

Seven Angels and Seven Trumpets



The opening of the seventh seal in chapter 8 of Revelation leads immediately to a new series of sevens—seven angels with seven trumpets. With this new series of seven come violent signs upon the earth beginning with hail and fire mixed with blood. Though the events unfolding are dire, God's mercy is shown through only a third dying (9:18). Some are spared, offering yet another chance to repent.

The Seven Angels—while this is the only reference within the Bible to “the seven angels,” there is a reference to them in the Book of Tobit, which was written between the time of the Old and New Testaments. Tobit 12:15 says, “I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who stand ready and enter before the glory of the Lord.” Also, the Prophecy of Enoch, an influential Jewish prophecy not found in scripture even names the seven angels as Uriel, Raguel, Michael, Sariel, Gabriel, and Remiel. These non-scriptural references would have been familiar to many in the churches who first received the Revelation to John as a letter.

Plagues—all commentators on this series of angels blowing trumpets note the similarities between the Plagues of Egypt (Exodus 7-10, Psalm 78:44, 105:27-36 and Amos 4:6-11) and the disasters that come here in Revelation. The thrust of the similarities show that Rome and other governments like it fall into the same patterns as Egypt did under the Pharaoh who countered Moses. Like the Pharaoh, they face the wrath of God.



Abaddon—the leader of the locusts is the angel of the bottomless pit named Abaddon, which in Hebrew means “the destroyer.” He is identified in Greek as Apollyon, a creative word play on Apollo, the Greek Sun God. Apollo was the divine name, which the Roman Emperor Domitian took for himself. Locusts were also a symbol for Apollo. In all of this, we see a close connection between the evil powers of this world and the deceiver Satan.

Eating the Scroll—As with the seventh seal, the blast of the seventh trumpet is delayed. In 10:8-10 John is given a little scroll to eat, which tastes sweet in his mouth and is bitter to his stomach. This scene echoes Ezekiel 2:8-3:3 in which that prophet is also commanded to eat a

scroll. In both Ezekiel and Revelation the purpose seems to be that the divine message of the vision is internalized, a process with both joy and sorrow as befits the vision itself. Having eaten the scroll, John then denounces the nations and kings.

The scroll of both Revelation 5 (the seven sealed scroll) and this small scroll of Revelation 10 relate to Daniel 12:6-9 with its scroll sealed until the “time of the end.”

Measuring the Temple—John is commanded to measure the inner court of the Temple, though we are not specifically told that he follows this command. Interesting to note is the safety implied concerning the inner courts. While the outside is given over to the nations, presumably the inner courts are not trampled. This is important as the Christian Church is identified strongly with the Temple. Just as the 144,000 were sealed, the inner court remains under God’s protection during the 1,260 days.

The Two Witnesses—Following the two olive trees and two lampstands of the Prophet Zechariah (4:3,14), two witnesses are called to minister during the 1,260 days, the 42-month end times period of Revelation 11:2. The witnesses are then faithful unto death and in death are vindicated by God. Like other martyrs, they are saved through suffering and death rather than save from these things. Like Moses and Elijah who stand for all prophets of the Old Testament (see Jesus’ transfiguration as an example), these two witnesses represent the faithful church at the end times, a church that will need to follow Jesus’ example of being obedient unto death.

