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THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION
NUMBER 14
REVELATION 8:1-13

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REVELATION 8:1-13 "And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. 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. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. 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. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. 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. 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; 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. 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; 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. 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. 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!"

The Book of Revelation is a sermon preached on a Sunday in 96 A.D. on the Isle of Patmos to one man--John. It is not a short sermon. It takes a number of hours to read it and it probably took several hours for Christ to deliver it.

Revelation chapter 1-----The Introduction.
Revelation chapters 2 and 3-----The history of the Church Age
Revelation chapters 4 and 5-----The Church in Heaven
Revelation chapters 6 - 19-----The story of the Tribulation
Revelation chapter 20-----The Millennium
Revelation chapters 20 - 22-----The Eternal Kingdom

This is not an obscure book. It is a part of the Bible and God meant for us to understand it. Revelation is the unveiling of Jesus Christ.

Chapter six gave us a summary of the Tribulation and chapter seven gave us the story of evangelism in the Tribulation. Now chapter eight begins the story of the three judgments. There are three series of judgments in these chapters 6-19. It is divided like this--

Chapter 6--The seven seals, a summary of the Tribulation.

Next comes the seven trumpets, and this is the Tribulation judgments from the standpoint of the Gentiles.

Next we move to the seven vials and this is the Tribulation judgments from the standpoint of the Jews.

While the church is in Heaven, just following the rapture as the church is being prepared as the bride of Christ, we have the most terrible period of world history. Following this seven-year period of horror and slaughter will come the Second Advent of Christ and his thousand-year reign.

REVELATION 8:1-2 "And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets." Here we have the introduction of the seven trumpets. Out of the seventh seal the seven judgments begin. This is judgment in the Tribulation. This is the judgment that will come to the Gentiles on the earth during the Tribulation. Back in chapter 7 we saw the sealing of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists and that seal brought a blessing. Now we see a seal that is connected with the cursing. The principle is blessing before cursing.

"Silence in Heaven" means that these judgments are so terrible they make people hold their breath. We are shocked by these judgments but they do not occur until these people have an opportunity to be saved. The silence is also an indication of God doing something.

ZECHARIAH 2:13 "Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation." In this case God is about to judge. In verse 2 we see that seven angels have been selected to bring these seven judgments. Sometimes God judges directly but often he uses angels. We saw this in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. God used 2 angels to administer judgment.

"Standing" is perfect tense and means they have been standing there for some time. They have been briefed and instructed concerning their judgments. They stand ready to serve.

Seven Points Regarding the Seven Trumpets

1. A trumpet is a judgment which takes place in the Tribulation to judge the Gentiles.
2. These judgments are directed toward unbelieving Gentiles.
3. In this chapter 8 only four trumpets are given. The remaining three are given in chapter 10.
4. These four trumpets in chapter eight are directed against nature, while in chapter ten the last three trumpet judgments are directed against mankind.
5. In the first four trumpets we have seven verses to describe them. In the last three we have fifty verses to describe them.
6. The trumpet judgments are held up until the 144,000 Jewish evangelists are sealed. There are only six seals in Revelation 6. There are seven in all, but only six in chapter 6. The seventh seal is the beginning of the seven trumpets. This is the principle of grace before judgment. All have opportunity to be saved. Now in chapter 8 we move into the seventh seal and this seventh seal contains the seven judgments. This is judgment against the Gentiles.
7. The seventh trumpet is the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. So the trumpets take us all the way down to the Second Advent of Christ. Actually you have a three reel film here.
 - a. Chapter 6--A general summary of the Tribulation
 - b. Chapter 8--Here we begin the judgment of the Gentiles.
 - c. Last we move to the vials and this is the history of judgment for the Jews.

In verses 3-6 we have an answer to the prayers of the believers who are martyred during the Tribulation. (In Matthew 24 Jesus warned the Jews to run to the mountains, Edom, Moab and Ammon, and stay there. That was during the first half of the Tribulation. Now during the last half of the Tribulation they are warned to stand their ground and fight. Zechariah 14 describes this. If they follow instructions then

everything will turn out right. The Gentiles resist and many are tortured and killed. When religion takes over then the most terrible things you can imagine take place. Jesus condemned religion as the worst enemy man has to face. Religion is going to take over in the Tribulation and persecute these Gentiles, and while they are dying they are going to do something. Under terrible persecution they are going to put the whole thing in the Lord's hands. The principle is this--Put it all in the Lord's hands for he says "Vengeance is mine, I will repay sayeth the Lord". They are going to pray and leave vengeance in the hands of God. Jesus calls the believer "The apple of mine eye" and you can't touch a believer without getting discipline from God. Judging others is a sin and it leads to sin. Instead of your judgment falling on them it turns back and falls on you. And this leads to self-induced misery. The Christian way of life is designed for a relaxed, happy life. So live your life as unto the Lord and let other people do the same. There is always some spiritual bully around who has failed miserably and he will try to live your life for you. Break away from this kind of a person just as fast as you can. Live by doctrine and let each person live his own life. In our story here these believers are relaxed and they turn everything over to the Lord. These believers are not afraid and those who die glorify God in their death.

