Table Host Discussion Guide

Week 5: The Trumpets of Warning

This week Revelation moves from the opening of the seals to the sounding of the trumpets. Before judgment continues, heaven falls silent as the prayers of God's persecuted people rise before His throne. The trumpet judgments deliberately echo the Exodus plagues, showing that John again interprets Revelation through the Old Testament rather than introducing entirely new imagery. Yet the plagues are now turned back toward God's covenant people as covenant judgment unfolds. Throughout the first six trumpets, the repeated language of "one-third" reminds us that these are restrained judgments—warnings that reveal God's mercy by giving opportunity for repentance before final judgment arrives. Even as the judgments intensify, Revelation continues to emphasize God's sovereignty over history. He raises up nations to accomplish His purposes while remaining completely sovereign over them. After the sixth trumpet, the action pauses once again as John receives the opened scroll. Like Ezekiel before him, he must first receive God's Word before proclaiming it. But unlike Ezekiel, whose ministry focused primarily on Israel, John's commission now expands to "many peoples, nations, languages and kings," signaling that Revelation's attention is about to widen beyond Jerusalem to the nations themselves. Above all, this week's study reminds us that Jesus is merciful. Before He judges, He warns. Before judgment reaches its fullness, He patiently calls people to repentance and sends His Word into the world.

Discussion Questions

1. What do the trumpet judgments teach us about the character of God's judgment?

Answer: Throughout Revelation 8–9, judgment never appears as impulsive or arbitrary. Before the trumpets sound, heaven grows silent, the prayers of God's people rise before His throne, and God responds in His perfect timing. The repeated "one-third" language shows these judgments are restrained rather than final. God warns before He judges, giving people opportunity to repent. His justice and His mercy are displayed together.

Application: How have you personally experienced God's patience in your own life? Why is it important to remember that God's warnings are expressions of His mercy rather than merely His anger?

2. Why does Revelation continually point us back to the Exodus and the Old Testament prophets?

Answer: The trumpet judgments deliberately echo the plagues of Egypt, while many other images come directly from the Law and the Prophets. John expects his readers to recognize these familiar biblical patterns. Rather than reading Revelation through modern events, we are invited to read it through the rest of Scripture. God has acted

this way throughout history, and Revelation shows those same redemptive and judicial patterns reaching their fulfillment.
Application: How has studying Revelation through the Old Testament changed the way you understand difficult passages? How can you become more intentional about letting Scripture interpret Scripture?

3. Why is John's experience of eating the little scroll so significant?

Answer: Just as Ezekiel first had to eat the scroll before speaking God's message, John must first receive God's Word before proclaiming it. The scroll is sweet because God's Word is always good, true, and life-giving. Yet it becomes bitter because the message includes God's coming judgment upon those who refuse to repent. Faithfully proclaiming God's Word means embracing both its joy and its weight.
Application: Do you tend to think of Bible study primarily as gaining knowledge, or as preparing to faithfully live and proclaim God's truth? What might it look like to "digest" God's Word more deeply before sharing it with others?

4. Why is John's commission to "many peoples, nations, languages and kings" an important turning point in Revelation?

Answer: Ezekiel was sent primarily to the house of Israel, but John's commission now expands to the nations. This signals that Revelation's focus is beginning to widen. The covenant judgments against Jerusalem are approaching their climax, while the following visions will increasingly address the kingdoms God has used as instruments of judgment. God's purposes have always extended beyond one nation to His plan of redeeming people from every tribe, language, people, and nation.
Application: How does remembering God's heart for all nations shape the way you think about evangelism, missions, and your own responsibility to share the gospel?

5. What have we learned about Jesus from Revelation 8–10?

Answer: This week reminds us that Jesus is merciful. The One who opens the scroll is also the One who patiently warns before judgment falls. He hears the prayers of His people, answers them in His perfect timing, and continues extending opportunities for repentance. Before the final trumpet sounds, He opens the scroll, commissions His messenger, and sends His Word to the nations. Revelation continually reminds us that its central focus is not judgment itself, but the mercy, authority, and faithfulness of Jesus Christ.
Application: Which aspect of Christ's character has stood out to you most through the first five weeks of Revelation? How has seeing Jesus at the center of the book changed the way you read Revelation?