

THE SEVEN (7) TRUMPETS: Revelation 8

Let me remind you again we are not trying to interpret all the intricate signs and symbols in this great vision. We want to understand the overall message by relying on God's word (scripture) to interpret God's word (Revelation). Just like God, His word never changes. Whatever God mentions in Revelation, He has mentioned before and explained it in one or more of His other great books. When Revelation does not self-define, we want to apply God's definitions and explanations from His other books to interpret and explain the same words, word phrases, symbols, circumstances, and events in Revelation. The difference in outcomes for the believer is as great as our heretofore unbelief explained below.

We avoid useless man-made speculation. After studying scripture for 2,020 years, the most today's church knows about who it is in Christ is: it is forgiven resulting in salvation. This knowledge accounts for less than 5% of what the Father made available to all believers when Christ ascended and was Exalted. After the early church, the church has never entered the other 95% because of unbelief. Our elite church leaders have never believed God beyond forgiveness resulting in Salvation.

The elite rejected everything else in God's word because they must first "see to believe" (no faith required). They never learned Psm 27:13 "believe to see." And they only applied Heb 11:6 "without faith it is impossible to please God" to forgiveness resulting in salvation. That explains why they pushed everything else in scripture over-yonder when they know they will "see" it all, albeit too late.

This year, the modern church around the world celebrates its 2,020th year living in the wilderness. Just like the Old unbelieving Jews when God brought them out of Egypt by a mighty hand (Duet 26:8), who were not able to enter the promise land because of unbelief (Heb 3:19), and all died in the wilderness without entering (Num 32:13), billions of believers every millennial die in the wilderness without ever entering into the other 95% because they refuse to trust God, believe God, or "believe to see" God's **much mightier hand** in the New Covenant.

The most brilliant spirit-filled (emphasis on lower case "s") mind in history is incapable of imagining any part of the other 95% because that part is exceedingly abundantly beyond anything we could ever ask or think. God expects His people to know what He has freely given us by faith so we will enter into the other 95% at our new birth, live in it and apply it throughout our lives to accomplish the exceedingly abundantly beyond activities the Father needs Christ to accomplish on earth through His body, the church. Entering the other 95% allows us to know how to provide God an acceptable service in Christ. The difference is as much as the east is from the west.

The book of Revelation is similar to any other book in the Bible. When scripture is used to interpret scripture, Revelation does not really introduce anything new. Everything can be found somewhere else in scripture. Our job is to glean its message for the early church and us today.

Let's begin. Rev 8:1-6, "And when he broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God; and seven trumpets were given to them. And another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightnings and an earthquake. And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them."

Back in Rev 5:8, the 24-elders each had a "golden bowl full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." In Rev 8:3, the angel was given much incense which he added to the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. Adding much incense to the prayers suggests the prayers within themselves might not have been sufficient. From Rom 8, we know Christ is before the throne interceding for us. The incense added by the angel could be the intercession of Jesus. Scripture does not tell us. At the very least, John shows us how God hears the prayers of the saints.

The picture is: prayers are sent up laying on the altar before the throne. At some point, the angel comes and adds much incense to the prayers of the saints. At the proper time, the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, go up before God. God hears those prayers.

We know the Spirit intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words (Rom 8:26-27) and Christ is always before the throne interceding for us whenever we pray. The conclusion: there are not any little or unimportant prayers coming from the lips and hearts of Christians. Rev 8 gives us confidence our prayers are laying upon the "golden altar of incense" before the throne.

We may have not received an answer to some of our prayers. Maybe we have not seen them answered. Sometimes we give up saying, "Well, God didn't answer." But that prayer is laying on the altar before the throne waiting when God deems it time to answer those prayers.

Notice what happens whenever God hears these prayers. Rev 8:5, "And the angel took the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar and threw it upon the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake." God manifests His awesome presence in response to the prayers of the saints.

What did this mean to the early believers who read this for the first time? Exodus 19:16 might have come to mind when God gave the law to Moses, "So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled." Verse 18, "Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently."

