



Note that the Seven Trumpets are contained within the seventh Seal.

The Golden Censer

This is a 4-8-1011. When he opened the seventh seal, three angels followed in heaven for about half an hour. (1) And I saw the seven angels who stood before God, and to them were given seven purpurs. (2) Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar: he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. (3) The voice of the four angels, with the prayers of the saints, went up with the angel's voice. (4) Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came voices of thunder, lightning, voices of lightning and an earthquake. (5) Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them.



Who is “another angel?” This question introduces one of the darkest passages of Revelation. Indeed, most commentators treat it very briefly, because they have so little to say of which they are sure. As to who this angel is, there are two approaches

- We don't know, or
- Jesus Christ.

The latter is argued for in one of two ways:

- In the dispensationalist theory, God is now dealing again with Israel as a nation. Israel is now God's representative (again) on earth. In the prior dispensation (the Law) Jesus appeared as “The Angel of the Lord.” Therefore, he must do so again. (This seems to argue more against dispensationalism than anything else it might argue for).
- More powerfully, however, the argument is made that who else could stand between the seven angels of the presence (as the Jews would have known them from the non-canonical book, *Tobit*). The parallel is drawn between this action and that of the High Priest entering the Holy of Holies (Leviticus 16:11-13) -- and who is our High Priest?

Incense, we have seen, represents prayer. Here we see it “mingled” with prayer. The best suggestion (again, most skip this) is that this incense (being heavenly) represents the prayer of the Holy Spirit (see Romans 8:26-27).

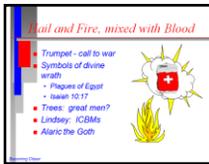
Fire -- note that it comes from the altar, wherein the blood of the martyrs is spilled -- compares to the passage in Ezekiel 10-11 where the coals taken from between the cherubim are spread over Jerusalem, foretelling her fall. This is a warning of things to come.

Thunder (and all the rest) are taken somewhat literally, meaning natural disasters (when they are commented on at all).

The Half Hour Silence may be the most mysterious of all. Some (historicists) hold that this is the consolidation of the church after the time of Constantine. Perhaps a better view is this: “Everything holds so that the prayers of the saints may be heard.” (Barclay)

The First Trumpet

Rev. 8:7 (NIV) The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.



A trumpet is, among other things, a call to war. This passage is sufficiently bloody and destructive to view it that way, and this is unchallenged between interpretations.

Following the general pattern that these judgments begin with the symbolic and end with the literal, we would see (with Talbot, a futurist) that the hail, blood and fire are symbols of Divine Wrath. They remind us of the plagues of Egypt (less the fire). Fire is described in two instances as representative of Christ, one in particular referring to wrath:

(Isa 10:17 NIV) The Light of Israel will become a fire, their Holy One a flame; in a single day it will burn and consume his thorns and his briars.

Alone among the commentators I have, Lindsey insists that there is no symbolism at all in this passage -- this is John's attempt to describe a rain of ICBMs. I consider this a minority exception, and one of the perils of the futurist point of view. Should the Lord tarry, who knows what weapon will be picked next?

Another minority position (Talbot) holds that trees must be considered as great men, following Daniel's dream about Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:20-22). While this is certainly supportable in Scripture, the parallel interpretations for grass (the fleetingness of man's life) and the earth (meaning its inhabitants) don't seem to fit as well. It is possible.

As usual, the futurist holds this in sequence after the rapture. The historicist says it was fulfilled in the invasions of Alaric the Goth.



In AD 409 Alaric and his Goths sacked Rome - the first time it had been taken in over 1100 years. Why do historicists point to this as fulfillment of this prophecy?

