

# REVELATION

## Session 4

October 3, 2021

### “The Trumpets”

(A Call to Repentance)

Revelation 8:6 – 11:19

#### BIG IDEA

Revelation explains the past, applies to the present, and gives hope for the future. The trumpets of Revelation are a warning to us to repent or suffer the ultimate wrath to come.

#### BIBLE CONVERSATION / GENERAL INFO

Although Revelation often strikes us as novel or perplexing, remember that much of what we find in this book is referring back to things we are already familiar with. This ability to conjure up ideas from the OT or our common human experience of life on this earth is very much at play when it comes to this next major section (ch.8-14) and particularly when it comes to the seven trumpets.

In this session, our focus shifts slightly from worship of the Lamb on the throne (ch.4-7) to admonitions about idolatry and joining with the beast (ch.8-14). In other words, we have just come from a large section in Revelation on how the people of God, past, present, and future, are constantly invited into worship of the Lamb on the throne, but now we enter a section on warnings which tell us what to expect when we don't do that. We enter into this second, large section of Revelation by beginning with seven trumpets. These trumpets are a way of explaining to us what God does to get our attention and steer us back to repentance and faith. Yet, just like with the plagues which God brought against Egypt during the Exodus, many did not repent and Pharaoh hardened his heart and became bitter. The question is, will we hear and take to heart God's warnings and trumpet calls, or will we harden our hearts and become embittered? These trumpets, and the cosmic narrative regarding the beast, signal to us; “repent of idolatry or suffer a greater wrath to come and, further still, suffer a final divine condemnation.”

So, as we step into a more sobering section of Revelation, try to see the big picture here. God is calling out like a trumpet to warn you of the great danger humans have in following a false king, whether that be ourselves or some other idol we have accepted or even a deceptive and despicable spiritual force like Satan himself. God not only calls to us with words of advice but also moves upon our world with fierceness, warning us of the danger there is in following these other things over Him. He calls out, “Turn to me. Repent. Or something worse may happen.”

**Read Revelation 8:6-9:3**

**Question #1** How are we to think about a God who will bring these kinds of warnings?

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**Question #2** Read Revelation 9:20-21 What is the response of many to the six trumpets?

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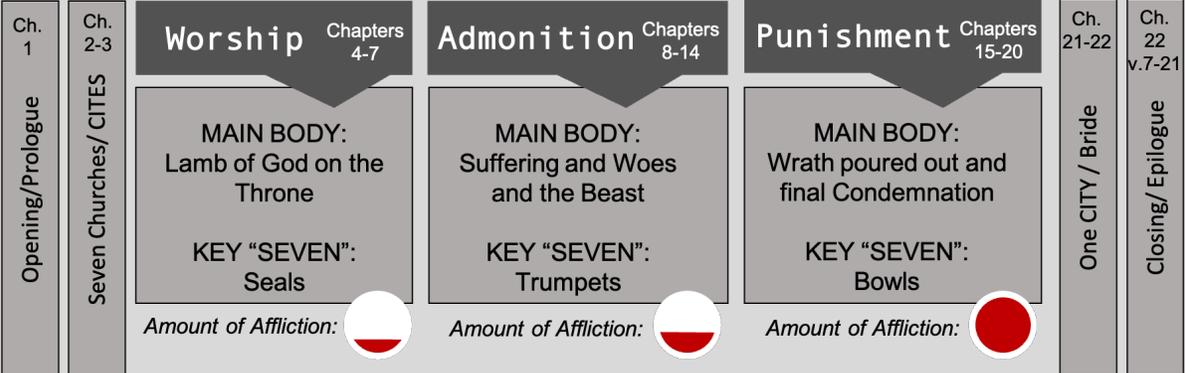


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Revelation *can be* thought of having seven main sections: an opening/prologue, the letter to the seven churches/cities, a large section on worship, admonition, punishment, the new city of Jerusalem (which ties back to the seven cities), and a final short closing (which ties back to the opening). With this session here, we step into the “Admonition” section.



