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Title: Revelation Commentary
[The Seven Trumpets](#)
[Parts 1-3](#)

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Begin Text:

We have been studying the book of Revelation for several months and we have carefully examined four topics: The seven churches, the seven seals, the 144,000 and the Two Witnesses. We have five topics to go: The seven trumpets, the four beasts of Revelation, the seven bowls, the Second Coming, and the Millennium.

After we finish our study on the seven trumpets, we will be able to move through the remaining topics in less time than the first four topics because we will have established a good foundation and a strong framework to work within. I hope you understand how the four rules take us to the intended meaning of apocalyptic prophecy. I have three introductory things to say about the seven trumpets before we begin with Revelation 8:2. . . .

1. The seven trumpets are to the Second Coming of Jesus what the Feast of Trumpets was to the Day of Atonement. In other words, the seven trumpets of Revelation will awaken the whole world to hear that "The Judgment Bar of Christ" has begun. This parallels the Feast of Trumpets which awakened the whole camp of Israel to [The Judgment Bar of Christ](#) which took place on the Day of Atonement.

Many Christians are surprised to learn that the member of the Godhead who spoke to Israel in the Old Testament was Jesus Christ Himself!

1 Cor 10:1 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea.

1 Cor 10:2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

1 Cor 10:3 They all ate the same spiritual food

1 Cor 10:4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and **that rock was Christ.**

Keep in mind that the Feast of Trumpets was designed to prepare Israel to meet Jesus Christ and the seven trumpets in Revelation will do the same. [\[more about this later on\]](#)

trumpets in the Spring of 1994, because at the end of 70 Jubilee cycles, God's patience with man's rebellion reached its limit. I believe the time appointed for God's wrath arrived in April, 1994 and I suspect that the implosion of Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 into Jupiter during July 1994 was magnificent "prophetic sample" of God's coming wrath. You may recall that the comet broke up into a string of 21 chunks and they impacted Jupiter creating the most powerful explosions ever witnessed by man.

Let's consider how Revelation 8:2 and 7:1 fit together:

Let's suppose the seven angels were given the seven trumpets in the Spring of 1994. Let's suppose the first four angels went off to harm the Earth, but they were told to "wait" until 144,000 servants have been sealed. This delay explains Revelation 7.

Rev 7:1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to **prevent any wind** from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree.

Rev 7:2 Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had **been given power to harm** the land and the sea:

Rev 7:3 "Do not **harm** the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God."

Why do we need to know about this delay? Why has God informed us about this delay? In a sentence, we know today that God's wrath is overdue, but God has not implemented His wrath because He is waiting on something more important than His wrath!

Jesus is waiting for the appointed time to arrive. "With God, timing is everything." He is waiting for a specific day, a day that is exactly 1,335 days short of the seventh millennium. Thus far, the delay has lasted 12+ years. According to my calculations, I think the Seventh Millennium begins somewhere between 2011 and 2017. Of course, I could be wrong. But, I think we are very close.

Rev 8:3 Another angel [**not one of the seven**], who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne [**We know that this altar is the "true" Altar of Incense. Look at these verses:**

Heb 8:1 The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,

Heb 8:2 and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.

Heb 8:4 If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already men who offer the gifts prescribed by the law.

Heb 8:5 They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

There's a profound point here: If we are going to understand what happens at the Altar of Incense in Heaven's Temple (Rev 8:3-5), we first have to understand what happened at the Altar of Incense on Earth because the temple on Earth was a copy and shadow of the true temple in Heaven. So,]

Rev 8:3 "Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the [true] altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. [Incidentally, the Altar of Incense in the Earthly temple was located in front of the Table of Showbread which represented the throne of God.]

Rev 8:4 The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God [as a sweet aroma] from the angel's hand. [The idea here is that all of the saints on Earth are praying... they are asking God to do something and verse 5 is God's response to their prayers.]

Rev 8:5 Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came ¹peals of thunder, ²rumblings, ³flashes of lightning and ⁴an earthquake.

Rev 8:6 Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them."

Rule One: Examine the sequence:

1. 7 angels given 7 trumpets [but, they are told to wait]
2. [later] An angel with a censer arrives at the Altar of Incense and He was given much incense to burn for this event
3. A sweet fragrance rises before God together with the prayers of all of the saints
4. Then, the angel fills censer with fire from the Altar and throws it down on Earth
5. Four physical phenomena occur
6. The seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets

What is this service at the Altar of Incense all about? In a sentence, "This service marks the close of corporate intercession and the commencement of the Great Tribulation."