When God first formed the nation of Israel, He descended in the awesome display of smoke and fire and earthquake. When the early believers read Revelation 8:11, if they thought of Jesus' prediction in Matthew 24, they knew God's response to its destruction would be similar to its establishment. They understood the Jewish nation would soon be destroyed as a nation.

This teaches our worship becomes a part of the court of heaven. What goes on in heaven is determined in great part by what goes on upon the earth. We have lost sight of that. Jesus said, "Whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." What happens in the courts of heaven is determined by the prayers of the saints.

The trumpets' judgments against the Old Testament system is in response to the prayers of the saints. Don't forget that. The world is governed, not from Washington or Moscow, but from the golden altar of incense. The alter is the source for all the world's governments. The prayers of the saints determine what God does upon the earth.

Amos 3:7, "Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets." This is another thing we have lost sight of. What happens in the world is a result of what is happens or does not happen in the church. Ever since Christ ascended, the church has the privilege and great responsibility to pray for earth-forming events in accordance with the Father's will. Unfortunately, today's church is largely unaware.

A few examples: We prayed for World Missions and God pulled down the Iron Curtain in Europe and the Bamboo Curtain in Asia. Missionaries were being killed. God closed the doors to our missionaries and sent them home. We said, "What a shame." When God closed the Russian Cathedrals and turned them into museums, we stood by shaking our heads saying, "Isn't that awful."

We did not see the church go underground in these areas giving birth to a native church, which was 1000-times stronger than any transplanted American church in those areas. When this native church became strong enough, it gave birth to the Solidarity Movement in Poland. The Solidarity Movement had its roots in religion, in the church.

The historic Round Table Agreement in April 1989 legalized Solidarity setting up partially free parliamentary elections in June 1989. It caused freedom to break out in East Germany, that spread to Czechoslovakia, and Romania. Communist regimes toppled. The Berlin Wall was torn down. Bible college students from America took part in recent demonstrations at Tiananmen Square in Red China. The church was surprised when all of this happened. To this day, the church does not understand how it all happened. Today's church does not know very much about who it is Christ and what it should be doing.

What were American churches doing during all this? Building Heritage USA, talking about

church growth, arguing about the rapture, and a thousand other things. All the while, God was answering the prayers of His people who prayed for missions.

We have all prayed for America. God's response to these prayers will bring about good for America. Suffering may occur, modern-day trumpets may blow, trials, persecution, and death may follow. But God will bring us through it in answer to the prayers of His people. God's judgement on America has started giving Americans strong encouragement to return to Him.

Consider another aspect. Imagine working for the largest, most technologically advanced, wealthy, generous, loving, kind, responsive, effective, and efficient company ever to exist that has given you unlimited access to the corporate checkbook, limitless resources, and the greatest personal counselor, mentor, and advisor to direct and assist your accomplishing significant tasks as acceptable service advancing the company. Regrettably, you reject the employee handbook never advancing your knowledge of the company beyond knowing your sins are forgiven (1%) resulting in salvation (1%). Although you excel in some fundamental assignments involving mission work, care for others, preaching and teaching Sunday School on the basics leading to forgiveness and salvation but nothing beyond, and involving yourself in a few healings, your employee stock account increases only 3%.

From your first to your last day with the company, you repeatedly and faithlessly pushed to the future (over-yonder) your opportunities to enter heaven itself while you are in the land of the living to avail yourself God's wisdom, the mind of Christ, and heaven's richest resources required for acceptable service making it impossible to perform the other 95% of your employee expectations: ruling, reigning, and governing the world, protecting, and cultivating the earth, defeating Satan, and making your enemies a footstool for thy feet, all in Christ.

