



– an uncluttered approach –

SIMPLIFYING

# REVELATION

- Ch. 6-7 revealed the seven seals.



- ❖ The gospel goes out
- ❖ Violence on the earth
- ❖ Sorrows & distresses
- ❖ Unnatural death
- ❖ Saints await judgment
- ❖ Wicked fear judgment

- A quick review of the first six seals...
  - **WHITE HORSE** – the gospel going forth
  - **RED HORSE** – violence on the earth
  - **BLACK HORSE** – sorrows & distresses upon the earth
  - **PALE HORSE** – unnatural death upon the earth
  - **SLAIN SAINTS** – they are awaiting judgment
  - **THE WICKED** – they fear the judgment
- Ch. 7 answered the question, “Who is able to stand?”
  - Those who have the seal of God (v 3-8),
  - Who are arrayed in white (v 9, 13), and
  - Who serve the Lord (v 10, 15).
- Ch. 8-9, it is not specifically stated, but the question is, “what about the rest?”
  - These 2 chapters look at God’s effort to reach the lost, to provoke them to repentance.



# the calm **BEFORE THE STORM...**

## **Silence** In Heaven

- Seals 1-6 brought a variety of activities – horses & riders, plea from the saints, elements of judgment...
- Seal # 7 brought silence. All the former noises were quieted.
- There is a storm on the horizon, set to begin in 8:5.
  - Before the storm, there is a great pause – a building of anticipation before troubles are unleashed.
  - During the calm, preparations are made.
  - Seven angels are given seven trumpets (v 2) which will break the silence and unleash awful things...
- Before the trumpets, another angel bearing “much incense” (prayers of the saints, 8:3-4; 5:8).
- It is common for prayers to intensify as circumstances warrant.

How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth? (6:10)

# Silence In Heaven



an ABRUPT **answer to prayer**

- The silence ended abruptly, as the angel filled the censer with fire from the altar & threw it to the earth, resulting in thunderings, lightnings & an earthquake.
- There is perhaps a lesson here on the surety of God answering prayers.
  - Recall the request of the saints in **6:10**? The saints asked for God's vengeance on the wicked.
  - This angel, casting the censer with the incense & fire to the earth, brings about the judgments which are represented in the 7 trumpets.
  - The chaos brought by the trumpets are not the final judgment but temporal judgments.
  - They are a temporal response by God to the prayer of His people.
- There is an abruptness to the context here. Things happen

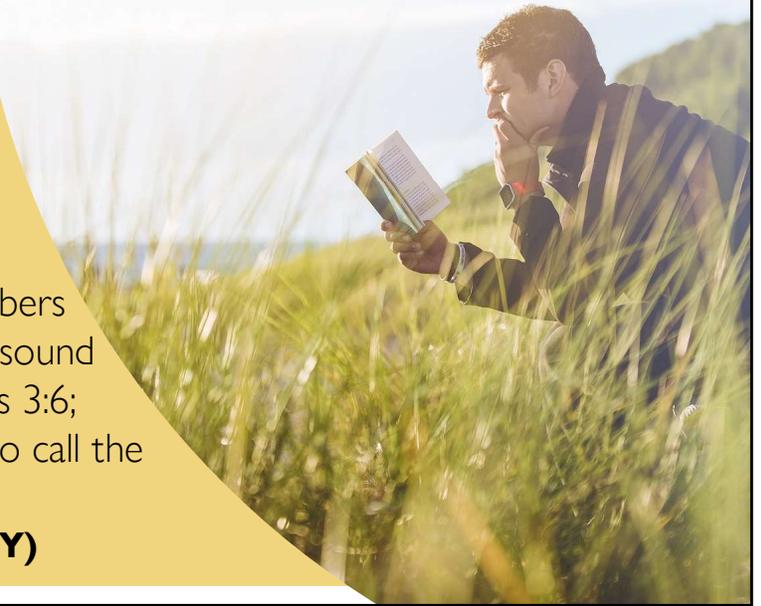
very quickly.

