

The Seven Trumpets

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

Before students of prophecy can begin to consider the seven trumpets of Revelation, they should consider the following introductory statements:

1. The seven trumpets of Revelation are seven horrible judgments that will impact Earth during the Great Tribulation. The judgments will ruin the ecosystems of this planet so completely that planet Earth will not be able to recover. These coming judgments are called “seven trumpets” in the book of Revelation because each judgment is *linked* to the sounding of a trumpet in Heaven. The seven trumpets will be unexpected and cataclysmic. They will distinctly sever the past from the oncoming future. The behavior and thoughts of mankind will drastically change when these judgments begin. The first four trumpets will be catastrophic: Twenty-five percent of the world’s population will die during the first few weeks, and humanity’s infrastructures (e.g., communication, travel, banking, manufacturing, shipping, etc.) will all but disappear. This will produce agony for everyone. The first four trumpets will also be catalytic (A catalyst is a thing that precipitates an event.): In this sense, these coming judgments will cause the whole world to think about and respond toward God in a way that is presently unimaginable. Last, the seven trumpets will be cathartic: They will separate Earth’s survivors into two groups of people. One group, designated “the holy city,” will consist of honest-hearted people who exalt righteousness and love truth above life itself, and the other city, called Babylon, will consist of people who will do whatever it takes to save themselves from suffering and death.

2. The “full cup principle” is a prerequisite for understanding the seven trumpets. In a sentence, the “full cup principle” is a process that God consistently uses to manage groups of people. A group of people can be a city like Sodom, a nation like Israel, an empire like Medo-Persia, or even the whole world as in Noah’s day. This policy is fairly easy to understand. When a majority in a group becomes so degenerate and defiant that extended mercy has no redeeming effect, God’s love for future generations causes Him to respond 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 then sends totally **destructive** judgments. This principle explains the appearance and disappearance of civilizations. The full cup principle is found throughout the Bible. Keeping the full cup principle in mind, consider these examples: The flood in Noah’s day, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the fall of Jericho, the Babylonian captivity (605-536 B.C.), and Jerusalem’s destruction in A.D. 70. For Earth’s last generation, God will send 144,000 servants with four distinct and compelling messages. These four messages will be presented during the seven trumpets, which are redemptive judgments. The seven bowls, which are totally destructive judgments, will follow the seven trumpets.

3. God thoughtfully designed the seven trumpets to accomplish many objectives. One objective is confrontation. God wants to bring all of the false religions of the world “to the table” and confront them with His gospel. The destructive forces of the first four trumpets will bring the religious leaders of the world together. When billions of people see the sudden destruction of notably wicked places all over Earth and the obliteration of 25 percent of the world’s population, most of the survivors will find themselves in genuine anguish, fearing the wrath of *Almighty*

God. The scope of destruction caused by the first four trumpets and the chaos that follows will be so great within every nation that each government will wonder if it will be able to continue functioning as a government. After the dramatic events that make up the first four trumpets occur, the nations of Earth will realize together that the whole world faces an *angry God*. The political leaders of Earth will seek and humbly unite with the religious leaders of Earth in an effort to appease God so that His wrath will cease. Driven by fear, humbled by overwhelming destruction, and ignorant of God's plans, the religious and political leaders of the world will come together and implement a terribly *misguided solution* to appease God's wrath. Ironically, this is precisely what God wants!

Another objective that God has embedded within the seven trumpets is redemption. The first four trumpets will cause destruction that will soften callused hearts and open every person's ears. All people, regardless of religious orientation, will intelligently consider a gospel that would previously have been foreign to them. This, in itself, will be miraculous. Given the religious antagonism that has existed for centuries between Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Atheists, Catholics, Protestants, and Pagans, no religious body can assert that it knows the truth about Almighty God without being condemned by the other six. What is so compelling about this final story is how the first four trumpets will temporarily silence the arrogance that plagues all religions. The overwhelming destruction caused by the first four trumpets will produce a common cause because everyone will be suffering from God's wrath. Billions of people will be humbled and this humility will provide an opening for God's servants, the 144,000, to speak and more importantly, be heard. The 144,000 will boldly proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Thus, people within every religious body will hear and

thoughtfully consider a gospel which they would otherwise refuse to hear!

