

Revelation 8:6-9:21

I. Structure of the Seven Trumpets

- The seven trumpets (the second of three judgments ordered by the number 7), are patterned like the seven seals.
- An initial group of four: hail, sea becomes blood, star called “wormwood,” darkening of heaven.
- $\frac{1}{3}$? “And you, O mortal, take a sharp sword; use it as a barber’s razor and run it over your head and your beard; then take balances for weighing, and divide the hair. One third of the hair you shall burn in the fire inside the city when the days of the siege are completed; one third you shall take and strike with the sword all around the city; and one third you shall scatter to the wind, and I will unsheathe the sword after them.” Ezekiel 5:1-2

II. The Exodus and the Seven Trumpets

- The judgments of the seven trumpet blasts are, obviously, based on the judgments enacted in Egypt before the release of Israel in the Exodus.
- “These are eschatological symbols, and precise identifications with catastrophes that occur in our time are useless.” Raymond Brown
- Theologically, Exodus symbolism is significant to the message of Revelation: As the plagues prepared for the liberation of Israel from slavery in Egypt, these plagues prepare for the deliverance of those who are sealed by God into a new creation.
- The eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in AD 79 likely served as a backdrop for the image of a burning mountain in 8:8, as did the frequent earthquakes which still plague this part of the world.

III. The Number Three and Seven Trumpet Blasts

- After the first four trumpet blasts, there is a brief interlude that features an eagle declaring “woe” three times, anticipating the final three trumpet blasts.
- The three woes for the earth in Rev 8 parallel the ceaseless song of the four creatures in the throne room: Holy, Holy, Holy. (4:8)

IV. Exodus, Joel, and Locust-Horses

- The fifth trumpet blast features locusts that look like war horses. Where does this odd symbol come from?
- For if you refuse to let my people go, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country. They shall cover the surface of the land, so that no one will be able to see the land. They shall devour the last remnant left you after the hail, and they shall devour every tree of yours that grows in the field. Ex. 10:4-5

- Before them the land is like the garden of Eden, but after them a desolate wilderness, and nothing escapes them. They have the appearance of horses, and like war horses they charge. As with the rumbling of chariots, they leap on the tops of the mountains, like the crackling of a flame of fire devouring the stubble, like a powerful army drawn up for battle. Joel 2:3-5 (Joel 1 and 2 describe locusts descending upon Israel).

V. Horseman from the East and the Unleashing of Destruction

- The Locust-Horses combined with the image of 2 million cavalry coming from the East evokes fears of the Parthian invasion from the East.
- The name of the king of the locusts is given in both Greek and Hebrew, which both mean destruction or destroyer.

VI. The Seventh Trumpet Blast?

- Once again, we must wait to experience the seventh sequence of judgments, emphasizing the importance of the theme of “eschatological delay.”
- It is worth emphasizing that we are not yet in the thick of John’s prophetic vision.
- “It is not until chapter 10 that the main content of the prophetic revelation John communicates in his book is given to him. All that has preceded is preparatory – necessary to understanding this revelation, but not itself the revelation. Recognizing this is a vital, though neglected, key to understanding the book of Revelation.” Richard Bauckham