

Jesus and Kingdom

October 18, 2026

Lesson Summary

Main Passages

Revelation 8:7-13; Revelation 9:1-21; Revelation 11:15-19

Session Outline

1. The First Four Trumpets (Revelation 8:7-13)
2. The Fifth and Sixth Trumpets (Revelation 9:1-6,13-21)
3. The Seventh Trumpet (Revelation 11:15-19)

Theological Theme

God is merciful, just, and right.

Call to Action

Where do you need to trust the Lord in the midst of hardship now? How can you take steps toward this?

Jesus and Kingdom

Introduction

Last week, we studied when Jesus opened the first six of the seals on the scroll John saw in the heavenly throne room. Today we'll dive into the judgments that transpired after this. But first, Jesus opened the seventh seal.

You can read about this on your own in Revelation 8:1-5, notice verse 1:

When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. —Revelation 8:1

If you take a quick flip through the chapters leading up to 8, you'll notice many auditory elements. There is so much sound in the heavenly throne room! But the praise that never ends went silent at this point. Why?

God silenced His own praise to listen to the prayers of His children (v. 3).¹ And our sovereign God chose to make these prayers a part of the exercise of His will.² The beginning of chapter 8 sets us up for the trumpet judgments. This beautiful picture gives way to God's response to the prayers of His people: judgment for unbelievers.

The seven seals dealt with how believers will experience the time in between Jesus's ascension and His return. The seven trumpets, however, described how those who don't believe in Jesus will experience this same timeframe (the church age).³

In Revelation 7, God sealed all believers (7:3). This acts as His guarantee. Believers are saved and safe and will one day be taken to heaven.⁴ Believers don't completely agree on what form this protection will take during the trumpet judgments, but agree that we are ultimately protected from God's wrath thanks to the atoning blood of Christ.⁵

Make no mistake: These judgments are heartbreaking and often hard to read. As we read, let's carry forward with some truths in mind. God is always good, just, and right. We can believe this in our bones and still grieve over the destruction that sin brings to our fallen world. Both things can be true. If you struggle with what we study today, take it to the Lord and ask for His help.

 When you think about God bringing judgment, how do you typically respond?

 Why is this judgment necessary?

Session Summary

After all seven seals on the heavenly scroll were opened, the seven trumpet judgments began.

In these passages, we see natural destruction, torment, and death. Every step is a wakeup call to the nonbeliever's need for a Savior. Even in the midst of this divine judgement, it is not too late to repent and turn back to our merciful God. An eternity apart from Him is much worse than anything the seven trumpets will bring.

While these passages can be hard to read, we can trust that God is good, just, right, and merciful.

1. The First Four Trumpets (Revelation 8:7-13)

 Describe the events that take place in this passage.

 What other biblical events might these be compared with? Why would that be significant?

The first four trumpets, all deal with nature, and are destructive. They also resemble the plagues God unleashed on the people of Egypt in the book of Exodus.

At the first trumpet, "hail and fire, mixed with blood" (Revelation 8:7) reminds us of "the LORD sent thunder and hail. Lightning struck the land, and the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt" (Exodus 9:23).

At the second trumpet, "So a third of the sea became blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died" (Revelation 8:8-9) reminds us of "all the water in the Nile was turned to blood. The fish in the Nile died" (Exodus 7:20-21).

At the fourth trumpet, “so that a third of them were darkened” (Revelation 8:12) reminds us of the plague of darkness: “and there was thick darkness throughout the land of Egypt for three days” (Exodus 10:22).

Back in the time of the Exodus, the Pharaoh asked the question, “Who is the LORD that I should obey him?” (Exodus 5:2) His disobedience and disbelief brought on the plagues. All unbelievers adopt a similar attitude, and there are consequences to this decision.

As a result of these judgments, a third of the trees and grass are burned up. A third of the seas become blood. A third of the waters become bitter and unfit to drink. A third of the day and night are without light.

Consider the impact. There would be less land for land animals to feed on. An entire third of sea creatures die. Less drinkable water creates a crisis for all living things. Darker days disrupt growing cycles for all plants that remain. Many gifts from God that have been taken for granted by nonbelievers are taken away here.