- It was his policy (as opposed to some others, which we shall see later) to conduct a scorched earth campaign. His orders were to burn all orchards, vineyards and farms. He precisely parallels the indications in this verse.
- The third part -- a recognized division of the Roman Empire -- here means the Greco-Roman lands, the Latin part of the Roman Empire. The other divisions -- roughly Turkey to Egypt, and Egypt on around through Spain, are dealt with later. Historicists do not precisely agree on exact definitions of "one third."
- Fascinatingly enough, 8 days after Alaric took Rome, he died. His followers scattered, after the sack of the city. He came in like a hailstorm -- and just as suddenly, was gone. His followers went north, and founded the kingdom of the Goths north of the Appenine mountains.
- There is a definite connection with the church. The Goths were heretics -- Arianists, who did not believe that Jesus was equal with God. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, wrote his classic work on the Trinity in an effort to persuade the Goths to orthodox doctrine. This is the first connection with the church of the time.

The Second Trumpet

Rev 8:8-9 NIV) The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, (2) a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.



This passage is just fascinating in its diversity of interpretation, particularly as regards this flaming mountain:

- The symbolic interpretation (which I believe is called for by the structure of the passage) is found in (Zech. 4:7 NIV) "What are you, O mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'God bless it! God bless it!'" (The mountain in context refers to the Persian Empire). The mountain represents some nation.
- The literalists -- much to my surprise -- include the so-called "poetic" interpreters -- the Amillennialists. They see a volcano; Lindsey sees either a giant meteor or an H-bomb.
- Smith (to my great surprise) positively identifies this as pollution of the world's oceans. How this ties with a flaming mountain is not explained.

The sea, as explained in Daniel's vision, is representative of the great mass of people out of whom empires arise (Daniel 7:2-3)

The fact that the mountain is all ablaze may be found (perhaps) in Moses meeting the Lord on the flaming mountain (Deu 4:11-12); more likely the correct symbolism is taken from Jeremiah:

(Jer 51:25-26 NIV) "I am against you, O destroying mountain, you who destroy the whole earth," declares the LORD. "I will stretch out my hand against you, roll you off the cliffs, and make you a burned-out mountain. {26} No rock will be taken from you for a cornerstone, nor any stone for a foundation, for you will be desolate forever," declares the LORD.

This, then, symbolically is a destroying nation; the second half of the verse indicates a strong connection to the sea (literally). The historicist view is that this was fulfilled in the invasion of the Vandals.



In AD 429 the Vandals finished a long march from their home in Europe to the point of Carthage, which they rebuilt. Carthage was Rome's ancient enemy (remember Hannibal and his elephants?). From these people we get our English word *Vandalism*.

The fascinating thing about this set of campaigns is the complete improbability of it all. Rome controlled the Mediterranean. It is an axiom of naval warfare that when one power controls -- and can closely blockade -- the ports of another, the weaker power will have no way to challenge that naval supremacy. The stronger power simply destroys the ships as they are being constructed. If you had to predict the route of the next invasion, this would not be it.

Genseric, the leader of the Vandals, conducted a sea campaign, taking most of the islands of the middle Mediterranean in a series of ferocious battles. Sea battles at that time usually resulted in the loser drowning -- total destruction of a fleet was common. The stated amount of bloodshed, and certainly the destruction of merchant shipping, are consistent with the campaigns of piracy the Vandals carried out.

Genseric sacked Rome in AD 455. Interestingly, Pope Leo (who did not know he was a Pope; he thought of himself only as Bishop of Rome) went out and begged for the lives of the citizens. This request was granted (rape and pillage were conducted on a business as usual basis). Thus we see a second connection to the church -- and evidence of the "sealing".

Genseric died a few months later (it seems that sacking Rome is not good for your health). The Vandals' power waned, and another nation came on the scene.

Third Trumpet

Rev. 8:10-11 NKJ. The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky 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 turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.



Once again, Lindsey is alone in insisting that the great star ablaze must be another H-bomb (or series thereof) hitting the fresh waters of the earth. All others interpret this as a great leader. Talbot explains that this is the head of the revived Roman Empire, most probably the Pope.

The effects of this are taken either literally (Amillennialists and Lindsey plus Smith) or (Talbot) figuratively. Talbot proposes that water represents the truth of God (I can't find justification for this). This would then be a symbol for apostasy, which fits. Historicist explanation will follow on the next slide.

