

**Revelation**  
**Lesson VI**  
**Revelation 8:1-11:19**

**The Sounding of the Trumpets**

**Introduction:**

1. Chapter seven was an interlude between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals.
  - a. The pause gave time for the sealing of the faithful church against the Roman Empire.
  - b. With the church assured of God's care, it is time for the opening of the seventh seal.
2. The opening of the seventh seal reveals seven angels with trumpets to sound.
  - a. These trumpets symbolize partial judgments against Rome.
  - b. They are only partial for the sake of giving the opportunity of repentance.
3. As with the seals, there is a pause between the sixth and seventh in this series.
4. In this lesson, we shall trace the progress of the seven trumpets and the events related to their sounding.

**Body of Lesson:**

**I. Preparation For Sounding the Trumpets: Rev. 8:1-6**

**A. Frequently there is a "calm before the storm".**

1. A "silence in heaven" followed the opening of the seventh seal.
2. This dramatic silence emphasizes the impact of the judgments about to be revealed.

**B. Seven angels are given trumpets to blow.**

1. Another angel added 'much incense' to the prayers of the martyrs.
2. God acts in response to the pleas of his creatures.

**C. Each trumpet will affect only a "third part" of its specified object.**

**II. The Sounding of Six Trumpets: Rev. 8:7-13**

**A. The first four trumpets affect earth's environment.**

1. First: Hail, fire and blood burn a third of the vegetation. Rev. 8:7
2. Second: damages a third part of the sea. Rev. 8:8-9
3. Third: one-third of land waters. Rev. 8:10-11
4. Fourth: causes a third of the heavenly bodies to withhold their light. Rev. 8:12

**B. The first four trumpets collectively signify the fact that mankind's sin affects the very planet earth itself. Cf. Rom. 8:20**

**C. A flying eagle warns that the worst is yet to come. Rev. 8:13**

**D. The final three trumpets affect men directly.**

1. Fifth: smoke and demon-locusts out of the abyss. Rev. 9:1-12
  - a. Absurd to picture literal creatures.
  - b. Likely a symbol of Rome's internal rotteness.
2. Sixth: invasion from the direction of the Euphrates River. Rev. 9:13-21
  - a. Designed to conjure up Rome's fear of the Parthian cavalry.

- b. Symbolizes external dangers of invasion.
  - c. This trumpet and reaction to it shows that Rome has gone too far to be saved. Rev. 9:20-21
3. Seventh trumpet will be sounded only after a pause for visions designed to show John and the church on earth its duty during the time of Rome's chastisement.

### **III. The Episode of the Little Scroll: Rev. 10:1-11**

#### **A. A mighty angel appeared to John. Rev. 10:1-2**

- 1. He spoke with a mighty voice which sounded much like a lion's roar.
- 2. Such a voice would make sinful men feel an awful sense of foreboding.

#### **B. The angel's cry was accompanied by seven thunders. Rev. 10:3-4**

- 1. Thunder is a warning signal of danger.
- 2. Forbidding John to write down the message of the thunders symbolizes the fact that Rome had run out of time and would be given no more warnings or time for repentance.

#### **C. The angel took an oath that "there shall be delay no longer". Rev. 10:5-7**

#### **D. The open scroll in the angel's hand. Rev. 10:8-11**

- 1. John was told to take and eat the scroll. Cf. Ezek. 2:8-3:3
- 2. It contained the judgments of God upon those who reject him.
- 3. It was "sweet" to receive a message from God; it was "bitter" to understand its harsh meaning.

#### **E. Thus was defined John's role during the impending crisis: prophecy to many nations.**

### **IV. The Two Witnesses: Rom. 11:1-14**

#### **A. John was told to measure the temple of God and the worshippers there. Rev. 11:1**

- 1. The "temple of God" is the church. 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; I Pet. 2:5
- 2. The measuring of it is another way of representing God's purpose to protect and preserve his church against harm. Cf. 2 Sam. 8:2

#### **B. The outer court of the temple (i.e. that which has been "given unto the nations") symbolizes all men outside the church.**

- 1. These people will be allowed to oppress the church (i.e. the holy city) for 42 months.
- 2. There is a limit to what God would allow wicked men to do to his faithful people.

#### **C. The two witnesses which appear represent the mission of the entire faithful church during the time of her persecution: continued faithful preaching of the gospel. Rev. 11:3**

#### **D. A description of the two witnesses. Rev. 11:4-13**

- 1. Also likened to two olive trees and two candlesticks. Cf. Rev. 1:20
- 2. Number "two" indicates something made strong.
  - a. Church is strong because of its spiritual resources in Christ.
  - b. Heaven responds to its needs. Rev. 11:5-6

#### **E. The "beast" who makes war with the two witnesses. Rev. 11:7**

1. This beast is more prominent in the second part of Revelation (12-22) than the first (1-11).
2. He is to be identified with the Roman emperor, and he is associated with the powers of evil (i.e. out of the abyss).
3. The beast appears to conquer the people of God.

**F. The two witnesses lie in the street of “Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified”. Rev. 11:8**

1. Some take this to be a reference to Jerusalem.
2. Jerusalem had been destroyed by the time our book was written, and this cryptic reference signifies Rome.
  - a. Jesus has been crucified in more places than earthly Jerusalem. Cf. Heb. 6:6
  - b. Names and memories of other wicked cities are used here to point to the most wicked city of John’s day.

**G. Mankind rejoiced over the death of the witnesses. Rev. 11:9-10**

1. This shows the contempt the world had for the religion of Jesus at this time.
2. The witnesses had “tormented” mankind through their faithful preaching.

**H. The revival of the two witnesses. Rev. 11:11-14**

1. The church would “rise from the ashes” of the Roman persecution.
2. Its enemies would know that divine power lay behind such a revival and experience great fear.
3. A wholesale reversal of the relative positions of Rome and the church were to take place.

**V. The Sounding of the Seventh Trumpet: Rev. 11:15-19**

- A. **The seventh trumpet is transitional to the next series of visions, viz. the seven bowls of divine wrath.**
- B. **The final series of visions will demonstrate that Rome does not rule the world but God and his Christ.**
- C. **Verse 18 introduces the theme about to be developed in the next series of visions: reward to faithful saints and destruction of Rome.**
- D. **The vision of the “ark of his covenant” in the heavenly temple is a symbol of God’s presence with his people.**

**Conclusion:**

1. A major point of transition in the Apocalypse has been reached.
2. The essence of the message of the total book is clear at this juncture.
3. Beginning with chapter 12, the terrible details of Rome’s final overthrow will be traced in some detail.
  - a. A new series of characters will be introduced for the sake of telling the final story.
  - b. The images will grow more impressive as the message of the book is brought to completion.

**READING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT LESSON:**

Please read Rev. 13 in its entirety. Do your best to identify the woman, her child and the dragon. What is the relationship of these three dramatic characters to one another?