**Lesson 4**

**The Seven Trumpets, The Mighty Angel and the small scroll and the two witnesses (8:6-11:19)**

**8:7** The first five trumpets are patterned after five of the plagues of Egypt. First trumpet (hail, fire, blood), Ex. 9:22-25. Second and third trumpets (poisoning the sea and waters), Ex. 7:20-25. Fourth trumpet (darkness), Ex. 10:21-23. Fifth trumpet (locusts), Ex. 10:12-15). The plagues may well be symbolic and have occurred throughout the age of the Church.

**8:8-9** Mountains often refer to nations and can represent the object of God’s judgement (Is. 41:15; 42:15; Ezek. 35; Zech. 4:7).

**8:11** Wormwood was a bitter herb which contaminates water (Jer. 9:15; 22:15; Deut. 29:17-18; Prov. 5:4; Amos 5:6-7).

**8:13** The fourth trumpet is a transition to more severe judgments to come and is represented by darkness. The plagues become increasingly severe because people do not repent.

Eagles in the Old Testament often represent coming destruction (Deut. 28:49; Jer. 4:13; 48:40; Lam. 4:19; Ezek. 17:3; Hos. 8:1).

“Woe! Woe! Woe!” indicates things will become progressively worse during the final three trumpets.

**9:1** The fifth angel blew a trumpet.

A fallen star may well refer to Isaiah 14:12-15 as Lucifer (See Rev. 12:9, 13). The abyss appears to be a place where evil spirits are imprisoned unless released for a special purpose.

**9:2** Darkness in the New Testament often refers to spiritual blindness (Luke 11:36; John 1:5; 13:3-8; 8:12; 11:10; 12:35-36; Rom. 13:12; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 John 1:5).

**9:3** Locusts bringing judgment would be linked to Joel 1 as well as to the plague of Egypt.

**9:4** 5 months could refer to the dry season, or the life-cycle of locusts. Or it could mean it is temporary.

Just as those without the mark of the beast will be persecuted, so those without the seal of God will suffer from the locusts.

**9:7** Golden crowns with human faces suggests demonic powers.

**9:11** Abaddon and Apollyon are the Hebrew and Greek words for “Destroyer.” King of the angels suggests this may be Satan.

**9:13** The sixth angel blew his trumpet, releasing evil forces on earth. This indicates that even evil is limited to what God allows for his purposes.

**9:14** The angels being bound indicates they have been restrained against their will until this time. The Euphrates was the eastern edge of the Roman Empire. To the east were the dreaded Parthians who had defeated Roman legions and were known for their fierce cavalry. Many invaders of Israel had traditionally crossed this river to make their way to Israel.

Horns represent strength. The number four represents completeness.

**9:16** Two hundred million is an astronomical number, not meant to be taken literally, but representing a great number, too many to count. In the first century, the Roman army consisted of 25 legions and 125,000 soldiers, plus auxiliaries.

**9:18** A third of the human race was killed by the fire, smoke, and sulfur. Burning sulfur in Revelation refers to the burning fires of judgment (14:10, 19:20, 20:10, 21:8). Smoke also reflects divine judgment (14:11, 18:9, 18, 19:3).

**9:20-21** Despite the horrendous suffering, the unbelievers refused to repent of their sins, idolatry being foremost.

**The mighty angel and a small scroll**

**10:1** A mighty angel described as wrapped in a cloud with a rainbow over his head and a face like the sun seems to indicate a divine figure, such as Christ.

**10:2** The little scroll, though somewhat different, may be the same scroll the lamb opened in chapter 5. That book revealed God’s plans for the ages.

**10:3-4** The seven thunders may be a heavenly being, or the voice of God. They may be prepared to reveal upcoming judgments just like the seals and trumpets but are told to not do so. In Leviticus 26 there are four sets of seven judgments.

