

# **Dr. David L. Mathewson, Revelation, Session 14,**

## **Revelation 7-8 Trumpets**

### **6-Min. Video Overview**

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Alright, let's dive into one of the wildest, most enigmatic, and, well, frankly, terrifying parts of the Bible—the seven trumpet plagues from the book of Revelation. For centuries, people have tried to figure out what these bizarre visions are all about, and today, we're going to try and decode them together. I mean, just listen to that.

That's the kind of imagery that has captivated and, let's be honest, confused people for 2,000 years. It's incredibly vivid, it's totally bizarre, and it comes straight from the text describing the fifth trumpet plague. So what in the world is John talking about here? You know, it's easy to see why so many popular interpretations today look at language like that and immediately think, oh, that's a helicopter, that's nuclear fallout.

But could the author, John, writing in the first century, really be predicting that? Or is there another way to read this one that would have made perfect sense to the people he was actually writing to? To solve this mystery, we have to start with the right key. First, we need a reliable way to decode these apocalyptic monsters and the strange world they came from. And this right here? This is the single most important rule we have to follow.

John's audience had absolutely no concept of helicopters or nuclear weapons. It just wasn't in their world. So any interpretation that relies on modern technology, well, we just have to set it aside.

It couldn't have been what John meant or what his first readers understood. We have to look for clues that they would have recognized. So if it's not a prediction of modern war, what is it? Well, the key, it turns out, isn't in our future, but deep in their past.

It's a blueprint John's audience knew by heart: the story of the Exodus from Egypt. You see, in Jewish thought at the time, there was this really powerful theme called the Exodus motif. It's this core belief that when God acted to save his people in the future, it would look like a new, even grander version of the original Exodus.

And John is tapping directly into this incredibly potent idea. And check this out. When you actually put the plagues from Exodus right next to Revelation's trumpets, boom.

The connection is just- it's undeniable. Water turning to blood, a plague of hail, a plague of darkness, and yep, a plague of locusts. John isn't just making these things up.

He's deliberately and strategically recycling the plagues of Egypt. But why? Why reuse these specific plagues? Well, think about it. The original plagues weren't just random disasters.

Each one was a direct shot at the gods of Egypt. John is doing the exact same thing here. He's using that Exodus blueprint to frame his plagues as a symbolic judgment against the idols of his day, the Roman Empire, and especially emperor worship.

So let's see how this actually plays out. Starting with those first four trumpets. Think of them like a series of cosmic warning shots.

And just look at the progression here. It's like a systematic de-creation. First, a plague hits the earth, wiping out vegetation.

Then the sea, striking right at the heart of Roman commerce. Then the rivers, their fresh water supply. And finally the heavens themselves, dimming the very sources of light.

The foundations of their whole world are being shaken piece by piece. And all through this, you keep seeing this one fraction pop up again and again. One third.

One third of the earth is burned. One third of the sea turns to blood. One third of the stars are struck.

This isn't just a random number. It's meant to tell us that this judgment is incredibly severe. But it's also limited.

It is a devastating morning, not yet the final total end. But right after those initial warnings, everything changes. The intensity just skyrockets.

An eagle flies through the sky, crying, whoa, whoa, whoa, basically shouting that the next three plagues are going to be on a whole other level of horrific. And this is where things get truly bizarre. This is no normal plague of locusts, not by a long shot.

These things come swarming out of the abyss, which is basically the prison for demonic beings. Their appearance is this monstrous mashup of animals and humans. And get this, their mission isn't to kill people, but to torment them for five months.

And they have a king leading them, a fallen angel named Abaddon, or Apollyon, which literally means the destroyer. This is a supernatural demonic assault. And this is where John reveals this terrifying spiritual irony.

The very pagan gods and demonic powers that people in the Roman Empire were worshipping, the things they looked to for security and power, those are the very forces now being unleashed to torment them. The point is that idolatry is profoundly, horribly self-destructive. Now let's talk about this sixth trumpet, because this is another big one.

An angelic army of 200 million is let loose from the Euphrates River. Now again, you have to resist the urge to pull out a map. This isn't about geography.

To John's first-century audience, the Euphrates was a powerful symbol. For Jews, it was the historic highway for invading armies. For Romans, it was the eastern border, home to their most feared enemy, the Parthians.

Just mentioning the Euphrates would have triggered this immediate, deep-seated fear of a massive, unstoppable invasion. So when we pull all these pieces together, it becomes really clear what's happening. Revelation's plagues aren't some literal blueprint for the future.

They are a powerful, symbolic warning rooted deep in the past. This right here is the key to the whole thing. It's about learning to read these chapters through first-century eyes.

When we do that, we don't see modern helicopters. We see symbolic, demonic torment. We don't see nuclear fallout.

We see a profound spiritual darkness. This isn't a future battle map. It's a powerful warning against the idolatry of the Roman world, and a desperate, urgent call for people to repent.

And you know, the text itself tells us the ultimate tragedy, the whole point of all this horror. Even after these devastating plagues, after all that torment, John writes that the people who survived still did not repent. The wake-up call, as loud and terrifying as it possibly could be, just went unanswered.

And that leaves us with one final, pretty provocative thought, right? John used the most terrifying symbols he could think of—locust plagues, scorpion stings, unstoppable armies—to warn against the destructive idols of his time. So if we were writing a similar warning today, what symbols would we use to describe the destructive forces of our own world?