To understand the phrase, "the termination of corporate intercession," you have to understand three things:

1. When Adam and Eve sinned, Jesus "stood between" the law of God which demanded their immediate execution and the guilty pair. Jesus interceded.

On the basis of love for Adam and Eve and their offspring, Jesus voluntarily interceded. For six thousand years, Jesus has been "standing in the way" of [as in holding back] the execution of sinners. This intercession operates on two levels: the personal level and the corporate level.

See if this makes sense:

When the whole world became corrupt in Noah's day, Jesus told Noah that He was going to destroy the world because it had passed the point of return. So, after 120 years, mercy for the world [corporately speaking] ended and the flood came.

However, even though God was angry with the behavior of mankind as a whole, mercy was extended to any individual who believed God's Word and entered the ark that Noah built. The point here is that God deals with mankind in corporate ways and He deals with mankind in individual ways.

This is why there were two altars in the Earthly temple. There are two levels of atonement. The Altar of Burnt Offering [located in the courtyard] was used for atonement on the personal level. This is where individuals came with their sin offerings.

The Altar of Incense [located inside the temple] was used for atonement on the corporate level. Each evening and morning, atonement was made on this altar for the whole nation of Israel. Because continual or daily atonement was ongoing, a holy God could dwell in a camp of sinners without destroying it!

Consider this: In Bible times, God dealt with the nation of Israel as though the whole nation was one person. The Babylonian captivity was corporate punishment upon the whole nation for the apostasy of its majority. [Yes, there were some in Israel at that time who still pleased God (like Ezekiel, Daniel and his three friends), but the majority in Israel displeased Him and He destroyed the whole nation through Nebuchadnezzar.]

Of course, God also deals with mankind as individuals. You may remember how God punished King David for having an affair with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah.

So, the first thing that you need to know about the service at the corporate altar, the Altar of Incense, is that God deals with mankind on two levels and this truth is confirmed by the presence of two separate and distinct altars in the Earthly temple and in Heaven's temple. (If you want to investigate this further, read Leviticus 4 and notice the differences between corporate sins and individual sins and their respective altars.)

Just in case you have forgotten, I said there are three things we have to understand before we can understand the service at the Altar of Incense in Revelation 8, so let's let proceed with item #2.

2. We need to understand the role of incense at the Altar of Incense.

Have you ever heard the expression: "Well, that just stinks!?" The idea behind this expression is that something went wrong and the consequences stink, that is, they are offensive. This may come as a surprise, but sinners are a stench in God's nostrils. This stench isn't body odor, our stench is our unrighteousness.

God is totally pure and we are totally impure -- even after a bath. Sin cannot be washed away with water. Pilate did not remove his guilt in the death of Jesus by washing his hands. To teach man that even in our finest clothes we are stench in God's nostrils, God required the offering of a special fragrant incense. Jesus designed this fragrance to mask our stench.

Exo 30:34 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Take fragrant spices -- gum resin, onycha and galbanum -- and pure frankincense, all in equal amounts,

Exo 30:35 and make a fragrant blend of incense, the work of a perfumer. It is to be salted and pure and sacred.

Exo 30:36 Grind some of it to powder and place it in front of the Testimony in the Tent of Meeting, where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you.

Exo 30:37 Do not make any incense with this formula for yourselves; consider it holy to the Lord.

Exo 30:38 Whoever makes any like it to enjoy its fragrance must be cut off from his people."

Each day, evening and morning, when priests offered this incense on the Altar of Incense, people would gather outside the temple to present their prayers and petitions to God. They gathered at the evening and morning services because they desperately wanted their petitions to be answered and they reasoned that their petitions would be favorably presented if they ascended with the sweet fragrance of incense.

Think about this: If you petitioned a great king to grant your request, don't you think a delightful atmosphere would do more good than trying to approach him in "stinky" clothing? OK, now that you know about corporate intercession on the Altar of Incense and you know about the use of incense. The last thing you need to know about is the censer and the act of throwing it down.

3. In Bible times, censers were little metal buckets [skillets] that were used to carry fire from one place to another. In those days there were no matches or butane lighters, so it was a lot easier to carry fire around than to start a fire. Thus, censers in ancient times were rather common household devices.