Woefully, when Christ Returns, your long-awaited rewards package is capped at 5% instead of an additional 95%. You forfeited the other 95% throughout eternity because of unbelief by your rejecting the past-tense (already happened) full-size printed truths about who you are in Christ repeatedly emphasized in the employee handbook. Consequently, what should be the greatest celebration in history is an eternal disappointment that can never be improved. When Jesus Returned, you finally saw the cost of unbelief during your allotted time on an unredeemed earth, and the few rewards enjoyed throughout eternity on a redeemed earth. Believe to see!!

Isaiah 26:9, "At night my soul longs for Thee, indeed, my spirit within me seeks Thee diligently; for when the earth experiences Thy judgements the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness." This is an important message. The only way some people learn righteousness is to experience the judgements of God. When the church prays, God hears its prayers, and the seven angels standing before God each having one of the seven trumpets prepares themselves to sound the trumpets. This then takes us through Revelation chapter 11.

The two Old Testament purposes for trumpets: worship and war. Numbers 10:2, God told Moses, "**Make for yourselves two trumpets of silver**, of hammered work you shall make them;

and **you shall use them for summoning the congregation and for having the camps set out.**" Num 10:9-10, "When you go to war in your land against the adversary who attacks you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, **that you may be remembered before the Lord your God, and be saved from your enemies. Also in the day of your gladness** and in your appointed feasts, and on the first days of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over your sacrifices and over your peace offerings; and **they shall be as a reminder of you before your God.** I am the Lord your God."

Joshua 6:7, seven **trumpets are blown to call the people to war against Jericho** and the inhabitants of the land. Nehemiah 12:41 identifies by name the seven priests with the seven trumpets. I Chronicles 15:24, identifies by name the seven priests who blew the seven trumpets before the ark of God calling the people to worship. **David blew seven trumpets when he re-established worship** after he recovered the ark, Nehemiah rebuilt the city walls and gate protecting Jerusalem in 52 days, and Ezra built the second temple.

In Revelation, 6 of 7 sounding trumpets are for judgment. In Rev 8, the first four trumpet blasts are divine judgments in the form of natural disasters upon one third of the four areas of creation. The first four do not affect mankind. The first judgement is upon the earth. The second upon the sea. The third upon the rivers of the sea. The fourth upon the sun, the moon, and the stars (the heavenly bodies).

When God controls the destruction to one third of creation preserving two thirds, He gives early believers confidence He can bring them through the great tribulation described in Matthew 24. He gives us confidence He can deliver us through any trouble, trial, or tribulation by controlling the events in our lives. When these trumpets sound judgment, the church is assured the God of creation is in control.

The fifth and sixth trumpets affect mankind.

Rev 9:1, the fifth angel sounds. The bottomless pit opens, locusts come forth, they are told not to hurt the grass, any green thing, any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads; the locusts are not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man (Rev 9:2-5).

Rev 9:13, the sixth angel sounds. The four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea (Rev 7:2) are released. Their three plagues kill one-third of mankind (Rev 9:15-18).

The **purpose for the sixth trumpet:** Rev 9:20-21, "And the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues **did not repent** of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they **did not repent** of their murders nor their sorceries nor their immoralities nor of their thefts."

The sixth trumpet was God's attempt to convert men from their idolatry, murders, sorceries, and thefts; to drive men to repentance before it is too late; but they never repent. In His judgement, God shows us He is the God of life, but He does not make anyone accept it.

It is interesting how these sins characterize American society today. Idolatry, immorality, and thefts in America are off-the-charts. In 2018, America averaged 44 murderers a day, 2,362 unborn babies killed daily using surgical and medical abortions, with pharmacy experts estimating another 38,365 daily chemical abortions ("14M annually," American Life League).

America is also overrun with the occult. Sorcery and immorality have even infiltrated our churches. On the front page of Christianity Today, one of America's national conservative magazines, printed by the Billy Graham Foundation, a lead article a while back devoted many pages to men claiming to be prophets in Kansas City. In some places, the article read like something out of an occult or astrology magazine. I wrote a letter to the editor, He never printed it.

