

## CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

717 North Stapley Drive, Mesa, AZ 85203 Phone: (480) 833-7500

<b>Series:</b>	<b>Revelation</b>		Pastor/Teacher
<b>Number:</b>	<b>34</b>		Gary L.W. Johnson
<b>Text:</b>	<b>Revelation 8:6-13</b>		
<b>Date:</b>	<b>June 20, 2021 (a.m.)</b>		

### THE SEVEN TRUMPETS OF DIVINE JUDGMENT (Part II)

Seven angels now blow seven trumpets which set in motion seven judgments. This forms the second cycle that depicts God's judgment. Like the trumpet used in the battle of Jericho (Joshua 6), these trumpets sound the fall of rebellious humanity (Revelation 11:13). As noted last week, the trumpet plagues harken back to the plagues on Egypt.

"The trumpet judgments issue from God's angels, who stand before his throne (v. 2). The vision of 4:1-5:14 remains an anchor point for this new cycle of visions. Like the seal judgments of 6:1-8:1, these judgments are executed according to God's plan and in accordance with his orders. The prayers of the saints play a notable part in issuing the judgments (8:3-4; cf. 5:8). Regarding thunder and other rumbling, lightning, and an earthquake (v. 5), see 4:5 and 6:12. Now consider the first four trumpets. For the first trumpet **hail and fire** (v. 7) are reminiscent of the seventh Egyptian plague in Exodus 9:23-24. As in the case of the Egyptian plagues, these judgments come from God against evildoers. They show that God is the true God, and they call people to repentance. Yet, like the Egyptians, people may harden themselves and not repent (cf. Rev. 9:20-21). Some other trumpet plagues parallel other Egyptian plagues (fig. 18).

"Fig. 18. TRUMPET PLAGUES AND THEIR PARALLELS IN EXODUS

Trumpet	Plague	Parallel in Exodus
1 <sup>st</sup> -8:7	hail and fire	7 <sup>th</sup> -hail and fire
2 <sup>nd</sup> -8:8-9	blood	1 <sup>st</sup> -blood
3 <sup>rd</sup> -8:10-11	bitter water	
4 <sup>th</sup> -8:12	darkness	9 <sup>th</sup> -darkness
5 <sup>th</sup> -9:1-11	locusts	8 <sup>th</sup> -locusts
6 <sup>th</sup> -9:13-21	army	
7-11:18-19	storm	Ex. 19:16-19" <sup>1</sup>

Hoeksema makes a good observation about interpreting the language of Revelation: "We believe that whenever the text is to be taken in the symbolical, or allegorical, sense of the word, the context or even the very contents of the verses will plainly indicate this. When, for instance, John is said to swallow a book, it is evident in itself that this is not reality, but symbolism. But in this connection there is absolutely nothing that compels us to such an interpretation. It is true that there are portions in the text which may be taken in the symbolic sense. There is one part in which John himself plainly indicates that it cannot be taken in the literal sense, namely when he says that a burning mass, as it were a great mountain, fell from heaven. But this gives us no reason to depart so radically from its literal interpretation as to spiritualize and allegorize something. There is nothing strange in hail and fire falling from heaven, or in the disturbance caused by the mass from heaven in the sea, or in the

poisoning of the waters, or the partial darkening of the heavenly bodies, sun, moon, and stars. In fact, the text is plainly in favor of the literal interpretation. For you will notice that by these four trumpets the whole physical universe is involved – the earth, and the sea, and the rivers, and the heavens, -- thus presenting one whole, which can never be obtained by any allegorical interpretation. Even as the first four seals refer to every sphere of human activity and relationship in the present dispensation, so the four trumpets evidently refer to every sphere of the visible universe, together constituting the whole of the world, as is also indicated by the number **four**. In the second place, the allegorical interpretation gives no satisfaction. It is conducive to all kinds of arbitrary questions, demanding just as arbitrary an answer. And the result is that after all is said, you are not sure whether you have attained to the right interpretation or not. If hail and fire may mean heresies, and may also mean political disturbances in the world of the Roman Empire, why may they not refer to a thousand other things in the world? All certainty is thus removed, and Scripture becomes a source of speculation. Thirdly, I refuse to go along with this mode of interpretation because the reference to definite historical facts and periods, as is implied in such a method, has always led to disappointment, and still does. Perhaps you remember – to mention just one example – how the first world war in the early part of this century was explained as meaning that it referred to Revelation 13. The German Kaiser, so they had it, was the beast that is there pictured. And this was to end in February, 1918, according to the exact calculation based upon the forty-two months which are mentioned in that chapter. Of course, that theory was exploded. And I suppose that other theories of the same kind can be built up. For it seems impossible that people learn by experience in this respect. But we will not be seduced by any such methods to interpret Scripture in this wise. I wish it to be understood from the outset, therefore, that in general the text means just exactly what it expresses. Hail and fire mingled blood means just executive what it expresses. Hail and fire mingled with blood refer to the destructive forces in nature with a view to the vegetable world. The sea is nothing else but the sea; and the creatures referred to are the inhabitants of that sea, while a ship means literally a ship. Rivers and fountains of water refer to inland waters in distinction from the oceans and seas; and their poisoning means exactly what it says. And sun and moon and stars are the heavenly luminaries with which we are acquainted, and not some mysterious reality either in the political or in the Roman world. We have here, in a word, a picture of the effects of the four trumpets on the physical universe in the history of the present dispensation.”<sup>2</sup>

