

# LEAD SHEET

## REVELATION - WK 6 THE SEVEN TRUMPETS NOVEMBER 6, 2016

### **THIS MONTH'S FAITH SKILL: NAVIGATE THE BIBLE**

If you want to know God better, read His Word!

### **GETTING STARTED**

We have a lot to cover this week, so we are going to jump right in, but before we do, we need to be reminded of a couple things as it relates to numbers.

#### **General Discussion:**

- What does the number 7 indicate? (*Perfection, completion.*)
- What does the number 4 mean? (*Completion.*)

Numbers, along with other symbols, are going to mean a lot in today's study.

### **DIGGING IN**

#### **Read Revelation 8:6**

We are about to read about the Seven Trumpets. This section of Revelation follows on the heels of the Seven Seals. Remember that these sections flank Revelation 12 (the point of Revelation). The seven seals were about judgment, as are chapters 17 and 18, which we'll read later. The Seven Trumpets talk about plagues, as do the seven plagues in chapters 13-16. As they parallel one another, they point to chapter 12 for emphasis.

The trumpets are named in two pieces. Let's look at the first four to begin.

## **Read Revelation 8:7-13**

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What came with the first trumpet? *(Hail and fire mixed with blood.)*
2. What was the result? *(A third of the earth, trees, and green grass was burned up.)*
3. What came with the second trumpet? *(Something like a blazing huge mountain was thrown in the sea.)*
4. What was the result? *(A third of the sea turned to blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of ships were destroyed.)*
5. What came with the third trumpet? *(A great star fell from the sky and landed on a third of the rivers and sources of water.)*
6. What was the result? *(A third of the waters turned bitter, many people died.)*
7. What came with the fourth trumpet? *(A third of the sun was struck as was a third of the moon and stars.)*
8. What was the result? *(A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.)*
9. What happened next? *(A flying eagle called out a warning about the future trumpet blasts.)*

Again, in this grouping of four, we can conclude that there is some symbolism at work. Everything is damaged by a third, and the damage is all done on earth. The fact that there are four trumpets in this section indicate completion (as do the numbers 7 and 12, etc. in Revelation). John has just seen the complete destruction of earthly things, people, animals, water, etc.

## **Read Revelation 9:1-12**

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Do you think actual locusts with a scorpion stinger struck God's enemies for five months? *(Allow for discussion.)*
2. Why does John describe these creatures twice? *(He is trying to describe his symbol clearly and describe the function of the symbol.)*
3. What are the locusts not allowed to do? *(They could not kill people, only torture them.)*
4. Why do you think that is? *(God wants people to repent.)*

In the Bible, God often uses plagues of locusts as judgment, both literally and figuratively. However, this is not a judgment that results in death, but repentance. It happens in Exodus, Joel, and elsewhere in the Bible. It was a real thing in the ancient Middle East. The original reader would've understood that this symbol meant judgment, but it was an attempt to get people to repent, not be destroyed.

## **Read Revelation 9:13-21**

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What follows the sixth trumpet? *(A voice from the four horns of the altar of God.)*
2. How many angels are released? What does that number mean? *(Four, it means completion.)*
3. What is the function of the angels? *(To kill a third of mankind.)*
4. How many mounted troops were there? Is this a literal number? *(10,000 x 10,000 x 2. No, it should not be taken literally; it just means a lot.)*

5. He writes “smoke,” “fire,” and “sulfur” three times in this passage. Why do you think so? (*This is a judgment passage. These plagues are meant to bring about repentance but if they do not then people will perish. Evil is being judged.*)

6. What happens to the rest of humanity who are not killed by the plagues according to verses 20-21? (*People still did not repent of their idolatry, sin, etc.*)

7. Why do you think this is emphasized before the last trumpet? (*The point of the plagues has been to get people to repent. Many still did not do so.*)

## **Read Revelation 10:1-11**

Between the sixth and seventh trumpet, we have a pause.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. How is this angel described? (*Light, fiery legs, face like the sun, feet planted on land and sea, etc.*)

2. Who does that sound like? (*Many of the same words are used to describe the Lord.*)

3. What does this angel say will happen? (*The mystery of God would be accomplished as he spoke to the prophets he would make his message known.*)

4. What is John told to do with the little scroll? What will happen afterward? (*Eat it. It will taste good but turn his stomach sour.*)

This is not the first time in the Bible that God has commanded messengers to eat His words. Both Ezekiel and Jeremiah are told to do the same. A first-century audience would have understood this.