*(Admonition. n. “an act or action of admonishing; authoritative counsel or warning earnestly”)*

Note: within each of these sections we see great perversion and disarray intermingled with great triumph and commendation. Satan’s kingdom and sin are pitted against God’s kingdom. Which will you choose? The kingdom of light and salvation or darkness and destruction?

SERMON OVERVIEW

Remember, Revelation is a letter written to encourage faithfulness and worship and the apocalyptic style of literature helps meet this goal. We are shocked awake like being submerged in cold water. However, these sections of scripture should also turn us back to the foundational story of God, and nowhere is that story so powerfully told than in the Exodus narrative. In fact, the entire system of trumpets finds its pattern in the plagues of Exodus where God brought upon Egypt His awesome power, destroying their false gods and idols. Despite God’s people being born into slavery, it is through tearing away their old world that they are birthed as a free people into a new one. These plagues have inaugurated their journey home.

Likewise, in the trumpets of Revelation, we are given a terrifying foretaste of God’s power and wrath. Just like the trumpets of a great army laying siege in ancient times, these trumpets ought to strike fear in us for they are a warning call that conflict and ferocity are beginning. In other words, the rising action has started and things are ramping up.

Nevertheless, despite things seeming terrible, and despite the rest of mankind not repenting, we see a calmer quieter picture of a mighty angel straddling the world with a rainbow about his head and a face like the sun. This great angel offers John a scroll and he eats it. It tastes like sweet honey, a clear allusion to Ezekiel 3. Hopefully, you remember this from week one. This is a picture of the Gospel and how God’s word is so sweet to us despite the distress around us.

Side note: When John is asked to eat the scroll, he again is invited into the cosmic narrative. Showing us that this is *for us* just as much as it is for some later time.

Then, and most importantly, John is told “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages, and kings.” (Revelation 10:11) Translation: despite our own sin and imperfection, we must humbly share the hope of Jesus to everyone, everywhere, of all status.

Lastly, John is told to measure the temple, altar, and number of worshipers, which are the *place of my people*, the *sacrifice for my people*, and the *number of my people*. For you, this should be gripping, inspiring, and hopeful because the very next thing we see is two witnesses. They are depicted as olive trees and lampstands. That’s you! That’s me! That’s the image of the church and God’s people that we have seen time and time again. We are called by God to be light to the world and to produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And all this is possible because we have the truth and indwelling of the Spirit and because Christ died for our sins.

**Question #3** Read Revelation 11:15-19. What does this seventh trumpet tell us? What do the earlier six trumpets’ warnings ultimately lead to and conclude with?

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[Compare and contrast Question 3 and Question 2. Revelation 9:20-21 and 11:15-19]

**Question #4** Have you seen a troubling event turn someone, or perhaps yourself, back to God? How might God allow a little bit of suffering to call you back to Him?

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**OPTIONAL EXERCISE**

Option 1	Option 2
<p>Re-read Revelation 8-11. Focus not so much on what you see and read, but on what you feel.</p> <p>What does this narrative section feel like?</p> <p>Do you feel anxious, scared, amazed, or sad?</p> <p>Do you feel the same when reading ch.8, and ch.9 as you do about ch.10? Or what about ch.11? How do these chapters move your emotions?</p> <p>Do you feel secure, hopeful, or accepting?</p>	<p>Personal/ Group reflection question:</p> <p>Where are you bitter? (bitterness is often an indication of sin or a lack of trust in God)</p> <p>What idols in your life or your culture is God sounding a trumpet against?</p> <p>What does repentance of those look like?</p>

**PRAYER**

- Intentionally Specific Prayer for this week:  
Pray for our community, nation, and the world that people would hear the trumpet call of God and turn to Him in repentance. Pray that we would be a faithful witness of Jesus despite our own sufferings and inadequacies.

**Next Session: Revelation 12:1 - 14:20**

DIGGING DEEPER	Read Joel
<p>Read the OT book of Joel. What kind of disaster does Joel depict will accompany the day of the Lord? (Hint what creature do you see and what kind of destruction does this creature normally do?) Then reflect specifically on 2:12-13 and 2:28-32. How does Joel’s imagery match Revelation 8-11? How does Joel’s call to repentance align with Revelation 8-11?</p>	