- I. ***THE NATURE AND CAUSE OF THE JUDGMENTS.*** When the angel hurled fire into the earth there followed “*thunders, voices, flashes of lightning and an earthquake*” (8:5). This first trumpet is patterned on the seventh plague of Egypt from Exodus 9:24-26; “*So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous . . . And the hail smote every herb of the field, and broke every tree of the field throughout the land of Egypt . . . Only in the land of Goshen where Israel was no hail fell.*” A third of the earth and trees are “*consumed.*” The verb *katakaiō* means, “consume, to burn up completely.” The same word will be applied to end-time “Babylon” in Revelation 17:16 (“*she will be consumed by fire*”). The verbal link is deliberate; the process that begins with this first trumpet culminates in Babylon’s destruction. The areas affected by this trumpet are concerned with food supply and agriculture, as was the case with food shortages in the third seal (6:6). (Revelation 8:8-9) – “*And the second angel trumpeted, 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 there died the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, even they that had life; and the third part of the ships was destroyed.*” Last week I pointed out that in John’s language – he saw something like a firey mountain fall and strike the earth, and even though John is not concerned to provide information about the exact mechanism for all of these disasters nonetheless God does use natural means to accomplish His purpose, i.e., perhaps a massive asteroid (firey mountain) strikes the earth.<sup>3</sup> Likewise the destruction brought about by an earthquake that triggers

a volcano eruption that results in crop and livestock loss could be seen in the eruption of a super volcano.<sup>4</sup>

**Conclusion:** (1) As we look across the vast expanse of human history since the first coming of Christ, and in anticipation of his second coming, we see the concrete and all-too-real effects of God’s wrath against human sin, idolatry, immorality, and unbelief: widespread famine, devastating tornadoes, floods, infectious diseases, war, psychological and emotional torment, pollution of our natural resources, and the list could go on seemingly without end. And to what purpose? To warn mankind that God will not ignore the defilement of his glory or the calloused disregard for his mercy and longsuffering. If ever there were an incentive for personal evangelism, this is it!

(2) Yet in the midst of this earthly carnage and demonic assault, God’s children are kept safe and secure, having been “sealed” by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. We may well suffer at the hands of the unbelieving world. Persecution, slander, imprisonment, even martyrdom may come our way. But we will never endure the wrath of God, for Jesus has satisfied God’s justice in our place on the cross! Let us praise God for his mercy!

(3) In the final analysis, God is unfathomable. As Paul said, “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! *For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?* For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen” (Romans 11:33-36).<sup>5</sup>

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> cf. V. Poythress, *The Returning King: A Guide To The Book of Revelation* (P&R, 2000), p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> H. Hoeksema, *Behold He Cometh: An Exposition of The Book of Revelation* (Reformed Free Publishing, 1969), p. 302.

<sup>3</sup> I cited an article from USA Today (May 31, 2021), “Potentially Hazardous? An asteroid the size of the Space Needle will pass near the Earth on Tuesday.”

<sup>4</sup> I also cited from Yellowstone Forever an article entitled “Yellowstone Supervolcano Revealed.” Scientists estimated that this supervolcano would be hundreds of times more powerful than St. Helens. “The Yellowstone volcanic system has experienced two supereruptions, or events resulting in accumulation of more than 250 cubic miles of debris. That’s enough material to bury the state of Texas five feet deep!” says Lowenstern. “Any volcanic system that’s resulted in a supereruption is dubbed a supervolcano.” In other words, an eruption like this would directly affect the heartland of America agricultural and livestock production.

<sup>5</sup> This is drawn from Sam Storms, *Revelation: Triumph of The Lamb* (The Bridge Church OKC, OK) 2021.