Amos 4:6-8, God reminds them of His goodness and declares two times, "**Yet you have not returned to Me.**" Amos 4:9, the Lord sent judgement, "I smote you with scorching *wind* and mildew; and the caterpillar was devouring your many gardens and vineyards, fig trees and olive trees; **Yet you have not returned to Me.**" Amos 4:10, the Lord sent more judgements, "I sent a plague among you after the manner of Egypt; I slew your young men by the sword along with your captured horses, and I made the stench of your camp rise up in your nostrils; **Yet you have not returned to Me.**" Amos 4:11, "I overthrew you as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were like a firebrand snatched from the blaze; **Yet you have not returned unto Me.**"

The same things are re-experienced **after the sixth trumpet: men would not repent.** Rev 9:6, "And in those days (the sixth trumpet) men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die but death flees from them." **They prefer death to repentance, destruction rather than accept forgiveness, and die without God, than repent.**

The Father is the God of creation and life. John 17:3, Jesus said, "This is eternal life, that they might know Thee, the only true God, in Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Life is not found in any of the sins we commit, the works of our hands, idols of silver, gold, wood, or brass, our murderers, sorceries, immoralities, or thefts. Somehow, America has the idea killing unborn babies is going to help our society and lead us to a better kind of life. We turn to the occult and sorceries because we think we found a source for a better life. We give ourselves over to immorality because we think this is living the good life. We engage in thievery, including the highest echelons of government, because we think that offers a better way of life. In all these judgments, God tells us He is our only source of real life. We never find real life anywhere else.

Rev 10:7, the seventh angel with the seventh trumpet is about to sound, but refrains until Rev 11:15. Interesting, **the seventh trumpet is not a judgement, but produces the worst impact.**

Rev 9:12, after the fifth trumpet, "The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things." Rev 11:14, after the sixth trumpet, "The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quick." **The seventh trumpet, the most horrible, is God's fulfillment to save.** Rev 10:7 introduces the seventh trumpet saying, "but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets."

Rev 11:15-17, "And the seventh angel sounded (his trumpet); and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever. And the twenty four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and they worshiped God, saying, 'We give Thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast, because Thou hast taken Thy great power and hast begun to reign."

Rev 11:18, "And the nations were enraged" because God is starting to reign through His Son and His body. The seventh trumpet, the third woe, is the worst event God could bring upon this society because His Son, Jesus, a man not of this world, now rules the world and reigns upon the earth.

The seventh trumpet demonstrates God's purpose is to save, not to condemn or to judge. He must judge because men will not listen. No matter what God does, they refuse to tear themselves away from their sins preferring to turn a deaf ear toward God's prophets and His Word. So, after the seventh trumpet, God's purpose to save is fulfilled through His Son and His body, the church.

As the last section of the seventh trumpet ends, God gives the early believers and today's church insight to Jesus as the new ruler of the world. Rev 11:19, "And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the Ark of His Covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm."

In the Jewish temple, the Ark of the Covenant was in the most holy place in the tabernacle, standing at the place where the High Priest made intercession for the people where their sins were forgiven. The Jewish temple was patterned after the true temple in heaven (Ex 25:40). This means the true ark of His covenant in heaven is located where Jesus makes intercession for His people. When all the trumpets blow, the earth is devastated, the heavenly powers are shaken, the rulers of this world topple, mankind is judged, and the world is in great distress and tribulation, don't ever forget what John saw . . . the temple of God in heaven is open to believers.

These believers are the Christians who believe God's word, know who they are in Christ, and enter heaven itself "while they are in the land of the living" (Psm 27:13). The vision of the temple in heaven open displaying the Ark of His Covenant depicts Jesus Christ interceding for His people on the basis of His blood and intercessory ministry at this present time, making reconciliation, protecting His church, and ensuring it comes through all this while His wrath is

poured out. The temple in heaven is open and Jesus is there forever. Remember that. While Jesus does all this, His church stands to back Him by doing His will.

These trumpets teach us our Father is: the God of creation, the God of life, the God of prayer, and the God who shows us how He hears and answers our prayers.