

THE SIXTH TRUMPET / THE SECOND WOE

Introduction

1. Chapter 6 recorded the opening of the first six seals of the scroll – revealing the persecution of the saints and the coming judgment of God upon the enemies of the church.
 2. Chapter 7 revealed an interlude between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals – during which the faithful were sealed by God and shown in the glory of their eternal reward.
 3. In chapter 8, the last seal was opened resulting in a period of silence in Heaven.
 4. As God listened to the prayers of the saints, seven angels began to sound seven trumpets – announcing the judgment of God.
 - a. The first four trumpets warned of God's coming judgment as He attempted to encourage sinners to repent.
 - b. The fifth trumpet announced the first woe – showing the suffering brought about because of sin (another warning of man's need to repent).
 5. Now, the sixth trumpet will sound, announcing the second woe.
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- I. The Sixth Trumpet – *Two Hundred Million Horsemen* (9:13-21)
 - A. The sounding of the sixth trumpet also brought about the second woe.
 - B. When the sixth trumpet was sounded, a voice was heard from the altar before God's throne.
 1. Keep in mind that this is not the altar of sacrifice (6:9).
 2. Instead, it is the altar of incense on which the prayers of the saints were offered (cf. 8:3).
 3. Thus, the judgment unleashed is directly connected to the prayers of the faithful.
 - C. The source of the voice is not identified, but the command is clearly the will of God.
 - D. The voice instructed that four angels were to be loosed from the Euphrates River.
 1. This river has been important in the history of God's people.
 2. It was the far eastern border of the nation of Israel (cf. Genesis 15:18; 1 Kings 4:21).
 3. It stood as the dividing line between Israel and the powers of the East – Assyria, Babylon, Persia (cf. Jeremiah 46:6-10).
 4. Thus, it symbolizes that God has held back judgment at the borders of the land.
 5. Now, the time has come for God's vengeance to be released.
 - E. These four angels had been prepared for the exact timing of God's plan and purpose.
 1. Keep in mind that the number 4 symbolizes the world or creation.
 2. Thus, this is a judgment of the world of men.
 - F. Consider how the severity of the judgments has progressed.
 1. With the first 4 trumpets, 1/3 of each realm was affected.
 2. With the 5th trumpet, men were made to suffer but not killed.
 3. Now, 1/3 of men will suffer death.
 - a. Again, this is not literal.

The Book of Revelation

Lesson Eighteen

Revelation 9:13-21

- b. It demonstrates that this is a limited judgment – not the final judgment at the end of time.
- G. As John watched, he saw a great army approaching on horseback – 200,000,000 in number!
 - 1. The size was so great that John had to be told the number.
 - 2. If literal, this would be a cavalry force 1 mile wide and 85 miles long!
 - 3. The symbolism is that the host is sufficient to accomplish God's will.
- H. As John described the horses, it was clear that this was no literal army.
 - 1. The horsemen wore breastplates of red, blue, and yellow.
 - a. Yet, each of these colors was related to an aspect of fire.
 - b. Fire, sulfurous smoke, and brimstone are often used to represent the judgment of God.
 - 2. The horses had heads like lions – symbolizing great strength and power.
 - 3. They issued fire, smoke, and brimstone from their mouths – again representing the judgment of God.
 - 4. Their tails were like snakes – symbolizing that there was suffering in the aftermath of the army's passing.
- I. The devastation wrought was not caused by literal fire and brimstone, for they are called "plagues" in verse 20.
 - 1. Plagues are usually outbreaks of disease or sickness.
 - 2. The Greek word refers to a wound or calamity – "public calamity, heavy affliction."
 - 3. Whether this refers to an actual plague or the sickness and suffering that follows a conquering army, the message is the same.
 - 4. God's fighting force is greater than Satan's army – and, if men do not heed God's warning, they will face His judgment.
- J. Even after such devastation and suffering, those who survived refused to repent of their sins.
 - 1. This demonstrates that this calamity came upon the world of sinners, not upon the faithful saints.
 - 2. Furthermore, it reveals that the purpose of the sounding of each trumpet was to warn and motivate men to repentance.
- K. Instead, they continued to practice the worshipping of idols.
 - 1. Idolatry was the root of their problem – they refused to acknowledge and submit to the authority of God (Romans 1:22ff).
 - 2. Notice the connection between idolatry and demons (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:19ff; Deuteronomy 32:17; Psalm 106:37).
- L. They also continued to mistreat their fellow man by the practice of sin.

Conclusion:

- 1. God has used stronger and more severe means to warn mankind of the danger of persisting in sin.
- 2. Thus, two woes have come upon the world of sinful men – with a third to follow.
- 3. But, before the seventh trumpet is sounded, there is an interlude during which John will learn from a mighty angel and a little book.