

Adult Faith Formation – Lent 2022  
The Apocalypse or The Revelation to John  
Week 4 – The Seven Trumpets (Chapters 8- 11)

- Silence in heaven for about ½ hour
- The trumpet blasts follow the same pattern as the seals....trumpet blasts 1-4 form a single picture (8: 7-12) Blasts 5 and 6 are different. Interlude visions follow
- The trumpet blasts produce a grace disruption of nature through “acts of God.”

7<sup>th</sup> Seal broken

- 7 angels standing before God are given trumpets (probably archangels)
- Angel stands at the altar with a gold censor and a great quantity of incense
- Hurls censor down to earth....thunder, lightning, earthquake as angels prepare to blow trumpets
- Incense and prayers are 2 different things: incense is mixed with the prayers and represents the favor with which God accepts the prayers
- Focus is a prayer of vindication: “thy kingdom come, thy will be done” asks for God’s intervention and judgment
- Hurling of coals represents God’s answer to prayer

Trumpets 1-4 (Ch. 8: 7-12)

Trumpet blast 1: hail and fire mixed with blood hurled down to earth. 1/3 of the land burned, 1/3 of the trees, all of the grass

Trumpet blast 2: large burning mountain (meteorite) hurled into sea. 1/3 of the sea turns to blood, 1/3 of the sea creatures die, 1/3 of the ships are wrecked

Trumpet blast 3: large star like a burning torch falls from the sky, falls on 1/3 of the rivers and on springs of water. The star is called Wormwood and 1/3 of all water turned to wormwood. Many people die.

Trumpet blast 4: 1/3 of the sun, 1/3 of the moon, and 1/3 of the stars are struck so that 1/3 of them become dark. Day loses light for 1/3 of its time as does night

Observations

- Trumpet blasts strike “the inhabitants”
- Harm the natural order on which human life depends
- Ecological disasters on every aspect of creation
- All relate to each other just as Seals 1-4 ...all involve natural disasters, recall the plagues that God sent against Pharaoh and the Egyptians
- Intended to convince idolaters to repent and submit to God’s will

Significance

- Series of visionary events that seem to contradict the events of the Seals
- Seals and trumpet blasts do not foretell a series of events in a timeline; they are saying something else
- Trumpet blasts 1-4 signify events that have naturally occurred in history (that God has allowed to occur)
- None are allowed to destroy everything (only a fraction)
- They are tempered by mercy to allow “the inhabitants” an opportunity to repent

- Parallels between these calamities and Jesus' eschatological discourse in the synoptic Gospels (Mt. 24: 7, Mk. 13: 7-8, Lk. 21: 9-10)

#### The Warning Cry (8: 13)

- Eagle flying through sky (GK = vulture)
- Cries "Woe" 3 times
- I Tim. 2: 1-4 It is especially important to pray for victims of natural disasters, whether believers or not

#### The 5<sup>th</sup> Trumpet Blast (9: 1-12)

- The most bizarre and horrifying (a true horror film!)
- The last 3 blasts are discriminating: strike only those who do not have seal on forehead
- There is a relation between blasts 5 and 6 and spiritual/psychological afflictions
- Star falls to earth (fallen angel) and is given the key to the passage of the abyss and opens the passage
- Abyss = In Septuagint = place of the dead (Rom. 10: 7)
- Smoke comes out of the abyss and demonic locusts swarm out
- Locusts are not allowed to kill their victims, but torment them for 5 months (typical lifespan of a locust)
- Locusts appear as horses ready for battle with faces and women's hair
- Humanoid but not human: teeth like lion, chest like iron breastplate, terrifying sound
- Their king is the angel of the abyss: Abaddon (Hebrew), Apollyon (Greek)
- The locusts are the first WOE that the eagle cries

