

The Four Trumpets

Revelation 8.6-13

January 29, 2025

⁶ Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

⁷ The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

⁸ The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. ⁹ A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

¹⁰ The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹ The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter.

¹² The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night.

¹³ Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, "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!"

1. The trumpets do not usher in a totally new sequence of events
 - The fate summoned by the trumpets parallels that of the seals
 - Recapitulate the seal woes from a different perspective
 - Seals lead to God's preservation of the church
 - Trumpets lead to the Lord's judgment of the wicked

"The seals view the unfolding of the redemptive purposes of God from the point of view of the Lord's own people, those who are sealed; the trumpets view this same reality from the point of view of the unsealed, those who are not the people of God. The opening of the seals brings great consolation to the people of God. The sounding of the trumpets brings great woes upon those who are not the people of God." Derek Thomas, Revelation: Reformed Expository Commentary, p.276

2. Visions are not literal but are symbols depicting historical realities
 - They do depict literal history
 - Imagery is drawn from the Old Testament

***The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.* Rev.8.7**

OT imagery: hail causing great destruction, Ex.9

- ***There was hail and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. The hail struck down everything that was in the field in all the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And the hail struck down every plant of the field and broke every tree of the field.*** Ex.9.24-25

Note that though the whole world is struck, only a third is destroyed. Even through judgment God is still giving man a chance to repent!

The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. ⁹A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

OT imagery: water turned to blood, Ex.7; a great mountain burning with fire

- ***And the fish in the Nile died, and the Nile stank, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.*** Ex.7.21

Jeremiah refers to Babylon as a vast mountain set on fire, its destruction prophesied

- ***“Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, declares the Lord, which destroys the whole earth; I will stretch out my hand against you, and roll you down from the crags, and make you a burnt mountain.*** Jer.51.25
- ***The sea has come up on Babylon; she is covered with its tumultuous waves. Her cities have become a horror, a land of drought and a desert, a land in which no one dwells, and through which no son of man passes.*** Jer.51.42-43

The Babylon of John’s day was Rome whose food supply depended upon trade from the sea.

¹⁰The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter.

OT imagery: fallen star causing fresh water to be made bitter

In Isaiah God likens Nebuchadnezzar to a fallen star:

- ***“How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.*** Is.14.12-15
- ***²⁷Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity.”***
²⁸All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. ²⁹At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, ³⁰and the king answered and

said, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?" ³¹ While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, "O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, ³² and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will." Dan.4.27-32

Alludes to the fall of world imperial powers putting their ideologies above the knowledge of God. These ideologies bring bitterness to human life.

¹² The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night.

OT imagery: darkness brought upon Egypt; NT imagery: darkness at the cross

Darkness depicts the removal of God's blessing.

- **So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the people of Israel had light where they lived.** Ex.10.22-23
- **Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.** Mt.27.45

Important to note: Jesus is the light of the world and only through him can the curse of darkness be removed.

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." Jn.8.12

Though we will interpret these visions differently we can be assured of the following:

1. God is aware of what goes on in the earth.
 - **And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.** He.4.13
2. God will bring judgment.
 - **Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.** Rev.20.11-12
3. God will deliver His people.
 - **Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.** Jn.5.24