

Revelation 8:1-13 - The Trumpets Begin to Sound

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Introduction - Jesus opens the seventh seal, ushering in the next series of judgements against those dwelling on the earth. God's extension of common grace to everyone draws to a close as He judges rebellion against His Son.

v1-5 - Seventh Seal Opened - God's Just Judgement Continues - The opening of the seventh seal is accompanied by 30 minutes of silence in heaven (Gen 2:2-3; Ecc 3:1-8). This is a significant event. Seven angels are then given 7 trumpets which continue to usher in judgement upon the earth (Joel 2:1). "In the OT, trumpets were used to announce war (Num. 10:5-9), move the camp (Num. 8), announce the feasts (Num. 10:10), and bring judgement (Josh. 6:13ff). The trumpet sound is a symbol of power and authority (Ex. 19:16)."¹ The angels are appointed for the time (Lu 1:19). The last trumpet introduces seven bowls of God's wrath (Rev 16). John sees a censer filled with incense representing the prayers of the saints (Ex 30:1-8; Deut 6:7; Lev 16:12-13; Num 16:46-47; Lu 1:10). Several commentators argue the angel's actions as a priest indicate that he is Jesus since He alone is our mediator. Our prayers go directly before God's throne (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 10:19-22; 1Jo 2:1-2; 1Ti 2:5). Now God answers prayers for justice.

v6-12 - Blowing of Four Trumpets - Blessings of God Withheld - The 1st trumpet evokes images of God's judgement of Egypt (Ex 9:19, 23-25) and introduces the next phase of His final judgement (Eze 38:22; Ps 18:7-15; Is 29:6; 30:30; 32:19; Joe 2:30-32). God's judgement is measured, restricted to a third, and leaves the majority intact (Gen 9:11). Destruction is possibly concentrated in areas of the antichrist's reign. The second trumpet is similar to judgement against Egypt (Ex 7:17ff). Again, God is restrained, but in the end, all of the sea will be blood (Rev 16:3). He is righteous (Rev 16:5-6) and His judgement falls on His creation and mankind's. The third trumpet heralds what could be a meteor. It's called, "Wormwood," a bitter plant related to mugwort and used in the OT to represent bitterness and judgement (Prov 5:4; Jer 9:13-16). Those who reject the One offering living water receive water that brings physical death. Finally, at the fourth trumpet, the heavens are darkened and the day and night lose illumination (Amo 8:9; Ex 10:21-23; Mar 15:33; Luk 21:25-28). They rejected the Light, so God removes light (Jhn 1:5; 3:19-20).

Much of God's grace is taken for granted. He sends rain, causes the plants and crops to grow, and provides for the needs of both those who follow Him and those who do not (Ps 104:14; 145:9; 147:8; Mat 5:43-48). God has long been merciful to people and blessed them. This blessing is how God has revealed Himself through creation (general revelation) (Act 14:17). Now He begins withholding that gracious blessing and letting people reap what they sowed.

v13 - Woe, Woe, Woe - Worse Still to Come - An eagle declares that three woes are coming upon the earth. His declaration is from mid-heaven, "the highest point in the heavens... where what is done can be seen and heard by all."² Alas, great grief is here for those who dwell on the earth! (Matt 23:13-36) Their citizenship is not in heaven (Phl 3:18-20).

So, what? Now, what? God created the world and gave us all the breath of life. He bestows so many blessings and continues to offer us grace. If you're having a hard time being content and thankful as we enter this new season of Fall, have you pondered the immense grace God has toward you in life and through His Son? Sometimes it's not until we see the times of judgement that we recognize the vast, undeserved riches we have. Christ is enough for me!

- How often do I take a rest for silence and solitude? Is my life always busy/noisy? What can I change? Mark 1:35ff
- How often do I take advantage of the privilege of prayer? Why are our prayers an incense before God?
- Am I grateful for the common graces God gives to everyone (food, marriage, children, shelter, beauty, health, creation, etc)? Do we value the extraordinary grace in Christ? (Col 3:15; Phil 2:14)
- If God gives good things to the wicked, how should I as a Christian do likewise? Does my graciousness at least start in my own family? Pray and ask God to help you extend grace to those around you.

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines: New Testament*. 818.

² Thayer's Greek Lexicon.