

Sunday, January 1, 2023 Revelation 8

Revelation 8:1 When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

Revelation 8:2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

The content of the scroll is now unveiled in the trumpets and bowls. The trumpet judgments form the middle of the three septets but are more closely related in style and substance to the bowl judgments. The seals are preliminary judgments that explore the depravity of humankind and demonstrate the necessity of judgment.

The saints are sealed from the wrath of God and the judgments themselves but face the wrath of the earth-dwellers. The silence in heaven is an expectant hush awaiting the action of God, but that is not to be just an outpouring of wrath but God's answer to the prayers of the saints (6:9-11, 8:3-4)

It is clear that the trumpets are directed at the idolatry so prevalent in John's day. The first four trumpets recapitulate the Egyptian plagues (Ex 7-10), which themselves were addressed to the Egyptian gods.

The plagues had a three-fold purpose: to prove the sovereign presence and power of YHWH, to show the powerlessness of the Egyptian gods, and to show Pharaoh that he could not win. All three of these elements are present in the trumpets and the bowls.

Pattern like the seals, 4 + 2 + 1, with an interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets. The fifth and sixth trumpets include a call to repentance.

Revelation 8:3-4 Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense ascended from the angel's hand with the prayers of the saints before God.

Revelation 8:5 Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and hurled it to the earth; and there were peals of thunder and sounds, and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

Revelation 8:6-7 And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them. The first sounded, and there was hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

Revelation 8:8-9 The second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was hurled into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood, and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.

Revelation 8:10-11 The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters. The star is named Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the waters because they were made bitter.

Revelation 8:12 The fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way.

Revelation 8:13 Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to those who live on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

Revelation 9:1 Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key to the shaft of the abyss was given to him.

Revelation 9:2-3 He opened the shaft of the abyss, and smoke ascended out of the shaft like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened from the smoke of the shaft. Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

Revelation 9:4-6 They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a person. And in those days people will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death will flee from them!