**10:9** The scroll would taste sweet to the mouth but would be bitter to the stomach, has some parallels to Jeremiah 15:15-18. The words of hope for believers would be sweet, but the judgment on unbelievers would be upsetting.

**10:10** Prophecy again, may represent John’s recommissioning as a prophet. He was previously commissioned in 1:10-20 and 4:1-2.

**The Two Witnesses**

**11:1** Measuring the temple is an acted-out parable. It may be referring to Ezekiel 40-48 where the prophet saw the future temple of God.

**11:2** Some have viewed this as a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. It more likely represents the Church.

The outer courtyard was the Courtyard of the Gentiles. This may represent the Church’s exposure to the secular, hostile world.

**11:3** 42 monthsequals roughly 3 ½ years. This is probably symbolic and can refer to many things. Jesus’ ministry was roughly 3 ½ years. Elijah and the drought in Israel lasted roughly 3 ½ years (Luke 4:25; James 5:17). The Israelites had 42 camp stops in their wilderness wanderings. It has been estimated that, counting the two years before the Israelites rebelled against God, they spent 42 years in the wilderness in total (Num. 33:5-49). 1,260 days would represent 42 months with an average of 30 days in each month. This probably refers to the same prophecy of Daniel 7:25; 12:7, 11-12. This will be a time of intense persecution of the Church before Christ brings time to an end.

**11:4** The two witnesses are described as olive trees and lampstands. The Greek word for witness is where we get the word “martyr” in English. There are two witnesses to fulfill the law (Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6; 19:15). This may be drawn from Zechariah 4:12-14.

The two witnesses may represent the Church as a whole, especially since they are described as lampstands (1:20).

**11:5** Fire comes from their mouths. This can describe the power of their testimony and witness. Elijah was also well known for calling fire down on his opponents.

**11:6** They can also prevent rain, as did Elijah (1 Kings 17-18; Luke 4:25; James 5:17). They can also turn water into blood, as could Moses (Ex. 7:17-25).

**11:7-10** The beast is first mentioned here. He comes up from the abyss and kills the witnesses. A short period of 3 ½ days the witness’s bodies lie shamefully unburied. This short period reflects that the beast’s apparent victory will be short-lived.

The “great city” at this time typically referred to Rome. It is “figuratively called “Sodom” and “Egypt.” Sodom represented the worst depravity and Egypt symbolized the bondage of God’s people.

The people of the earth will celebrate and gloat because they did not like the message of the witnesses.

**11:11-14** The breath returning to the witnesses is taken from Ezekiel 37:5, 10.

“They went up to heaven” could refer to the rapture of the Church. But it may also indicate the ultimate victory of the Church over the power of Satan. Ezekiel was repeatedly taken up in the Spirit as well (Ezekiel 1:28-2:2; 3:12-14, 23-24; 11:1-5; 43:5).

Clouds usually refer to God’s presence with his people (Ex. 13:21-22; Num. 14:14; Deut. 1:33; Ps. 78:14; Is. 4:5; Ezek. 1:4; Dan. 7:13; Matt. 17:5; 24:30; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:34-35; Acts 1:9).

A great earthquake occurs immediately after the witnesses are vindicated. The wording is similar to Ezekiel 38:19. The population of Jerusalem at this time was approximately 70,000. 7,000 dead would be the same as the 7,000 survivors under Elijah (1 Kings 19:18).

This brought an end to the second woe after the 4th trumpet had been blown.

**11:15** The seventh trumpet brings the climax of judgment, just as the 7th seal and bowl in chapter 16. The 3rd woe is the 7th trumpet. It narrates the end of history. There are similarities with Joshua and Jericho. On the 7th day, the ark of the covenant was brought out, trumpets were blown, and victory was won. This also relates to Daniel 7.

**Questions**

1. **What strikes you about the judgments God unleashes on earth?**
2. **How are you seeing these judgments occurring now?**
3. **What strikes you about the two witnesses?**
4. **Do you receive any comfort from God’s judgment on evildoers?**