REVELATION 8:3 "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." This is the angel with the golden shovel in his hand, and it represents answered prayer.

"Another" here refers to the fact that he is the same kind of an angel as we saw in the seven trumpets. This eighth angel pops up and he has a golden shovel in his hand. He stands in front of an exact replica of the Temple. This reproduction is in Heaven. We see the golden altar of incense and the censer with burning coals. This golden altar is the message center of prayer. So everything in both the Tabernacle and the Temple was to teach the Jews about Christ. The Brazen altar spoke of the cross and here the sacrifices were offered. On the golden altar they placed incense and this was a picture of their prayers that rose up to the throne of God. This is outlined in Exodus 30:1-10 and Exodus 37:25-28. The altar was made of Acacia wood, which stood for the humanity of Christ, and it was overlaid with gold, which represented the deity of Christ. It is impossible for deity and eternal life to die. It was impossible for Jesus to die in his deity, and this is why it was necessary for him to become a human being. The sins of the world were poured out on Christ on the cross and he died spiritually and then he died physically. So Jesus is different from all others. He is unique.

This sweet-smelling incense rising up to God is a picture of the prayers of these dying Gentiles in the Tribulation. These are Tribulational saints, believers who were martyred in the Tribulation, and we will meet them again in Revelation 13 and Revelation 17. Some of the prayers they offered were anticipated prophetically in Psalm 13. Here are some actual prayers of believers in the Tribulation dealing with this situation.

PSALM 44:22 "Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter."

PSALM 54:5 "He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth."

PSALM 79:5 "How long, Lord? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?"

PSALM 143:12 "And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am thy servant."

So this verse refers to the prayers of dying Gentile believers in the Tribulation and their prayers are answered with the judgments of these seven trumpets. These trumpet messages are beamed against those responsible for these Tribulational martyrs. Instead of trying to take vengeance they left vengeance in the hands of the Lord.

REVELATION 8:4 "And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." This is a picture of prayer, but in this particular case these are the prayers of these Gentile martyrs. They prayed. They put their case in the Lord's hands. Prayer is the great grace weapon in the hands of the believer. And God always hears and gives the right answer.

REVELATION 8:5 "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." This is the warning of coming judgment. Fire is always the figure of judgment. The thunder and lightning and earthquake are physical means by which God expresses his anger and are figures to express his judgment. Thunder and lightning comes with an approaching storm. This is the figure used here. The voices refer to the great noise of an approaching storm.

REVELATION 8:6 "And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound." These seven angels with the seven trumpets prepare to give their message. As we say today, they were ready to "sound-off". The "Day Of The Trumpets" is described in Zechariah 1:14-18 "So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction. Therefore thus saith the Lord; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem. Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem. Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns."

These angelic trumpeters are leading angels, high officials.

First four trumpets are natural disasters and take up seven verses.

Second three trumpets are judgments from God and take up 50 verses.

These first four trumpets fall into three categories--

- a. Agricultural--grass and trees
- b. Aquatic
- c. Aquatic-----Water
- d. Astronomic----Sun, moon, and stars

REVELATION 8:7 "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." This is the judgment of God through the destruction of agriculture. All the plants that produced food were destroyed. The ruler in the Tribulation will employ the method of refusal to sell food to any believer. Only those who have the mark of the beast on their person will be able to get food. This judgment was an attack on vegetation.

REVELATION 8:8-9 "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; 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." Here we see that part of the sea was corrupted with a mass of chemicals. Fish were killed and commerce disrupted.

REVELATION 8:10-11 "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; 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." This is an attack on fresh water, the lakes and rivers. The word translated wormwood means a liquid of bitter poison. It would destroy all life in fresh water. The water supply was completely destroyed.

REVELATION 8:12 "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." This is a celestial activity. The sun, moon, and stars were greatly affected by this physical disturbance. These are natural type disasters. But this is not the worst. The worst is yet to come.

REVELATION 8:13 "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!" The words woe--woe--woe are announcing the next three judgments. This first woe will be described in Revelation 9:1-12, the second woe will be described in Revelation 9:13 and the last woe is described in Revelation 11:15. So the angel is here warning that the worst is yet to come.

If you can imagine all this on an international scale--no lights, no water, no commerce, no police protection. All of this means utter chaos and it is depicting the worst time of all world history. This is what the Tribulation will be.