

b. The seven trumpet judgments (Rev.8:2-11:15)

It would be helpful to understand how trumpets are used in the Bible before we look at the trumpet judgments separately. First of all, at certain times the blowing of trumpets played an important part in the nation of Israel. There were several important reasons why God wants His people to blow trumpets:

- God instructed Moses to use trumpets as a means of summoning the congregation to break camp for a move to a new location, for calling the congregation to the door of the Tabernacle, for calling the leadership to assemble, and as an alarm to warn the camp of trouble (Num. 10:1-6).
- God instructed Moses to use trumpets to arouse God's help in times of national war (Num. 10:9, cf. Ez.33:1-7).
- God instructed Moses to blow trumpets to celebrate times of gladness, the feasts, the first days of each month, and when offering certain sacrifices (Num. 10:10).

In the New Testament we also find trumpets being blown for specific reasons.

- A trumpet is used to announce the coming of the Son of Man and the gathering of the elect of God (Matt. 24:30-31).
- A trumpet will be used to rapture the church (1 Cor. 15:52).
- A series of trumpets will be blown to announce God's coming judgments (Rev. 8 - 9; 11:15)

Essentially, we could say trumpets were used in the Bible as something of a wakeup call, an announcement of a gathering, or as a prelude to something God is going to do. In light of these things, it is not hard to see that the trumpet judgments are used by God as an instrument to wake up the world and inform its inhabitants that He was on the move.

Another feature of these judgments is how the earth will get the brunt of God's fury. In many of the judgments to follow, the earth is going to suffer just as God had predicted through the Old Testament prophets (Hosea 4:3; Zephaniah 1:2-3; Isaiah 2:12-22). By the time God is finished with the earth, it will lose all of its beauty and lay desolate to the point of almost being uninhabitable.

i. The first trumpet judgement (Rev. 8:7) - the _____ will suffer.

When this trumpet is sounded, one-third of earth's vegetation will be burned up, and the effect on the food chain will touch every human being's life in a negative way. It is interesting to note that in the first book of the Bible (Gen. 3:17), the land is cursed because of man's sin; and when we come to the last book of the Bible, the land suffers once again due to man's sin. It is no wonder the apostle Paul spoke of the creation groaning as it waits to be set free of man's sin (Rom. 8:19-22). On many different levels, men have abused God's world and, in some cases, have permanently destroyed the environment, usually for financial reasons. This alone would be justification for the first trumpet judgment. As a result of this judgement a large part of the world will be laid low by hail and scorched by fire, leaving vast sections of the world unusable. Cities and towns will be destroyed and large ecosystems will be stripped of any productivity. This will not only have an impact on humanity but also have a major effect on the animal and insect kingdoms, and then down to the microbiological level of life. All of these things will naturally lead to a mass spilling of blood, or as the Bible says "...*hail and fire, mixed with blood...*"

ii. The second trumpet judgment (Rev.8:8-9) - the _____ will suffer

The sounding of this trumpet will turn one-third of the sea into blood. The cause of this destruction will come from something that looks like a mountain that is on fire and has been cast into the sea. As a result, one-third of all sea creatures will die and one-third of all the ships on the sea will be destroyed, thus turning one-third of the oceans into blood.

One can only imagine the outcry of pain the world will suffer with such destruction. When we think of the resources the ocean provides us, such as commercial food (fishing industry), transportation of goods (cargo, oil), entertainment (cruise liners), and naval fleets, the losses will be incalculable. And on top of this, the stench from death, both human and aquatic, will be overwhelming for most of the world that borders the oceans.

iii. The third trumpet judgment (Rev. 8:10-11) - earth's fresh _____ systems suffer

At the sounding of the third trumpet, God goes after the earth's freshwater supply. One-third of the earth's freshwater will be contaminated; this will have a devastating effect on the world. The cause of this devastation will come from a star by the name of "Wormwood." This is a name that describes plants and shrubs in the Middle East that are bitter and even poisonous in some varieties. It was sometimes used as a cure for intestinal worms.¹ In the Bible, wormwood is used to symbolize bitterness and sorrow.² In the Old Testament, God used the title "wormwood" to describe the pain He would bring to Israel for her disobedience (Jer. 9:15; 23:15; Lam. 3:15, 19). Everyone knows how important freshwater is to sustaining life, and to have one-third of the earth's freshwater turn bitter and unusable will cause a very unhealthy state of affairs for all those who have survived the first two trumpet judgments.

iv. The fourth trumpet judgment (Rev. 8:12-13) - the _____ system suffers

When this trumpet blasts, one-third of the sun, moon, and stars will be darkened. This will affect time for mankind. Man has always measured his days by sunrise and sunset; but during this judgment, man will live mostly in the dark. One can imagine that if the world continues to adopt a reliance on solar energy to power the world, when this trumpet blasts, there will be millions of people, business and financial institutions without access to electricity. All of this reinforces how dark the world will be at that time.