#### The 6<sup>th</sup> Trumpet Blast (9: 13-19)

- 6<sup>th</sup> blast signals the final warning
- The voice that authorizes it comes from the horns of the gold altar before God
- 4 angels (fallen angels) have been bound at the banks of the Euphrates (bound in the past because of their intention to kill 1/3 of the human race) They have been preparing for their release since being bound
- The 6<sup>th</sup> trumpeter is told to release them
- Significance of the Euphrates River
- God allows them to be released as a "last ditch" effort to bring "the inhabitants" to himself
- The angels are the second WOE of the eagle: a cavalry of 2 hundred million (horses and riders wearing colored armor: red, blue, yellow (fire, sapphire, sulfur)
- Horses kill 1/3 humanity by the fumes emitted from their mouths (symbolic of false speech, lies, et al) and tails (like scorpions)
- This description references Luke 10: 19 used as Scriptural proof for snake handlers
- Parallel between 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet blast and 4<sup>th</sup> Seal: one kills 1/3 of the people and one kills 1/4. Figurative quantities but increasing in number
- Comparison between our view of this and God's view

#### Humanity's Response

- God's intention for all calamities thus far to lead to repentance but still not everyone repents
- Nature of humanity's wrongdoings is "worship of the work of their hands", a form of idolatry. Grave violation of the Decalogue that even pagans recognize as wrong. Ch. 9: 20-21 "murders,

magic potions (GK = pharmaka), unchastity (GK = sexual immorality in the act of fornication), robberies.

- Those who “play” with demons will become the prey of demons
- Spiritual idolatry in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1<sup>st</sup>-century readers would have been familiar with these wrongdoings)

#### Interlude Visions (2)

##### Vision One: Part One (10: 1-7)

- “mighty” angel appears with one foot on sea and one foot on land
- Voice roars like a lion (reference to God’s voice)
- 7 thunders speak. John asks if he should write down what they say but is told not to
- Angel raises right hand to heaven and swears an oath that there will be no more delay. When the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet blast is heard, God’s mysterious plan will be fulfilled

##### Vision One: Part Two (10: 8-11)

- John is told to take the small scroll held by the angel and angel tells him to swallow it
- Sweet in his mouth but sour (bitter) in his stomach
- Unknown voice says: “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.”
- Swallowing = the prophet who receives the word of God and assimilates it within himself until it is a part of his being. He then expresses it as best he can
- We do not know if this is the same scroll as the one with 7 seals.

##### Vision Two: Part One (11: 1-2)

- In this vision John plays an active role
- Given a measuring rod and told to measure the temple and the altar, and to count the worshippers
- Temple = the Church
- It is being measured because the church is in process of growing and expanding
- Exclude (GK = cast out) the outer court that will be trampled by the Gentiles for 42 months

##### Number Symbolism

- 42 months = 3 ½ years                      Gentiles trample outer court of temple
- 1260 days (42 x 30 = 1260)              2 witnesses prophecy
- 1260 days                                      woman (church) nourished in the desert
- 42 months                                      Beast allowed to exercise authority
- 3 ½ = ½ of 7. 7 =                              totality
- In Daniel:                                      3 ½ years = the eschatological period of tribulation

##### Vision Two: Part Two (11: 3-13)

- 2 witnesses wearing sackcloth prophecy for 1260 days
- They are described as 2 olive trees and lampstands = the witnesses represent the Church
- Fire comes from their mouths and destroys anyone who would harm them
- They have power to close up the sky and cause famine and drought
- When they have finished they are allowed to be silenced
- The Beast (first mention of this) comes up from the abyss, wages war against the witnesses, and kills them

- Their corpses lie in the Main Street of the Great City for 3 days. “The inhabitants” gaze on them and will not allow them to be buried
- Identity of the Great City (Babylon, Rome, Jerusalem, Sodom, Egypt et al) = the whole world
- After 3 days, God raises them from the dead and brings them up to heaven
- The Church’s witness to the world is powerfully anointed as they ascend in the presence of their enemies

Response of the People (Vs. 13)

- Great earthquake
- 1/10 of the city falls in ruins
- 7,000 people killed
- The rest of “the inhabitants” are terrified and give glory to God
- ONE city is saved!

Rev. 11 reveals the two-fold role of the Church: to worship and to witness

Our role in the 20-21 centuries

- 1) Christ has commissioned us to be witnesses (to speak about Jesus Christ; to speak about right and wrong, good and evil)
- 2) We must speak boldly, without fear or compromise
- 3) We will encounter stiff opposition
- 4) We can look forward to divine vindication

The second WOE has passed but the third is coming soon

Then the 7<sup>th</sup> angel blows his trumpet