

Tooting their Horns

Revelation 8:6-13

INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about the earthquake striking Messina, Italy, *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, pp. 207-208.
1. I wish that I could say there was a definite connection between their corruption and the earthquake, but, of course, I can't.
 2. But, there have been cases where God has sent judgment upon a nation.
 - a. Because Sodom and Gomorrah were extremely wicked, the Lord rained fire and brimstone down upon them.
 - b. When the Israelites murmured against the Lord and Moses, the Lord sent deadly serpent among them; many of the people died (Num. 21:5-6).
- B. As we have seen, Revelation depicts God's judgment upon the Roman Empire.
1. Each of these pictures of judgment reveals a little more of God's character, his hatred for sin, and the judgment he will send at the end of this age.
 2. Tonight, we want to examine the blowing of the first four trumpets.
 3. Some preliminary remarks:
 - a. These trumpets seem to be an answer to the prayers of the saints in vv. 3-5. That seems to be the case, because:
 - 1) These trumpet blasts come immediately after those prayers.
 - 2) In the first trumpet blast, fire is thrown to the earth; fire is thrown to the earth in answer to the saints' prayers (v. 5).
 - b. The imagery in these trumpet blasts is drawn from die ten plagues sent upon Egypt.
 - 1) The first trumpet corresponds to the plague of hail.
 - 2) The second trumpet corresponds to the turning of the water to blood.
 - 3) The third trumpet could possibly correspond, not to an Egyptian plague, but to the bitter waters in Ex. 15:22-23.
 - 4) The fourth trumpet corresponds to the plague of darkness.
 - c. The significance of the Egyptian imagery would be that God is going to punish the Romans as he punished the Egyptians.
- C. Let's take a look at these trumpet blasts:

JUDGMENT ON THE VEGETATION, v 7

- A. When the first angel sounded his trumpet, "hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up."
- B. Notes about this verse:
1. The syntax of this sentence implies that the blood-colored storm appeared in heaven before appearing on the earth; this is the way things work.
 2. In Roman thought, the raining of blood from the sky signaled the anger of the gods; here God is showing his displeasure against the Roman Empire.
 3. "To burn up" here means to "burn down" or to "burn up completely."
 - a. The idea is that a third of the tree and a third of all green grass were completely burned up; nothing was left.
 - b. The burning up of only a third of forestation and vegetation shows that although God is sending punishment upon the Roman Empire, the punishment is not yet complete and final.

JUDGMENT UPON THE SEAS, vv 8-9

- A. When the second angel sounded his trumpet, “something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood.”
 - 1. This casting down of a burning mountain in the sea could represent the fall of a great power; the fall of a powerful city could very well be in view.
 - 2. A third of the sea became blood - again only partial judgment is in view.
- B. A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.
 - 1. Some say that the death of these sea creatures shows that many people are adversely affected by the fall of the city, but this more than likely is simply a literary device used in telling this story — if the sea would become blood, the sea creatures would die.
 - 2. A third of the ships were destroyed — this shows the fierceness of the sea.

JUDGMENT UPON THE WATERS, vv. 10-11

- A. When the third angel sounded, “A great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers, and on the springs of water.”
 - 1. Unlike the previous trumpet that affected salt water, this trumpet’s sounding affects the fresh water.
 - 2. This falling star could easily refer to a comet, shooting star - In the ancient world, comets were considered divine omens of death and disaster.
 - 3. That this star fell from heaven shows that God is active in the judgment brought against the earth.
 - 4. This sounds much like Isaiah’s description of the king of Babylon’s fall (Is. 14:12); if we are correct in saying the second trumpet shows the downfall of a great city, this trumpet may depict the fall of the king/ruler of that city.
- B. The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.
 - 1. Wormwood is the name of a plant that has a strong bitter taste; although the plant “wormwood” is not poisonous, many men are depicted as dying from the bitter water.
 - 2. “Wormwood” may symbolize that God’s punishment bring bitterness, suffering, or sorrow. In this way, the people died from the wormwood. God’s punishment.

JUDGMENT UPON THE HEAVENS, v. 12

- A. When the fourth angel sounded, “a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.”
 - 1. In the Old Testament, the darkening of the heavens means that God is about to judge.
 - a. Is. 13:9-10.
 - b. Ezek. 32:7-8.
 - 2. Unusual darkness also attended the crucifixion of Christ.
- B. The idea here is that God is bringing punishment upon the world.

APPLICATION:

- A. God is going to bring judgment upon the world.
 - 1. The judgment in view here has already occurred — it was judgment upon the Roman Empire.
 - 2. But, he will bring judgment at the end of the world.
- B. Even the powerful will face God’s judgment— the sending of the mountain into the seas and the great star’s falling from heaven demonstrate this.
- C. Many will suffer as a result of God’s punishment.
 - 1. When Wormwood fell on the fresh waters, many men died from drinking the water; the name “Wormwood,” meaning “bitterness,” implies great suffering.
 - 2. When God’s punishment comes at the end of this age, many will suffer.

CONCLUSION

- A. John looked and heard an eagle flying through the midst of heaven. saying with a loud voice, “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!”
 - 1. The Greek term for “eagle,” could also mean vulture, which in this context would symbolize impending doom.
 - 2. This vulture flies in mid-heaven, where everyone can see him, and he cries with a loud voice so that everyone can hear him.
 - 3. This angel pronounces a warning upon those who are inhabitants of the earth.
 - a. Those who are “inhabitants of the earth” are those who are not faithful to the Lamb.
 - b. This vulture gives the non—Christian world, who are about to receive God’s punishment, a warning.
- B. If God were to speak directly to us today, no doubt he would give non-Christians a warning.
 - 1. He has given warning to non-Christians and Christians alike in Scripture.
 - 2. But, are you heeding God’s warning?