There is another unique feature to this trumpet judgment that is brought out in v.13. As an eagle flies over the earth, he will cry out three woes indicating the judgments are going to get worse. The Greek word for "woe" is *ouai* and it means "a state of intense hardship or distress—'disaster, horror.'"³ The way this unpacks itself is in the next three trumpet judgements. Trumpet #5 contains "woe" judgment #1; Trumpet

¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 697). New York: United Bible Societies.

² Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J. (1988). Wormwood. In *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (Vol. 2, p. 2164). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.

³ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 242). New York: United Bible Societies.

#6 contains “woe” judgment #2, Trumpet Judgment #7 contains the seven bowl judgments, which are “woe” judgment #3. So you can see that as this judgment gets unpacked, the effects become more severe and deadly.

v. **The fifth trumpet judgment {*woe judgment #1*} (Rev. 9:1-12) - the releasing of _____ to cause human suffering**

When this trumpet sounds, a star falls from heaven and locust-like creatures are released from a bottomless pit to torment people as they live on the earth. The question is: what are these beings? There are a number of things in these verses that give us clues as to who they are.

First, our attention is drawn to a “star” that had fallen to earth from heaven.

- In the Scriptures, _____ are sometimes referred to as stars (Job 38:7; cf. 1:6).
- The star is referred to with personal _____, “him” and “he” (v.1-2).
- A key was given to him to unlock the _____ pit, implying he had prior knowledge of the pit (Luke 8:31).
- He used his _____ and motor skills to open the pit (v.2).
- When he opened the pit, smoke went into the _____ with such intensity that the already-darkened sun was further darkened and the air was seen as darkened by the soot of the furnace.
- He had a name that means _____ (v.11).

Without a doubt this creature is an angel, who is Satan himself or a high-ranking demon in Satan's army (cf. Eph. 6:12).

As for the creatures who come out of the bottomless pit, who or what are they?

- They are described as locusts (v.3) but do not act like the insect we are familiar with.
 - ▶ They have _____ like a scorpion to sting people (v.3).
Real locusts don't sting people.
 - ▶ They are not _____ to hurt the grass, green things, or trees (v.4a). These are all things that real locusts eat.
 - ▶ They have _____ human targets (v.4b). Real locusts do not target human beings.
 - ▶ They are described as horses prepared for _____ (v.7a).
 - ▶ They have _____ of gold on their heads (v.7b).
 - ▶ They have _____ like men (v.7c).
 - ▶ They have _____ like women (v.8a).
 - ▶ They have _____ like lions (v.8b).
 - ▶ They have _____ of iron (v.9a).
 - ▶ They make a _____ like chariots (v.9b).
 - ▶ They have a _____ in their tail (v.10).
 - ▶ They have a real _____ for a leader (v.11).

- They have limitations
 - They cannot _____ the grass, green things, and trees (v.4a).
 - They can only _____ those who don't have the seal of God (v.4b). The 144,000 have been sealed (Rev. 7:4-8). It could be possible that anyone at this time that has placed their faith in Christ could be given a seal (cf. Eph. 1:13; 2 Tim. 2:19). God doesn't punish the saved with the unsaved.
 - They can only _____ (Gk. torture) people; they cannot kill them (v.5a).
 - They can only torment people for _____ months, approximately 150 days (v.5b).

The real horrifying feature of this trumpet judgment is that men will seek to commit suicide but will be unable to do so. (v.6). They would prefer to die in their sin rather than call upon the name of the Lord for salvation and win eternal life.

vi. The sixth trumpet judgment {*woe judgment #2*} (Rev. 9:13-21) - the suffering of war

In the sixth trumpet judgment there will be an army of 200 million men from the east who will viciously destroy one-third of the human race that exists at that time. The exercise of this military campaign will serve as a prelude to the battle of Armageddon.

There are four key factors we should notice in these verses:

- First, everything in this judgement is _____ and _____ overseen by God (vv.13-14).
- Second, the war is influenced by _____ (vv.14b-15).
 - The demons have been _____ at the Euphrates River.

- ▶ The demons have been _____ by God for this specific time.
 - ▶ The demons have a _____ objective to kill one-third of the human race. By the time they are finished killing, half of the world's population will have been killed between trumpet judgments four and six.
- Third, the demons are working in _____ with human beings (vv.16-19). Part of the cause of this is the demon worship that is taking place on the earth at that time (v.20). Men will welcome demonic influence and possession to conquer the world. It is also possible that demons might take possession of the animals used in the war (v.19, cf. Matt. 8:28-32).
 - Fourth, men will not repent of their _____ (vv.20-21).
 - ▶ They will not repent of their sinful _____.
 - ▶ They will not repent of their _____ worship.
 - ▶ They will not repent of their _____.
 - ▶ They will not repent of their _____ of money.
 - ▶ They will not repent of their _____.
 - ▶ They will not repent of their _____.
 - ▶ They will not repent of their _____.
 - ▶ They will not repent of their _____.

This judgment demonstrates the hardness of man's heart due to sin. It is a terrible testimony of the reality of how awful sin is and why God must judge it and punish it.