- Judgment after judgment is about to unfold.
- The complete answer to their prayer would not come until the final judgment, but in a very real way, there was **AN IMMEDIATE ANSWER.**
- There are other times in Scripture where we see abrupt answers to prayer.
  - Elijah's battle with the prophets of Baal (1 Ki 18:19-40)
  - Elisha's servant seeing the heavenly hosts (2 Ki 6:17-18)
  - Hezekiah's health restored & life extended (2 Ki 20:1-6)
  - Peter's release from prison (Ac 12:5-16)
  - Paul & Silas in a Philippian jail (Ac 16:25-26)
- The Scriptures teach us to have confidence in the Lord – to believe that He answers prayer.
  - Sometimes we must wait for answers to prayer;
  - Sometimes the answer to prayer is immediate.
  - Regardless, let's have confidence in prayer.

# 7 trumpets

An understanding of the purpose and service of trumpets may be gained from a study of their place in the Old Testament. Moses was instructed to make 2 silver trumpets of 'beaten work' to be used for special occasions: a call to assembly, a pilgrimage, a festival and war (Numbers 10:1-10). In later years trumpets were used to sound an alarm to warn of approaching danger (Amos 3:6; Hosea 5:8), impending judgment (Joel 2:1), or to call the people to a holy convocation (Joel 2:15).

