

The Trumpet Judgments, Part 2 (Revelation 8:1–13)

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Introduction

1. The opening of the seventh seal (vv. 1-5) introduces the seven trumpet judgments (8:6–9:21).
 - a. The *purpose* of the judgments
 - 1) To *warn* unbelievers that their continued rebellion against heaven must end (nature of trumpets)
 - 2) To *call* unbelievers to repentance for their rebellion against heaven (restrained wrath, divine mercy)
 - 3) To *demonstrate* the stubborn nature of rebels who refuse to repent (nature of judgment)
 - b. The *nature* of the trumpets
 - 1) They *warn* of the judgment unleashed by the resurrection and enthronement of Jesus, giving Him sovereignty over human history (John 5:22–24).
 - 2) They *sound the alarm* of war, announcing that the kingdom of this world has not submitted to the kingdom of our God.
2. Facts we must understand
 - a. The judgments mimic the plagues of the Exodus while they enlarge the scope of those judgments—Egypt < the world.
 - b. The response of people to calamity, hardship, and suffering is expressed often in anger and defiance of God because people do not understand the jeopardy they are in with a holy and righteous God because of their sinfulness.
 - c. People suffer under His punishment because they *deserve* it. The trumpet judgments are God’s righteous response to continued rejection of His person (love), His laws (obey), and His ways (serve).
 - d. Although these judgments are severe, they show God’s mercy in their limited scope while at the same time warning sinners that final judgment is coming—a *judgment without mercy*.
3. With respect to the saints, the purpose of the trumpet cycle is to call the complacent to repentance and to summon the church to holy spiritual warfare.

The SEVEN TRUMPET JUDGMENTS (8:6–9:21; 11:15-19)							
1	2	3	4	5	6	Interlude	7
1/3 of earth burned up by fiery hail	1/3 of seas turned to blood; ships and sea life destroyed	1/3 of waters turned bitter	1/3 of sun, moon, and stars darkened	Locusts wield beast’s military power	Terrible armies from the East	The little scroll and the two witnesses	God’s Kingdom has come
War 7 th plague of Egypt	Rebellious Nations— <i>Babylon</i> 1 st plague Jer. 51:25, 52	Apostasy and <i>Idolatry</i> 1 st plague continued Jer. 9:15	Testimony 9 th plague	Demons from the <i>Abyss</i> 8 th plague Joel 2:1–7	Demon <i>Hordes</i> Crumbling of law, order, and safety	God’s care for the church	God’s Temple opened in heaven

I. The Plagues of Exodus

1. The first five trumpet judgments reflect four of the plagues of Exodus (Ex. 7:20-25).
 - a. The plagues were warnings for which Pharaoh was accountable.
 - b. They anticipated Egypt's defeat at the Red Sea.
 - c. They demonstrated Pharaoh's hard heart; indeed, they were the means of God's hardening it.
2. The plagues were designed to punish obstinate hearts, idolatry, and the oppression of God's people.
 - a. God intended to harden Pharaoh's heart in order to provide Him opportunity to perform the signs.
 - b. God's purpose was to show His incomparable power to the Egyptians and the whole Eastern world.
 - c. As with the plagues, the trumpets will also be met with refusal to acknowledge God's hand; however, the intensity of them will demand that attention.
3. While God's merciful restraint allows for repentance, the ultimate purpose of judgment is punishment of unbelievers.
 - a. God broke the back of Egyptian resistance in order to release Israel from bondage; the final judgment will free the church from the world's captivity.
 - b. Israel's freedom enabled them to enter God's Promised Land; our freedom enables us to enter the glories of the Eternal Kingdom.

II. The Conquest of Jericho

1. Jericho was a pagan fortress that blocked the people of God from entrance to the Promised Land; so, too, must apocalyptic Babylon fall in order for the saints to enter the New Jerusalem.
2. Several significant features of the Jericho conquest are similar to the trumpet judgments.
 - a. Seven trumpets were used in the conquest of Jericho (Joshua 6), announcing the defeat of the city.
 - b. The trumpets were sounded by priests at Jericho; the seven angels have priestly function (15:6).
 - c. The Ark of God was present in Jericho; it is present in the vision of John (11:19).
 - d. A verbal silence preceded the final trumpet at Jericho; silence in heaven precedes the trumpet judgments.
 - e. As with the plagues, the trumpets at Jericho did not sound warning but judgment; so it is with the seven trumpets of Revelation.
 - f. As at Jericho, the first six trumpets prepare for the climactic judgment of the seventh.

III. The Content of the First Four

1. The first trumpet was followed by hail and fire mixed with blood, indicating war with its devastation.
 - a. The golden censer with fire from the altar in response to the saint's prayers was flung to earth.

- b. The seventh plague in Egypt was limited to the destruction of certain crops and areas.
 - c. Burning applies to war as seen in ancient warfare strategy (6:4).
2. The second trumpet was followed by a fiery mountain thrown into the sea, turning the seas to blood.
 - a. Mountains symbolize kingdoms, and God is going to destroy end-time Babylon (Jer. 51:25, 42).
 - b. The sea was the major means of commerce in John's day; thus, the nations will be shaken at the source of their confidence.
 - c. This is a prelude to Babylon's final destruction (18:19; note 11:8).
 3. The third trumpet was followed by Wormwood falling to earth and poisoning the fresh-water supply.
 - a. Wormwood is symbolic of the lethal consequences of apostasy from truth (Jer. 9:15; Heb. 12:15).
 - b. The poisoning of the water supply was also an ancient tactic of warfare (2 Kings 20:20).
 4. The fourth trumpet was followed by a darkening of the sun, moon, and stars (the ninth plague of Exodus).
 - a. John does not inform us as to the nature (physical or spiritual) of the trumpet or the means God will use to accomplish this work.
 - b. What we know is that warfare leads to burning cities whose ascending smoke dims the light of sun and moon.
 5. This section closes with a vision of an eagle traversing the sky, announcing the three woes accompanying the final trumpets (8:13).
 - a. Like "holy, holy, holy," the triple use of *woe* (a strong judgment warning) indicates an escalation of the frequency and severity of the coming judgments.
 - b. The woes are directed at earth dwellers (un-believers) in contrast to those whose citizenship is in heaven.

Use

1. When God reveals His will but provides no grace to obey, we are still responsible and accountable for obedience.
Failure to obey will result in judgment without mercy.
2. We are in the midst of a great spiritual war. Satan will do anything to deceive and distract believers from their mission. Revelation informs us of God's plan, and His sovereignty assures the outcome. Our task to pray and persevere.