Now we have to go to chapter 11. Some believe this is one of the hardest chapters in all the Bible to understand. Let's remember this, though—the seventh trumpet is coming and so too is Revelation 12, the point of the chiastic structure of the book of Revelation and a big hint as to what all this is all about.

### **Read Revelation 11:1-14**

There are a lot of symbols in this passage. We have to remember that Revelation is not meant to confuse you. Let's simplify this passage as much as possible.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What is John told to measure? (*The temple.*)
2. According to the New Testament, what is the temple? (*The Church. This is common teaching in the New Testament and early Church history.*)
3. Who are the Gentiles and the outer court? (*All those who don't belong to Jesus. In Revelation "Israel" is the people of God and a "gentile" is not.*)
4. Who wins and who loses in this passage? (*God's people escape to Heaven, those who don't belong to God look on, are left on earth, and endure a great earthquake. This is the "second woe."*)

Many scholars believe the "two witnesses" in verse 3 and following could represent Elijah (prophecy) and Moses (law), but more perfectly Christ (who fulfilled the law and the prophets and perfectly represents both) and His Church. Christ and the Body of Christ are the witnesses against the evil that exists.

Some notes on numbers. 42 months is the same as 1,260 days. That's 3.5 years. Taken symbolically, this is half of 7, or half of completion. This time of prophecy is a time of persecution. Also, three and half days comes up in this passage as well. There's much too much to handle responsibly here. And this passage, ultimately, is not about the numbers.

## **Read Revelation 11:15-19**

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Again, what does 7 mean in Revelation? (*Completion, perfection.*)
2. What does the voice from Heaven say? (*That the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of the Lord, and He will reign forever and ever.*)
3. In Revelation, it is often said of the Lord that He was and is and is to come. What is missing in this passage? (*And is to come.*)
4. Why is “and is to come” missing? (*Because He has arrived.*)
5. Who is seated before God and what are they doing? (*The twenty-four elders and they are worshipping the Lord.*)
6. What time has come according to verse 18? (*For judging the dead and rewarding God’s servants.*)
7. What is open? (*God’s temple in Heaven.*)

## **MAKING IT REAL**

### **General Discussion:**

- These plagues listed with these trumpets (Especially the first four) are reminiscent of what Old Testament event? (*The plagues in Exodus.*)
- What plague is saved for last in Exodus? (*The death of the firstborn son.*)
- What did the plagues give Egyptians an opportunity to do? (*Repent.*)
- Why don’t you think people repent when given the opportunity to do so? (*They are prideful, with hardened hearts and selfish ambition, etc.*)

Suffering is a great teaching tool. Whether an exercise in God's judgment or simply trials of life, God gives us time to repent. The lives of the faithful must include the practice of repentance.

**General Discussion:**

- What does repentance mean? (*To turn away from sin, change directions, change your heart, mind, and ways.*)
- According to Revelation, how much time do we have to repent? (*Until the end.*)
- Do you think repentance is a regular practice for believers today? How is repentance different from just feeling sorry? (*It requires action, not just an emotion.*)
- When was the last time you repented of something? (This may just be something for students to be challenged with privately.)

The seven trumpets are a reminder that God is our judge. Like the other “sevens” they can seem scary on the surface. However, at the end of chapter 11 we read that Heaven awaits those who are faithful.

**CLOSING PRAYER**

Ask a student to close your time in prayer.