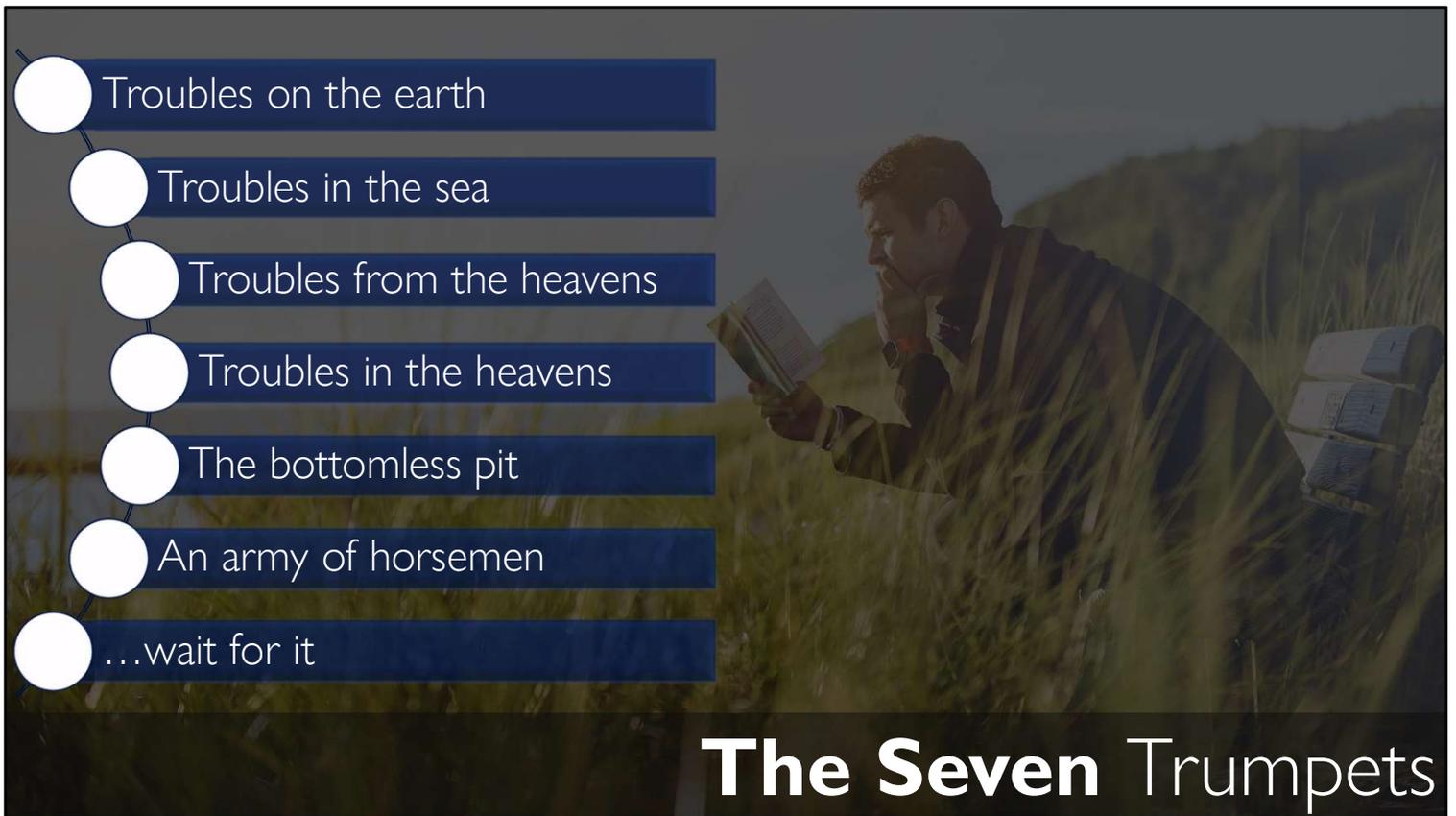
**(COMMENTARY ON REVELATION, HAILEY)**



- Understanding the use of trumpets elsewhere in the Bible will perhaps help us grasp their use here...
- **HOMER HAILEY** quote.
- The trumpets in ch. 8-9 serve as a series of warnings from the Lord, a variety of unpleasant circumstances and occurrences intended to cause repentance (9:20-21) are on their way.
- In a sense these, along with seals 2-4 (the various troubles on the earth) parallel the 10 plagues of Egypt.
  - The first 3 plagues (seals 2-4) were upon everyone, whether Egyptian or Israelite (sinner or saint).
  - The last 7 plagues (now the 7 trumpets) were exclusive to those who stood against God.. The same is
  - The plagues in Egypt were not about destroying things, but to convert Pharaoh's heart. Likewise, the things in

Revelation 8-9 represents God's efforts, extreme at times, to cause repentance among the unrighteous.

- The seven trumpets are also comparable in their purpose to the evil which fell upon Israel of the OT when they turned away from the Lord (Deut 28:15-68; Lev 26:14, 16, 18, 21, 23-24, 28, 40, 42).
  - At any moment, the people could have relieved themselves of the punishment for their sin by repenting and turning to God.
  - The same is true for the wicked in this text.
  - The intent of the trumpets is not to wreak havoc, it is to provoke repentance.



## The Seven Trumpets

- It is natural to want to know the specifics; how was or will this be fulfilled?
  - Some have tried to pinpoint the trumpets in human history (or expect to see them happen).
  - They are figures, not literal.
  - The key is that extreme trials are pictured, intended to provoke repentance.
- **TRUMPET #1** (8:7) – hail and fire, mingled with blood.
  - These are the same elements used in the OT to speak about God’s judgment against the unrighteous (Exo 9:23-24; Isa 28:2; 30:30-33; Eze 38:22).
  - A third of the trees & grass burned up is a substantial destruction! Keep in mind, this is not literally plants being destroyed (God’s beef is with unrighteous people, not trees);

- It is a figure used to convey excessive hardship.
- **TRUMPET #2** (8:8-9) – a great mountain burning with fire cast into the sea.
  - Mountains are used in the OT to represent kingdoms and nations (ie. Isa 2:2; God’s kingdom is above all other kingdoms).
  - Babylon was described by Jeremiah as a “destroying mountain” which would eventually be a “burnt mountain” (Jer 51:25). A few verses later, it is “desolate among the nations! The sea has come up over Babylon; she is covered with the multitude of its waves” (Jer 51:41-42).
  - No specific mountain is mentioned by John, nor is it necessary that any particular nation be identified. Nations rise and fall.
  - Again, we see destruction as a third of the sea became blood, a third of the creatures died, a third of the ships are destroyed.
  - Why a third? We’re going to see a third mentioned through the 1<sup>st</sup> four trumpets. What is significant about it?
    - Though this is a substantial amount, it is worth noting the Lord could have

destroyed all.

