CONSEQUENCES AND TRUMPETS

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Putting Romans 1 and Revelation 8 next to each other and seeing what happens.
Category: Observations

I'll readily admit that this blog post is speculative. Please feel free to tell me I've got it all wrong, because I probably have, but don't just dismiss it out of hand either!

What I'd like to do is to read a slice of the book of Revelation alongside a bit of Romans Chapter 1 and to see what happens. As they used to say on fireworks when I was a kid 'light the blue touch paper and retire'.

When we think of God's judgement, we tend to think of God being active.Â We may have got beyond the image of God throwing thunderbolts at people, but we see judgement as God doing something. However, the book of Romans gives an alternative view. In Romans 1:18-32, Paul tells us that God judges sinful humanity and that he does this by letting them get on with whatever it is they were doing and living with the consequences. Twice in this section it says that "God gave them over to ...".

You can illustrate what Paul is saying here by thinking of someone who drives too fast, overtakes on a blind bend and ends up killing themselves. They weren't judged by a court for breaking the speed limit, but the consequences of their actions were far worse than a few points on their licence. What Paul doesn't mention in this passage, is that sin rarely impacts just one person and that others will live with the consequences, Â too.

I'm not ruling out direct, divine action in judgement. I believe that this is something which the Bible clearly teaches, but it isn't the only way that God does things. He also judges sin by letting us do what we want to do and live with the consequences.

With that in mind, let's look at Revelation chapter 8 and the first four trumpets of judgement in verses 6-13. When we read Revelation we need to remember that itÂ is an apocalyptic vision, not a literal statement. It uses pictures and images to convey it's message. What that means is that we shouldn't necessarily expect that angles will blow trumpets and that bad things will happen. We have to look beyond that to the reality that the image is describing. Let'sÂ take one example

> *8Â The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze,*
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> *was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, 9Â a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.*

If we read this in the light of the Romans 1 principle of God judging humanity by letting us live with the consequences of our actions, this passage takes on a whole new light.

Let's just imagine that humanity became so greedy and materialistic that it started to produce things and to consume the earth's resources without any thought to the good of the planet or to the needs of future generations. Sound familiar? Now let's imagine that God, judged that greed and lack of care for his creation by letting us get on with it.

It is easy to imagine how pollution and non-biodegradable plastics could start to pollute the oceans in huge quantities, poisoning fish and damaging the ecosystem to the point where it is barely sustainable. It would be easy for massive industrial fishing fleets to wipe out whole species and turn previously rich maritime areas into underwater deserts. The greed of financiers, fueled by consumers demanding more and more goods could lead to the development of huge trading fleets, which were then scrapped when the economy turned, taking a load of livelihoods with them.

It's easy to imagine a scenario like this, because we are living in it today. The judgement of the second trumpet is being visited on our planet at this very moment.

We've managed to do it all ourselves without the involvement of an angel blowing a trumpet.

As I say, this is speculative; I'm far from a specialist on Revelation. Feel free to disagree with my exegesis.

What is undeniable is that our greed is having a devastating impact on our planet and its ability to sustain life.