Wormwood is a tough one to trace, until you discover that the word for Wormwood here is translated "bitter food" or "bitter poison" elsewhere in the Bible. (This is another instance of how the King James Version has affected our view). In Deuteronomy 29:17-18, we see that this bitter poison is the fruit of idolatry.

Taking it together, we see a great leader, with some religious significance, connected somehow to rivers and springs.

The historicists see this fulfilled in Attila the Hun.



So why Attila the Hun?

- Attila claimed to be a son of the god Mars, the god of war. In one celebrated instance, his horse bloodied his hoof on something in the ground. Attila got off to look at it; it was a sword, half buried in the ground. He immediately claimed that it was thrown down from heaven by Mars to him (star falling, all ablaze?)
- His campaign which resulted in victory over Rome was conducted largely in Northern Italy, the source of the rivers of Rome. Interestingly enough, his campaign tactic (evidently for the first time) took advantage of these rivers. He would make a weak attack on the Romans, and then withdraw across the river. As soon as the Romans had about half their army across the river, he would strike at their flanks, dividing their army in two, and defeating it in detail -- a river based campaign.
- His nickname? "Scourge of God."
- Leo (same one) persuaded him not to sack Rome by reminding him of Alaric's fate (hand of God will strike you down, etc..), ably assisted by a bribe from the Emperor. Attila did extract one victim from the city: the Princess Honoria, whom he carried off to his mountain castle to marry. He died on their wedding night -- the marriage unconsummated. (There's a pattern here, folks).
- The Huns dissolved after that as a force, but not before burying Attila with some of his treasure -- under the Danube, the northern river boundary of the Roman Empire.

Fourth Trumpet

Rev. 8:12 (NIV): The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, 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 turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.



This passage is little commented upon.

Remember the discussion we had during the Sixth Seal? Sun, moon and stars (following Joseph's dream) are supposed to be kings and authorities. So we may begin by stating that the symbolic side of this must be the fall of a third of the kings, etc.. to which this applies.

Note also that we explicitly mention not only the stars, etc.. but also the light. Light is seen symbolically as the light of God ("God is Light" said John -- remember in our preliminary study?). Darkness, the lack of light, is a plague, as it was to the Egyptians.

There are some interesting parallels. The point of the plagues in Egypt was to warn Pharaoh; the point of these trumpets is to warn men (which is probably why the damage is partial).

Another parallel concerns the fact that this is the fourth trumpet. Recall that in Genesis the fourth day saw the creation of the sun and moon; the fourth trumpet sees a third destroyed. Make of it what you will.

The literalists (notably Lindsey, as usual) hold this to be nuclear in nature (or volcanic, Smith). Talbot and others place this as a moral darkness.

The Historicist approach sees this in the start of the Dark Ages. The Latin Roman Empire (or "Western Empire") was finally destroyed from within. A minor German tribe, the Heruli, under their king Odoacer, demanded one third of the lands of Italy in payment for their services in keeping out the (other) northern barbarians. This was refused. Odoacer then entered Rome, deposed the emperor and abolished the Senate -- effectively ending the Roman Empire in the west. In its last act, the Senate petitioned the *Eastern* emperor, Zeno, to accept Odoacer as his viceroy for the west (the actual title was "patrician.") Zeno did so, and the proud city of Rome ceased to be independent. Thus began what classic historians call **The Dark Ages**.

Woe

Rev. 8:13 NKJV As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!"



Very little is said in the commentaries about this section.

Lindsey, alone, sees a literal eagle. Others follow the King James, seeing a literal “angel” (a mistranslation). Hosea 8:1 gives us the symbolism:

(Hosea 8:1 NIV) "Put the trumpet to your lips! An eagle is over the house of the LORD because the people have broken my covenant and rebelled against my law.

The consensus is that we have a short pause during which men are reminded of God’s justice.

The historicist view, such as can be found, is that Justinian (approx. AD 527) represents this eagle. He reconquered Africa from the Vandals, but more important he reestablished the Roman Law in its entirety. He was the Roman Empire’s closest equivalent to Moses. (See next two slides)

There is a warning here for us, too. God has yet to utterly destroy; therefore, that which is upon us is to warn and correct us. The question is, will we listen?