Censers were also used at the temple for the purpose of carrying fire. The fire on the Altar of Incense never went out, even when Israel carried the tabernacle from place to place. The fire from the Altar was carried in a censer. Notice how a censer was used on the Day of Atonement.

Lev 16:12 "He [the high priest] is to take a censer full of burning coals from the altar before the Lord [Altar of Incense] and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense and take them behind the curtain.

Lev 16:13 He is to put the incense on the fire before the Lord, and the smoke of the incense will conceal the atonement cover above the Testimony, so that he will not die."

The point here is that temple censers were used to carry fire during the process of atonement. [When the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram occurred, God became very angry with the whole nation of Israel . . .]

Num 16:44 And the LORD said to Moses,

Num 16:45 "Get away from this assembly so I can put an end to them at once." And they fell facedown.

Num 16:46 Then Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer and put incense in it, along with fire from the altar, and hurry to the assembly to make atonement for them. Wrath has come out from the Lord; the plague has started."

Num 16:47 So Aaron did as Moses said, and ran into the midst of the assembly. The plague had already started among the people, but Aaron offered the incense and made atonement for them.

Num 16:48 He stood between the living and the dead, and the plague stopped. [what a beautiful example of intercession]

Num 16:49 But 14,700 people died from the plague, in addition to those who had died because of Korah."

Now that you know what censers are and how they were used for atonement in temple services, the big picture behind the simple event in Revelation 8:3-5 becomes possible to grasp. Consider this scenario:

1. God's patience with Earth ran out in 1994 -- at the end of 70 Jubilee cycles. The seven angels were given seven trumpets [the seven trumpets represent seven punitive judgments]

2. Before the first four angels can sound their trumpets, they are told to wait until the 144,000 are sealed.

3. When the "perfect time" comes, an angel approaches the Altar of Incense and he offers much incense on the Altar, and the fragrance ascends before God together with the prayers of all the saints on Earth.

3. Then, the angel fills a censer with fire from the Altar of Incense and he throws it down on the Earth and four physical signs follow.

Putting the fire from the Altar in the censer and throwing it down indicates **the end** of services at the Altar. In other words, this is the end of corporate intercession and the seven trumpets will now begin! Look at the next verse:

Rev 8:6 Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them.

Compare this with Daniel 12:11:

Dan 12:11 "From the time that the daily [service] ~~sacrifice~~ is abolished [in Heaven] and the abomination that causes desolation is set up [a universal death decree for the saints], there will be 1,290 days."

Once the censer is cast down, daily atonement (daily intercession) will not be offered any more on the Altar of Incense. Therefore: God's corporate wrath breaks out on Earth's inhabitants.

The fourth seal is broken. Rumbings, lightning, thunders, and a global earthquake follow. The world will be stopped in its tracks. Arrested!

The **whole** world will be put on notice with these four physical phenomena that God's anger with our behavior will not be contained any longer. The **appointed time** for God's wrath has come and shortly after these four manifestations, the first trumpet will sound in Heaven's courtroom and fiery hail will fall from the sky and burn up 1/3 of Earth. The enormous scope and nature of this judgment is "a prophetic sample" of hell.

One more point:

You might be wondering about the prayers of **all the saints on Earth**. What is their petition? What are saints, the world over, praying about? This is a good question because no one knows the timing (the day and hour) of this service in Heaven's temple! Remember, the prayers of the saints are presented to the Lord shortly **before** the censer is cast down and the global earthquake occurs. See if this explanation makes any sense:

The Bible does not say what the saints are praying about. We know that saints are praying everyday to God, but this service in Heaven is not an everyday event and neither are these prayers. However, there **is one thing** that all of God's saints would pray about at the same time under the right circumstances.

I believe that a great war will erupt in the Middle East and this war will escalate until there is a nuclear exchange. Tens of millions will die in this war. Because this war will affect the global economy, the distribution of oil, food, clothing, building materials and supplies of all kinds will slow to a stop. This war will be a fearful event. The words of Iran's president may be prophetic: He wants to wipe Jerusalem off the map.

If Israel was totally destroyed by nuclear bombs, what would this could do to the theology of hundreds of millions of Christians who believe that the temple will be rebuilt?