But the destruction is not total and final. Even in judgment, God is merciful. This is a wakeup call. A chance to repent.



How does God’s judgment provide a signpost and opportunity for repentance?

A common belief today is we are in control of our own destinies. This way of thinking believes we have (or can get) everything we need ourselves. It says we are independent and don’t need God. Even Christians can live this way in moments, but unbelievers continually do, and the events of the first four trumpets expose just how helpless (and in need of a Savior) we all are.

2. The Fifth and Sixth Trumpets (Revelation 9:1-6,13-21)



What judgments do these verses describe?



Passages like this can bring fear and anxiety. How do they also push us toward urgency and grace?

Already living in a devastating reality due to the previous events, the judgment unbelievers face in the fifth trumpet reads like a nightmare. The “abyss” John described here is the same one referred to in Luke 8. The one which the legion of demons begged not to be returned to: “And they begged him not to banish them to the abyss” (Luke 8:31).

Then comes a hellish army to torment nonbelievers. Note that they have no power of their own (v. 3), it has to be granted to them by God, who is sovereign over all things. They were given specific instructions to follow: not to harm the grass, plants, or trees (v. 4), or the entirety of believers who God sealed in Revelation 7. Nonbelievers had no such protection and were subject to five months of torment so awful that people seek death but cannot find it.

The judgment meted out in this scene is terrifying, but in it, God is still merciful. This inability to die gives the people further chance to repent, turn to the Lord, and be saved.⁶ This trumpet judgment ends ominously: “The first woe has passed. There are still two more woes to come after this” (v. 12).

 When was a time God used hardship to lead you to His grace?

The action of the sixth trumpet begins at the golden altar with horns (the altar from Exodus 30:1-3). In the judgment of this trumpet, four evil angels (demons) in positions of authority lead a demonic army two hundred million strong and mount up a staggering death toll.⁷ Our current world population is in the neighborhood of 8.2 billion.⁸ One third of that would be about 2.7 billion people.

Prior to this, the entire unbelieving population had been given multiple chances to repent, but in His mercy, God still leaves two-thirds of the population with yet another chance to humble themselves, turn away from their idols, and worship Him.⁹

Tragically, in defiance of the chances given, John wrote:

“The rest of the people, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands to stop worshiping demons and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood, which cannot see, hear, or walk. And they did not repent of their murders, their sorceries, their sexual immorality, or their thefts.”—Revelation 9:20-21

This is a devastating scene. Instead of grasping at the salvation offered, the people continued drowning in their idolatry.

3. The Seventh Trumpet (Revelation 11:15-19)

 What took place when the seventh trumpet was blown?

 How is this different from the other trumpets?

The Seventh Trumpet

The sense of finality in the wording of the seventh ... trumpet has caused some interpreters to think this is the point of the second coming of Christ and that the following chapters double back and retrace the same ground from a different perspective. In a full-blown “recapitulation” view, it is held that the seals, trumpets, and bowls all speak of the same judgments from different perspectives. Such an approach is not necessary, however, since the seventh trumpet overarches the seven bowls of wrath, with the seventh bowl telescoping all the way to the preparation for the second coming of Christ. This perspective is supported by the fact that the phenomena (lightning, rumblings, thunder, an earthquake, and severe hail) ready to be poured out on the earth related to the seventh trumpet (v. 19) are not actually poured out until the seventh bowl (16:18, 21).

The seventh trumpet brings a departure from the others. Remember, in Scripture, seven is a number of perfection. The number of fullness and completion. With the blowing of the seventh trumpet, God’s mystery as announced to the prophets was completed, and there was much celebration.

John recorded loud voices proclaiming Christ’s victory. While scholars don’t agree on the full meaning of the text here, we can all agree on this: Jesus is victorious, and He has already won, and “he will reign forever and ever” (v. 15) in His eternal kingdom.¹⁰



How does Christ’s victory give us reason for celebration and hope every day, no matter what we face?