- Instead, He destroyed a portion of the whole, not the whole itself.
- This is a display of God's continuing longsuffering.
- *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Pe 3:9).
- **TRUMPET #3** (8:10-11) – a great star (wormwood) fell from heaven like a burning torch.
  - A third of the rivers & springs are struck; the bitterness of the water killed man.
  - Whatever disaster is described, again, there is a substantial human toil, but keep in mind the purpose of these awful things – God wants mankind to repent and turn to Him.
  - And also keep in mind, this is not something that literally happened or will happen, it is an image.
- **TRUMPET #4** (8:12) – a third of the sun, moon & stars were struck, a third of the day and the night.

- Remember, when Jesus died, there was darkness for 3 hours (Luke 23:44-45; Amos 8:9).
- Similarly, the events here identify God's anger with man's sinfulness, expressed by the absence of light.
- verse 13 – *“Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpets of the three angels who are about to sound!”*
  - The woes were not because of the devastation from the four trumpets already sounded.
  - There were some awful things described, the things to come are more severe.
- **TRUMPET #5** (9:1-12) – an angel with a key to the bottomless pit is shown.
  - Some are inclined to say this is the devil (cf. Lk 10:18).
  - Satan doesn't work for God! These trumpets are from God, intended to provoke repentance.
  - This angel would eventually bind Satan and cast him into the pit (20:1-3).
  - Smoke came from the pit, darkening the sun

and air.

- Locusts, with the power of scorpions came forth.
- They were granted to torment, but not to keep people for 5 months.
- We see the reaction of the wicked (v 6) and the power and terror of the locusts (v 7-10).
- Exactly what these locusts represent, we are not told, but a few things to consider:
  - Locusts are known for stripping away leaves, fruit, etc. However, these do not touch the plants, but torment men.
  - They are stripping away, without completely destroying.
  - Five months (not literal) is a substantial period of time, but has an end. Again, the intended result is repentance.
- These locusts have a king, “Abaddon” (Heb. A destroying angel) or “Apollyon” (Gr. A destroyer).
  - Neither word is found elsewhere in the Bible.
  - Most commentators say this is Satan.
  - This is the angel of v 1 – he works for the Lord.

- The references as “king” simply conveys authority.
- **TRUMPET #6** (9:13-19) – instruction comes from the golden altar, which is a place of mercy (1 Ki 1:51; 2:28).
  - Mercy cannot be extended to those who will not repent, so further punishment comes.
  - Four angels are released from the Euphrates, which is associated with Assyria & Babylon.
  - As God authorized these nations to destroy the unfaithful of His own people (Isa 7:17; 8:7; Jer 20:4; 25:9), so these angels are working with the authority of God.
  - They had been prepared for the hour, day, month and year (9:15). As God escalated the punishment against His people of Old when they would not repent, so He does here to the wicked.
  - A third of mankind is killed! An army of 200,000,000 horse men is revealed. The description is terrifying (v 17-19).
    - From their mouth, three plagues (fire, smoke & brimstone) come forth that kill people.
    - These are the images commonly

associated with judgment (Gen 19:24; Ps 11:6; Eze 38:22; Lk 17:29).

- There is no historical event matching these details. It is a figure.
- The destruction displays the true price of sin. In previous trumpets, there was a lot of suffering, now, death has come (Ro 6:23).
- Again, keep in mind, the image of a third reveals God's mercy. He could have destroyed all; but rather extends an opportunity to repent.
- All of these (trumpets 1-6) were intended to affect repentance among the wicked; yet those who were not killed still would not repent (v 20-21).
- God has done what He can to affect human hearts, but the final decision is with us; He will not force His will on any. However, there are eternal consequences to come.
- Just as the **SEVENTH SEAL** was separated from the first six by a brief interlude, so the seventh trumpet (11:15) was separated from the first six. The interlude (ch. 10-11) will look at the work of God's people while they wait for judgment to

come.

Next week...

- ❖ An interlude...
- ❖ Rise and Measure the Temple of God

REVELATION 10-11