Because this war will be nuclear and the consequences far reaching, the whole world will suddenly be crying out for "peace and safety." Anxiety will be very great and [all of God's people](#) will be praying for the same thing: [The imminent return of Jesus Christ!](#)

Paul wrote:

1 Th 5:3 "While people are saying, "Peace and safety," [destruction will come on them suddenly](#), as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

1 Th 5:4 But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief."

Did you notice that within a context of people saying "peace and safety" that "sudden destruction" comes [from the Lord]?

While world leaders are doing their best to limit the nuclear war and achieve peace and safety, God answers the prayers of His saints by stepping into the fray!

All of the saints on Earth will be earnestly praying for the Lord's intervention. An angel is called to the Altar of Incense. He is given much incense, and in the context of a sweet aroma, the petitions of the saints will be presented to the Lord. The Lord will give the nod and the angel will throw the censer down. Corporate intercession for Earth is terminated and God's wrath breaks out. The 1,335 days just began. The Second Coming is a parade of events over a course of 1,335 days.

If you think this nuclear exchange I have presented is horrible, you haven't seen anything yet! Sudden destruction from God will miniaturize the nuclear exchange. God will step into the affairs of mankind with something bigger than nuclear bombs. [\[Illustration: Big ant and three little ants fighting\]](#)

In fact, the first trumpet will burn up a third of the entire world! Suddenly, man's biggest problem isn't nation against nation, it is God versus mankind. Let's look at the first four trumpets:

Rev 8:7 The first angel sounded his trumpet [\[in Heaven's temple\]](#), and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

Rev 8:8 The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood,

Rev 8:9 a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

Rev 8:10 The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water--

Rev 8:11 the name of the star is Wormwood [\[poison\]](#). A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.

Rev 8:12 The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night. [\[Global famine\]](#)

Rev 8:13 As I watched, I heard an eagle [the fourth living creature, the one with the face of an eagle that oversees the fourth seal] that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: "Woe! Woe! Woe [condemned are] to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!"

So, the first four trumpets are:

1. Fiery hailstorm burns up 1/3 of Earth.
2. Asteroid impact on ocean -- tsunami and the ocean is left in angry turmoil
3. Asteroid impact on a continent -- drinking water contaminated
4. Darkness -- no food crops

Two points that need to be addressed:

1. The repetitive use of 1/3 in the seven trumpets:
2. The reason for calling these judgments "seven trumpets":

The Jews celebrated "The Feast of Trumpets" on the first day of the seventh month each year. (Tishri 1) Actually, God required Israel to observe the commencement of every month at the time of each new moon and these festivals kept Israel's calendar synchronized with the moon. But, the new moon festival for the seventh month of the year was different from all the others. This feast was marked by the sounding of trumpets.

The purpose for the sounding of the trumpets was to notify Israel that the most important day of the year was about to arrive. In other words, the Jews were put on notice that they had nine days to get ready for the 10th day of the 7th month which was the Day of Atonement -- or the Day of Judgment.

God warned Israel with trumpets that their Day of Judgment was coming because corporate approval was only possible if all of the Jews made sure that all personal wrongs had been made right.

Consider this:

When a wrong is committed, God **does not** forgive the sinner until restitution has been made to the victim. Restitution consists of restoring what was taken plus paying a penalty.

For example:

Exo 22:1 "If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he must pay back **five head of cattle** for the ox and **four sheep** for the sheep."

Exo 22:5 "If a man grazes his livestock in a field or vineyard and lets them stray and they graze in another man's field, he must make restitution from **the best of** his own field or vineyard."

Exo 22:7 "If a man gives his neighbor silver or goods for safekeeping and they are stolen from the neighbor's house, the thief, if he is caught, must pay back **double**."

Exo 22:8 But if the thief is not found, the owner of the house must appear before the judges to determine whether he has laid his hands on the other man's property.

Exo 22:9 In all cases of illegal possession of an ox, a donkey, a sheep, a garment, or any other lost property about which somebody says, 'This is mine,' both parties are to bring their cases before the judges. The one whom the judges declare guilty must pay back **double** to his neighbor."

Of course, restitution is not possible for some things.

Exo 22:16 "If a man seduces a virgin who is not pledged to be married and sleeps with her, he must pay the bride-price, and she shall be his wife.