Remember the twenty-four elders? They’re back and they are worshipping again. Their emphasis is on the victorious King. Christ reigns, judges righteously, and rewards His servants.¹¹

The ark was God’s home among His people, and here it appeared in the heavenly temple. These verses give hope. God is sovereign over all, even when it feels like the world is off the rails. He will right every wrong, and all believers are headed to an eternal home with Him.

Conclusion

The trumpet judgments started with natural calamities. “Hail and fire, mixed with blood” that burned up a third of the earth (Revelation 8:7), “a third of the sea became blood,” killing a third of the living creatures within it (8:8-9), a third of the water became bitter and undrinkable (8:11), and “a third of the day was without light and also a third of the night” (8:12).

And it only got worse from there. With every trumpet judgment, the people were given a chance to repent. But they didn’t heed the moment. Revelation says that they still wouldn’t repent, even after God, in His mercy, had given more chances. Their hearts remained hard.

The last trumpet ends on a triumphant note, and we are reminded that Jesus has already won.

These events can be heavy and hard to read, but let’s remember a few things as we finish. God is good, just, and right, and even in His judgment, He mercifully extends second chances to turn to Him.

Further, we have a role to play in His plan for humanity. He has commanded us to go and share the gospel, and to act as witnesses of His work in our lives. He wants us to be a part of the good work He is doing in the world. Are we participating?

If you don't yet know the Lord, He loves you so much He sent His Son to die so you could live. He doesn't want you to perish, but to have a relationship with you, and He extends countless opportunities to come to Him.

The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.
—2 Peter 3:9

- ❓ This is a hard portion of Scripture to study. How were you challenged? How can you be encouraged?
- ❓ How are we to live in light of what we've read today?
- ❓ How does today's study give you urgency to share the gospel with others?

Prayer of Response

Thank God for His mercy and that He is sovereign over all things and always just and right. Ask for His help as you process what we've read about today and the ways it challenges you. Ask to remember that He is always good and loving.

Memory Verse

The seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven saying,

*The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom
of our Lord and of his Christ,
and he will reign forever and ever.*

—Revelation 11:15

Additional Resources

- *Exalting Jesus in Revelation* by Daniel Akin
- *Be Victorious* by Warren Wiersbe
- *Revelation for You* by Tim Chester



Historical Context of Revelation

Purpose

Much of the book of Revelation focuses on events at the end of the age (eschatology), more so than any other book in the Bible. But it also focuses on practical choices that believers and unbelievers must make in the course of their lives that have far-reaching consequences at the end.

Author

The traditional view holds that the author of Revelation is the apostle John, who wrote the Fourth Gospel and the three letters of John. Evidences for this view include the following. (1) The writer referred to himself as “John” (1:4, 9; 22:8). (2) He had personal relationships with the seven churches of Asia Minor (1:4, 11; 2–3). (3) His circumstances at the time of writing (1:9) matched those of John the apostle (who was placed in Asia Minor from about AD 70 to 100 by reliable historical sources from the second century AD). (4) The saturation of the book with Old Testament imagery and echoes implies a Jewish writer, like John, operating in overwhelmingly Gentile Asia Minor.

Setting

The initial audience that received the book of Revelation was a group of seven local churches in southwest Asia Minor (1:11; 2–3). Some of these congregations were experiencing persecution (2:9–10, 13), probably under the Roman emperor Domitian (ruled AD 81–96). Others had doctrinal and practical problems (2:6, 13–15, 20–23). Also behind these surface problems was the backdrop of unseen but powerful spiritual warfare (2:10, 14, 24; 3:9).

Special Features

The resurrected, glorified Jesus Christ revealed himself to the apostle John, who had been imprisoned “on the island called Patmos” (1:9). Christ’s twofold purpose was: (1) to “unveil” a spiritual diagnosis for seven of the churches in Asia Minor with which John was familiar (chaps. 2–3), and (2) to reveal to John a series of visions setting forth events and factors related to the end times (chaps. 4–22).

