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(Revelation 8:6-13)

Intro. The audio you just heard was from a shofar, the biblical trumpet. They were blown to assemble the people for a meeting & to call them to pack up their tents & head out & to go to war. The sound of the trumpet determined the purpose. Over these next few weeks we are going to look at the 7 trumpets of Revelation 8-11 & the subject of “Battle Trumpets,” because these trumpets are God’s call to war against the unbelieving world. Today we begin with “The Tribulation” of Revelation 8:6-13.

Theme: Tribulation/judgment of God

Background: The Apostle John received a vision of Christ with a message to 7 churches in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). He also saw God on the throne & the Lamb next to Him & all heaven’s host worshipping them. And then the Lamb takes a 7-sealed scroll, the document for the end-times & begins to open each seal to show what will happen. The first 6 seals deal with the coming of the antichrist & his spirit of conquest, followed by war & oppression & famine & death. Then we see the souls in heaven who have died for their faith, asking God when He will avenge them by dealing with their enemies. He responds with “just a little longer” & then we see a great earthquake & cataclysmic events. While these things are taking place, chapter 7 reminds us how God redeems both Jews & Gentiles, even from every ethnic group through the good news of the blood of the Lamb. Chapter 8 opens with the calm before the storm as the 7th seal is opened which includes the prayers of the saints being answered by God.

- Because we have taken a break from Revelation for the last 2.5 months, let me remind you of my view of the 3 sets of judgments in Revelation (seals, trumpets & bowls):

Various Views of the Judgments in Revelation:

1. Chronological —7 seals followed by 7 trumpets followed by 7 bowls						
Seals	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
Trumpets	1 2 3 4 5 6 7					
Bowls	1 2 3 4 5 6 7					
2. Chronological Intensification —in order, but the 7 th seal consists of the 7 trumpets & the 7 th trumpet consists of the 7 bowls						
Seals	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
Trumpets						
Bowls						
3. Overlapping Intensification —each of the 3 sets overlap but grow in intensity where the 7 th of each is the final judgment before Christ’s return (the last 2 always include earthquakes & storm-related events)						
Seals	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
Trumpets	1 2 3 4 5 6 7					
Bowls	1 2 3 4 5 6 7					

- I’m not saying I have all the numbers lined up correctly in this last view, but it highlights the growing intensity of the judgments (on comparisons of trumpets & bowls, see Kistemaker, 272)
- Even if my view isn’t correct about these sets of judgments, everyone agrees that with each new set we get closer to the end of things here on earth
- With this in mind, let me give an explanation of these first 4 trumpets & a couple of applications:

I. The 1st trumpet involves a great storm to harm much of the earth (8:7)

- “hail and fire, mixed with blood”—probably refers to a hail & lightning storm, burning forests & grassy areas & resulting in the deaths of animals & humans (reference to blood)—cf. also Exodus 9:23-27 & the 7th plague

Illus: You may have witnessed great hail storms which caused tremendous damage to crops or houses or vehicles—that’s the kind of thing happening here, only with greater harm

II. The 2nd trumpet refers to volcanic explosions harming the sea (8:8-9)

- The “great mountain, burning with fire” is a volcanic island or volcano near the ocean which blows its top

Illus: This is worse than Mount St. Helens in May, 1980 (scorching 230 square miles) or Mt. Etna in October 2013, shutting down airplanes in much of Europe or Mt. Vesuvius & its eruption in 79 AD which spewed 20 miles high & destroyed the nearby city of Pompeii with a release of thermal energy 100,000x greater than that at the Hiroshima bombings (3 million live in that vicinity, the most densely populated volcanic region in the world)

III. The 3rd trumpet includes a meteorite from space harming fresh water (8:10-11)

- “a great star...from heaven, blazing like a torch” must certainly be a meteorite, because not only would John have viewed it that way 2000 years ago, but we would still use a similar description today (shooting stars)
- Whereas the previous judgment affected the salt water, this one affects fresh water, turning drinking water bitter (cf. Exodus 15:23 & the waters at Marah made sweet by God’s work through Moses)

Illus: Now if you watched too much Hollywood, you might think we would spot such a meteor & blow it up before it ever got here, but even if everyone on the planet looked to the stars to keep an eye out for anything coming our way, we could still miss one as it came soaring through our atmosphere (the Chelyabinsk Meteor hit Russia in February 2013 with intense heat & light brighter than the sun). It’s said the Barringer (Meteor) Crater in Arizona was caused by a meteor with an explosion force 150x greater than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

- It’s possible this refers to a missile striking the water and turning it deadly, but since these other trumpets appear to reference God’s work, this one probably does, too

IV. The 4th trumpet decreases the light & increases the darkness on the earth (8:12)

- This one is a bit harder to figure out, but it plays off the 9th plague on Egypt (cf. Exodus 10:21-23)—in light of the preceding trumpets & the cataclysmic events, it may cause the earth to speed up its rotations, so the days & nights are actually shorter (cf. Matthew 24:22) or there may be so much dust & debris in the atmosphere from the volcanic & meteor activity that part of the light gets blocked out

Application:

I. Be Grateful for the Justice of God (cf. 8:2-5)

- Evil will not reign forever & God will respond to the sufferings of His people
- Those set against the Lord will burn & die (these physical descriptions foreshadow the spiritual suffering after the Great White Throne judgment, 20:11-15)

II. Realize the Mercy of God & Repent (8:7-13)

- References to 1/3 (12x in this chapter) show God is still merciful during this time; He doesn’t destroy everything yet & still allows 2/3 of the ships & the living to carry on with their lives
- The trumpets are warnings, like an alarm going off, letting you know of danger—heed the merciful warning & repent

Conc. Now I’ve covered this passage but I really haven’t said anything about the final verse of chapter 8.

We’ll start covering the first of the three woes (referencing pain/anger) which are mentioned next time. But here’s the real message of verse 13—as bad as everything sounds with the first 4 trumpets, “you ain’t seen nothing yet.” It’s going to go from bad to worse! Sin & evil & darkness & warfare & judgment will increase exponentially. That’s why you cannot put off surrendering your life to Christ now, because it will only become harder during those days. You say, “when I see things getting really bad, then I’ll give my life to Jesus.” Don’t be a fool—as the world grows in darkness, so will you & you won’t see Christ as the only offer of hope. Turn from your sin & trust in Him today.