail....but it is not necessary to understand every detail in order to profit spiritually."

Dear Faithwalker brothers.....Let us continue to edify and encourage one another as the great day of His reappearing draws near...and let us testify and witness to one another, and to those that do not yet believe so they too may know of His love for them!