Extended Commentary

Revelation 8–11

The Seven Trumpets (8:6–11:19)

The seven seals were divided between the four horsemen and the remaining three seals, with a narrative break between the sixth and seventh seals to remind the people of God of the Lord's promise of final protection and their hope of eternal glory. A similar pattern occurs with the seven trumpets.

The first four trumpets describe partial judgments (“a third”) upon the earth's vegetation, the oceans, fresh waters, and the heavenly lights. The last three trumpets are grouped together and are also described as three “woes” upon the earth, emphasizing God's judgment upon humankind. The fifth trumpet (and first woe) releases hellish locusts who will sting those not having the seal of God. The sixth trumpet (and second woe) brings forth a mighty army of infernal horsemen who kill a third of humankind. But all these judgments have no redemptive effect, for the rest of humankind who are not killed by these plagues refuse to repent of their immoralities. The warnings have fallen on deaf ears.

Just as the interlude between the sixth and seventh seals assured the recipients of Revelation that the people of God are safe from the eternally destructive effects of God's wrath, so also between the sixth and seventh trumpets we are reminded of God's protective hand on His people. But in the trumpet interlude we also learn that God's protection during these days of tribulation does not mean isolation, for the people of God must bear a prophetic witness to the world.

In 10:1–11 John's call (after the pattern of Ezek. 2:1–3:11) is reaffirmed. He is told to eat a bittersweet book and “prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings.” The note of protection and witness is again struck in 11:1–13, where the measuring of the temple of God alludes to God's protective hand upon His people during the hour of turmoil. These persecutions will last for forty-two months, but His people, the “holy city,” will be neither destroyed nor silenced. For the “two witnesses” will bear witness during this time, also called “1,260 days,” to the mercy and judgment of God. Note well: the “42 months” and the “1,260 days” refer to the same time period seen from different perspectives, for the days of witness are also days of opposition (11:2–7; 12:6, 13–17). Negative references to persecution and the activity of Satan and the beasts are consistently called “42 months” (11:2; 13:5), whereas positive references to the sustaining hand of God or the prophetic testimony of His two witnesses are called “time, times and half a time” (12:14), or “1,260 days” (11:3; 12:6).

It seems unlikely that the “two witnesses” (“two” suggests a confirmed, legal testimony) are two individual persons, for they are also called “two lamp-stands,” terminology already interpreted in 1:20 to mean the church. Also we must note that the “1,260 days” of the woman's flight and protection from Satan in 12:6 is as well a reference to the protection of God's people, though under a different image or symbol. Note, too, that in 13:5–7 the same beast from the abyss, who here in 11:7 attacks the two witnesses and overcomes them, is said in 13:7 to “make war against the saints” and “to conquer them.”

Though engaged in great spiritual warfare, the church, like Moses and Elijah of old, must faithfully maintain a courageous and prophetic witness to the world, a witness even unto death. Although the earth rejoices that the testimony of the church is in the end apparently snuffed out, the temporary triumph of evil (“three and a half days”) will turn to heavenly vindication as the two witnesses (the people of God) are raised from the dead. Though John was not yet ready to describe more fully the resurrection of Christ’s followers and the bliss of heaven, we have in the resurrection of the two witnesses the depiction of the church’s great hope: the resurrection of all those who hold to the testimony of Jesus (compare 11:7–11 with 13:15; 20:4–6).

The seventh trumpet (and third woe) again introduces the earthquake, lightning, and thunder. The end of history has come, the time for the dead to be judged and the saints to be rewarded. Clearly the very end has come, for the heavenly chorus now treats the coming of the reign of God (and Christ), as well as the day of judgment, as past events. The chorus sings, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.” John has again brought us to the point of our Lord’s return and, indeed, has begun to describe the rejoicing that will accompany His return (19:1–10). But he is not yet ready to describe the actual coming of the King of kings and Lord of lords. There is (sadly) more to relate regarding “the beast that comes up from the Abyss” to make war with the two witnesses, the people of God. It is that awful forty-two months, the period of persecution (and protection/witness), that John must now unfold.¹²

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