

THE BOOK OF REVELATION: VERSE BY VERSE

Darin Latham/www.broadwaychurch.com

WEEK TWELVE

I. THE SEVEN TRUMPETS AND THE TWO WITNESSES (Revelation 8:6 – 11:19)

A. The Seven Trumpets (8:6 - 9:21; 11:15-19)

Trumpets: What and When?

A trumpet was an O.T sign of alarm, a call to action, and a sign of warning. (Ezekiel 33:1-6 and Joel 2:1) These trumpets are God's judgment upon the earth; judgment that is not complete because it is designed to bring about repentance.

Opinions vary as to when the events linked to the trumpets take place. Some say they occur after Christ's appearance. Others say they occur along with Christ's appearance. Still others say these events occur throughout history, prior to Christ's appearance – representing God's divine activity in bringing judgment to the earth.

1. The first trumpet... (8:6-7)
 - a. Hail and fire mixed with blood, one third of the earth and vegetation is burned.
2. The second trumpet... (8:8-9)
 - a. A great mountain burning with fire is thrown into the sea, one third of the sea, its creatures, and ships are affected.
3. The third trumpet... (8:10-11)
 - a. A great star (named Wormwood – 'bitterness') fell from heaven, one third of the rivers are poisoned.
4. The fourth trumpet... (8:12)
 - a. One third of the sun, moon, and stars are darkened.

Trumpets And "Woes"... (8:13)

John now introduces an eagle (think 'symbol of a first century scavenger', do *not* think 'majestic symbol of a 21st century superpower.') The eagle adds a layer of three 'woes' (a word uttered in grief or denunciation) that overlap with the remaining three trumpets.

5. The fifth trumpet/first 'woe'... (9:1-12)
 - a. A star (Satan? Luke 10:18) falls from heaven and has been given the authority to release locusts from a bottomless pit. These locusts torment (but not kill) those who are not marked with God's seal.
6. The sixth trumpet/second 'woe'... (9:13-21)
 - a. An innumerable army (the symbolism of **"twice ten thousand times ten thousand"**) is unleashed upon the earth destroying one third of mankind. But humanity still refuses to repent.

B. A Brief Interlude... (10:1 – 11:14)

1. The angel and the little scroll... (10:1-11)
 - a. John (and the church?) is given the bitter/sweet task of prophesying to the world regarding God's judgment and gospel.
2. The two witnesses... (11:1-14)
 - a. **"Measure the temple of God"** is symbolic language for God protecting His people.
(See Zechariah 2:1-5; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 6:16)
 - b. **"42 months"**: 42 is a number loaded with symbolism in the Bible.
 - i. It is the number of stages in Israel's journey through the desert to the Promised Land (Numbers 33).
 - ii. It is the length of time that it did not rain while Elijah called the nations to repentance (Luke 4:25).
 - iii. It was the number of generations from Abraham to Jesus (Matthew 1:17).
 - iv. It is mentioned twice in the book of Daniel (7:25; 12:7) and in Revelation (12:14) in the form of **"time, times, and half a time."**
 - v. It is 1,260 days, which is 3½ years, which is ½ of the number 7 (divine completeness.)
 - vi. Some scholars believe that this is a literal length of time in the future while other scholars believe that this is the symbolic length of time that the church is in the world, caught in the battle between opposing kingdoms (see Revelation 12:14).
 - c. Who are the **"two witnesses?"**
 - i. Some claim that this is an apocalyptic description of the role, treatment, and ultimate vindication and triumph of the church of Jesus Christ.
 - ii. Others claim that this is a literal description of the unique ministry of two specific individuals during the final years prior to Christ's return.

C. A Return To The Seven Trumpets (11:15-19)

1. The seventh trumpet/third 'woe'... (11:15-19)
 - a. When the seventh trumpet is sounded, John's attention returns back to the heavenly throne room (as opposed to the activity of the previous 6 trumpet judgments and the treatment of the **"two witnesses"** on the earth.)
 - b. We are given a glimpse of what is happening around God's throne. From the perspective of heaven, the victory of God's kingdom has already been accomplished.