

Introduction

- Chapter 7 appears to be an interruption of the seals.
- Much of the discussion around Revelation is over what is literal or symbolic.
- I believe most of Revelation is fulfilled literally and symbolically.

Ezekiel 9

- God puts a mark on the heads of those who mourn the idolatry of the world to protect them from the judgment to come.
- It does not appear to be a literal mark that they are able to see.
- The word for sign begins with the Hebrew Taw, which was written as an X, being Christ, the Christos, or the cross.
- Probably not the brand of a slave, but certainly the sealing of the Holy Spirit.

Who are the 144,000

- The 144,000 are all Israel, a distinct number of Jews, only specific Christians, or symbolic of the multitude.
- The multitude John sees could be the same number that he hears.
- Some classic pre-tribulation folks interpret this to mean no Christians are present in the tribulation at all.

Sitting with God

- This is a place where people get the image of endless worship and always in church.
- I do think this part is symbolic of always experiencing God's presence.
- It is the restoration of God's presence from Eden.

Trumpets, Bowls, and Seals

- Some see each of these as describing the same event from different angles.
- Some see these as successive literal events taking place on the earth.
- Some see these as symbolic judgments taking place currently.

Symbolism & The Trumpets

- One valid option is that these trumpet judgments are symbolic.
- Modern commentators who hold to the idealist view often appeal to "symbolism, and apocalyptic language" without clearly defining what the symbol is.
- G. K. Beale is the gold standard, but is still generally vague.
- Earlier Christians, who believed Revelation was at least partially symbolic, at the very least attempted to explain what the symbols pointed towards.
- If the Scriptures are symbolic and figurative, then each sign is signifying something.

Trumpet 1

- Beale sees this as a judgment of famine because of the fire and 1/3s in Ezekiel 5.
- The hail and fire figuratively point to the eternal punishment sinners face in hell.
- The trees are unfaithful "Christians" who are "fruitless trees" (Jude 13) and "blown by every wave of teaching" (Eph 4:14).
- The grass is unbelievers, who have been fattened by luxury (all people are like grass" Isaiah 40:6).

Trumpet 2

- Beale says this again is the judgment of famine.
- The fiery mountain thrown down is Satan.
- The sea is this present life with turbulence and distractions.
- The fish and boats are those filled with bitter sins and tossed through life by anxiety.
- The mountain is the devil being cast out of the church, and the blood are those who follow him ("flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God" 1 Cor 15:50).

Trumpet 3

- Beale says this is symbolic of bitterness from God's judgment.
- The star is the devil ("I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" Luke 10:18).
- The springs and rivers are the fallen shepherds ("wandering stars" Jude 13).
- The bitterness comes from those discouraged by fallen shepherds.
- Wormwood is the sweetness or bitterness of sin that kills those who drink.

4th Trumpet

- Beale says this is spiritual darkness now on the earth before unbelievers.
- Symbolic of great apostasy in the church, where the darkness is those who leave.
- Eagle is the Word of God being proclaimed over the earth.
- The eagle is symbolic of the church preaching the gospel.

Application

- Ask what symbolic or apocalyptic language is specifically pointing towards.
- The big picture meaning helps decipher the smaller literal or symbolic meaning.
- Revelation is worth wrestling with.