Exo 22:17 If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he must still pay the bride-price for virgins." [full price]

[The bride-price was determined by the father of the woman. The idea behind the bride-price was that the girl was the property of her father, and her marriage was a financial loss to her father. So, if she was a good-looking virgin, and if the father was a wealthy man, the bride-price was very high. If she was quite ugly, the bride-price wasn't very great. Now you know why Laban gave Jacob his daughter Leah instead of Rachel. No one would pay Laban for Leah. Jacob worked for Laban for seven years to pay for Rachel and after he was cheated, he worked seven more years to pay for her. I find the Bible to be humorous describing the morning after Jacob's wedding to Leah: "When morning came, there was Leah!" Can you image Jacob's surprise and angst?]

The point here is that the Feast of Trumpets in ancient Israel was designed to awaken Israel to the fact that Judgment Day was only 9 days away.

If a Jew failed to make the necessary restitution between man and God during those nine days, his sin would be revealed when the High Priest entered the Most Holy place to stand in God's presence. God would tell the High Priest that sin was in the camp and after the sinner was located he would be "cut off" or "evicted" from the nation of Israel.

So, the nine days between The Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement were to be spent in soul searching, carefully reviewing the past to make sure all wrongs had been made right. So it will be. The time-period of the seven trumpets will be a time of soul searching. A time for making all wrongs right and taking a position on the side of truth.

Jesus will send seven trumpet judgments to Earth to awaken the people of Earth to the fact that Judgment Day has come.

2 Cor 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."

Rev 14:7 He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."

One last point: Meeting Jesus is vastly different than meeting a great king or president on Earth because the only people that can see Jesus without being destroyed by His holy presence are the pure in heart.

Matt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Let's finish today's study with this question, "What is the purpose of 1/3 in the seven trumpets?"

Actually, the quantity of 1/3 is mentioned 12 times in the seven trumpets. This repetition is important because it keeps directing us to an important concept over and over again. The use of 1/3 in Revelation comes from an ancient custom of kings showing generosity.

For example, if a king defeated his rebellious enemy, he might show great generosity by allowing one third of his enemies to live!

2 Sam 8:2 "David also defeated the Moabites. He made them lie down on the ground and measured them off with a length of cord. Every two lengths of them were put to death, and the third length was allowed to live. So the Moabites became subject to David and brought tribute."

The 1/3 that were spared were glad to be alive! They had a change of mind and were suddenly pleased to pay their taxes!

Look at this: When the Lord, the Great King of Israel, destroyed Jerusalem because of apostasy, He spared 1/3:

Ezek 5:11 Therefore as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your vile images and detestable practices, I myself will withdraw my favor; I will not look on you with pity or spare you.

Ezek 5:12 A third of your people will die of the plague or perish by famine inside you; a third will fall by the sword outside your walls; and a third I will scatter to the winds and pursue with drawn sword."

The point here is that the seven trumpets are a time of mercy. Instead of justifiably destroying 3/3's, Jesus destroys 1/3 and leaves 2/3! He is double generous!

The destruction of 1/3 will be so overwhelming that people will think that God is going to destroy everyone and everything. Yes, He would be justified in so doing, but He is a double generous king.

One last thing:

The number 666, the mark of the beast, is 2/3 of 1,000. The devil will divide the people of Earth into groups of 1,000 and kill of 1/3.

When we study the mark of the beast, you will be amazed at the fact that Lucifer will kill 1/3 of mankind and spare 2/3's. (Rev 9:15) The 2/3's will gladly choose to wear the number "666" showing they belong to the 2/3's that are permitted to live. We'll discuss this later on.

If time permits:

"Eternal truth is not what I believe. Truth is greater than me. Truth is not even what I know for truth is larger than anything I know. Truth is fact. I may not believe it. I may not know it. But, that does not change it. It is there nevertheless, waiting to be discovered and believed. Truth does not depend upon the unsettled and changing opinions of men. It was there before it was believed and it remains truth whether it is believed or not. Truth is true. Reason does not originate it nor create it, it merely discovers it. Consequently, reason is not its source. Truth goes back beyond the beginning of reason. Some would have us believe that the church is the source of truth, particularly in matters of theology. They are wrong. The church is the product of truth. It does not originate it. The church came into being by accepting divine revelation. The church is not the source of that revelation. Truth goes beyond the church, it is antecedent to it. Truth, eternal truth." (Written by Carlyle B. Haynes (1882-1958), the reference for this quote has been lost.)

End Text: