

The Seven Trumpets

“And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.”

– Revelation 8:2

Please consider four introductory points:

- 1. The seven trumpets of Revelation are seven horrible judgments that will impact Earth during the Great Tribulation.** These judgments will devastate the ecosystems of this planet so completely that Earth will not be able to recover. The book of Revelation describes these judgments as “seven trumpets” because a trumpet will sound in Heaven’s temple each time a judgment occurs. The first four trumpets will occur in rapid succession. These four judgments will be so catastrophic that they will sever the past from the future. Life for everyone on Earth will dramatically change once these events begin. Thousands of cities will be destroyed by fire and water. Twenty-five percent of the world’s population will die during the first few weeks, and global infrastructures such as communication, travel, banking, manufacturing, and shipping will all but disappear. God’s judgments will impose great tribulation on everyone. The first four trumpets will cause the whole world to relate to God in a way that is presently unimaginable.
- 2. The “full cup principle” is a prerequisite to the study of the seven trumpets.** The “full cup principle” is a policy that God consistently uses to manage groups of people. A group of people can be cities like Sodom and Gomorrah, a nation like Israel, a world empire like Medo-Persia, or even the whole world, as in Noah’s day. This principle is fairly easy to understand. When the majority of a group becomes so degenerate and defiant that extended mercy has no redeeming effect, God reveals His love for the innocent victims of sin and future generations. He responds to the current generation by sending warnings and redemptive judgments, so that if possible, His wayward subjects will change course. If His warnings are ignored and His **redemptive** judgments do not produce repentance and reformation, God destroys that group by sending totally **destructive** judgments. This principle explains the appearance and disappearance of civilizations. The full cup principle is found

throughout the Bible. For example, God destroyed the world with a flood in Noah's day, God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah in Abraham's day, God collapsed the walls of Jericho for Joshua, God destroyed two-thirds of Israel and sent the remainder into Babylonian captivity (605-536 B.C.), and finally, God sent the Romans to destroy Jerusalem in A.D. 70. God will soon apply the "full cup principle" again to the whole world as He did in Noah's day. The seven trumpets will be redemptive judgments (seven first plagues) and then the seven bowls (seven last plagues) will be totally destructive.

- 3. God thoughtfully designed the seven trumpets to accomplish many objectives.** One objective is confrontation. God wants to confront the false religions of the world with "gospel truth." The first four trumpets will set the stage for this confrontation. When billions of people see the sudden destruction of notably wicked places all over Earth and the obliteration of twenty-five percent of the world's population, almost everyone will be found in a state of genuine anguish, fearing the wrath of Almighty God. The first four trumpets will produce unimagineable destruction, and the chaos that will follow will be so great within each nation that each government will question whether it will be able to continue functioning. After the first four trumpets occur, the nations of Earth will realize that mankind is dealing with one angry God. All of Earth's political and religious leaders will humbly unite in an all out effort to appease God so that His wrath will immediately cease. Driven by fear and humbled by overwhelming destruction, the religious and political leaders of the world will implement a terribly misguided solution to appease God's wrath. Unfortunately, their solution will stand in direct opposition to what God actually wants, and the confrontation between man's solution and God's plan will begin.

Another objective embedded in the seven trumpets is redemption. The "shock and awe" of the first four trumpets will shatter religious paradigms. All people, despite religious backgrounds, will listen and intelligently consider a gospel that is different from anything they have ever heard. This receptivity to another paradigm will be miraculous given the religious antagonism that has existed for centuries between Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Atheists, Catholics, Protestants, and Pagans. Today, no one religious body can claim that it knows more about Almighty God without being condemned by the other six. God will displace man's arrogance by uniting

mankind through fear. Overwhelming destruction will produce unimaginable suffering and hardship. God will level the playing field through humiliation so that people will hear His gospel. This will provide an opening wedge that will cause people to listen to God's servants, the 144,000. The 144,000 will boldly proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Thus, every religious and nonreligious nation will hear and thoughtfully consider a gospel which they would have refused to hear at any other time. (Matthew 24:14)

There are other important objectives in the seven trumpets, but these two examples should demonstrate the point that God has thoughtfully planned His forthcoming actions. God is love. He is deliberate and purposeful in all of His actions. It is a shame that God has to implement His full cup principle and destroy a large portion of Earth to get mankind to listen to Him. Yet, the good news is that millions of people in every nation will listen. The Great Tribulation will ultimately produce two distinct groups of people. One group, the sheep, will consist of people with pure hearts who will exalt righteousness and love truth. The other group, the goats, will consist of people who will do anything to save themselves from suffering and death.

Because God is deliberate in everything He does, I call the seven trumpets and seven bowls designer judgments. God's plan for Earth and its inhabitants predates Creation, and His plan will be consummated soon. The Bible teaches "Intelligent Design:" Jesus created this world in six literal days and rested from His creative works on the seventh day. (Genesis 2:1-3) The Bible also teaches "Intelligent Demise:" Jesus will also destroy this creation over a course of 1,335 days. Nothing can stop Him once He starts the process.

4. **Some people believe the book of Revelation was written in chronological order.** Consider these two verses: **"When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets."** (Revelation 8:1,2)

Many people think these two verses are in chronological order. This is not the case. If we approach the book of Revelation with the presupposition that its contents were written in chronological order, we will become hopelessly confused. For reasons that were discussed in the chapter titled, "Getting Started with the Book of

Revelation,” we know the book of Revelation contains twelve prophecies. There is chronological order in Revelation, but this order is found *within each prophecy*. Remember, I use four rules as a basis for my understanding of apocalyptic prophecy. Specifically, Rule One of Apocalyptic Prophecy¹ states: “An apocalyptic prophecy has a beginning and ending point in time and the events occur *in their stated order*.”

If you are not technically inclined, you may wish to skip the following section and return to it after you read the rest of this chapter. I have elected to include this segment early in the story of the seven trumpets because you need to understand that references in more than one apocalyptic prophecy can tie to the same event.

Take a moment to consider Diagram 12.1. Notice that the six seals in Prophecy #1 and the six trumpets in Prophecy #3 are in chronological and numerical order.

Next, look at the three elements within Prophecy #2. The first element is the sealing of the 144,000, and by simple deduction, we know that

Chronological Order within Each Prophecy

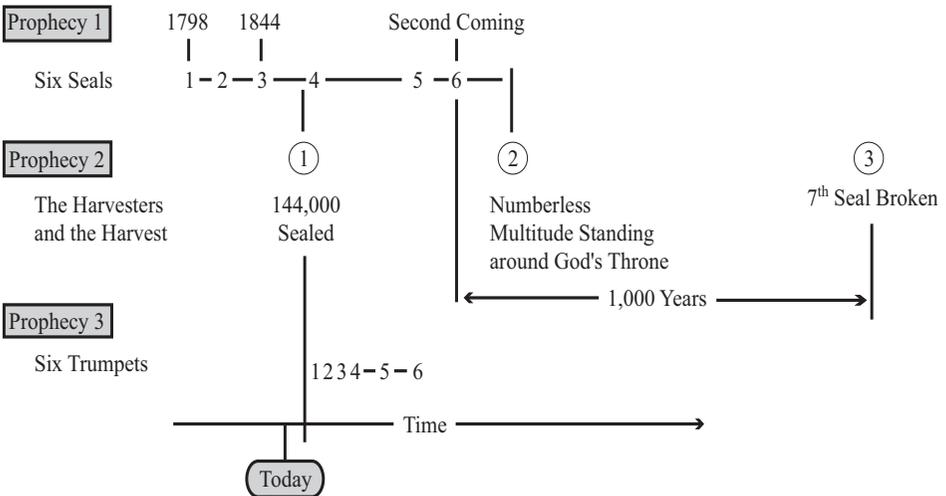


Diagram 12.1 (Not drawn to scale)

¹ If you would like to examine the four rules of interpretation used in this commentary, please review “Notes and Comments on Chapter 1,” pp. 21-30 in my book, *Daniel, Unlocked for the Final Generation*, or you can freely download this chapter at <http://www.wake-up.org/Daniel/DanChap1.htm>.

this sealing occurs *before* Earth is hurt and the Great Tribulation begins. The second element in Prophecy #2 is a scene that takes place in Heaven *after* the Second Coming: An innumerable number of people who went through the Great Tribulation are seen standing around God's throne. Finally, the third element in Prophecy #2 is a numbered element – it is the seventh seal. Carefully notice that the events within Prophecy #2 are in chronological order even though the seventh seal is the only numerical item in this prophecy.

At first, it might seem that the seventh seal in Prophecy #2 is disconnected from the six seals in Prophecy #1. God deliberately put the seventh seal at the end of Prophecy #2 so that we could accurately determine the timing of the seventh seal!

Notice how this works: Obviously, the seventh seal has to occur *after* the sixth seal (the sixth seal is the Second Coming). Then, because there is chronological order in Prophecy #2, we know that the seventh seal occurs *after* the numberless multitude are seen standing around God's throne. This also confirms the seventh seal occurs after the Second Coming. And, according to Revelation 20:12, the *Book of Life* is opened once – at the end of the 1,000 years. From our study on the seven seals, we know that the *Book of Life* is the “book” that was sealed with seven seals. Therefore, the breaking of the seventh seal on the *Book of Life* occurs at the end of the 1,000 years. There is no wiggle room on this conclusion because God put the twelve prophecies together in a very tight matrix. When we use valid rules of interpretation, there is harmony from the sum of all the parts!

The prophecies in both Daniel and Revelation have many elements that occur simultaneously. For example, in Revelation, the breaking of the fourth seal in Prophecy #1 (God's four judgments – sword, famine, plague, and wild beasts) and the sounding of the first trumpet in Prophecy #3 occur at the *same time*. In fact, the seven trumpets cause sword, famine, plague, and wild beasts to occur!

This next point is important, but few Bible students understand it. Rule One of apocalyptic prophecy forces *a new prophecy to begin whenever chronological order is broken*. This concept explains why Revelation 8:2 starts a new prophecy. In other words, the seven trumpets cannot be given to the seven angels *after* the seventh seal is broken and the 1,000 years have ended, even though both events are contained in the first two verses of Revelation 8. Rule One forces Revelation 8:2 to become the starting point of a new prophecy because Revelation 8:2 *does not chronologically follow* Revelation 8:1.

Whenever chronological order is broken, Rule One forces us to declare the ending point of the previous prophecy and the starting point of a new prophecy. It is a challenging, time consuming process to find the twelve prophecies in Revelation, but with God's help, we can identify the twelve prophecies. Blessed is the one who reads and understands the book of Revelation. (Revelation 1:3)

The Bottom Line

If a person does not properly understand the timing, nature, and purpose of the seven trumpets, he cannot understand Revelation's story. Ironically, most Christians do not appreciate the necessity of understanding the seven trumpets for three reasons: First, millions of Christians have been misled by the doctrine of a pretribulation rapture. Because these Christians believe they will not be on Earth during the seven trumpets, they are not especially concerned about them. Their attitude is, "Yes, the seven trumpets are interesting, but not critically important. As long as we are ready for the rapture, we have nothing to worry about." A second group of Christians have also been misled on the seven trumpets. They believe the seven trumpets occurred in the distant past, but interestingly, their attitude is similar to the first group. Their attitude is, "Yes, they are interesting if you are interested in history, but they are not critically important today. As long as we have a good relationship with Jesus, we have nothing to worry about." The last group of Christians scoff at the importance of Bible prophecy. Their attitude is, "Bible Prophecy is a nose of wax that people manipulate according to whim and bias. The Bible can be made to say anything. Bible prophecy has no bearing on my salvation. As long as I have a good relationship with Jesus, there is nothing to worry about." Even though all three Christian views are in opposition to each other, they produce the same attitude, "The seven trumpets are interesting, but they are nothing to worry about."

This indifference reminds me of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. **"The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'"** (Matthew 25:5,6) Christians have gone to sleep, but the first four trumpets will awaken them and many will suddenly discover that they have been deceived. Many will become angry and bitter toward God and whose fault will it be?

Just BEFORE the Seven Trumpets Begin

There is an unusual service that occurs in Heaven just before the seven trumpets begin. Once you understand the significance of this special

service, the judgments that follow will make a great deal of sense. As you investigate the seven trumpets, keep this thought in mind: God is love. This means that God's actions *are eternally consistent* with principles of love. The Father gave us Jesus because He "so loved the world" and Jesus willingly died on the cross because He "so loved the world." God's wrath against evil and degenerate behavior is motivated by His love for righteousness, fairness, and equity. Do not forget the flood in Noah's day. A "God of love" destroyed the *whole* world when a majority of people became hopelessly wicked. (Genesis 6:7) God's love for oncoming generations demanded action.

The full cup principle is based on love, and God's love is expressed through a perfect balance of justice and mercy. God hates to see individuals and nations self-destruct through degeneracy, rebellion, and sexual immorality. (Genesis 13:13) God is patient and longsuffering, not willing that anyone should perish. (2 Peter 3:9) We often forget that God – who sees the past, present, and future with the same clarity – loves oncoming generations just as much as He loves the present generation. Therefore, His love for oncoming generations moves Him to destroy the current generation so that the oncoming generation can be free of the degenerate and destructive behaviors that would be passed down to them. Remember, the sins of the fathers are passed down to the third and fourth generations! (Exodus 20:5)

Over time, sin multiplies, it metastasises like cancer cells. Sin penetrates society quickly and exponentially. Sin is like gravity. It creates a steady downward tug that eventually pulls everyone (especially the innocent and uninformed) into its deadly vortex. A new generation only gets a chance of having a better life when the old order is destroyed. Thus, it becomes necessary for a God of love to destroy degenerate groups of people when they pass the point of no return.

Innocent people sometimes perish when God destroys degenerate groups because God's wrath against a group of wicked people is not necessarily discriminating. For example, many little children were drowned in Noah's flood. Many good people were killed during King Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem. When God's wrath breaks out against a corporate body whose majority is beyond redemption, it is like the indiscriminate destruction caused by an atomic bomb. The loss of innocent life does not prohibit God from doing what needs to be done because (a) God knows that everyone on Earth dies sooner or later anyway, and (b) He has the power to resurrect every dead person. Remember, Jesus will judge each person individually. Jesus will decide each person's case accordingly. So, whether a child died in Noah's flood

or a person dies of illness, a crime, a tragic accident, or during some expression of God's wrath, the cause of death has nothing to do with one's eternal destiny. (Ecclesiastes 12:13,14, 2 Corinthians 5:10)

The Censer Comes Down

The story of the seven trumpets begins with Revelation 8:2. Take a few moments to get acquainted with this segment of the story: **“And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar [of Incense]. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand [and God granted the request of His saints]. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came ^apeals of thunder, ^brumblings, ^cflashes of lightning and ^dan earthquake. Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them. [A few days later.] The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came ^ehail and fire mixed with blood [mercy], 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 [including food crops] was burned up.”** (Revelation 8:2-7, insertions mine¹)

Five Physical Phenomena

Five small superscript numbers were inserted into the verses above. Each number identifies a fearful and spectacular event. These five events form a package and this “package of five events” will occur on *three separate occasions* during the Great Tribulation. The first package will occur at the beginning of the seven trumpets. The second package will occur at the end of the seven trumpets (Revelation 11:19) and the final package will occur at the end of the seven bowls (Revelation 16:18-21). The Bible does not say whether these events will transpire over a few hours or a few days. However, according to Rule Three of apocalyptic prophecy, we can be sure these five events will be

¹ I have found that one of the best ways to offer Bible commentary is to insert a few words or phrases into those portions of Scripture that are being discussed. This is *not* an attempt to translate nor change Scripture. Rather, it is an attempt to be as direct as possible. This technique often accelerates understanding. Therefore, you will find my words, notes, and phrases throughout this study enclosed in brackets [].

phenomenal! They are designed to bring the world to a halt. Everyone on Earth will be intimidated by these violent and powerful displays of nature. The whole world will witness these violent events *at the same time*.

Even though Revelation 8:5-7 does not explicitly say these five phenomena will be global events, they have to be understood as global events because:

1. The seven trumpets will affect the whole world.
2. The Great Tribulation will affect the whole world.
3. The seven trumpets will terminate world order as we presently know it. The seven trumpets will put the world on notice that Jesus Christ now rules over Earth as *Almighty God*.
4. These five phenomena will occur three times. The third package occurs at the Second Coming, which will be a global event. Since the Second Coming and the seven trumpets are global in nature, I believe it is safe to conclude that all three packages are global. These five events are designed to get worldwide attention at the same time.
5. God's wrath and offer of salvation will be global in nature. The story in the book of Revelation is universal, that is, the story is the same in every nation. Therefore, these five phenomena will occur *in the same way at the same time in every nation*.

Commentary

“And I saw the seven angels who stand before God and to them were given seven trumpets.” (Revelation 8:2)

The story of the seven trumpets begins with a simple statement. John saw seven angels standing before God – actually, Jesus Christ. Earlier, in our study on the seven seals, we found that Jesus ascended the throne as “Lord *God Almighty*” in 1798. (See also Revelation 11:17 where Jesus is called “Lord *God Almighty*.”) The angel’s *standing* posture before God’s throne indicates these particular angels have positions of highest authority. These seven angels are described throughout Revelation in different ways, such as the seven spirits of God, the seven angels of the seven churches, the seven angels who received the seven trumpets, and the seven angels who will eventually

pour out the seven bowls.

The Timing of Revelation 8:2

As a result of my study, I have concluded the seven angels were given the seven trumpets in the spring of 1994. Since this date is not explicitly declared nor predicted in Scripture, some people scoff at the suggestion that 1994 is prophetically important. To be fair, I agree that a certain amount of skepticism¹ is warranted, but the fact remains that the seven angels are given the seven trumpets at some point in time. When I ask people to put a biblically reasoned date-stamp on Revelation 8:2, the responses range from silence to avoidance. Some people have suggested the seven angels were given the seven trumpets at the cross, or when Jesus returned to Heaven, or at the end of the seventy weeks, or at the time of Noah's flood, or 1798, or 1844. Some people have even said, "It does not matter when they received the seven trumpets because if it did matter, God would have told us."

Nothing in Scripture explicitly dates Revelation 8:2. However, for those who would duck the dating of this verse, my response is simple: "There are seventeen prophecies and eighteen prophetic time periods in the books of Daniel and Revelation, and God has not declared a starting date for most of them. This silence does not mean that starting dates are unimportant or that starting dates cannot be determined. In fact, God's silence is an invitation to see if a solution date can be found!

Everyone wanting to date-stamp Revelation 8:2 faces a thorny problem. Here is the problem: The torment of the fifth trumpet lasts five months. (Revelation 9:5) Should these five months be regarded as five literal months or should they be translated (using a day for a year) as 150 years (thirty days per month times five months equals 150 days which translates into 150 years)? This question raises more questions: *If time is translated as a day for a year in apocalyptic prophecies, like the seventy weeks mentioned in Daniel 9:24, when does a day for a year translation begin? Does the day for a year translation ever end? If so, when?*

By God's grace, I believe that I stumbled upon the answer to this problem and this discovery produced Rule Four of apocalyptic prophecy. Rule Four states, "The presence or absence of the Jubilee Calendar

¹ Bible prophecy does not always explicitly state important dates, but through studying Bible prophecy, we can determine these dates. For example, 457 B.C., A.D. 30, 1798, and 1844 are not explicitly mentioned in Scripture, but these dates are very important. In another case, the date of Christ's birth was not announced in Scripture, but the wise men figured it out!

determines how God measures time.” In other words, when the Jubilee Calendar is operating, the day for a year translation occurs. A day is translated as a year. When the Jubilee Calendar is not operating and there is no translation, prophetic timing is to be understood as stated. Therefore, I have concluded that the seven angels received the seven trumpets in the spring of 1994, at the expiration of the Jubilee Calendar. (Please examine this matter further by reading the “Addendum” located at the end of this study.)

What Happens Next?

For the purpose of explaining Revelation 8:2-5, let us proceed under the assumption that the seven angels were given the seven trumpets in the spring of 1994. So, the four angels in Revelation 7:1-3 have been *waiting* to hurt Earth for several years. We know they are waiting because (a) the five phenomena described in Revelation 8:3-7 have not occurred at any time in history, and (b) the first four trumpet judgments have not yet fallen. Therefore, the four angels in Revelation 7 are patiently waiting for the service described in Revelation 8:3-5 to occur.

“Another angel [that is, not one of the seven angels], 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 [of Incense] before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel’s hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.” (Revelation 8:3-5, italics and insertions mine)

The golden altar in front of God’s throne is the Altar of Incense. We know this because the golden altar in the earthly temple was the Altar of Incense (Hebrews 9:3,4) and it was positioned before the Table of the Presence (Exodus 26:35; 40:5) which represented God’s throne.¹

Further, the bronze Altar of Burnt Offering was located in the outer court and it was covered with bronze. (Exodus 38:2) To understand the significance of the service conducted at the Altar of Incense in Heaven’s temple, we have to first understand how the Altar of Incense functioned in the earthly temple because the tabernacle Moses built was a copy and shadow of the *true temple* in Heaven. (Hebrews 8:1-5)

Four Prerequisites

¹ For further discussion on the Table of the Presence, see pages 185-189 in my book, *Jesus, The Alpha and The Omega*.

The special service in Revelation 8:3-5 marks the close of corporate mercy and the beginning of the Great Tribulation. You need to understand and synthesize four prerequisites to understand why this service is conducted at the Altar of Incense:

1. Corporate Mercy

Before sin began, God commanded Adam and Eve to obey this law: **“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.’”** (Genesis 2:16,17, KJV)

Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. Neither person *defiantly* sinned against God, although they did sin. On the basis of love for Adam and Eve *and their future offspring*, Jesus interceded. God’s law demanded immediate death, but instead of killing the guilty pair, Jesus went to the Father and offered to die – not only in their place, but on behalf of all of their future offspring. The Father consented and on that very day, Jesus became “subject” to the will of the Father for the next 6,000 years. (Psalm 2:7-12, John 6:38, Hebrews 5:4-7) The emphatic point is that Adam and Eve were not immediately executed. Jesus mediated a “stay of execution” and Jesus has been holding back God’s wrath for 6,000 years. Many people do not understand this intercession. Even worse, they do not know that the intercession will soon end.

Jesus intercedes for sinners on two levels, the individual level and the corporate level. Both levels are separate, distinct, and important to understand. For example, corporately speaking, the world became corrupt in Noah’s day. When a majority of the antediluvians grieved away the Holy Spirit, the world went beyond the possibility of repentance. Jesus told Noah that since a majority of mankind was beyond redemption, He was going to destroy the world in 120 years. Jesus commanded Noah to build an ark and Noah went to work. Noah informed the world of God’s coming wrath and Noah encouraged people to enter the ark and be saved. When the appointed time arrived, the flood came and destroyed *all* but eight people. Even though God was angry with the *corporate* behavior of mankind, He extended mercy to *individuals* by offering refuge in Noah’s ark.

When it comes to understanding God’s goodness and grace, it is important to distinguish between corporate mercy and mercy for individuals. God can be angry with a nation like Israel and at the same time be happy with individuals like Daniel. Consider this: There were

two altars in the wilderness tabernacle. Individuals used the bronze Altar of Burnt Offering (located in the courtyard). Families brought their sin offerings to the bronze Altar of Burnt Offering each day. However, the golden Altar of Incense (located inside the tabernacle) was only used for *corporate* atonement. (Leviticus 4) Every evening and morning, priests offered atonement for the nation of Israel on the golden altar. Because there was continual atonement, sinners were not immediately executed when they sinned!

Notice how corporate grace aligns with grace and mercy for individuals. If an individual sinned in July and his family's turn at the Altar of Burnt Offering came in November (services at the Altar of Burnt Offering were rotated monthly according to tribe), the sinner knew that his death would be "stayed" because corporate intercession was made every evening and morning. In other words, corporate intercession provided a period of grace for individuals. This grace gave sinners time to make atonement if they wanted to make atonement.

Because Jesus has been corporately interceding for the whole world for the past 6,000 years, life on Earth has continued for the offspring of Adam and Eve. God's corporate grace has given billions of sinful individuals a chance to discover their need of a Savior. Once a person discovers Jesus as his Savior, he then realizes the wonderful corporate grace that was extended to him while he was in darkness. Out of joy and thanksgiving and praising God for the grace that He has provided, the sinner repents of his sins and offers himself as a living sacrifice unto the Lord.

At times, God dealt with Israel corporately, as though the whole nation was an individual. For example, God imposed the Babylonian captivity on everyone in Israel when a majority in Israel became hopelessly defiant and rebellious. Even though God punished the nation as one man, there were some individuals who pleased God, men like Ezekiel, Daniel, and Daniel's three friends. Nevertheless, God raised up a destroyer, King Nebuchadnezzar, to destroy Jerusalem and His temple. Of course, the Bible clearly indicates that God deals with individuals, too. You may remember the punishment of Achan (Joshua 7), Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Numbers 16), and King David who was also punished for having an affair with Bathsheba. (2 Samuel 11). Individual consequences were not limited to Old Testament characters. God also punished Ananias and Sapphira for their rebellion against Him. (Acts 5)

Summarizing, the first thing that we need to remember about the special service at the Altar of Incense in Revelation 8:3-5 is that the

Altar of Incense concerns corporate intercession. *The casting down of the censer indicates the cessation of corporate intercession.* When the censer is cast down, God's destructive wrath will be released throughout Earth. This is why the seven trumpets occur after the censer is thrown down. God's corporate wrath begins when corporate mercy ends.

2. The Role of Prayers and 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 dressed in their finest clothes are a stench in God's nostrils. This stench is not body odor, but our unrighteousness. God's heart is totally selfless and pure, and our hearts are just the opposite, totally selfish and impure. Sin cannot be washed away with water. Pilate did not remove his guilt in the death of Jesus by washing his hands. (Matthew 27:24) To teach Israel that even in their finest clothes, their hearts were still a stench in God's nostrils, God required the offering of a special fragrant incense each evening and each morning.

"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Take fragrant spices – gum resin, onycha and galbanum – and pure frankincense, all in equal amounts, and make a fragrant blend of incense, the work of a perfumer. It is to be salted and pure and sacred. 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. Do not make any incense with this formula for yourselves; consider it holy to the Lord. Whoever makes any like it to enjoy its fragrance must be cut off from his people.' " (Exodus 30:34-38)

The Jews gathered around the temple when evening and morning services were offered because they reasoned that their petitions would be more favorably presented if they ascended with the sweet fragrance of holy incense. Think about this: If you petitioned a great king to grant a very important request, obviously a fragrant atmosphere would be more favorable than a smelly one! The practice of burning incense with corporate offerings explains why the angel in Revelation 8:3-5 was given much incense to burn on the Altar of Incense. God's people on Earth (a dear group of stinkers) will be desperately praying for God's help when Revelation 8:3-5 occurs, and the angel will add much incense on the Altar to "sweeten" their petitions – and the Lord will not disappoint.

3. The Use of Censers

In Bible times, small metal pans or censers were used to carry fire from one place to another. Since there were no matches or butane lighters, it was a lot easier to carry fire around than to start a fire. (Genesis 22:6) Thus, censers were rather common household devices in Bible times. Censers were also used in the temple for the purpose of carrying fire *during atonement services*. Notice how a censer of burning coals was used on the Day of Atonement: **“He [the high priest] is to take a censer full of burning coals from the altar before the Lord [the Altar of Incense] and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense and take them behind the curtain. He is to put the incense on the fire before the Lord, and the smoke of the incense will conceal the atonement cover** [The atonement cover was a removeable lid on the golden box that held the Ten Commandments. Two figurines of angels were attached to this lid and God’s glory radiated as a brilliant light from between these two angels. This light radiated] **above the Testimony** [the Ten Commandments are often called “the Testimony” in the Old Testament and the smoke from the incense protected the priest from this brilliant light], **so that he will not die.”** (Leviticus 16:12,13, insertions mine)

The fire on the bronze Altar of Burnt Offering in the courtyard burned continuously. (Leviticus 6:13) Priests sustained this fire around the clock. However, there is no evidence in the Bible that the fire on the golden Altar of Incense was provided or sustained by man. I understand that God Himself ignited and sustained the fire on the Altar of Incense and this made that fire *holy* or set apart. In other words, the fire on the Altar of Incense was God-made and the fire that burned on the Altar of Burnt Offering was man-made. I mention this point for two reasons. First, the “strange” fire that Aaron’s two sons, Nadab and Abihu, used was most likely taken from the Altar of Burnt Offering. Evidently, they came before the Lord with man-made or “unholy” fire to burn incense. This action was a defiant sin and an insult to God. God responded to their impudence by killing them. (Leviticus 10:1,2) Second, I believe that God ignited and sustained the fire on the Altar of Incense because this perpetual burning fire represents Jesus’ unilateral and perpetual intercession for humanity. In other words, corporate grace has nothing to do with the efforts or desires of mankind. Corporate intercession is God’s gift to all sinners. The perpetual burning fire on the Altar of Incense represents His grace, His perpetual love for us that never goes out.

Summarizing, the priests used fire in the temple services and carried it in censers to burn incense. The casting down of the censer indicates the atonement service conducted on the Altar of Incense is finished. Since the Altar of Incense is limited to matters of corporate mercy, the casting down of the censer indicates the end of corporate mercy.

4. The Termination of the Daily

There is one more topic that will secure the conclusion that Revelation 8:3-5 marks the end of corporate mercy. Daniel 12:11,12 says, **“From the time that the daily [service] sacrifice¹ is abolished [in Heaven] and the abomination that causes desolation is set up [This abomination that causes desolation points forward to a universal death decree that will be set up to kill all of God’s saints on the 1290th day of the Great Tribulation.²], there will be 1,290 days. Blessed is the one who waits for [patiently endures] and reaches the end of the 1,335 days [allotted for the Great Tribulation].”** (Insertions and strikethrough mine)

The tabernacle on Earth was a copy and shadow of Heaven’s temple. According to Hebrews 8:1-5, Jesus serves in Heaven’s *true tabernacle* as our High Priest. This wonderful truth enables us to understand things about services in Heaven’s temple that would be impossible to otherwise understand. For example, since there was a daily service in the earthly temple, there must also be a daily service in Heaven’s temple. The daily service in the earthly temple consisted of two routines. The first routine centered around corporate atonement. Every evening and morning, the priests presented an atonement offering before the Lord on the Altar of Incense. The priests conducted a second routine at the Altar of Burnt Offering. During daylight hours, people brought their sin offerings to the Altar of Burnt Offering. Both services were considered perpetual, continual or “daily.”

The book of Daniel mentions “the abomination that causes desolation” two times. The first mention points to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. (Daniel 11:31, Matthew 24:15) The second mention (Daniel 12:11) points to a daily service that will end in Heaven’s temple and 1,290 days later, a universal death decree will be imposed on God’s saints. How do we know that Daniel 12:11 is speaking about the daily service that occurs at the Altar of Incense in Heaven’s temple?

¹ The word “sacrifice” in verse 11 is not in the Hebrew text. It is supplied by well-meaning translators. However, the word “sacrifice” is misleading. A better choice would have been the word “service.”

² See my book, *Daniel Unlocked for the Final Generation*, pages 228-233.

Rule Three of apocalyptic prophecy further requires that we examine the context. The context in Daniel 12 clearly concerns the end of time. Consider the first two verses in chapter 12: **“At that time Michael [Jesus], the great prince who protects your people, will arise** [indicating that His mediation for mankind has been completed. He will stand up – a position that kings take when moved by indignation]. **There will be a time of distress** [the seven last plagues – the seven bowls] **such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people** [who are alive] – **everyone whose name is found written in the book** [of Life] – **will be delivered** [from further martyrdom]. [Then, at the Second Coming] **Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others** [including those who participated in the crucifixion of Jesus¹ will be raised] **to shame and everlasting contempt.”** (Daniel 12:1,2, insertions mine)

Now that we know the context in Daniel 12 is the end of days and the Second Coming, consider the final words in Daniel 12: **“He [Gabriel] replied,** [Daniel, you have been shown things about the distant future.] **Go your way** [go about your business], **Daniel, because the words** [of this prophecy] **are closed up and sealed until the time of the end.** [There will be many difficult centuries for the saints.] **Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand** [these visions], **but those who are wise will understand** [how these words apply to them]. **From the time that the daily** [service in Heaven] **sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation** [a universal death decree for God’s people] **is set up, there will be 1,290 days. Blessed is the one who** [patiently] **waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days** [for he will see Jesus coming in clouds of glory without seeing death]. **As for you [Daniel], go your way till the end** [of your life]. **You will rest** [with your fathers in death], **and then at the end of the [1,335] days you will rise** [with all of God’s saints] **to receive your allotted inheritance.’**” (Daniel 12:9-12, insertions mine)

Because the context in Daniel 12 is the end of the age, it should be rather easy to see that “the daily” in verse 11 points to an event that is 1,335 days before the Second Coming. Moreover, if there was a daily service on Earth at the Altar of Incense, then there has to be a daily service in Heaven at the Altar of Incense because services in the earthly

¹ See Revelation 1:7 and Matthew 26:64.

temple parallels services in Heaven's temple. We already know that corporate mercy will end when the censer is cast down and God's wrath (the seven trumpets) will follow, therefore, the timing of the daily in Daniel 12:11 is the same as the casting down of the censer in Revelation 8:3-5.

Intermediate Summary

Thus far, we have found that the Altar of Incense concerns the administration of corporate mercy. The casting down of the censer indicates the end of atonement at this altar, that is, the end of corporate grace for the world. After corporate grace is terminated, the four angels will sound the first four trumpets which will harm the Earth. God's wrath will break out on the whole world. There will be physical phenomena announcing God's wrath. These physical phenomena will occur simultaneously all over the world. There will be a global earthquake. The whole world will be halted, unexpectedly arrested by awesome and violent displays of nature. Mankind will be put on notice with these physical phenomena that God's anger cannot be contained any longer. A few hours, or perhaps days, after the censer is cast down, the first trumpet will sound and a firestorm of burning hail will fall from the sky and burn up one-third of Earth. There is perfect harmony in the sum of all the parts!

Praying Saints

Returning to verse 3: **“Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar [of Incense]. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of *all* the saints, on the golden altar [that stands] before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints [their petitions], went up before God [a very sweet aroma filled the court] from the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.”** (Revelation 8:3-5, insertions and italics mine)

Notice the chronological sequence of events. Verse 3 says that *all* of God's saints are praying for something. Then, in verse 4 the angel presents their petitions to God, and in verse 5, God favorably responds to the petitions of His saints by commanding the angel¹ at the altar to cast down the censer.

¹ To be proper, this angel serves as a priest to Jesus. Jesus alone, as our High Priest, authorizes the casting down of the censer. Given the nature of this special service, it does not seem likely that an angel would presume to throw the censer down of his own accord.

The Bible says that “**all**” of the saints (God’s children everywhere) are petitioning God when Revelation 8:3-5 occurs. The *only* thing that could move *all* of God’s children at the *same* time, as religiously diverse as we are, is a global crisis. What global crisis, after 1994, but prior to the end of corporate grace, would cause Jesus to issue a command to cast down the censer?

Nuclear War?

There is one possibility that could cause *all* of God’s saints to pray for the same thing at the same time, namely, nuclear war. Here is a possible scenario. One day, simmering hostilities could erupt and quickly escalate into a nuclear exchange. Tens of millions could die in this war. This war could affect our struggling global economy and immediately affect the distribution of oil, food, clothing, building materials, and commerce of all kinds. If nations joined in, this war could quickly become a fearful event for most everyone on Earth. If such a war occurred – and the global consequences would be far reaching – the whole world would cry out (demand) “peace and safety.” In other words, a nuclear exchange could bring *all* of God’s people to the point of praying for God’s intervention.

Paul wrote: **“While people are [frantically] saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction [from God] will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.”** (1 Thessalonians 5:3,4, insertions mine)

There is no reason to be surprised about sudden destruction coming from God if we allow Revelation 8 to speak. We can be sure of two things. First, it’s only a matter of time until there is a nuclear exchange. Second, when a nuclear exchange occurs, human efforts will be made to stop the war for the sake of *global* “peace and safety.” The problem is that the speed of intercontinental missiles is measured in seconds, but getting nations to negotiate peace can take years. Besides, once a nation’s sovereignty and survival is threatened by nuclear bombs, what would be the point of any nation using restraint against such an enemy? The maxim for nuclear war is simple: “Annihilate or be annihilated.”

Suppose an angel rushes to the Altar of Incense after a nuclear exchange, and together with the petitions of *all* the saints, he puts much incense on the coals of the altar and a sweet fragrance ascends

before God's throne. As Almighty God, Jesus answers the prayers of His saints by stepping into the din of war with overwhelming power and authority. Jesus sends physical manifestations that are so magnificent and awesome that the war actually stops! He who calmed the storm on Galilee calms this war. Then, the first trumpet sounds and a hailstorm of burning meteors burn up a third of Earth. The nations of Earth suddenly discover that man's nuclear bombs are no match for "the wrath of the Lion from the tribe of Judah." Sudden destruction from God will miniaturize man's nuclear exchanges. The destructive power of Jesus will dwarf anything that mankind has to offer. Suddenly, man's biggest problem is not nation against nation, it is a whole world facing the wrath of one God!

Summary on Revelation 8:2-5

By now, you should understand that (a) there were two altars in the earthly temple because there are two levels of atoning grace, corporate and individual, (b) incense was used each evening and morning on the Altar of Incense to mask the stench of sin and sinners, (c) censers were used during the atonement services to carry fire, and (d) the termination of *daily* services at the Altar of Incense in Heaven's temple is dated 1,335 days before the Second Coming. When we align these four topics with the events described in Revelation 8:3-5, it is safe to conclude that Revelation 8:3-5 describes the end of corporate mercy because *this was the only form of atonement offered on the earthly Altar of Incense*. Moreover, the punitive judgments (the seven trumpets) that follow the casting down of the censer perfectly align with this conclusion. When corporate grace ends, corporate wrath begins.

Just before the censer is cast down, all of God's saints will be praying for divine help. A nuclear exchange could move all of God's people to pray for peace. The point here is that Jesus responds to the prayers of the saints by terminating the daily service at the Altar of Incense. He will command the angel to cast down the censer. After the censer is cast down, the Bible continues the sequence saying, "**Then the seven angels who had [been waiting with] the seven trumpets [since 1994] prepared to sound them.**" (Revelation 8:6, insertions mine)

The First Four Trumpets

The first four trumpets will come in a group of four rapid-fire judgments. I understand that these four judgments could fall over a period of about sixty days. These four judgments will occur in their stated order. Four distinctive blows will produce unimaginable death

and destruction. They will change the thinking and priorities of mankind overnight. The death and destruction left in their wake will be incalculable, and amazingly, all of this global upheaval will be caused by a team of only four angels! It is a gross understatement to say the whole world will be in shambles by the time the fourth trumpet judgment has been executed.

If actions speak louder than words, the first four trumpets will speak volumes. Jesus has much to say to this diverse world. To get everyone's attention, He will send a display of power and destruction that will silence the din of war and the defiance of skeptics. Keep in mind that Jesus' display of power and destruction will not be a temper tantrum. Jesus will not smash and trash the world in a random way. His display of wrath is carefully designed to accomplish many objectives and one of them is to prompt a unified response from mankind.

Fire and Water

The first two trumpets will be judgments of fire and water. The first judgment will come as a fire storm of burning hail. Jesus will rain down white hot meteors on notoriously wicked places and incinerate them (just as He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah). The second judgment will be an asteroid impact in an ocean. The resulting tsunami will destroy *thousands* of coastal cities. It appears that God uses the fire of the first trumpet to sterilize wicked cities that cannot be destroyed by water, and then uses the water of the second trumpet to wash away wicked cities whose cup of iniquity is overflowing.

The third judgment will be an asteroid impact on a continent that is beyond redemption. This huge impact will compromise geologic strata for thousands of square miles. Underground aquifers will become contaminated with human waste and toxic garbage. Wells and springs will produce poisoned water and millions of thirsty people will drink the poisonous water and die. The fourth trumpet will be a period of darkness. The Bible does not explain the cause of darkness, but it could easily be caused by hundreds of simultaneous volcano eruptions. If the Pacific "ring of fire" belched enough ejecta into the atmosphere, the jet stream could easily blanket the *middle third* of Earth with enough soot and debris to darken the Sun, moon, and stars. If this darkness lasts for a few weeks, agricultural crops would not produce food. Global winter and famine would quickly follow.

The first four trumpets will fall upon notably wicked *places* for two reasons. First, the last three trumpets are directed at wicked *people*.

This is why they are called three “woes” or curses. (Revelation 8:13)
 Second, Jesus wants the survivors of the first four trumpets to realize that His judgments are not random episodes of nature’s violence. Jesus wants the survivors to realize that these destructive events are deliberate manifestations of God’s wrath. In other words, the wholesale destruction of *notably wicked places* within sixty days will put the whole world on notice that there really is a living God and He is very angry with man’s degenerate behavior. Some scientists will argue that the geological history of Earth supports catastrophic events at predictable intervals every million years or so, and calamities like these have happened before. However, the first four trumpets will discredit and silence science. Scientists will not be able to explain how notably wicked places all over the world became divine targets of destruction.

The First Trumpet

“The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood [Hail and fire mixed with blood indicates this judgment is mixed with mercy. The atoning blood of Jesus limits the scope of this destructive judgment to one-third of the world.], **and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth** [the Greek word for earth, *ge* means land] **was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass** [the Greek word for grass, *chortos* includes vegetation and crops] **was burned up.** [The repetitive use of one-third indicates that mercy is mixed in with God’s wrath.] (Revelation 8:7, insertions mine)

The Second Trumpet

The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain [perhaps a mile or more in diameter], **all ablaze, was thrown into the sea.** [The asteroid was so hot that it made the water anoxic and] **A third of the sea turned into** [the color of] **blood** [caused by the rapid growth of red algae which thrives in anoxic water], **a third of the living creatures in the sea died** [because the water is oxygen deficient and what little oxygen is present is consumed by red algae], **and a third of the ships were destroyed** [by the huge tsunami resulting from the impact]. (Revelation 8:8,9, insertions mine)

The Third Trumpet

The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star [a second asteroid, perhaps a mile or more in diameter], **blazing like a torch** [as streams of fire trailed behind the fireball], **fell from the sky** [and impacted Earth. The result of this impact will be noticed] **on a third**

of the rivers and on the springs of water – the name of the star is Wormwood [poisoned waters]. A third of the waters turned bitter [poisonous], and many people [agonizing from thirst] died from [drinking] the waters that had become bitter. (Revelation 8:10,11, insertions mine)

The Fourth Trumpet

The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and [hundreds of huge volcanos erupted] a third of the sun [’s light] 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. [The middle third of Earth – where ninety percent of its population lives – became dark.] (Revelation 8:12, insertions mine)

More Trumpets Coming!

As I watched, I heard an eagle [this eagle is one of the four living creatures, it has the face of an eagle and it oversees the destruction of the fourth seal - Revelation 4:7, 6:7,8] that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: [“Get ready for three greater curses.”] ‘Woe! Woe! Woe [cursed, cursed, cursed] to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!’ ” (Revelation 8:13, insertions mine)

Are These Judgments Literal or Symbolic?

Did you notice that each trumpet judgment produces a *literal* result? For example, in verse 7, fire comes down from the sky and *burns* up a third of the trees and vegetation. In verse 9, a third of the *ships sink* after a great mountain impacts the sea. In verse 11, *people die* from drinking poisoned water after a blazing star impacts Earth. These events are consistent with the laws of physics, so it is possible the first four trumpets are literal descriptions of literal events. In other words, what else would fire, trees, and vegetation symbolize in the first trumpet if not fire, trees, and vegetation? What else *sinks* real ships and causes *real* people to die if not two great asteroid impacts? For that matter, what do the sea creatures and people drinking poisonous water represent in verse 11 if not *real* sea creatures and *real* people? What else could the sun, moon, and stars represent in verse 12 if not the sun, moon, and stars that are normally visible?

When it comes to interpreting apocalyptic prophecy, many pastors and scholars do not understand the necessity of using valid rules of interpretation. *When valid rules are not used, one cannot study the*

book of Revelation and arrive at its intended meaning. This oversight has led many scholars to assert that the seven trumpets are symbols because they believe “the whole book of Revelation is a book of symbolism.” If we evaluate the core of this argument, it is just another way of saying, “No one really knows what Revelation means.” For hundreds of years this tactic has enabled so-called experts to spin fancy interpretations that have little or nothing to do with the intended meaning.

If the book of Revelation forever remains a book of symbolism, we face two insurmountable problems. First, what kind of language would God have to use if He wanted mankind to regard the fire, trees, and vegetation in the first trumpet as literal fire, trees, and vegetation? What words would God have to use if He wanted us to understand that during the third trumpet desperate people will drink poisoned water out of rivers and springs and die? If God wants the world to know that the first four trumpets are literal events, what would He have to say? We know that the four phenomena (peals of thunder, rumblings, lightning, and the earthquake) that precede the fiery hail of the first trumpet are literal, and we can see that the first four trumpets are consistent with the laws of physics, so treating the first four trumpets as symbols is not a valid argument.

If the first four trumpets are in fact symbolic descriptions of things other than what they say, where are these symbols defined? When a prophetic element is deemed symbolic, human beings are not free to interpret symbols according to their imagination. There must be *relevant Bible texts* to define the symbol, otherwise, the Bible cannot speak for itself. According to Rule Three, every time God *creates a symbol in apocalyptic prophecy*, God Himself defines *that* symbol. This simple process enables the Bible to speak for itself, that is, without an interpreter (pastor or scholar).

Consider two examples. A great prostitute is introduced in Revelation 17:1 and she is defined a few verses later (verse 18) as “the great city” that will rule over the kings of Earth. The seven stars in Revelation 1:16 are defined a few verses later (verse 20) as “the seven angels of the seven churches.” These two examples show how *relevant texts* interpret symbols. When we follow valid rules of interpretation, we are not at liberty to go rummaging through the Bible to find a disconnected verse that we can apply to something that we want to call a symbol. When God wants something understood as a symbol, *He always defines the symbol by declaring the meaning of the symbol in a relevant text.* Rule

Three of apocalyptic prophecy says, “Apocalyptic language can be literal, symbolic, or analogous. To reach the intended meaning of an apocalyptic prophecy, the student must consider (a) the context, (b) the use of parallel language in the Bible, and (c) relevant texts that define the symbol if an element is thought to be symbolic.” If we follow this simple rule (along with the other three), we will avoid reaching conclusions that have nothing to do with the intended meaning.

Calling the first four judgments “symbolic” is unwarranted. God has described the seven trumpets with language that makes perfect sense once you understand the full cup principle, God’s use of vocabulary, and the end of corporate mercy. Everyone on Earth will see and experience the first four trumpets when they fall. They will be very literal and very harmful.

Jesus Spares Two-thirds

Did you notice the repetitive use of thirds in the first four trumpets? The Bible says a third of the trees were burned up, a third of the ships sank, and a third of the day was without light. “One-third” is mentioned twelve times in the seven trumpets! This repetition is deliberate and important because Jesus assures us a dozen times in the seven trumpets that He is a generous King. To understand the ancient practice of sparing one-third and destroying two-thirds, we have to examine some passages from the Old Testament.

During Old Testament times, if a conquering king felt that grace was merited or that grace was politically expedient, he would spare one-third of his enemies after defeating them. Notice this text: **“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 [paid their taxes].”** (2 Samuel 8:2, insertion mine)

King David was as generous as he was wise. He spared one-third of the Moabites for two *redemptive* reasons. First, he felt the surviving Moabites might have a change of mind and gladly pay their tribute [taxes] if he spared their lives. (Isn’t it amazing what people can do when motivated by gratitude?) Second, David did not want to destroy his tax base. David knew that in years to come, the Moabites would recover from this war and repopulate. Their future taxes would mean additional income for Israel’s treasury! So, David spared “a third” of the Moabites. Now that you understand why ancient kings sometimes

spared one-third of their enemies, notice that Jesus followed this principle when He destroyed Jerusalem during the days of Nebuchadnezzar:

“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. *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.*”
(Ezekiel 5:11,12, italics mine)

This last text is another confirmation of the ancient custom of sparing one-third and destroying two-thirds:

“‘In the whole land,’ declares the Lord, ‘two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it.’”
(Zechariah 13:8)

Now that we have surveyed the ancient custom of sparing one-third and destroying two-thirds, the process of destroying one-third in Revelation should make sense. This repetitive language tells us the seven trumpets are *redemptive* in nature. The seven trumpets will be mixed with mercy (remember, atonement blood was mixed with the fire that was cast down upon Earth). Instead of destroying two-thirds of everything, the Lord restrains Himself by only destroying one-third. In other words, Jesus is “double generous!” Of course, very few people will think that Jesus is double generous when He destroys one-third of everything on Earth, but man’s ignorance has no bearing on God’s actions. Man learns from God, not the other way around. If Jesus destroyed two-thirds of everything during the seven trumpets, His wrath would be justified in the eyes of watching angels because corporately speaking, Earth today is very similar to Earth in Noah’s day – beyond corporate redemption.

Sixty Days?

Earlier, I indicated that the first four trumpet judgments will produce death and destruction on a biblical scale that exceeds human calculation. These four judgments will ruin Earth to the extent that recovery will be impossible. I also indicated that the first four trumpets will occur during a period of about sixty days. Even though the Bible does not explicitly declare the timing of the first four trumpets, there is some indication they will happen in a rapid-fire sequence after the

censer is cast down. Please consider the following:

The Bible predicts that mankind will quickly respond to the first four trumpets by setting up a **crisis government called “Babylon.”** Of course, world leaders will not call their new creation “Babylon.” The Bible calls this coming government “Babylon” because its behavior will parallel the ancient kingdom of Babylon, **both in arrogance and ignorance.** The Bible also indicates Babylon will persecute God’s saints for forty-two months. (Revelation 13:5) Because the Great Tribulation will last approximately forty-five months (1,335 days, Daniel 12:11,12), Babylon has to form within ninety days after the Great Tribulation begins in order to persecute the saints for forty-two months (forty-five months minus forty-two months leaves ninety days). Since Babylon has to begin persecuting the saints within ninety days after the censer is cast down, this suggests that the first four trumpets will come in a rapid-fire sequence. Here is why:

1. A rapid-fire sequence of judgments on notably wicked places will silence the argument that these horrific events were random acts of nature. If the first four trumpets were months apart, these judgments could be interpreted as random acts of nature and the argument favoring a random string of “natural disasters” would be difficult to silence. Moreover, if the first four trumpets were months apart, nothing else could move diverse religions and nations to unite and form Babylon so that the persecution of God’s people all over the world can begin within ninety days.
2. If the first four trumpets were months apart, it would be impossible to get people to thoughtfully consider the gospel presented by the 144,000. (The 144,000 will begin their work on the day the censer is cast down.) Until religious paradigms are shattered and a theological vacuum is created, people will not listen to a gospel that is contrary to their current beliefs. If the first four trumpets do fall within a short period on notably wicked places, this would force reasoning people to admit that (a) God is on the warpath against wickedness, and (b) something must be done quickly to appease God or He may destroy everyone.
3. If the first four trumpets occurred in a rapid-fire sequence, the resulting shock and awe would totally overwhelm the whole world. Panic and trembling would be so great that a war involving nuclear exchanges would end. Panic and fear of “The Living God” would bring world leaders (religious and political) into a humble union. United by terror and motivated by fear, they would move *quickly* to

appease God. *Man’s fear of more wrath explains the sudden formation of Babylon.* Everyone on Earth will conclude that God is angry. Of course, extreme circumstances require desperate solutions, and the Bible predicts that man’s solution to appeasing God’s wrath will be extreme (otherwise unthinkable).

When these factors are combined and mathematically aligned, it is reasonable to conclude that the first four trumpets will occur within ninety days. Furthermore, it seems likely that Babylon’s persecution could begin as early as the sixty-fourth day of the Great Tribulation. Evidently, Babylon forms during the darkness of the fourth trumpet, and Babylon’s leaders will humbly, logically, and out of necessity, move quickly to do everything possible to appease God by reversing man’s degeneracy. However, in their efforts to do good, the leaders of Babylon will end up doing evil – persecuting God’s saints for forty-two months.

Even though we have not discussed and aligned all of the time periods mentioned in the book of Revelation, I hope you will consider the data presented in Diagram 12.2. As this commentary progresses through the book of Revelation, it should become increasingly clear that God has left very little wiggle room for moving things around in the book of Revelation once all the prophecies are put on the table. For now, this simple chart should give a basic understanding of where this commentary is headed.

Timing Considerations

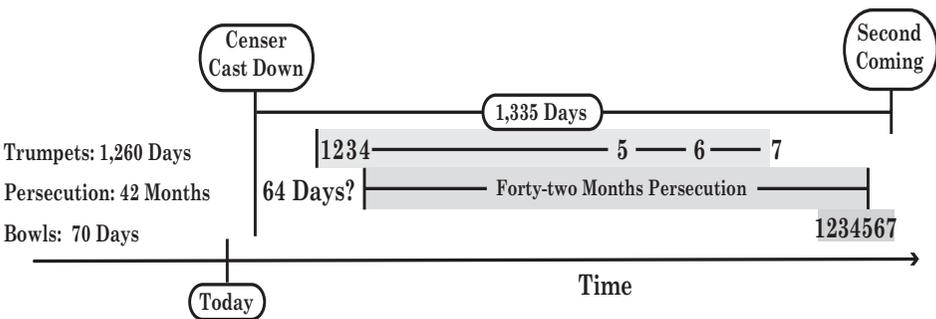


Diagram 12.2 (not drawn to scale)

The Last Three Trumpets

“Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the Earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!”
(Revelation 8:13)

The first four trumpets will destroy notoriously wicked places all over the world and will cause twenty-five percent of the world’s population to die. Since the first four trumpets will be utterly destructive, you might expect the last three trumpets to be more of the same. Actually, the last three trumpets are quite different from the first four. The first four trumpets will awaken billions of people. They will hear a powerful message and many of them will thoughtfully consider a gospel that is totally contrary to what they presently believe. Since Jesus is not willing that anyone should perish, the last three trumpets can be regarded as a second attempt to move stubborn and rebellious people toward the right choice. The people of Earth will literally see demons with unvarnished clarity. Once this revelation occurs, a few will “see the light” and embrace the gospel of Jesus. When God has done everything possible to demonstrate right from wrong, there is nothing more He can do to save those who choose to do wrong.

The fifth trumpet marks the physical appearing of Lucifer. Lucifer is the dreaded Antichrist. He is the embodiment of evil. In an attempt to mimic Christ’s return, he will arise out of the Abyss to descend from the sky with 200,000,000 evil angels. (Revelation 9:3,16) He will appear as a most impressive, glorious being of light. (2 Corinthians 11:14) The devil will claim to be Almighty God and he will prove his assumed identity by performing incredible miracles at will. (Revelation 13:13,14) He will deceive billions of people and his demons will subdue anyone who stands in opposition to his presumed authority with searing pain. (Those who have already received the seal of God will not be harmed. Revelation 9:4)

The sixth trumpet will be a world war. Lucifer will initiate this war. In the process, he will kill a third of mankind in order to take control of Earth and establish a “theocracy.” The devil will abolish the religions and governments of the world and will establish ten kings as “taskmasters.” The devil will be ruthless and victorious in his efforts to conquer the world. For a short time, Lucifer will appear to reign over the whole world as “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

The seventh trumpet marks the end of God’s grace for individuals and the beginning of the seven bowls. The seven bowls will last seventy

days. The world and all of the surviving wicked will be destroyed by the end of the seventh bowl. (The Second Coming occurs at the end of the seventh bowl.)

Before we examine the last three trumpets in detail, you need to be aware of several developments that will transpire between the fourth and fifth trumpets. The time between the beginning of persecution in the fourth trumpet and the fifth trumpet will be approximately 826 days (about 27.5 months). Although Babylon will be studied in greater detail in a later chapter titled “The Four Beasts of Revelation,” you need to understand a few things about Babylon and its mission in order to appreciate the significance of the fifth trumpet.

What is Babylon?

Babylon is represented in Revelation 13:1-8 as a leopard-like monster that will rise out of the sea. Babylon represents man’s response to God’s wrath. Babylon will be a religious government with a simple objective: Babylon will attempt to appease God so that His wrath will cease. The “sea” from which Babylon will rise represents “**peoples, multitudes, nations and languages.**” (Revelation 17:15) In other words, Babylon will arise from *within* the nations of the world. After the first four trumpets turn the world upside down, the political leaders of the world will humbly submit to the authority of Babylon. The Bible predicts this amazing turnover with these words: “. . . **And he** [Babylon, the leopard-like beast] **was given** [the gift of] **authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.**” (Revelation 13:7, insertion and italics mine)

Babylon will be a “monster-sized” church-state government. Babylon’s leaders will dictate how the civil governments of the world are to proceed in their efforts to appease God so that His wrath will cease. Today, it goes beyond comprehension to say that a time is coming when the world’s political leaders will submit to the dictates of a one-world religious government, but the destruction caused by the first four trumpets is unimaginable, too. When the world witnesses God’s devastating wrath on notably wicked places and smells the stench of 1.75 billion dead people, almost everyone will have a dramatic change in their thinking about God. His authority and our accountability to Him will become topics of greatest concern.

During the gloomy darkness of the fourth trumpet, the religious leaders of the world will convene and conceive a well-intended, but foolish plan to appease God. They will unanimously agree that *one* God is angry

with *all* mankind and that degenerate behavior has provoked God's wrath against all nations. Therefore, religious leaders will conclude that *all* nations and *all* religions must unite *as one family to appease Him*. "If we do this," they will say, "our chances of offending God further will be reduced. Perhaps He will have mercy on the whole world when He sees that all mankind is anxious to please Him and our sincerity is global."

Three Enabling Lies

Humbled by overwhelming destruction and desperate to appease God so that His judgments will cease, the world's religious leaders will form a religious government to appease God's wrath. The basis for this government will be three enabling lies. The first lie: Everyone on Earth worships the *same* God, even though He is called by different names. This lie will be convincing because the rapid-fire destruction of the first four trumpets points to the handiwork of *one* God. This lie will enable the clergy of the world to temporarily lay aside their theological differences so that they can unite on two principles which all religions hold in common. The first principle is that God's wrath is aroused by decadent and degenerate behavior. While this principle is true, religious leaders will conclude that God would be pleased to have the nations enact laws forbidding degenerate behavior. Many people will conclude that this deduction is reasonable, but this is the second lie. A God of love is pleased when people *choose* of their own free will to forsake evil and obey His commands, but He has no part or interest in *forced* righteousness. The second principle that all religions have in common is the belief that Almighty God rules the universe and He is entitled to respect and worship. Babylon will claim that God will be pleased to have a government formed promoting respect for Him and the worship of the Almighty. Of course, this is the third lie. Babylon does not speak for God and even worse, Babylon's demands will stand in direct opposition to God's law.

Once the political leaders of the world consent, the leaders of Babylon will move forward to implement a dramatic plan to appease God so that His judgments will cease. Everyone will be required to show respect for Almighty God. Many "sin-less" laws will be enacted and enforced. Babylon will declare a specific day for worship and require businesses to close on that day. The irony is that Babylon's solution to appeasing God is built on the three enabling lies. The leaders of Babylon will tell the world that they are confident that their plan to appease God is the right thing to do and billions of people will agree with their religious leaders. However, the 144,000 will boldly tell the world that Babylon is

on the wrong track! The 144,000 will confront Babylon's lies with Scripture and honest hearted people will find themselves trying to determine the truth.

The fact that Babylon will require all nations to set aside a day for the worship of God will quickly get the attention of the world. In Moslem nations, laws regarding the holiness of Friday will be imposed. In countries where Christianity is the primary religion, laws regarding the holiness of Sunday will be imposed. In Israel, laws regarding the holiness of Saturday will be imposed. This duplicity on Babylon's part will cause honest hearted people to question how a one world government can appease the *same* God with different laws in different lands. The three lies that enabled the formation of Babylon will be undermined by Babylon's own behavior.

Babylon's Seven Heads

The leopard-like beast has seven heads¹ and ten horns. When Babylon rises to power, the Bible says that **one** of the seven heads "**had been healed.**" (Revelation 13:3) Notice that the phrase, "had been healed," is stated in the past perfect tense. This means that when the leopard-like beast rises from the sea, the deadly wound will be completely healed.

The seven heads represent the seven religious systems of Earth. If one head is a religious system, then the remaining six have to be religious systems too, because there are seven heads. Each religious system is a blasphemous organization – that is, each religious system is defiant to the will of God. This defiance is described with this phrase, "**and on each head [was written] a blasphemous name.**" (Revelation 13:1, insertion mine) At the present time, this defiance is not discernable within each religious system because each religious system claims (and its followers believe) that it teaches the truth about the will of God. Nevertheless, the honest in heart will see, in due time, that the claims

¹ The seven heads represent Atheism, Heathenism, Judaism, Islam, Eastern Mysticism, Catholicism, and Protestantism. See the chapter, "The Four Beasts of Revelation," for more details. Some people claim that Atheism is not a religion, but I maintain that it qualifies as one of the seven religious systems of the world. I state it this way because Atheism truly is a faith-based church system. Atheism believes there is no God. Some people have argued that Atheism insists on the separation of church and state. Historically, this premise is not sustainable. Wherever Atheism controls government, it does not permit the free exercise of any other religion. Atheism is the religion of the state. Atheistic governments behave like a church-state government because they are a church-state government.

of *all* seven religious systems are blatantly false. When the 144,000 begin speaking the testimony of Jesus, the religions of the world will fight back with prejudice, lies, insults, and persecution. The devil has used these well worn tools for thousands of years to keep God's truth hidden from sight, but there is nothing more powerful than a truth whose time has come. The religious systems of the world will be exposed. They are blasphemous and it will not take long for the honest in heart to recognize the gross deception that has kept them in darkness.

The Wounded Head

The *head* that was wounded and "had been healed" when Babylon rises to power represents the Roman Catholic Church. The authority of the Catholic Church over the kings and nations of Europe began with Emperor Justinian's decree in March, A.D. 533 (but the decree remained ineffective until A.D. 538). The Church's authority over the kings of Europe lasted 1,260 years. (Daniel 7:25, Revelation 12:6,14) When this prophetic period ended, the French Revolution (1789-1799) fatally wounded the authority of the Church when Pope Pius VI was dethroned and put in prison (February 1798). One hundred thirty-one years later, on June 7, 1929, Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini, on behalf of King Victor Emmanuel III, granted the Catholic Church the right to exist as a sovereign state. This grant to the Catholic Church is known as the Lateran Accords or Treaty. This event granted the pope sovereign rulership over the State of Vatican City and more importantly, the pope was set free to direct and lead the Catholic Church without accountability to any nation.

For the past eighty years, the religious and political influence of the Catholic Church has been steadily growing throughout the world. In recent years (largely due to the extraordinary popularity of Pope John Paul II, 1920-2005), the Roman Catholic Church has become a significant political force in the world. Pope Benedict's reception and extravagant birthday party at the White House (hosted by President George Bush on April 16, 2008) is a recent event demonstrating the Church has *regained* a position of international respect and power. Many nations (170 at this writing) have ambassadors assigned to the Vatican. However, the deadly wound *will not be healed* until the Roman Catholic Church once again exercises authority over sovereign governments.

When world leaders convene during the fourth trumpet to create Babylon, I believe three amazing decisions will come out of this emergency meeting.

1. Recognizing the religious diversity of mankind and given the obvious fact that **one** God has destroyed a third of the world, this emergency council will agree that all nations must unite *as a family* to appease God so that His wrath will cease. This council will agree that a number of “sin-less” laws must be enacted and enforced or God’s anger will continue to burn against mankind. This council will also agree that God must be respected and worshiped. This council will conclude that anyone defying laws that honor God should be punished because it is better for one person to suffer for wrong doing than for the whole world to suffer additional destruction due to God’s wrath. They will conclude that enforcing high standards of conduct is the only way that God’s wrath against world decadence will stop.
2. Because everyone at the council will know that God’s anger was directed at notably wicked places all over the world, political leaders will acquiesce to the suggestions of religious experts. Political leaders will have no choice but to accept the responsibility of enacting and enforcing laws to reduce sinful behavior. All nations will participate in this endeavor because world leaders believe that God’s wrath could possibly break out against the *whole* world if any *part* of the world family fails to participate. Political leaders will be put in the position of having no choice but to go along with **Babylon’s** mandates in hopes that Babylon’s directions will quickly resolve the awful **crisis** that exists between God and man.
3. Leaders of the world understand that every governing body requires qualified leadership. A supreme council, something like the Security Council of the United Nations will be created. Given the dire circumstances caused by the first four trumpets, Babylon will be far more effective than the Security Council. *I believe the pope will be selected as the leader of Babylon for four reasons.* First, the healing of the deadly wound has been ongoing since 1929. Second, the Catholic Church is uniquely prepared to serve the world through its diplomatic relations with 170 nations. Third, the Roman Catholic Church believes a church-led state is the best form of government. Finally, the Bible predicts the deadly wound will be healed (Revelation 13:3) and the little horn of Daniel 7 (the papacy) will speak boastfully after 1844 (Daniel 7:11). These four reasons lead me to conclude that the pope will be chosen to lead Babylon.

The pope **will not**, however, be put in a position to impose Catholic doctrines on Atheists, Jews, Eastern Mystics, Muslims, Heathens, or Protestants. The diversity of the world’s religions will not permit this.

Rather, the authority of the pope will be like that of the Secretary General of the United Nations. He will serve as Babylon's "chief facilitator." He and the supreme council of Babylon will direct *the governments of the world in a global effort to appease God.*

Babylon **will not** displace the civil governments of the world's nations. Rather, the demands of Babylon will be imposed on all nations and they will be applied according to the prevailing customs and religions of each nation. The basic idea is that civil government will be *used* by Babylon's leadership to enforce laws on people so they will commit fewer sins. Keep in mind that laws important to Muslims will not be applicable in Catholic or Hindu countries and vice versa. The leaders of Babylon (and the rest of the world) will soon discover that it is impossible for the human race to worship the *same* God as one family. Our diverse religious views and our cultural paradigms will not allow it.

Martial Law

During the first four trumpets, each nation will be forced to suspend its constitution so that martial law can be enacted. Given the size and scope of God's wrath, world leaders will do whatever it takes to maintain control. Food and water supplies will be rationed. Medical care and energy reserves will be scarce. Hunger and thirst will drive millions of dazed and bewildered people crazy. Extreme situations require desperate solutions. Earth's population has never seen a global crisis like the first four trumpets. The crisis will be so huge that political leaders in every nation *will be set free of their constitutional obligations* almost immediately. This freedom will permit them to enact and enforce laws they would have been strongly opposed to during normal times. The declaration of martial law will make it very easy for lawmakers to comply with the demands of Babylon's clergy. Given the fact that something *must* be done to appease God, very few citizens will complain – at first.

After Babylon begins to function as a religious authority over the nations of the world, Babylon's laws will become increasingly oppressive and restrictive. Remember, laws will be enacted demanding that everyone set aside one day for worshiping God. Later on, these laws will be amended and mandatory worship on specific days will be required. *Man's efforts to appease God's wrath explains how worship will become a focal point for persecution.* The Bible predicts, "**All inhabitants of the earth will worship [obey] the beast – all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.**" (Revelation

13:8, insertion and italics mine)

The Ten Commandments, especially the fourth commandment, will be constantly debated. The topic of worship will become very important. The 144,000 will present the holiness of God's seventh day Sabbath with clarity and compelling power. There is only one reason for rebelling against the fourth commandment. It is man's natural hostility toward God's authority. When the carnal nature is confronted with the demands of God's law, hostility is the result. Paul wrote, **"The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God."** (Romans 8:7,8)

Cain foolishly rationalized and assured himself that God would be pleased with his choices of fruit and vegetables (Genesis 4:3), but the Bible is clear, God was not pleased at all. God did not accept Cain's worship (Genesis 4:5) because He saw Cain's rebellion for what it was. Think about this: Why would anyone refuse to rest on God's holy Sabbath when God's prophets are teaching that God demands we rest from our labors on His holy day? God wrote the Ten Commandments in stone. They are inseparable and unchangeable. The Bible is not in conflict with itself. Paul wrote, **"For somewhere [in the Scripture, God] he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: 'And on the seventh day God rested from all his work'. . . . There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his."** (Hebrews 4:4,9,10)

During the Great Tribulation, God will test the inhabitants of Earth with His Sabbath rest test. Observing God's seventh day Sabbath will become a global test of faith when Babylon legislates other days for worship. Consider this parallel: God required ancient Israel to rest on His Sabbath before He delivered them from slavery in Egypt. Similarly, God will require mankind to rest on His Sabbath before He sets us free from the slavery of sin. There was persecution in ancient Egypt for resting on Sabbath and there will be persecution for everyone who defies Babylon's authority.

Incredible as it may seem, many people will fear Babylon's persecution more than God's seven bowls. However, the honest in heart will receive the gospel of Jesus and embrace the Creator's Sabbath. A large number of Moslems, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, Catholics, Protestants, Heathen, and Atheists will receive the gospel of Jesus Christ and rest on His Sabbath day once they understand who Jesus really is and what He

wants!

Summarizing Babylon's Persecution

Thus far, we have examined Babylon's persecution of the saints between the fourth and fifth trumpets. Here is a short summary:

1. Once it comes into power, Babylon will move quickly to appease God's wrath. The **first enabling lie** told by religious leaders is that everyone worships the *same* God even though He is called by different names. The **second enabling lie** is that God will be pleased with laws that outlaw sinful behavior. The **third enabling lie** will be Babylon's assertion that it has the authority to determine *when* God should be worshiped.
2. At first, Babylon's efforts to appease God will seem logical and appropriate to billions of people; however, the wheels will quickly fall off of the wagon after a few weeks because man's religious diversity will not permit a world of diverse religions to worship the *same* God in the *same* way. Babylon will consist of seven diverse religions and the worship of God will become an inconsistent and internally conflicted topic. Babylon's duplicity in appeasing God with laws regarding worship will undermine Babylon's lies. The honest in heart will see through Babylon's lies and embrace the gospel of Jesus.

The Gospel of Jesus Will Stall

The only people authorized to speak for Jesus during the Great Tribulation will be His servants, the 144,000. Jesus will not use churches, clergy, priests, imams, rabbis, pastors, or evangelists. The 144,000 will begin their work on the day the censer is cast down. Their first message is the first angel's message found in Revelation 14:6,7. **"Fear God – worship Him."** Later, when Babylon begins persecuting the saints, the 144,000 will give the second angel's message, **"Babylon is fallen."** (Revelation 14:8, KJV). Some of the 144,000 will speak before legislatures, parliaments, kings, prime ministers, dictators, and presidents. (Revelation 10:11) The 144,000 will explain the plan of salvation from the Bible, including the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, to young and old, rich and poor. They will present the love and sacrifice of Jesus and the terms and conditions of His gospel. They will boldly declare that Babylon is full of blasphemy and lies. In a word, the 144,000 will declare that **"Babylon is *fallen* [corrupt]."** (Revelation 14:8, KJV, insertion and italics mine)

The 144,000 will tell the world that contrary to Babylon's claim, everyone does not worship the *same* God. They will also inform the world that the God who has destroyed so much of the world is Jesus Christ, the Creator of the world. The 144,000 will tell parliaments and congresses that legislating worship and moral conduct **will not** appease God's wrath. If Jesus wanted moral legislation imposed on people, He would have imposed His Ten Commandments on mankind long ago. Jesus could have sent legions of angels with torturing devices if forced obedience was His objective. The 144,000 will tell world leaders that the last resort of false religion is force and contrary to what Babylon claims, Jesus will not accept coerced behavior as a substitute for repentance. Tortured confessions are unacceptable to a God of love. Jesus will only forgive our sins when we are truly sorry and willing to turn away from our sins. Jesus said, **"If you love me, you will obey what I command."** (John 14:15) Of course, this testimony will be rejected by those who believe the formation of Babylon is appropriate. Religious leaders will demand that politicians punish those "fools" who know nothing about God and are inciting and misleading others to offend God!

The 144,000 will plainly say, "The devastating judgments have stopped until the fifth trumpet occurs!" World leaders will not believe them. When fear and panic rule, people retreat to what they think is secure and this is why the whole world *follows* after the leopard-like beast. Everyone will be looking to their religious experts for direction and instruction. No politician will be willing to risk more of God's wrath by embracing the claims of 144,000 *nobodies*. The leaders of Babylon will argue and political leaders will agree that there is safety in numbers and remaining united *as one family* is the best way to appease one angry God.

After two years of persecution during the Great Tribulation, almost everyone on Earth will have decided whether or not he is willing to submit to the gospel of Jesus Christ. When the advance of the gospel ceases, the fifth trumpet occurs. Jesus will release Lucifer from the spirit realm where he has been confined. After he is released, the devil will physically appear before mankind masquerading as Almighty God. Paul calls the devil "the man of sin" (KJV) or "the man of lawlessness" (NIV) because the devil will not be subject to human laws. He will do as he pleases and no one will be able to stop him! As you read the following verses, notice that the devil is called a man and notice why the devil is permitted to physically appear before mankind:

"And then the lawless one [or, the man of sin] will be [physically]

revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. The coming of the lawless one [masquerading as a righteous and holy God] will be in accordance [in perfect harmony] with the [cunning and deceptive] work of Satan [which will be] displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They [the wicked will] perish because they *refused* to love the truth and so be saved. [That is, the wicked heard the testimony of Jesus and refused His offer of salvation.] *For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion* [the devil masquerading as God] so that they will believe the lie [the delusion] and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.” (2 Thessa-lonians 2:8-12, italics and insertions mine)

God Releases a Destroyer

Before we examine the fifth trumpet, we need to discuss the full cup principle and God’s use of a “destroyer.” At the beginning of this study, we learned the full cup principle is a policy that God consistently uses to manage groups of people. When the majority of a group of people becomes so degenerate and defiant that extended mercy has no redeeming effect, God’s love for the innocent victims of sin, as well as oncoming generations, causes Him to respond to the decadence of the current generation. He sends warnings and redemptive judgments so that if possible, His wayward subjects will change course. If His warnings are ignored and **His redemptive** judgments do not produce repentance and reformation, God will send a **destroyer** to destroy the unrepentant. If the situation is not redeemable, He will send totally **destructive** judgments.

Sometimes, Jesus Himself is the destroyer. He destroyed the world in Noah’s day. (Genesis 6:7) Jesus destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. (Genesis 19:24) Jesus also killed the firstborn in Egypt. (Exodus 12:12) Centuries later, Israel ignored the warnings which God mercifully sent through Jeremiah. Notice Jeremiah’s words, “**For twenty-three years – from the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah until this very day – the word of the Lord has come to me and I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened. And though the Lord has sent all *his servants the prophets* to you again and again, you have not listened or paid any attention. . . . ‘But you did not listen to me,’ declares the Lord, ‘and you have provoked me with what your hands have**

made, and you have brought harm to yourselves.’” (Jeremiah 25:4,5, italics mine)

“Therefore the Lord Almighty says this: ‘Because you have not listened to my words, I will summon all the peoples of the north and *my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,*’ declares the Lord, ‘and *I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin. I will banish from them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, the sound of millstones and the light of the lamp. This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.*’” (Jeremiah 25:8-11, italics mine)

Two important parallels can be applied to the Great Tribulation. First, there is a clear parallel between the work of Noah, Moses, Jeremiah, and the work of the 144,000. God warns people of His forthcoming actions through appointed messengers. Second, when Jesus saw that extended mercy did not produce change in ancient times, Jesus took action. He either imposed destruction on His rebellious subjects or He raised up a destroyer (as in Jeremiah’s case, King Nebuchadnezzar) to accomplish His will. The same thing will happen during the Great Tribulation. For 890 days, Jesus will grant everyone a chance to hear and receive His gospel and be saved. When it becomes clear to Jesus that extended mercy has no further redeeming effect, Jesus will release the devil (a destroyer) on the world. The devil will ultimately lead the wicked in a war to destroy Jesus at the Second Coming. Of course, the ultimate destroyer is Jesus. He will destroy His enemies with a command (represented as a sword that comes out of His mouth – Revelation 19:15-21) and return the devil to the Abyss. (Revelation 20:1-3) Just as Jesus released the king of *ancient* Babylon on Israel to bring Israel’s rebellion to an end, Jesus will release Lucifer, the king of *modern* Babylon to bring the world’s rebellion to an end.

Remember, the fifth trumpet does not occur until a majority of the wicked and the undecided have **refused** to accept the clearest evidences of truth. Paul wrote, “**They** [the wicked will] **perish because they** [heard the gospel of Jesus and] **refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion** [the physical appearing of the devil] **so that they will believe the lie.**” (2 Thessalonians 2:10,11, italics and insertions)

mine)

Three Groups of People

To appreciate the horrible torment described in the fifth trumpet, you need to understand that three groups of people live on Earth at any given time. These three groups will become clearly visible during the fifth trumpet. The first group consists of God's saints, the second group consists of people who appear to be religious, but they are wicked nonetheless. I call this group of people the religious wicked. The last group consists of people who will have nothing to do with religion. I call this group of people, the non-religious wicked.

As the Great Tribulation begins, almost everyone will reject the 144,000 and the testimony of Jesus. It is extremely difficult for people to relinquish their views about God – even when their views are proven erroneous. Even when people are convinced of a truth, there can be a great struggle to embrace it and publically defend it because the social consequences can be very severe. Many people will not be able to embrace the gospel of Jesus until the fifth trumpet because they cannot face the ridicule and persecution that will come from following Jesus. Jesus understands our dilemma and this is why He will put the devil and his evil work on public display. The devil and his angels will be allowed to physically appear so that human beings can clearly observe demons in action. Right now, we cannot see them, but this will change.

During the fifth trumpet, Lucifer's demons will torment one specific group of people. They will not harm the saints or those who embrace Lucifer as God, but they will target Lucifer's opposition (the non-religious wicked). When the world witnesses the horrible torture and suffering that demons will impose on people who refuse to worship Lucifer, an amazing thing will happen. Those in the non-religious group will either embrace the gospel of Jesus or they will join forces with the devil, claiming, "I believe he [Lucifer] is Almighty God!" The fifth trumpet will help push undecided people into the sheep pen or the goat pen.

Please consider the following on these three groups of people:

1. **The saints:** God's saints are in every nation, culture, religion, and language. These people are sincere and honest in heart. They love God even though their knowledge of Him is incomplete and largely erroneous. The saints listen to the Holy Spirit and through faith, obey His directives. The saints are conscientious. They strive to please God in all their actions. Because God's saints are found in all

religious groups, His saints do not agree among themselves very much. Theologically speaking, one could say that currently, most of God's saints are *honestly* opposed to each other because man's diversity in theology, culture, and language is substantial. Our diversity, however, is not a problem for God. God reads our motives and sees our hearts, even though our heads may be mixed up with all kinds of theories and ideas. Nevertheless, during the Great Tribulation, God's saints will hear the testimony of Jesus coming from the 144,000 and they will eventually embrace the gospel of Christ.

2. **The religious wicked:** The term, "religious wicked," may sound like a contradiction in terms, but it is not. There are wicked people in every religious system. The religious wicked are people who have made their religious system their God. They are more concerned with being right than doing right. These people are found in every religious body. Although they may appear to be deeply religious, they are not spiritual. These people have not been born again. They do not understand the love or the heart of God. Jesus said they will even commit murder, if necessary, to keep their religious system from failing. (John 16:1-3) Most of the Pharisees in Christ's day belonged to this group. Even though Saul was a Pharisee, he was not among the "religious wicked." Saul had the head of a Pharisee, but the heart of a saint! Jesus saw Saul's heart and this is why Saul was given an epiphany as he traveled to Damascus to persecute Christians. Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 1:13, **"Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief."** Even though this group of people are wicked, Jesus knows there are some potential saints within this group.
3. **The non-religious wicked:** The title for the third group is self-explanatory. These people have no use for God. Generally speaking, these people are spiritually dead. Like the religious-wicked, they are controlled by the carnal nature. Nevertheless, there are some potential saints living within this group. The saints in this group are people who have honest hearts, but their heads are totally messed up. Jesus understands their misdirection and He has a plan that will extract the honest in heart from this group.

Now that you have been introduced to these three groups of people, you need to understand two things. First, Jesus has a plan for gathering the saints out of the last two groups, and second, He will bring His saints

into one accord! After the devastation of the first four trumpets has opened the ears of billions of people, the 144,000 will deliver the testimony of Jesus to the world. The first four trumpets will put the people of Earth in a very difficult situation in terms of survival, but the gospel of Jesus will put the people of Earth in a very difficult situation in terms of doing God's will. These extremities will separate the sheep from the goats. The sheep will follow Jesus by faith. They will pay the price of discipleship. By the time the seventh trumpet sounds, only two groups of people will be left. The saints will be worshiping the Lamb (Jesus) and the religious wicked will be worshiping the lamb-like beast (Lucifer). The devil's demons will eliminate the non-religious wicked group through torture in the fifth trumpet and death in the sixth trumpet.

The Fifth Trumpet

“The fifth angel sounded his trumpet [in Heaven’s temple], and I [John] saw a [an angelic] star that had fallen from the sky to the earth.” (Isaiah 14:12, insertions mine)

Lucifer was the first and highest being of creation. Over time, Lucifer became jealous of Christ and later, he openly rebelled against Christ's authority. Lucifer became “anti”-Christ. Lucifer infected a third of the angels with his hatred for Jesus and eventually, God cast them out of Heaven. Evidently, they were expelled from Heaven the first time before Earth was created. (Isaiah 14:12-17) God allowed Lucifer and his angels to roam the universe and this is how Lucifer came to planet Earth where he succeeded in causing Eve and Adam to sin.

When Adam and Eve sinned, Lucifer became the prince of this world. Lucifer is the father of lies and of all beings who have fallen natures. Because Lucifer was the prince of this fallen world, he was allowed to meet with God and other angels at various times for administrative purposes. (See Job 1) Four thousand years after sin began, Jesus paid the penalty for sin by dying on the cross. With His blood, Jesus *redeemed* Earth from Lucifer's dominion and possession. On Resurrection Sunday, Jesus ascended to Heaven to receive possession of Earth, but Lucifer would not relinquish his ownership of Earth to Jesus, so there was a second war in Heaven. (Revelation 12:7) Once again, Jesus and His angels cast Lucifer and his angels out of Heaven. Ever since their expulsion, Lucifer and his angels have been confined to Earth. They are forced to live in the spirit realm and although they are unseen, they freely travel about Earth. This captivity will change at the fifth trumpet. **“The [angelic] star [Lucifer] was given the key to**

the [gate that seals the] shaft of the Abyss.” (Revelation 9:1, insertions mine)

In John’s day, the Jews regarded the *abussos* (the Abyss) as a deep, dark dungeon for spirits. The Abyss was a geographical space that existed somewhere under the basin of Earth. Volcanoes were believed to be chimneys for the endless fires that burned under the basin of Earth. Remember, people in John’s day thought Earth was flat and they thought the “bottomless pit” was a shaft that went through the flat Earth. God cast Lucifer and his demons into the Abyss on Resurrection Sunday and according to Revelation 9:1, they will come out of the Abyss when the fifth trumpet occurs. Lucifer will be given the key, and he and his angels will exit the spirit realm and become plainly visible to all human beings.

“When he [Lucifer] opened the Abyss, [demons ascended from the Abyss into the sky and there were so many of them that they looked like a dense cloud of smoke and the] smoke rose from it [the Abyss] like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. (Revelation 9:2, insertions mine)

“And out of the smoke locusts *came down upon the earth* [Notice they came down from the sky, and at a distance, the demons looked like a dense cloud of smoke to John. Their appearing darkened the sun and sky! As they drew closer, the demons looked something like large locusts with wings as they *came down* upon Earth.] **and [these demons] were given power like that of scorpions of the earth [That is, they had the ability to inflict searing pain on human beings]. (Revelation 9:3, italics and insertions mine)**

“They were told [by Jesus] not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree [The demons cannot destroy anything at this time.], **but [they can “sting”] only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads.”** (Revelation 9:4, insertions mine) In other words, the devil and his angels cannot hurt the 144,000 and those saints who were sealed during the 890 days prior to the fifth trumpet. Of course, the devil and his demons will not hurt those people who immediately believe that he is Almighty God. The devil and his demons will torture the non-religious wicked group – those who reject the gospel of Jesus and stand in opposition to the devil’s blasphemous claims. The non-religious group will consist of people like scientists, communists, agnostics, and the devil will painfully torment them. This painful intimidation will cause many to give in to Lucifer’s demands and they will

offer a *forced* confession, “Yes, I believe this glorious being is Almighty God and I will obey his commands.”

“They [the demons] were not given power to kill them [those in the non-religious wicked group], but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man [awful, searing pain]. (Revelation 9:5, insertions mine)

“During those days [wicked] men [and women] will seek death, but will not find it; [the pain will be so great] they will long to die, but death will elude them. (Revelation 9:6)

“The locusts [the devil’s angels also] looked like horses [and armed riders] prepared for battle. On their heads they [the demons] wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces.” (Revelation 9:7, insertions mine) Angels, also created in God’s image, resemble human beings in appearance. The crowns of gold reflect their high positions as angels of the false god. (The Greek word used here for crown is *stephanos* and it means crowns of honor, victory.) The devil and his angels will be part of the great delusion (2 Thessalonians 2:11) which God will release upon the world because the wicked will have refused to love the truth and be saved. This deception will be so great that it would deceive the very elect, if that were possible. (Matthew 24:24) Lucifer and his angels may stand about fifteen feet tall (1 Kings 6:26, 2 Chronicles 3:10-13), so they will be very intimidating and most impressive. Those not having the seal of God will be totally overwhelmed.

“Their hair was [long and beautiful] like women’s hair, and their teeth were [strong and deadly, designed to tear flesh] like lions’ teeth. (Revelation 9:8, insertions mine)

“They had breastplates like breastplates of iron [nothing manmade could penetrate them or hurt them], and the sound of their wings [when they fly] was [powerful and fearful] like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. (Revelation 9:9, insertions mine)

“[Because God can speak volumes with caricatures, Lucifer’s demons appeared as though] They had tails and stings like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months.” (Revelation 9:10, insertion mine)

When Lucifer and his angels are released from the Abyss, their

appearance will be beautiful and stunning. *They will not look like grasshoppers or horses.* God represented Lucifer and his angels to John with caricatures so that the final generation might understand the work and character of these demons with very few words. Remember, scribes copied the book of Revelation by hand for 1,900 years and a picture is worth 1,000 words. For example, in Revelation 19:15, John saw a sword coming out of the mouth of Jesus. This sword represents a deadly command that will come out of Jesus' mouth at the Second Coming. Jesus will slay the wicked by a command! (Revelation 2:12,16; 19:21)

“They [the demons] had as king over them *the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon.*” (Revelation 9:11, italics and insertion mine) Both names mean the same thing: “Destroyer.” Lucifer receives a Hebrew name and a Greek name because he will destroy many saints (when the fifth seal opens) and many wicked (during the sixth trumpet). In other words, the devil will be a great destroyer.

“The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come.” (Revelation 9:12) At the end of five months, the fifth trumpet is over. The sixth and seventh trumpets are coming and they will be even worse!

Fifth Trumpet: A Really Big Show

The devil will have to imitate the Second Coming of Jesus a number of times. Unlike the global appearing of the real Jesus who will remain in the sky for everyone to see, the devil's appearing will be a series of local events. For example, Lucifer and his angels could descend from the sky over Houston, later they could descend out of the sky at Dallas, then Los Angeles, Mexico City, Paris and the other great cities of Earth. Jesus confirms the local nature of Lucifer's appearing. He said, **“At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. . . . So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”** (Matthew 24:23,26,27)

John wrote, **“Look, he [Jesus] is coming with the clouds, and *every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.*”** (Revelation 1:7, insertion and italics mine) When Jesus comes, He will

not touch the Earth. This explains why the saints will meet Him in the air! **“After that [the resurrection of the righteous dead], we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.”** (1 Thessalonians 4:17) Jesus said where the saints will go. **“In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there [to the New Jerusalem] to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”** (John 14:2,3)

The Bible indicates the fifth trumpet will last for five months. The devil will speak kind words, perform wonderful miracles of healing, feed the multitudes, and offer inspiring words of hope to a world in utter despair. He will show great signs and wonders. He will be glorious and lovely to look upon. He will captivate and motivate people toward hope, assuring them that a thousand years of peace and joy is coming. The kingdom of God has come! He will call for renewed efforts to make the world a better place to live. Meanwhile, some of his demons will be working night and day to subdue Lucifer’s opposition. The non-religious wicked group will suffer the horrible “sting” of Lucifer’s scorpions. When family members and observers see the horrible searing pain that comes from one demon, many in the non-religious wicked group will capitulate on the spot. I can see how demons could tauntingly use this Scripture: **“. . . If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”** (Romans 10:9) Of course, the Jesus promoted by Lucifer’s demons is the devil, an imposter of the real Jesus.

Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, John, and Paul Agree

Shortly before Paul’s death, Jesus revealed to him that Lucifer would someday physically appear on Earth. Notice Paul’s understanding of this matter: **“Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day [the Second Coming of Jesus] *will not come until the rebellion occurs* [a worldwide rejection of the gospel. Paul knew that the gospel of Jesus would be presented to everyone on Earth before Jesus would return. “The rebellion” that has to happen before Jesus can**

return will occur during the Great Tribulation. The world must first hear the gospel and refuse to submit to its terms and conditions before Jesus can return. This great rebellion will cause the work of the 144,000 to stall. When the gospel cannot make any forward progress, Jesus will release the devil from the Abyss] **and the *man* of lawlessness is revealed, the *man* doomed to destruction.**"

(2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, insertions and italics mine)

Lucifer Is Called a Man

Lucifer is called a *man* in 2 Thessalonians 2, Isaiah 14:16,17, and Ezekiel 28:2 for two reasons. First, God will give Lucifer a body that looks something like the form of a man. Currently, Lucifer has no body. (Revelation 17:8) He is locked in the spirit realm. Just as Jesus was given a body (Hebrews 10:5) to save mankind, Lucifer and his angels will be given bodies as part of their mission to destroy mankind.

Second, Lucifer is called a man because he is a mortal being, that is, he is subject to death just like mankind. The coming Antichrist is a man, but not a man born of a woman, or having an earthly origin. Even though the devil has lived for thousands of years, he will be annihilated with fire at the end of the 1,000 years, just like the rest of the wicked. (Revelation 20:9,10)

Isaiah saw Lucifer cast out of Heaven and given the form of a man!

“How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ But you are [a mortal] brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: ‘Is this *the man* who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, *the man* who made the world a desert, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?’ ” (Isaiah 14:12-17, italics and insertion mine)

Daniel knew the Antichrist would be a man, but not a man of earthly origin. He wrote, **“Out of one of them [the four winds] came another horn [the king from the north], which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land. . . . In the latter part of their reign [that is, the reign of Earth’s kings], when *rebels* [against the gospel] have become**

completely wicked, a stern-faced [angel] king, a master of intrigue, will arise [from out of nowhere, the Abyss]. He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior [above everything that is called God]. When they feel secure [with his deceptions], he will destroy many [people at the sixth trumpet] and take his stand against [Jesus] the [real] Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.” (Daniel 8:9,23-25, insertions and italics mine)

Paul continues, **“He [the man of lawlessness, the devil] will oppose [the teachings of all religions] and will exalt himself over [and above] everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God. Don’t you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things?”** (1 Thessalonians 2:4,5, insertions mine.)

Contrary to what many people think, Paul is not talking about the devil sitting in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. The temple the Romans destroyed in A.D. 70 cannot be rebuilt because God has established a new covenant. He abandoned the nation of Israel (Matthew 23:38) and put a seal on the temple mount to prevent the temple from being rebuilt. This seal is a Moslem mosque, “The Dome of the Rock.” Furthermore, Paul says the devil *will oppose* everything that is called “God or is worshiped” as God. This means the devil will blaspheme Judaism and all religions. In fact, Lucifer will destroy all of the world’s religions when he sets up his theocracy during the sixth trumpet. Paul’s phrase, “he sets himself up in God’s temple proclaiming himself to be God,” means the devil will usurp God’s place and authority over Earth. The devil will exalt himself over everything that is called God so that he can rule as King of kings and Lord of lords. Isaiah affirms this point: **“You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’”** (Isaiah 14:13,14)

Paul continues: **“And now you know what is holding him [the devil] back, so that he may be revealed *at the proper time* [fifth trumpet]. For the secret [unseen and hidden] power of lawlessness [even though he is invisible or hidden, the devil] is already at work; but**

the one who now holds it back [Jesus is currently holding back the appearing of the devil.] **will continue to do so till he** [Jesus] **is taken out of the way.** [When the corporate intercession of Jesus is taken out of the way, there is nothing to stop the wrath of God.] **And then** [during the fifth trumpet] **the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his** [Second] **coming. The coming of the lawless one** [his appearing] **will be in accordance with the work of Satan** [even though the devil will give the appearance of Almighty God, his actions will betray his charade. The devil will convince the world of his assumed divinity by performing miracles, manifesting incredible powers] **displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They** [the wicked] **perish because they** [heard the gospel and] **refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion** [an invincible destroyer] **so that they will believe the lie** [that Lucifer is God] **and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.”**

(2 Thessalonians 2:6-12, insertions and italics mine)

God gave Isaiah, Ezekiel, John, Daniel, and Paul slightly different views of the devil's work and appearing. Isaiah saw Lucifer cast out of Heaven and given the form of a man! Ezekiel saw a man claiming to be God. Daniel was shown “a stern faced king” who will come out of the north and destroy the mighty men and the holy people. Paul was shown “a lawless man,” and John was shown “the angel king from the Abyss.” When we align these views, we discover that God has provided a powerful matrix revealing several things about Lucifer that cannot be explained with just a few words! Consider the following verses and notice how the wicked will be surprised at his appearing!

“[The angel said to me, ‘John,] **The** [great red dragon] **beast, which you saw** [cast out of Heaven in Revelation 12:7-9], **once was** [in Heaven], **now is not** [in Heaven because he was cast into the Abyss], **and** [at the appointed time, he will be released and] **will come up out of the Abyss** [the spirit realm where he has been confined] **and** [after a great display of authority and power for 445 days he will] **go to his destruction. The inhabitants of the Earth whose names have not been written in the Book of Life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they** [actually] **see the** [great red dragon] **beast, because he once was** [visible as a glorious angel in

Heaven], **now** [he is confined to the Abyss and] **is not** [visible to human beings], **and yet** [during the fifth trumpet, he] **will** [be permitted to] **come** [out of hiding and masquerade as Almighty God. He will astonish the wicked with incredible glory, counterfeit wonders, and miracles!]. **The** [great red dragon] **beast who once was** [in Heaven], **and now is not** [in Heaven], **is an eighth king.** [The devil is called an eighth king because he will rule over the seven heads just like the eighth horn ruled over the seven horns in Daniel 7.] **He** [the great red dragon] **belongs to the seven** [heads because he is blasphemous. He opposes God's authority and truth. The great red dragon is the dreaded Antichrist] **and** [even though he will appear to be invincible for awhile, you can be sure that he] **is going to his destruction."** (Revelation 17:8,11, insertions mine)

To put it simply, the devil will be released from the Abyss because the gospel has stalled. Jesus releases a destroyer so that people can make up their minds about good and evil. Once Lucifer is released, the devil will move quickly to establish control over the world and his evil actions will force many undecided people into a decision. If counterfeit miracles cannot budge a hardened heart, then the searing pain imposed by Lucifer's demons will. Many people will make up their minds when they are confronted with Lucifer's demands. Even still, a few hard-headed people will remain in the valley of decision, but the sixth trumpet will force everyone into their "final decision."

Abrupt Change

During the five months of the fifth trumpet, the devil will steadily gain a following of believers through deception. World leaders will be delighted that "Almighty God" is on their side, but a problem will soon arise. How is religious diversity possible when "God" dwells among men? How can Jews, Muslims, Christians, and Hindus defend opposing views of God when "God" Himself lives among men? How can nations remain sovereign when "God" is sovereign over all nations?

At the end of the fifth trumpet, the devil will abruptly change his tactics and demeanor. He will become a "stern-faced" dictator. He will make *horrible demands and mankind will be powerless to resist or stop him.* There will be no law except the law of this demon. Whatever the devil wants and whatever the devil commands will be the law. (Hence the descriptive term used by Paul, "the man of lawlessness.") The devil will demand an end to religious diversity and his command will be carried

out. He will demand that a theocracy be established and his command will be honored. (A theocracy is a church-state government where God rules as King of kings and Lord of lords.) For reasons beyond the scope of this study, I also believe Lucifer will change the weekly cycle to ten days and establish every tenth day as *the* day for worship. Because he will be “King of kings and Lord of lords,” who can resist anything he wants or says? Resistance to Lucifer’s demands will be silenced by Lucifer’s demons. “. . . **And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man. During those days men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.**” (Revelation 9:5,6)

Lucifer’s theocratic government will be established during the sixth trumpet. This government is called “an image to the beast” in Revelation. Notice how the image (or a likeness) of Babylon will be set up: “**Because of the signs he [Lucifer] was given power to do on behalf of the first beast [the leopard-like beast, Babylon], he [Lucifer] *deceived* the inhabitants of the earth.** [When the five months allotted to the fifth trumpet ended] **He *ordered* them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded [in the head] by the sword and yet lived.**” (Revelation 13:14, italics and insertions mine)

Using the guise of admiration for a job well done, the devil will *honor* Babylon’s efforts to establish a church-state, but he will insist on modifying Babylon at the end of the fifth trumpet. Lucifer will move to eliminate the confusion that diverse religions create by simply abolishing the diverse religions of the world. He will claim that then, and only then, will there be “one lord, one faith, one baptism” instead of seven opposing religions trying to appease one God in different ways.

The devil will dethrone the pope. The devil will outlaw the practice of any former religion. Consider the importance of this process. During the sixth trumpet, the wicked will be *forced* to abandon their original religious beliefs. Prior to the sixth trumpet, God’s children *chose* to abandon their original beliefs because they loved truth! Those embracing the gospel of Jesus will not be able to remain in their former churches once they begin worshiping Jesus on His Sabbath day. Meanwhile, those hanging on to their churches because they are afraid to make a change will wake up and discover that their church and their religion have not only been abolished, but they have been outlawed! The valley of decision has just ended. Now, everyone will have to join the church of Satan or the church of God.

Think about this: When the masquerading “God” lives among mankind, there will be no room for religious diversity. Lucifer’s theocracy is described as “the great whore” in Revelation 17 because everyone joining Lucifer’s church will have to prostitute their souls for survival. The situation will be dire and all wiggle room will be gone. During these developments of the sixth trumpet, Jesus will send a final message to those in Babylon who are still undecided: **“Come out of her [the great whore, the theocratic government set up by Lucifer], my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes.”** (Revelation 18:4,5, insertion mine)

The Sixth Trumpet

Masquerading as the Savior of the world, Lucifer will abruptly take control of Earth at the end of the fifth trumpet. He will announce that as “King of kings and Lord of lords,” the time has come to set up the “kingdom of God” on Earth. Anyone resisting will be killed. Lucifer’s demons will be allowed to kill one-third of mankind. These demons will conduct a simple loyalty test and everyone refusing to accept the mark of the beast will be killed. The devil will demand that everyone wear a tattoo; this mark (Greek: *charagma*: an engraving, a tattoo) will be the number 666 tattooed on each person’s right hand. Every business transaction will require verification, that is, the tattoo must be shown. The devil will impose many harsh demands on mankind and all who refuse to worship and obey this evil “God” are to be killed.

“The sixth angel sounded his trumpet [in Heaven’s temple], and I heard a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God.” (Revelation 9:13, insertion mine) The golden altar before the throne is the Altar of Incense, the same altar from which the censer was cast down at the beginning of the seven trumpets. (Revelation 8:5) John heard the four horns speak. Of course, the horns do not literally speak, but they are personified as speaking for a good reason.

“It [the voice coming out of the four horns] said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, ‘Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.’” (Revelation 9:14, insertion mine) The four horns on the Altar of Incense played an important role in the earthly temple service. Israel’s corporate guilt was transferred to the four horns each evening and morning via the blood of the evening and morning sacrifices. (Exodus 29:38-44)

Other than Leviticus 4, which clearly indicates that blood was applied to the horns of the Altar of Incense, there is no textual evidence explicitly stating that blood was applied to the horns of the Altar of Incense each evening and morning. I conclude that blood from the evening and morning sacrifices was applied to the horns for three reasons. First, there is no atonement for sin without the shedding of blood. (Hebrews 9:22) This is true for corporate sin as well as individual sin. (Leviticus 4) Second, the Altar of Incense had four horns just like the Altar of Burnt Offering. (Exodus 37:25, 38:2) These horns were a repository for the record of guilt. In other words, corporate sin was transferred via the blood to the corporate altar. (Leviticus 9:7-12) Third, the Altar of Incense had to be cleansed of guilt on the Day of Atonement because the altar was defiled by the presence of guilt. (Leviticus 16:18) When these facts are aligned, personifying the horns on the Altar of Incense so that they can speak makes sense. The horns represent justice and mercy. The voice says, "Remove the barrier and let the Destroyer destroy."

50/50

The four angels bound at the river in Revelation 9:14 are Lucifer's demons, poised and ready to kill a third of mankind. When the appointed hour, day, month, and year arrives, the sixth trumpet will sound and these demons will be released. They will kill millions of saints (remember, God has predetermined the exact number of martyrs He will allow to perish – Revelation 6:11), and whoever remains in the non-religious wicked group will also be killed.

The language in Revelation 9:14 parallels the language in Revelation 7:1-4 where the four angels were told to wait until the 144,000 were sealed. Ironically, God's four angels and Lucifer's four angels will kill the *same* number of people! Consider the math:

Let us assume the population of the world will be 7 billion people when the censer is cast down. We know that twenty-five percent of the world will be destroyed when the fourth seal is broken and the first four trumpets occur. So, God's four angels will kill 1.75 billion people. Subtracting 1.75 billion dead people from a total of 7 billion leaves 5.25 billion people alive. At the sixth trumpet, Lucifer's four angels will kill a third of mankind. A third of 5.25 billion is another 1.75 billion people! The numbers indicate two things. First, in the battle for souls, Jesus and Lucifer are permitted to kill the *same* number of people. One kills out of the full cup principle; the other kills because his authority is

questioned. Second, the population of Earth will be reduced by fifty percent by the end of the sixth trumpet! This is actually merciful given the extremity of those days.

The Great River Euphrates

The release of the four angels *bound* at the great river Euphrates means that the devil is clearly limited by Christ's higher authority. Jesus limits the devil's destruction to one-third of mankind. Have you ever wondered why the great river Euphrates is used in this passage? Actually, the imagery is simple. The great river Euphrates formed Israel's northern boundary in ancient times. The great river was a *natural barrier*, keeping advancing armies from the north out of Israel's northern territory. When the sixth trumpet sounds, the barrier that has been protecting the world from Lucifer's destruction will be removed and Lucifer's four angels will be released to sweep down "out of the north" to destroy their limit without impediment. (Daniel 11:40)

"And the four angels [four demons] who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind [the timing of the sixth trumpet was determined long ago]. (Revelation 9:15, insertions mine)

"The number of the mounted troops [the demons were represented to John as riders on horses] was two hundred million. I heard their number. (Revelation 9:16, insertion mine)

"The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur. A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury." (Revelation 9:17-19)
This caricature of Lucifer's demons indicates there is no escape for mankind. No human army can defeat this foe. Lucifer and his demons will take control of the world away from mankind, and men will be powerless to stop them.

"The rest of mankind [the two-thirds] that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood – idols that cannot see or hear or walk.

Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.” (Revelation 9:20-21, insertion mine)

Jesus holds the door to salvation open during the sixth trumpet, and 144,000 servants bravely give the final call, “Come out of her my people.” Even though the wicked see the despicable behavior of Lucifer and his demons killing a third of mankind, one would think that some people would repent. But, they do not. Like Pharaoh’s heart, their hearts have become hardened. They have committed the unpardonable sin and they stubbornly insist on maintaining their hostility toward Jesus and His demands. The establishment of Lucifer’s theocracy and the slaughter of one-third of mankind *forces* everyone to either surrender to Jesus or pass the point of no return. Everyone who rejects the final gospel invitation will commit the unpardonable sin. Jesus does not close the door to salvation on a single soul. Instead, everyone will make his own choice, and when the last individual on Earth makes his choice, Jesus terminates His offer of salvation! When the Two Witnesses complete their work at the end of 1,260 days, six trumpet judgments will have occurred and every survivor will be found worshiping the devil (the lamb-like beast) or worshiping Jesus (the Lamb).

Additional Thoughts

Before we close this segment on the sixth trumpet, here are five issues for your consideration:

1. After the devil is released from the Abyss in the fifth trumpet, honest hearted people will see and understand the true character of evil. Currently, few people understand the demonic rage and cunning sophistry of Lucifer, but this will change. The world will get to see a glorious being who is committed to evil and destruction without reservation. When people observe the torture and murder that Lucifer and his angels inflict on human beings during the fifth and sixth trumpets, some of the wicked will repent of their rebellion. *Lucifer’s actions are a mirror. Any sinner would do as Lucifer does if given the opportunity because sin is just as predictable as love!* God has allowed Lucifer and his angels to live for thousands of years to demonstrate this amazing truth. Any departure from righteousness, no matter who leads the rebellion, produces the same result. During the Great Tribulation, God wants the world and the universe to see that sin is everything that He is not. The Holy Spirit will do everything short of violating a person’s free will to bring a person into God’s love, because in Christ there is

love, freedom, and joy. His “yoke is easy and His burden is light.”
(Matthew 11:30)

2. The “religious wicked” group will be in for a devastating shock when Lucifer suddenly outlaws all of the religions of Earth. Religion and culture deeply permeate our thoughts and behavior, and it is almost impossible for a religious person to relinquish his cherished beliefs! When the devil establishes his theocracy, he will necessarily abolish all of the religions of the world. There will be one lord, one faith, and one baptism. Now, the “religious wicked” will face a conundrum. They will have no religious authority other than Lucifer! There will be no pope, no Mohammed, no Bible, no Koran, no Dali Lama, no sacred writings, and no other religious authority. Whom will the “religious wicked” now worship? This sudden vacuum will cause some people to reconsider the gospel of Jesus Christ.
3. The Bible predicts the devil will force the mark of the beast on the inhabitants of Earth: **“He [the lamb-like beast] also forced [remember, force is the last resort of false religion] everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark [the Greek word for “mark” is *charagma*¹, which means “an etching or engraving”] on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is (1) the name of the beast or (2) the number of [belonging to] his name.”** (Revelation 13:16,17, insertions mine) Multitudes of people will compromise and comply fully knowing that they are receiving the mark of the beast. They will make this decision because they are either rebellious toward God or they are cowards. Notice what the Bible says about cowards: **“But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars – their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”** (Revelation 21:8)

Here is a possible scenario. When Lucifer abolishes the religious systems of the world, he will establish ten kings. These kings will do whatever the devil wants. (Revelation 17:13) To enhance his

¹ This etching will be a non-removable, non-transferrable tattoo on the right hand. A tattoo is a *charagma*. A story that runs parallel to the mark of the beast is told in Ezekiel 9. Although this story did not actually take place, the concept of separating people according to a mark (etching) was presented to Ezekiel in a vision.

control, I believe the devil will divide the people of Earth into groups of 1,000 with one person from each group of 1,000 chosen as their leader. This leader will report to his respective king leaving 999 people in each group. The devil will tell the world that 666 people in each group will be permitted to live and participate in his theocracy. Therefore, anyone wishing to avoid death must come forward by a specified date. This person must swear allegiance and loyalty to the devil and his government. To signify his fealty, the individual will then receive a tattoo on his right hand showing the number 666. This tattoo will clearly separate Lucifer's opposition from those people willing to serve as devoted subjects. The good news for Earth's survivors (if there is any good news) is that two-thirds of each group will be spared! This decree will quickly force the wicked to make their final decision. Many people will rush in to receive the tattoo because they know that each group will be limited to 666 survivors. This process explains why Lucifer's theocracy is called "the great whore" in Revelation 17. When people willfully and knowingly worship the devil in order to survive, they have sold their souls to the devil.

Those who refuse the mark of the beast will become targets for murder. Millions of saints will be slaughtered. (Revelation 6:9-11; 16:6; 17:6) Most if not all of the 144,000 will perish. Even in the non-religious group, millions will be killed and if Lucifer deems it necessary, even those who willingly worship the devil will be killed. The devil is a sociopath. He loves no one. Only 666 will be allowed to live, the rest will be killed as quickly as the devil's minions can find them. Jesus said, **"For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"** (Matthew 16:25,26)

The tattoo on the forehead is easy to understand. It is a simple counterfeit. The Bible says the names of Jesus and the Father will be *engraved* on the foreheads of the 144,000! (See Revelation 14:1, 22:4) This glorious insignia on their foreheads will indicate their high rank wherever they travel throughout eternity. In his attempt to denigrate all that God plans for good, Lucifer will counterfeit this insignia by putting his name, in the form of an engraving (a tattoo) on the forehead of his lieutenant in each group.

Lucifer's assumed name (unknown at this time) will not be numerically equivalent to 666. The Bible does not indicate or require a Roman numeral translation. Rather, the Bible indicates the number 666 is the "number [of people] *belonging* to the man [of sin]." The Greek syntax puts this phrase in a genitive of *possession* case, that is, 666 people will belong to Lucifer. Look again at these verses: **"He [the lamb-like beast] also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark [Greek: *charagma* – an etching, an engraving, a tattoo] on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the [visible tattoo] mark [to show everyone], which is (a) the [assumed] name of the beast [tattooed on the forehead] or (b) the number [of people who belong to] of his name. This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate [count] the number of [people belonging to] the beast, for it is [the] man's number [that is, the number belonging to the man of sin]. His number [of remaining people] is 666."** (Revelation 13:16-18, italics and insertions mine)

4. I believe the devil will change the weekly cycle so that God's seventh day Sabbath will move through the weekly cycle. In other words, suppose every tenth day is Lucifer's holy day. The effect would be twofold. First, there would be less rest for everyone building up "the kingdom of God." Exhaustion would be consistent with Lucifer's demonic drive to destroy the people of Earth. Second, and more importantly, a change in the weekly cycle would make God's seventh-day Sabbath fall at different times and anyone resting *during* the work week would be easily spotted and killed.
5. The destroyer will arrive with the intent of destroying everyone on Earth (even those who adore him) and he would quickly do so if he could, but Jesus holds him back for several reasons. One reason is restitution and vengeance. Jesus keeps a large number of the wicked alive so that He can deal with them during the seven bowls. Jesus will reward the wicked with suffering according to the suffering they impose on His children! **"Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord."** (Romans 12:19)

The Seventh Trumpet

On the 1,265th day of the Great Tribulation (a Sunday?), I believe God will gather up all of the 144,000 and take them to Heaven. The 144,000 will be presented to Jesus as the first fruits of a coming harvest, a

numberless multitude of people who chose Jesus as Lord and Master *during* the Great Tribulation. Once the 144,000 are safely gathered around the throne, the seventh trumpet will sound in Heaven.

“The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: [The intercession of Jesus on behalf of individuals is completed. His work as High Priest has ended. The kingdom of God is complete. Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords.] ‘The world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he [Christ, will overthrow Lucifer and destroy sin and all who love it.] will reign for ever and ever.’ (Revelation 11:15, insertions mine)

“And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: ‘We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have [redeemed everyone who loves truth] taken your great power and have begun to reign [over the Earth].” (Revelation 11:16-17, insertions mine) This trumpet marks the beginning of seventy days of destruction when Lucifer’s masquerade, his theocracy, and his followers are destroyed. Ultimately, Earth’s civilization itself is destroyed.

“The nations were angry [at Lucifer’s unbearable demands]; and [the time for] your [totally destructive – seven bowls of] wrath has come. The time has come for judging [avenging] the dead [who stood firmly for the testimony of Jesus and the Word of God. The time has come to extract restitution from those who hurt them], and for rewarding your servants the prophets [the 144,000] and your saints and [all] those who reverence your name, both small and great – and [the time has come] for destroying those who destroy the earth [Lucifer and his demons]. (Revelation 11:18, insertions mine)

“Then God’s temple in heaven was opened [to the view of everyone on Earth so that everyone could actually see God’s covenant], and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant [which contains the Ten Commandments]. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great [destructive] hailstorm.” (Revelation 11:19, insertions mine)

The End of Salvation

The seventh trumpet is the third and final curse. This trumpet marks the end of mercy and the commencement of the seven last plagues. The

seventh trumpet is a global notification that God's mercy for sinners has ended. There is no further possibility for salvation. For 1,260 days, the 144,000 faithfully extended Christ's offer of salvation to every man, woman, and child. Every person has made his or her decision. Many people will wear the mark of the beast and Jesus will seal the others. Can you imagine the amazement of Heaven's angels as they witness the stubborn rebellion of sinners? Who can intelligently refuse the gift of eternal life from a God of love? I can understand why an angel says, **“Who will not fear you, O Lord [Most High God], and bring glory to your [wonderful and awesome] name? For you alone are holy [the Ruler and Creator of Heaven and Earth]. All nations will come and worship before you [out of love], for your righteous acts have been revealed.”** (Revelation 15:4, insertions mine)

The Ark of the Covenant

One dramatic aspect of the seventh trumpet is the awesome display of the Ark of the Covenant. To understand the significance of this event, a few words about the Ten Commandments are necessary.

The Ten Commandments were kept inside the Ark of the Covenant and this made the Ark of the Covenant the holiest article of furniture within the earthly temple. The Ark was *never* exposed for people to see. Even when the nation of Israel traveled about, the Ark of the Covenant was covered with the veil that separated the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. (Numbers 4:5) Even more, the Israelites remained about a half mile away from the Ark whenever the Levites carried it from place to place. (Joshua 3:4) The Ark of the Covenant was the holiest of all objects because it contained “the covenant.” The Ark was *never visible* except to the High Priest who cautiously entered the Most Holy Place once a year to stand before it on the Day of Atonement. (Leviticus 16:13)

God kept the Ark hidden from view for a good reason. He did not want Israel to worship two tablets of stone. God foreknew that Israel, like the nations of the world, had a proclivity for idolatry – worshipping sacred objects such as golden calves, idols, Asherah poles, and the starry hosts. So, God hid “the covenant” from sight because the Ten Commandments are not to be worshiped. In fact, the second commandment forbids the worship or veneration of any object!

God made the Ark of the Covenant holy because His perfect law is His constitution. A God of love is a God of law and order. His law is love and His order is humility and service. He uses His magnificent powers

– omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence – to ensure that His unchangeable constitution will survive throughout eternity. He wrote the Ten Commandments on two tablets of enduring stone. The first tablet contains four commandments. They describe man’s responsibility to God. The second tablet contains six commandments. They describe man’s responsibility to his neighbor. In total, these two tablets are a declaration of what people will *naturally do* when the carnal nature has been subdued by God’s love! The Ten Commandments are *prophetic* in this sense. When a person loves God, he will naturally want to do what the first four commandments require. Likewise, when a person loves his neighbor, he would not think of sinning against his neighbor. Therefore, the law’s prediction is fulfilled through love.

The Ten Commandments were also kept out of sight because God’s law is not an external matter. God wants His laws written on the “tablets of our heart,” not on our shirt sleeve. The carnal nature loves attention. It likes to show off. It quickly absorbs pride and arrogance because our carnal hearts are selfish and self-seeking. In short, the carnal heart is everything that God is not. God is not impressed with a show of external piety, but He is impressed with modesty. Jesus said, **“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.”** (Matthew 6:5-7) An infinitely wise God kept the Ten Commandments out of sight because (a) God knows that carnal minded people cannot understand His law because it is spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:14), and (b) God knows that the best way to present His law to carnal minded people is through the loving words and actions of His people. Of course, God also knows that a legalist can make His law repugnant in the eyes of those who do not understand it. (Remember the disgusting ways of the Pharisees?)

The Testimony

The Ten Commandments are sometimes called “The Testimony” in the Old Testament. Five times in Scripture, the earthly temple is called the “Tent of the Testimony,” and thirteen times, the Ark is called the “Ark of the Testimony.” The Ten Commandments are called “The Testimony” because they are the written testimony of Jesus Himself.

“When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of *the Testimony*, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.” (Exodus 31:18, italics mine) It is important to note that Jesus did not give the Ten Commandments to Moses so that Moses could write them down. I mention this difference because the Ark of the Covenant is not an article of furniture that belonged to Israel. The covenant made with Israel is separate from the Ten Commandments. The timeless Ten Commandments are not to be confused with the temporary laws given to Moses. Those laws were nailed to the cross. (Colossians 2:13-17)

The Ten Commandments are also called “The Covenant” and this explains why the golden box containing the Ten Commandments is called “The Ark of *The Covenant*” or “The Ark of His Covenant” more than thirty times in the Bible. **“Moses was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of *the covenant* – the Ten Commandments.”** (Exodus 34:28, italics mine) When a person considers all of the documents ever written, the Ten Commandments are unlike anything else. God wrote them in stone with His own finger!

It is rather easy to understand why the two tablets should be called “The Testimony,” but many people may not understand why the Ten Commandments are also called “His Covenant” or “The Covenant.” They do not realize that covenants can be unilateral (one-sided), bilateral (two-sided), and multilateral (many-sided). God entered into a bilateral (two-sided) covenant with the descendants of Abraham, that is, a mutual agreement was reached between the two parties. God said, **“Now *if you obey me fully and keep my covenant* [laws], then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. . . .”** (Exodus 19:5,6, insertion and italics mine) Israel accepted God’s proposal: **“When Moses went and told the people all the Lord’s words and laws, they responded with one voice, ‘Everything the Lord has said we will do.’”** (Exodus 24:3)

Marriage is a bilateral covenant and the marriage covenant remains intact as long as both parties are faithful to their covenant. So, the covenant between God and Israel was a bilateral covenant, like a marriage covenant, but the Ten Commandment’s covenant is a unilateral covenant! It remains intact whether people honor or reject it.

A unilateral (one-sided) covenant is not a covenant based on mutual agreement or performance. For example, whenever a person is sworn

in as a courtroom witness, he promises to tell “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” This is a unilateral covenant between the witness and God. The court is a witness to this covenant. The witness promises to “tell the whole truth” regardless of what others may say or do. Consider this unilateral covenant: God said, **“I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life.”** (Genesis 9:13-15)

The devil, working through false religion, has grossly distorted the role, importance, beauty, and value of the Ten Commandments. God did not impose His law on mankind as a recipe for salvation. The devil has cleverly created this deception. God did not impose the Ten Commandments on mankind to determine who will receive eternal life. The devil has created this deception. *Obeying the Ten Commandments cannot produce eternal life because eternal life comes through faith in God.*

We know that Babylon will persecute those who keep God’s seventh-day Sabbath holy during the Great Tribulation. When people learn that (a) obeying the fourth commandment cannot produce salvation, and (b) obeying the fourth commandment will surely bring persecution, many people will argue, “Why should we keep the Sabbath?” The 144,000 will respond, “It is God’s will that everyone obey His law. Out of love for you, Jesus came from Heaven and paid the price for *your* sins on the cross. If you love Jesus for what He has done and if you want to participate in His salvation, you will gladly obey Him because He is your Creator, your Redeemer, and the Master of your life. When we love God with all of our hearts, minds, and souls, and our neighbor as ourselves, the Ten Commandments declare how that love will be expressed.

Every human being will be blessed if they submit to God’s authority and obey His Commandments out of love. Even though the saints will be terribly persecuted during the Great Tribulation for their faith, they will be happy in the Lord! Consider Paul’s comment about his own persecution: **“We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus**

may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body." (2 Corinthians 4:8-11) All created beings in God's universe, except those of us who are under the curse of sin, have God's law of love written in their hearts. In other words, sinless beings naturally live in harmony with God's covenant of love. Here is why: **"The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, *giving joy to the heart*. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb."** (Psalms 19:7-10, italics mine)

The really good news is that a sealing process will occur during the Great Tribulation. Everyone who passes his test of faith will experience an amazing miracle. God's children will miraculously have the curse of sin removed from their minds and hearts. They will be given a new mind and a new heart and their new unfallen nature will be "sealed" within them. **"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."** (Hebrews 8:10-12)

The Ark of the Covenant Uncovered

I have digressed for a moment on the Ark of the Covenant and the Ten Commandments because you need to understand that the display of the Ark of the Covenant during the seventh trumpet will be an astonishing event that is accompanied with Heavenly glory, violence, and commotion. The five phenomena that occurred at the beginning of the Great Tribulation will be repeated when the Ark of the Covenant is displayed. Here are three reasons why God will display the Ark of the Covenant:

1. When the saints are sealed and all of the wicked are tattooed, the contest between Christ and Satan for souls will end. Jesus will then display His covenant which the righteous embraced through faith (they accepted the covenant without seeing the covenant). The

wicked will also see the covenant they despised. Because the contest for souls is over, God's law can be *physically* revealed to the world. Faith has become fact. Once the Ten Commandments are written in the hearts and minds of the saints (Hebrews 8:10-13), there will be no risk that God's people will be tempted to worship the law instead of the Lawgiver!

2. The Ark of the Covenant will be shown from Heaven's temple so that everyone can see (a) the reality of Jesus as Almighty God whose temple is not on this footstool called Earth, but in Heaven itself, (b) that God's law is the highest law – it overrules any law made by man, and (c) that mankind lives **under** the rule of law. It is foolish for men and women to think that they are **above** God's law. No one is exempt from the obligations imposed on man by our Creator. Babylon's clergy will be left speechless when they view the law they refused to recognize and obey. I imagine they will be just as dumbfounded as those who crucified Christ when they are resurrected at the Second Coming.
3. The Ark of the Covenant will be displayed at the seventh trumpet to encourage the saints. I am guessing, but I believe about one billion saints will be *alive* at the seventh trumpet. This awesome view of God's law will confirm the validity of their faith. Remember, at that time, the saints will have suffered persecution for more than three years. The saints who see this sight will live through the seven bowls without seeing death. (Daniel 12:1) Of course, the wicked will also see the law that justifies the seven bowls they are about to receive. (Revelation 16)

Has the Ark of the Covenant Been Found?

History suggests that Jeremiah hid the Ark as King Nebuchadnezzar approached Jerusalem to set siege in 605 B.C. In recent years, numerous claims have been made saying that the Ark of the Covenant has been found. However, no one has produced any evidence to substantiate the claim. The absence of validating evidence is puzzling. Personally, I believe these claims are false because the Ark is not on Earth! I believe God took the Ark of the Covenant to Heaven¹ after Jesus died on the cross so that He could **show it** to the whole world at

¹ Jeremiah 3:16 indicates that under the covenant with the nation of Israel (Plan A), a time would come when the Ark of the Covenant "would not be missed" and another Ark "would not be made." This prediction pointed forward to the arrival of Messiah and the establishment of the kingdom of

the proper time.

Now please consider the following seven points:

1. During the Great Tribulation, the infrastructures of Earth will be destroyed and travel will become virtually non-existent. If the world is in a “lock down” condition, what would be the point of finding the Ark if only a few thousand people in the immediate area could see it? Other than local interest, there would be zero global impact.
2. If the Ark of the Covenant was found prior to the Great Tribulation and if it was put on display in a museum, it would be regarded as a religious relic. In this context, the Ark of the Covenant would not “prove” anything to anyone. The Ark would be just another archeological find, and more importantly, the covenant would mean nothing! The Ark would be regarded like ancient treasures found in the Mayan temples. The world impact regarding such a “find” would be zero. God’s law would be treated as a relic instead of a divine revelation.
3. If the Ark of the Covenant was found prior to the Great Tribulation, the Jews would immediately lay claim to the Ark. More than likely, they would hide it from view in one of their holy places of worship. The net effect is that the Ark would immediately return to obscurity. Hidden from view and regarded as a Jewish icon, the impact of God’s covenant on the world would be zero.
4. Suppose the Ark of the Covenant was found prior to the Great Tribulation and no one was killed after touching it. (Remember how Uzzah died? – 1 Chronicles 13:9,10) This would indicate that the Ark had “lost its divine power” and would confirm that the Ark was just another relic from antiquity. This would also give many Christians the assurance that the Ten Commandments are Jewish and were abolished at the cross. Again, zero global impact.

God on Earth which did not occur. Instead, a new covenant was established and “Plan B” was put in motion. If “Plan A” had been fulfilled, the Ten Commandments would have been written in the hearts and minds of God’s children. (Ezekiel 36:24-27) Since the Ark of the Covenant had no further purpose on Earth after “Plan A” was abandoned, since God shows the Ark of the Covenant from Heaven at the seventh trumpet, and since there is only one Ark containing the original Ten Commandments, I conclude that Jesus took it to Heaven for safekeeping after He returned to Heaven.

5. If my conclusions are correct and the Ark of the Covenant is shown from Heaven during the seventh trumpet, there will be no question as to whether the Ten Commandments were abolished at the cross. In fact, Jesus will show the Ark *of the Covenant* to the *whole world* at an appointed time because this covenant has not been changed or abolished. The display of the Ark will confirm the faith of the saints who accepted the demands of God's law through faith, and it will condemn the faithless who refused to acknowledge their Creator and His unilateral covenant. Although this display will not change minds or hearts, it will be a great blessing to the saints and a horrible omen for the wicked.
6. When Jesus presented the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai, His thunderous power was so great that the Hebrews were afraid for their lives. (Exodus 20:19) The power accompanying the presentation of the Ark of the Covenant at the seventh trumpet will be even greater. Imagine this: A dazzling Ark will be seen against a dark sky crisscrossed with violent lightning and deafening thunder. Even the ground shakes at this stunning display. This presentation of God's everlasting covenant will be an awesome experience for the people who are still alive at the time of the seven last plagues.
7. Finally, Jesus Himself wrote the two tablets of stone placed in the Ark of the Covenant. (Exodus 31:18, 34:1) This makes the covenant an original work. Heaven's temple does not have *a copy* of the Ark and the Ten Commandments. There is one original which was taken to Heaven for two purposes. First, it will be shown to the world during the seventh trumpet. Second, the Ark of the Covenant will endure through eternity as a witness that God is love. Nowhere is God's balance of mercy and justice better stated than in the Ark of the Covenant.

Summary

Unfortunately, this study on the seven trumpets of Revelation has been lengthy because the topic is full of crucial detail. By now, I hope it is clear why I write that the book of Revelation will not make sense without a proper understanding of the seven trumpets. The seven trumpets enables Revelation's story to take place. To conclude this study, here's a short review of the topics that we have studied:

1. Seven angels who stand before God were given seven trumpets in the spring of 1994.

2. The first four angels of the seven trumpets went out to hurt Earth, but they were told to wait until the 144,000 are sealed. (At this moment, we are still waiting for the sealing of the 144,000 to be completed.)
3. Sometime in the near future, a manmade worldwide crisis (possibly a nuclear war) could occur, causing God's saints on Earth to pray for His intervention.
4. Jesus will favorably respond to the prayers of His saints. The censer will be cast down and corporate mercy will end. The wrath of God will begin.
5. The first four trumpets, which will occur over a period of about sixty days, will dwarf the manmade crisis and entirely devastate Earth.
6. The first four trumpets will be (1) a meteoric firestorm that burns up a third of Earth, (2) an asteroid impact on an ocean, (3) an asteroid impact on a continent, and (4) darkness covering the middle third of Earth. This darkness could be caused by hundreds of simultaneous volcanic eruptions. Twenty-five percent of Earth's population will die from the first four trumpets. Notably wicked places all over the world will be destroyed.
7. World leaders, fearing God's enormous anger and even greater destruction, will convene to figure out a way to appease God's wrath.
8. Religious leaders will embrace three lies. The first lie is that everyone worships the *same* God, although He is called by different names. The second lie is that God would be pleased if the nations used force (legislation) to limit sinful behavior. Third, they will embrace the lie that God must be honored and worshiped according to majority rule within each nation.
9. Without firing a single bullet or going to war, Babylon will form and will be given authority over all nations. Because of fear and ignorance, political leaders will humbly submit to the demands of Babylon. The religious leaders of Babylon will tell political leaders in each nation how to proceed to appease God.
10. The pope will be selected as the leader of Babylon. He will serve as Babylon's chief facilitator until Lucifer establishes his theocracy during the sixth trumpet.

11. Babylon will persecute the 144,000 and those who embrace the gospel of Jesus. The saints will be persecuted for forty-two months. Persecution could begin on the sixty-fourth day after the censer is cast down.
12. The advance of the gospel will stall about 890 days into the Great Tribulation. Everyone will have taken a position on the gospel, but some wicked people will abandon their position when they experience the fifth and sixth trumpets.
13. The devil and his angels will be released from the spirit realm during the fifth trumpet. They will physically appear before the people of Earth with a great show of glory, signs, and wonders.
14. For five months, the devil will masquerade as “Almighty God” and his demons will torture the non-religious wicked group into submission.
15. At the end of the five months, the sixth trumpet will sound and the devil will abruptly change character. He will become a stern-faced dictator. He will demand that a theocracy be established and that all religions and governments be abolished. He will appoint ten kings (taskmasters) to oversee his theocracy.
16. For purposes of rations and administration, the devil will divide the people into groups of 1,000. Four of his angels will kill one-third of mankind. The result will be 666 survivors and one lieutenant per unit of 1,000. The devil will require all survivors to wear a tattoo showing the number 666 on their right hands. The devil’s lieutenants will also wear the devil’s name tattooed on their foreheads, which will indicate their high rank in the devil’s theocracy.
17. Counting from the day the censer is cast down, the seventh trumpet will sound on the 1,265th day. God will display the Ark of the Covenant from Heaven on this day. The righteous will be thrilled to see the Ark because they have God’s law written in their hearts and minds. The wicked, on the other hand, will tremble. They have refused to honor God’s covenant and they are therefore subjects of its curse. They will be condemned to death because they have rejected love and sacrifice and embraced selfishness and rebellion.
18. One thing will become very clear after the devil physically appears. Man was created as a lower order than the angels. We are no match for their superior strength and intelligence. The physical

appearing of the devil with 200,000,000 demons is designed to awaken the wicked, if possible, to man's desperate need of a Savior.

Closing Remarks

Near the beginning of this study, I wrote that God has several important objectives for the seven trumpets, which I hope you now understand. Here is a list of seven objectives I am sure will be achieved:

1. **The Revelation of Jesus:** The whole world will be introduced to the reality of Jesus Christ. The world will learn that Jesus is Sovereign. He is our Creator, Savior, and God. All other gods are manmade.
2. **The Intercession of Jesus:** The world will discover that God's wrath against Adam and Eve was suspended by Jesus' love for mankind. When the censer is cast down, a great awakening will occur because of God's wrath.
3. **The Worship of Jesus:** Babylon will attempt to appease God through forced worship. This endeavor on man's part will only make the voluntary worship of Jesus better known and understood.
4. **The Law of Jesus:** Babylon will make laws opposing the law of God. This will make the Ten Commandments (God's covenant) more widely known than ever before.
5. **The Love of Jesus:** Babylon will persecute the saints and in so doing, their love for God and one another will show the world how wonderful God's love is. In spite of persecution, God's people will be filled with peace and joy.
6. **The Character of Jesus:** When the devil is released from the Abyss, the world will see and experience what an "omnipotent" sinner is like. The man of lawlessness will do as he pleases. This will give everyone a glimpse of what Jesus is unlike. (I used the word "omnipotent" because no one will be able to thwart or stop the devil from doing whatever he wishes. At the present time, many people think this is the way that God acts.)
7. **Eternity with Jesus:** Few people presently understand the curse of sin. The order of things that we face has been in place for 6,000 years. The destruction of Earth, beyond the point of recovery, will force people to seriously consider their eternal destiny – either eternal life with Jesus or eternal separation (death) without Jesus.

Addendum

Revelation 8:2 and 1994

For those who are willing to invest the time and study, the following sections explain why I believe that 1994 is the only possible date for the event described in Revelation 8:2. For a more thorough study, please refer to my booklet *Great Clocks from God*.

1. Two Different Ways of Measuring Time

In apocalyptic prophecy, God *sometimes* measures time according to the operation of the Jubilee Calendar. In such cases, a day is translated as a year. For example, the seventy weeks in Daniel 9:24 contain 490 days (seventy weeks x seven days/week = 490 days). The 490 days are *translated* as 490 years because they occur during the operation of God's Jubilee Calendar. Moreover, history confirms that this translation is warranted and correct. On the other hand, there are places in apocalyptic prophecy where God does not translate time as a day for a year. For example, the 1,000 years in Revelation 20:2, the five months in Revelation 9:5, the 1,260 days granted to the Two Witnesses, and the forty-two months in Revelation 13:5 are to be understood as literal time.

I believe there is a rule found in Scripture that answers the question of determining when prophetic or literal time is to be used. The fourth rule governing the interpretation of apocalyptic prophecy says, "The presence or absence of the Jubilee Calendar determines how God measures time in apocalyptic prophecy." In other words, when the Jubilee Calendar is operating, God wants us to translate a day for a year according to His Calendar. On the other hand, when the Jubilee Calendar is not operating, there is no translation.

Note: A rule of interpretation has no exception. The "seven times" imposed on King Nebuchadnezzar does not require translation because (a) that prophecy is not an apocalyptic prophecy, and (b) if it did, the king could not eat grass for 2,520 years ($360 \times 7 = 2,520$), which, of course, is impossible. The prophecy concerning King Nebuchadnezzar was a "local prophecy" directed at the king. Each type of prophecy has its own rules, and they cannot be mixed or merged. There are five types of prophecy in the Bible and these are discussed in detail in the chapter titled, "Getting Started with the Book of Revelation."

2. The Jubilee Calendar

God created the Jubilee Calendar. It is incredibly precise and God put this calendar in motion two literal weeks *before* the Exodus in 1437 B.C. By divine decree, God forced Israel to abandon their use of the Egyptian calendar (a summer-to-summer calendar) when He imposed His spring-to-spring Jubilee Calendar on them. (Exodus 12:1) Although this is not the place to present the function and fullness of God's Calendar, four topics with the Jubilee Calendar need to be discussed to show how 1994 connects with the book of Revelation.

A. Even though God required Israel to let the land rest from cultivation every seventh year, Israel did not observe the seventh year Sabbath rest while in the desert. (This makes sense since they did not grow crops in the desert.) However, the words in Leviticus 25:2 cause some people to think that cycles of seven years began when Israel entered Canaan. This understanding is incorrect. God started counting cycles of seven years at the time of the Exodus and the proof is rather simple. It only takes two steps. First, we have to align the date of Christ's death with the middle of the seventieth week and second, we have to identify one Jubilee year.

For reasons beyond the scope of this study, it can be proven beyond reasonable argument that Jesus died on Friday, Nisan 14 (April 7), A.D. 30. (For a comprehensive study on this topic, see my book, *Daniel, Unlocked for the Final Generation*, pages 196-208.) Once this date is determined, the *synchrony* of the weekly cycle of years becomes known because Daniel 9 declares that Messiah would die in *the middle of the seventieth week*. Therefore, A.D. 30 has to be a Wednesday year because Wednesday is always the middle day of the week. Now that we know A.D. 30 was a Wednesday year, we can identify all Sunday years forward and backward. For example, A.D. 27 and 457 B.C. were Sunday years, and A.D. 1844 was a Thursday year.

The second step requires identifying one Jubilee year. After we positively identify one Jubilee year, Jubilee cycles can be calculated forward and backward. Fortunately, there is one Jubilee year that is easily identified. It occurred during the fifteenth year of Hezekiah's reign. (Isaiah 37:30) Since Jubilee years always fell on Sunday years, this forces Hezekiah's Jubilee year to be 702 B.C. All other dates have to be eliminated because known historical events will not align. (Many scholars, knowing nothing about the synchrony of the weekly cycle of years and the operation of the

Jubilee Calendar, date Hezekiah's Jubilee at 701 B.C. This shows that good scholarship can get close to the truth, but sometimes there are limitations. History can resolve questions to a point, but sometimes, history cannot pinpoint a specific year.) The point of knowing that 702 B.C. was a Jubilee year is this: Once we know the location and synchrony of *one* Jubilee year, Jubilee cycles can be calculated. By counting forward or backward in forty-nine year intervals from 702 B.C., we find that God started the Jubilee Calendar on Abib 1, 1437 B.C., two weeks before the Exodus! No other date is historically possible.

- B. God treats the synchrony of time in a different way than we commonly treat time today. First, God counts time inclusively. Any portion of a unit of time counts as a whole unit of time. For example, Jesus spent a portion of Friday, all of Sabbath, and a portion of Sunday in the tomb. Jesus counted this as three days and three nights. (Matthew 12:40) All prophetic time periods are counted this way. This explains how Luke counted A.D. 27 as the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, even though Tiberius took office on September 17, A.D. 14. (Luke 3:1)

God also treats His weekly cycle in a different way than we commonly do. For example, God starts a *week* with Sunday, the first day of the *week*. We casually define a week as any period of seven days, but this is *never* the case in God's Calendar. When it comes to God's clocks, there is a big difference between seven days and a week. God's seventh-day Sabbath and God's seventh year rest for the land are determined by the first day of Creation and the first year of the Exodus, respectively.

- C. One Jubilee cycle contained seven full weeks of seven years each. Thus, a Jubilee cycle was forty-nine years in length. The forty-ninth year always fell on a Sabbath year that was synchronous with Israel's deliverance from Egypt. (Leviticus 25:8) *The weekly cycle is the basis for translating time – "a day for a year."* (Numbers 14:34) The year of Jubilee (the fiftieth year) always fell on the Sunday year that followed the forty-ninth Sabbath year. This may seem strange at first, but the fiftieth year of the old Jubilee cycle and the first year of the new Jubilee cycle occurred simultaneously. This method of counting time is confirmed by the Feast of Pentecost.

The Feast of Pentecost (the fiftieth day) was always celebrated on Sunday (the first day of the week). This is how the countdown to

Pentecost occurred: Passover fell on different days of the weekly cycle (like our birthdays). But, to calculate the Feast of Pentecost, the priests waited until the first Sunday following Passover to start counting off forty-nine days (seven full weeks). (Leviticus 23:15,16) Then, on the fiftieth day, which was the first day of the eighth week, the Feast of Pentecost was celebrated.

There is needless confusion over the length of Jubilee cycles. Jubilee cycles are forty-nine years in length because (a) the weekly cycle of seven years is not interrupted, (b) the weekly cycle of years remains synchronous with the year of the Exodus (year 1), and (c) the seventy weeks in Daniel 9 totals 490 years. If Jubilee cycles are fifty years in length as some people claim, it would be mathematically impossible to make the seventy weeks equal 490 years. The seventy weeks are 490 years (70 x 7) and 490 years are ten Jubilee cycles (49 x 10).

You may wonder, what does the Jubilee Calendar have to do with Revelation 8:2? The Jubilee Calendar appears to be important to Revelation 8:2 because God's patience with mankind appears to be seventy Jubilee cycles. In other words, from the Exodus in 1437 B.C. to 1994, there are seventy Jubilee cycles. For reasons forthcoming, I find that *God's patience ran out and Jesus handed the seven trumpets to the seven angels in 1994*. If you can accept this premise for a moment, then the delay described in Revelation 7 is consistent with everything written in Scripture about this matter. For example, suppose that God's patience with sin on Earth came to an end in 1994 – at the close of seventy Jubilee cycles. The seven trumpets were given to the seven angels, and before the angels could begin their mission of harm, they were told to wait. The destruction caused by the first four trumpets has been delayed for fifteen years thus far!

Thirty Jubilee Cycles

Because of Abraham's friendship and faithfulness, God chose Abraham's descendants to serve as trustees of His gospel. Unfortunately, this choice proved to be disappointing to God. For about 800 years, the Jews failed to live up to the covenant they made with God at Mt. Sinai. After their exile to Babylon, God gave Israel a second chance to become the model nation that He wanted to make of them. He graciously granted the Jews ten Jubilee cycles – seventy weeks – 490 years! (For comparison, at the time of this writing, the United States has been in existence for 233 years.)

Bible history reveals that during the Sunday year of the seventieth week (A.D. 27), Messiah began His ministry. (Luke 3) However, Israel rejected Messiah's message of love, truth, and righteousness, and they crucified Him. (Acts 10:39) When we examine Israel's history in light of the Jubilee Calendar, we discover a stunning fact: God granted to Israel, down *to the very day*, a total of thirty Jubilee cycles. (1437 B.C. to A.D. 34) This precision reminds me of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. **"At the end of the 430 years, to the very day, all the Lord's divisions left Egypt."** (Exodus 12:41, italics mine) This precision also highlights the fact that the Second Coming will occur on *the very day* which God has predetermined. **"Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days."** (Daniel 12:12)

Forty Jubilee Cycles for the Gentiles

When Israel's thirty Jubilee cycles ended, God started over. He wanted to give the Gentiles their chance as trustees of His gospel. God raised up a brilliant young Jew, Saul of Tarsus, and made him an apostle to the Gentiles in A.D. 34. As a result, the Christian church soon had more Gentile believers in it than Jewish converts. Because there is a New Covenant, the Christian church did not displace Israel; it replaced Israel. God abolished the Old Covenant by creating a New Covenant. This redefined Israel. Believers in Jesus are now the heirs of Abraham. (Galatians 3:28,29) History confirms that God granted forty Jubilee cycles to the Gentiles! (A.D. 34 to 1994) The proof of this assertion requires three steps:

First, we know that the Jubilee Calendar could not end at the cross because (a) Jesus' death occurred during the *middle* of the seventieth week (A.D. 30 was a Wednesday year), and (b) from our study in Daniel 8 we know that the 2,300 days began *before* the cross and they continue uninterrupted until A.D. 1844. This means the 2,300 days are translated (a day for a year) past the date of the cross without interruption *until* 1844. So, at a minimum, we are forced to recognize that the Jubilee Calendar with its day/year translation continued until the Thursday year of 1844. The Jubilee Calendar could not end in 1844.

This brings us to the second step. At this point in our discussion, we know the Jubilee Calendar is divided into three units of time: (a) a week of seven years, (b) seven weeks of seven years, and (c) seventy weeks of seven years. Since history indicates that God granted the Jews thirty Jubilee cycles to the very day, this indicates that the seventy weeks in Daniel 9 is one Great Day, one unit of time.

The Great Week

I have concluded there are seven Great Days of seventy weeks each. I like to call this week of seven Great Days, the Great Week. If this structure truly exists, the seventy weeks in Daniel 9 becomes the Great Day of Tuesday. It is most interesting to note that from the Exodus in the Sunday year of 1437 B.C. to the dedication of Solomon's temple in the Sunday year of 947 B.C., there are exactly seventy weeks or 490 years. (I call this seventy weeks the Great Day of Sunday.) Then, from the dedication of Solomon's temple to the decree of Artaxerxes in the Sunday year of 457 B.C., there is another Great Day of seventy weeks or 490 years. I call this Great Day, Monday. Then, from the decree of Artaxerxes to restore and rebuild Jerusalem to Saul's conversion in the Sunday year of A.D. 34, there is another seventy weeks or 490 years. I call this Great Day, Tuesday. I believe this information provides evidence that a Great Week exists. If so, it would seem reasonable that there are four more Great Days to make up the Great Week since the prophecy describing the 2,300 days does not end until 1844. If we fill the Jubilee Calendar with four more Great Days of seventy weeks each, we end up with The Great Week having seven Great Days. Each Great Day has seventy weeks each, totaling 3,430 years. (1437 B.C. - 1994)

Counting inclusively, the Thursday year of 1844 falls 150 years short of spring, 1994, the end of the Great Day of Sabbath. We have to ask, "Would God terminate the Great Day of Sabbath with 150 years remaining? No. Inclusive counting *forces* the seventh Great Day of the Great Week to end on April 9, 1994. The Great Week began on Sunday, Nisan 1, 1437 B.C. and it ended 3,430 years (490 x 7) later on Sabbath, Adar 29, 1994.

Once the Great Week ends, the Jubilee Calendar with its weekly template of seven Great Days expires. Then, we discover an amazing outcome: All remaining apocalyptic time periods *after* 1994 occur without translation. If you can accept the premise that all prophetic time periods occurring *after* 1994 are to be treated as literal units, then everything stated in Scripture will perfectly fold into an even larger calendar called the "Grand Week," a calendar where a day translates into 1,000 years!

The Grand Week

The Grand Week is a week of millenniums totaling 7,000 years. Each day in the Grand Week represents 1,000 years. When all of the genealogical records, historical events, and prophetic time periods

mentioned in the Bible are assembled together, it appears that the Bible only speaks of 7,000 years for the duration of sin. I call these seven millennia the “Grand Week.” In other words, the 1,000 years of Revelation 20 will be the seventh millennium. Earth itself will rest from the works of sin during this Sabbath day rest. There is no time period throughout all eternity, past or future, that reveals the love of God like the time He has spent resolving the sin problem! I do not have words to describe the grandeur of this incredible process. I am sure saints and angels will study the drama of the Grand Week throughout eternity.

Full Cup Principle / Jubilee Language

The final step in connecting the Jubilee Calendar with Revelation 8:2 concerns the operation of the full cup principle as it pertains to timing. Notice how this works. God’s patience with the nation of Israel ended when Israel violated *seventy* Sabbath years. When this limit was reached, God swiftly raised up King Nebuchadnezzar to take His people into Babylonian exile before another Sabbath year could be violated! (Jeremiah 25:7-11) The Bible says Israel was exiled to Babylon for *seventy* years because Israel violated *seventy* Sabbath years. (Leviticus 26:31-36; 2 Chronicles 36:21,22) After the Babylonian exile was over, God granted Israel a second chance with respect to time. God granted the Great Day of Tuesday to Israel using Jubilee language. He used Jubilee language so that His people (who should have understood the Jubilee Calendar) could easily determine *which* decree would start the countdown to Messiah’s appearing. The timing of the first advent of Jesus *was not* supposed to be a surprise.

“Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, [Messiah] the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens’” (Daniel 9:25, insertion mine)

Have you ever wondered why God stated the sixty-nine weeks in two parts? Why does He say, “seven weeks” and “sixty-two weeks” when He could have easily said, “sixty-nine weeks?”

Note: The Hebrew word *shabuwa*’ translated as “weeks” or “sevens” means “the cycle of the seven” or commonly “the week.” Compare Daniel 9:24 with Daniel 10:3. Millions of people have read the words in Daniel 9:25 without realizing what they actually say. Perhaps the easiest way to explain this text is to use interlaced commentary:

“[Israel] Know and understand this: [There will be a total of four

decrees to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, however] **From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem** [that will occur during the Jubilee year, 457 B.C.] **until the Anointed One** [Jesus, Messiah], **the ruler, comes** [in A.D. 27], **there will be** [one cycle of] **seven ‘sevens,’** [a Jubilee cycle of forty-nine years. In other words, Israel, watch for the one and only decree that will be granted during a Jubilee year] **and** [after that Jubilee cycle of forty-nine years ends, count off] **sixty-two ‘sevens.’** [That is, count off sixty-two more weeks of years – 434 years. Then, watch for Messiah’s appearing. You will see Messiah baptized by John the Baptist in the Sunday year of A.D. 27, the first year of His ministry and the first year of the seventieth week.]” (Daniel 9:25, insertions mine)

Think about this. God could have granted any number of probationary weeks to Israel. Why did He deliberately choose seventy weeks? God could have established any time frame for the appearing of Messiah. Why did He select “seven weeks and sixty-two weeks”? Even more, God could have used the words “490 years” instead of saying “seventy weeks.” Why did He choose to say seventy weeks? God could have started counting down the years to the appearing of Messiah from something highly contemporary such as the victory of the Romans over the Grecians in 168 B.C. or He could have dated the appearing of Messiah from the desecration of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes IV on Kislev 15, 167 B.C. So, why did God deliberately describe the countdown to Messiah with the words “seven ‘sevens’ and sixty-two ‘sevens’”?

I keep making the statement, “*With God, timing is everything,*” because the more you understand about His timing, the more profound this topic becomes. I conclude that God set the time and He chose the descriptive words “seventy weeks” for two reasons. First, a week of years begins with a Sunday year. Second, seventy weeks makes up *one day* in His Great Week. In other words, God graciously granted Israel one more “day” to accomplish His objectives. (Hebrews 4:8) If God had said “490 years” instead of “seventy weeks,” the Jews would not have been able to figure out which decree to restore Jerusalem that God used to start His count. (There were four decrees.) The language “seventy weeks” should have been a huge clue because the first day of a week always begins on Sunday in God’s calendar. It is as though God was shouting to Israel’s generations, “Watch for the decree that will be issued to restore and rebuild Jerusalem in a *Sunday year!*” This is precisely what happened in the Sunday year, 457 B.C. (Ezra 7)

Note: Of the four decrees issued to rebuild and restore Jerusalem, only

one occurred in a Sunday year and interestingly, it was also a Jubilee year. Since this alignment only occurs every forty-nine years, Israel had no excuse for missing the appearing and ministry of Jesus. One of the remarkable features of the Jubilee Calendar is that during the year of Jubilee, the land was returned to its original owners free of charge. God did no less! He moved upon the heart of King Artaxerxes and the king returned the land of Judah to the Jews free of charge! He even gave them much wealth to help rebuild.

To be more precise, God divided the sixty-nine weeks into two parts of seven weeks and sixty-two weeks because He wanted His people to know and understand that the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem would not only occur in a Sunday year, but it would also occur in a Jubilee year! Since each Jubilee cycle is forty-nine years in length, God used the *first seven weeks* (the first forty-nine years) of the sixty-nine weeks to help Israel determine which decree was important to the appearing of Messiah. Every Jew knew that King Artaxerxes issued the all important decree on or about Nisan 1, 457 B.C., and as you might expect, 457 B.C. just happens to be a Jubilee year. Remember, 457 B.C. is a Jubilee year because 702 B.C. is a proven Jubilee year. It is as though God gave Israel every hint possible about the timing of Messiah's appearance and yet, Israel's learned scholars – pompous Pharisees and pious scribes – did not have a clue when the actual time arrived.

The arrogance and ignorance in Israel at the time of Christ's birth is no different than the attitude of Christians today. This darkness cannot be measured. *There is no darkness like stubborn religious darkness.* Jewish authorities were speechless when the wise men showed up in Jerusalem to worship the newborn King. The second appearing of Jesus is imminent. Bible prophecy has never been clearer and more understandable, yet many Christians treat the books of Daniel and Revelation as though they are full of darkness, gloom, and doom. But, open your eyes, and you will see that the darkness is gone!!! The book of Daniel has been unsealed. The rules that lead us into understanding the ways, plans, character, and love of God are shining brightly! **“But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.”** (Galatians 4:4,5, italics mine)

Seventy: A Random or Deliberate Number?

Is the number *seventy* important to God or is it just a random number? I am generally opposed to numerology because numerology is based on the notion that numbers have hidden or obscure meaning. Since there

are no defined rules regarding numerology, it is a nose of wax as far as I am concerned. It has taken some time for me to come to terms with the fact that certain numbers might have special meaning to God, but I have concluded that from God's perspective, the number seven represents completion. There are seven colors in the rainbow. There are seven continents and seven oceans. There are seven days in the week. Jesus spoke seven times on the cross. In the book of Revelation, there are seven angels, seven lamps, seven churches, seven seals, seven thunders, seven trumpets, seven heads, seven hills, seven thousand people, and seven bowls. Furthermore, we know that God's Jubilee Calendar is based on recurring and expanding units of seven. If after reading this paragraph you still don't see any significance to God's use of *seven*, you may want to skip down to the next section. (I'm smiling as I write this.)

Unlike God, man uses many numbering systems. For example, computers use a binary system of zeros and ones, but in order to program them, programmers use compilers that translate ordinary words into binary numbers for them. Perhaps the most common numbering system that man uses is the one based on units of ten. (Maybe ten fingers and ten toes got human beings going in this direction.) The nice thing about base ten is that each time a count of ten is *completed*, the count continues expanding or shrinking by simply moving the decimal point one place to the left or right. It is interesting to me that God's numbering system and man's numbering systems have one thing in common. They express completion at intervals and in order to continue counting, expansion becomes necessary. In God's case, He *translates* a day as a year whereas man moves the position of the decimal.

When God multiplies His "seven" with man's "ten," we find the limits of divine forbearance and human completion. In other words, *seventy indicates that God has gone as far as He will go and man has gone as far as God will let him go!* Multiplying seven and ten to determine completion helps us understand, in part, why God was moved to action when Israel violated *seventy* Sabbath years. This seems to be the reason why God put Israel in Babylon for *seventy* years. (2 Chronicles 36:21,22) Again, the idea of completion helps us understand why God granted *seventy* weeks to Israel. I think it is beyond reasonable argument to say that God's use of seven and ten is random and meaningless. God is just too deliberate and purposeful.

There are two other ways that God has used seven and ten. First, the

annual Day of Atonement always fell on the *tenth* day of the *seventh* month. The Day of Atonement was the most important day in Israel's religious year because God required Israel to stand before His judgment bar on that day. It was a somber day and a day of fasting. It was *the annual day of reckoning*, and everyone in Israel was concerned whether God had accepted their individual efforts to make atonement.

Remember, *the seventh month indicates that God's justice has gone as far as He will go and the tenth day indicates that man's behavior has gone as far as God will let him go!* So, the tenth day of the seventh month is judgment day!

Second, the great red dragon in Revelation 12, the leopard-like beast in Revelation 13, and the scarlet beast on which the whore rides in Revelation 17 have *seven* heads and *ten* horns. The seven heads on these beasts represent the same thing, namely the seven religious systems of the world. The ten horns represent ten kings (political pawns) which the devil himself will appoint during the sixth trumpet. When the time comes, the seven heads and ten horns indicate *completion* – a world whose leadership is *full* of theological and political evil.

You may think this discussion on the number seventy amounts to conjecture. If so, then why does the “Great Week” and the “Grand Week” each consist of *seventy* cycles? The Great Week consists of seven Great Days and each Great Day consists of ten Jubilee cycles (seventy weeks). Likewise, the Grand Week consists of seven Grand Days and each Grand Day consists of ten centuries (1,000 years). When we place the seventeen prophetic time periods found in Daniel and Revelation in their proper places according to Rule Four, the dates and numbers will perfectly align so that everything neatly folds into a Grand Week of 7,000 years!

The Bottom Line

I believe there is a definite connection between the number “seventy” and 1994, and there is also a definite connection between the number “seventy” and the duration of sin. We can see that from Creation, God allotted a total of 7,000 years for sin. I call this time period, the Grand Week (each day of the week translates as 1,000 years – Psalm 90:4, 2 Peter 3:8). The evidence aligns backward and forward. From the beginning, God foreknew the limits of His patience with sin and He deliberately set the duration of sin to be seventy (7 x 10) centuries or 7,000 years! When God's use of seventy is further synthesized, I find that God's patience with Jews and Christians ended in 1994. In other words, for purposes of proclaiming the gospel, God abandoned human

organizations in 1994. The 144,000 will not be an organized body of people. Rather, they will be a group of diverse individuals upon whom the Holy Spirit rests. Seventy Jubilee cycles ended in 1994 and there is no further need to translate apocalyptic time as a day for a year. In 1994, God gave the seven angels the seven trumpets and they are armed and ready, waiting for the divine command to harm Earth.

Because the second and third trumpets involve asteroid impacts, I do not think it is coincidental that God gave the whole world a “prophetic sample” of coming events in 1994. You may recall the implosion of Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 into Jupiter during July 1994. That marvelous event was televised and published worldwide. Those impact craters on Jupiter for the past fifteen years have been a harbinger of coming asteroid impacts on Earth. The comet, Shoemaker-Levy 9, broke up into a string of twenty-one chunks as it approached Jupiter and as these chunks accelerated into Jupiter’s gravity, they created the most powerful explosions ever witnessed by mankind. In fact, one impact crater is so large that three planets the size of Earth can fit in it!

Summary

Even though the Bible does not explicitly say when the seven angels received the seven trumpets, and even though the Bible does not mention 1994, I conclude that Jesus gave the seven trumpets to the seven angels in April 1994 because God’s patience with Earth ended with seventy Jubilee cycles. According to His great mercy, God granted Israel thirty Jubilee cycles and the Gentiles forty Jubilee cycles. Arriving at 1994 is not easy and a fair amount of skepticism is warranted. Nevertheless, I believe that a synthesis of the topics just discussed will rule out any other date. In summary, here are five major points:

1. **Two Different Ways of Measuring Time** – There has to a valid rule governing the interpretation of apocalyptic time because it is clear that some prophetic time-periods are to be translated and some are not. Based on the information presented above, I have drawn the line at 1994. Prior to 1994, a day is translated as a year in apocalyptic prophecy. After the expiration of the Jubilee Calendar in 1994, the translation of time is not permitted or justified. I cannot accept the premise that expositors of prophecy are free to interpret apocalyptic time according to personal whim or opinion because apocalyptic prophecy is based on a very intelligent design and God’s Word speaks for itself.

2. **The Jubilee Calendar** – The Jubilee Calendar did not end at the cross for two reasons. First, Jesus died in *the middle* of the seventieth week; therefore, the seventieth week was unfinished at the cross. Second, the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14 operate on both sides of the cross; therefore the Jubilee Calendar and the translation of a day for a year operates on both sides of the cross. In this particular case, the 2,300 day year prophecy extends from 457 B.C. to A.D. 1844. The Jubilee Calendar did not end in 1844, and the Great Day of Sabbath does not end until 1994.
3. **The Great Week** – The time between the Exodus in 1437 B.C. and the dedication of Solomon’s temple in 947 B.C. was 490 years. Then, the time between the dedication of Solomon’s temple and the decree of King Artaxerxes in 457 B.C. was another 490 years. Then, the seventy weeks in Daniel consisted of 490 years. Since there are three units of 490 years each, they suggest the presence of an ongoing pattern. Today, we know that God gave the Jews exactly thirty Jubilee cycles of grace – to the very year. It also appears that God gave the Gentiles forty Jubilee cycles of grace (A.D. 34-1994). These two period of grace total seventy Jubilee cycles in all. Using the weekly template and aligning each unit of 490 years as a Great Day, we find the presence of a Great Week. When the Great Week ends, so does the translation of apocalyptic time.
4. **Full Cup Principle** – Evidently, God uses the numbers seven and ten to express the limits of divine forbearance. When Israel violated *seventy* Sabbath years, they were exiled to Babylon for *seventy* years. When God gave Israel a second chance, He gave the nation *seventy* weeks. We also see God’s use of seven and ten used during Israel’s annual judgment day, the Day of Atonement. This special day occurred on the tenth day of the seventh month. Furthermore, the dragon and the leopard-like beast in Revelation 12 and 13 have seven heads and ten horns. The heads and horns represent the sum of religious and political powers on Earth. Finally, the whole drama of sin fits neatly into *seventy* centuries (7,000 years). In other words, when the millennial Sabbath ends (seventh millennium), Earth will be made new.
5. **God’s Timing Is Perfect** – We find throughout the Bible that God’s timing is always perfect. He knows no haste or delay. Given this fact, two things stand out very prominently. First, if we translate the apocalyptic prophetic time periods prior to 1994 according to God’s calendar (a day for a year) and if we treat all

apocalyptic time periods after 1994 as literal time periods, everything written about timing in apocalyptic prophecy harmoniously aligns with a 7,000 year picture for the duration of sin. (Sin is destroyed at the end of the 1,000 years in Revelation 20.) Second, now that we understand what the seven trumpets are, if we align Revelation 8:2 with the end of seventy Jubilee cycles, it seems most appropriate that Jesus would give the seven angels the seven trumpets because God's patience with mankind ran out in 1994. We are living on borrowed time! In fact, giving the seven angels the seven trumpets in 1994 is the only way I know of to explain from the Bible the delay that is imposed on the first four angels in Revelation 7.

When all of the items discussed in this segment are aligned with a working knowledge of God's Jubilee Calendar and the precision of God's actions, there appears to be only one "biblically reasoned" date for Revelation 8:2 and 1994 is that date. Again, I say, "With God, timing is everything."