

Revelation 8

When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.

3 Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. 5 Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.

Vs. 1: Seventh seal opened! → silence: goes to climax!

During half hour: preparation for the seven trumpets.

Trumpets: to announce. The seven trumpets are going to announce the Judge.

They indicate: the time is near now and the great judgment is at hand!

Compare seven seals to seven trumpets: increased intensity.

Fourth seal: a quarter of mankind was killed (6:8) by sword, hunger, death (plague) and beasts.

Sixth trumpet: a third of mankind was killed (9:18) by three plagues: fire, smoke, brimstone.

Two groups of trumpets:

1-4 : the vegetation on the land, the seas, the waters and the heavens are struck.

Number four: entire creation.

5-7 : three woes (see 8:13): mankind itself is struck, not nature anymore.

Bowls with the prayers of the saints, see 5:8

Fire from the altar: holy fire! God's wrath.

The censer filled with incense and prayers of the saints. Now together with God's wrath: see 6:

Noises, thundering, lightnings and an earthquake. See 4:5. End of the series of seven seals and the beginning of the series of seven trumpets.

6 So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

7 The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

8 Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. 9 And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

10 Then 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 water. 11 The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.

12 Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.

Reminder of Joel 2, and Exodus: plagues of Egypt.

Joel 2:1 : *Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD is coming. For it is at hand.*

First trumpet: see Exodus 9:23 : now mingled with blood.

Disasters with vegetation: bush fires, drought, crop failure, is a part of God's warnings!

Second trumpet: Big mass of fire, as big as a mountain.

One third of the ships destroyed: God's wrath in storms and disasters on the sea are also a warning!

Third trumpet: waters on the land: the source of life. → Wormwood. Bitter. Toxic.

Disasters with drinking water is also part of God's warnings!

Fourth trumpet: The heavens struck.

Third of the sun: Joel 2:31 : The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.

Darkened: by the smoke of fire, which destroys the earth. Bushfires, fires of war, volcanoes: all warnings from God.

13 And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

Vs. 13: angel? ESV, NIV: EAGLE.

Eagle: foreboding, omen.

Inhabitants of the earth: used to indicate the unbelievers.

Revelation 9:

Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.

6 In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

7 The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. 8 They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. 9 And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. 10 They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five

months. 11 And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

12 One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things.

Star fallen from heaven: See Isaiah 14:12 : *How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning.* And verse 15: *Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit.* Terrifying, but keep in mind 1:18 : *'I have the keys of Hades and of Death!'* Christ rules, even though He allows this fallen angel to unleash the powers of hell.

Bottomless pit: hell. Underworld. Separated from the earth. Demons from this world could not come on earth, until God allowed this fallen star to open the pit.

Smoke came out: With locusts.

See Exodus 10: eighth plague. See Joel 2:1-11 !

But here: not normal locusts: combination of locusts and scorpions.

But: do not destroy the vegetation. They are to torture the unbelievers.

Five months: one season, the usual life span of locusts.

Central verse: verse 6!

A: Fallen star/angel of the bottomless pit

B: Locusts/Scorpions torment mankind

C: Men will seek death

B: Locusts/Scorpions hurt mankind

A: king: angel of the bottomless pit.

Torture: spiritual, mental, physical: can be either or all. Torture drives them to madness.

Eph. 6: spiritual hosts of wickedness.

Angel of the bottomless pit: his name mentioned in Hebrew and in Greek! Meaning: Destroyer.

Contrast with Jesus Christ: not the Redeemer but the Destroyer.

13 Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." 15 So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. 16 Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. 17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. 18 By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. 19 For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.

20 But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. 21 And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Sixth trumpet: Voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God: see 8:3: the prayers of the saints were offered to God. Also the altar in 6:9, the fifth seal: the souls under the altar praying.

Euphrates: Isaiah 7:20; Isaiah 8:7; Jeremiah 46:10. Place from where God's punishment comes.

Vs. 15: Hour and day and month and year: all at the right time: at God's time.

Vs. 16: two hundred million horsemen: see ESV: *The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number.*

Reference to Psalm 68:17 : *The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of thousands.*
Or ESV: *The chariots of God are twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands;*

Vs. 17: the colours fiery red, hyacinth blue and sulfur yellow: the colours of their plagues: fire, smoke and brimstone.

Vs. 18: Fire, smoke, brimstone are the means with which God's wrath comes in the OT (Gen. 19: Sodom, Isaiah 34:9-10). These three give a picture of hell!

Tails of the horses: like serpents, which can bite and wound. These creatures can attack from two sides: mouth and tail. See also the locusts/scorpions in the fifth seal.

Vs. 20-21: Despite urgent warnings the rest of mankind does not repent.

Question;

The seven trumpets, just like the seven seals, are describing in symbols what is happening on this earth before Christ returns. We see in it the warnings of His coming as judge. The Lord Jesus also speaks about the signs of His return in Matthew 24. These signs are given to us as encouragement to be prepared. Can you look at this world and what happened in the past years, and give examples of these warnings, which go unheeded by this world? And does that exhort us to be ready for Christ's coming?