The seven trumpets have other objectives, but these two examples should demonstrate the point that God carefully designed the seven trumpets in Revelation thousands of years ago to achieve certain objectives. God is deliberate and purposeful in all of His actions, and because of this, I call the seven trumpets and the seven bowls, “Designer judgments.” Since the first day of Creation, God has had a plan for Earth and its inhabitants. I believe the Bible affirms the doctrine of “intelligent design.” Jesus created this world in six literal days and He rested from His creative works on the seventh day. (Genesis 2:1-3) I also believe the Bible affirms the doctrine of “intelligent demise.” Jesus has a plan to totally destroy this world over a course of 1,335 days and nothing can stop Him once He starts the process.

4. Many people, unaware of the four rules that govern the interpretation of apocalyptic prophecy, read Revelation 8:1,2 and conclude that the seven trumpets take place *after* the seventh seal.

This is not the case. By using the four rules, we realize that Revelation 8:1 describes the seventh seal and the remaining verses in chapter 8 describe the first four trumpets. If we approach the book of Revelation with the presupposition that the entire book is written in chronological order, any derived sequence of events will be impossible to understand. The book of Revelation did not provide a single prophecy from beginning to end in chronological order. Instead, once the parameters of each prophecy are understood, *the elements within each prophecy are in chronological order!* According to Rule One, there are five prophecies in the book of Daniel and twelve prophecies in the book of Revelation. (If you are unfamiliar with the four rules that govern apocalyptic interpretation, they are discussed at the end of Chapter 1 in my book, *Daniel, Unlocked for the Final Generation* or see <http://www.wake-up.org/Daniel/DanChap1.htm>.)

Rule One states: “Each apocalyptic prophecy has a beginning and ending point in time and the events occur *in the order given.*”

Take a moment to consider Diagram 12.1.****Page Align**** Notice that the six seals in Prophecy #1 and the six trumpets in Prophecy #3 are in chronological and numerical order. Now, 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 this sealing must occur *before* the Great Tribulation begins. The second element in Prophecy #2 is a scene that takes place in Heaven *after* the Second Coming. (The people who came out of the Great Tribulation are seen standing around God’s throne.) The third element in Prophecy #2 is a numbered element – it is the breaking of the seventh seal. 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 was almost forgotten because it is so disconnected from the six seals in Prophecy #1, but do not be fooled. God deliberately put the seventh seal at the end of Prophecy #2 so that we could accurately determine the timing of the seventh seal.

Follow these four logical steps: (a) The seventh seal has to occur *after* the sixth seal (which is the Second Coming), (b) according to Rule One, the seventh seal has to occur *after* the numberless multitude are seen standing around God’s throne, (c) according to Revelation 20:12, the Book of Life is opened once – at the end of the 1,000 years, and (d) our study of the Seven Seals showed 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!

The seventeen prophecies found in Daniel and Revelation have many elements that occur during the same segments of time. Consider Diagram 12.1 again. The fourth seal in Prophecy #1

(God’s punitive judgments of sword, famine, plague, and wild beasts) and the first trumpet in Prophecy #3 commence at the *same time*. (In fact, the seven trumpets cause sword, famine, plague, and wild beasts to occur!)

It is important to understand how Rule One forces a new prophecy to begin whenever chronological order is broken. This explains why Revelation 8:2 starts a new prophecy. The seven trumpets are not given to the seven angels *after* the 1,000 years have ended and the seventh seal is broken. (Revelation 8:1) Rule One forces Revelation 8:2 to become the starting point of a new prophecy. Whenever a new prophecy begins, we are forced by Rule One to find a starting date for it because each apocalyptic prophecy has a beginning and ending point in time.

Chronological Order within Each Prophecy

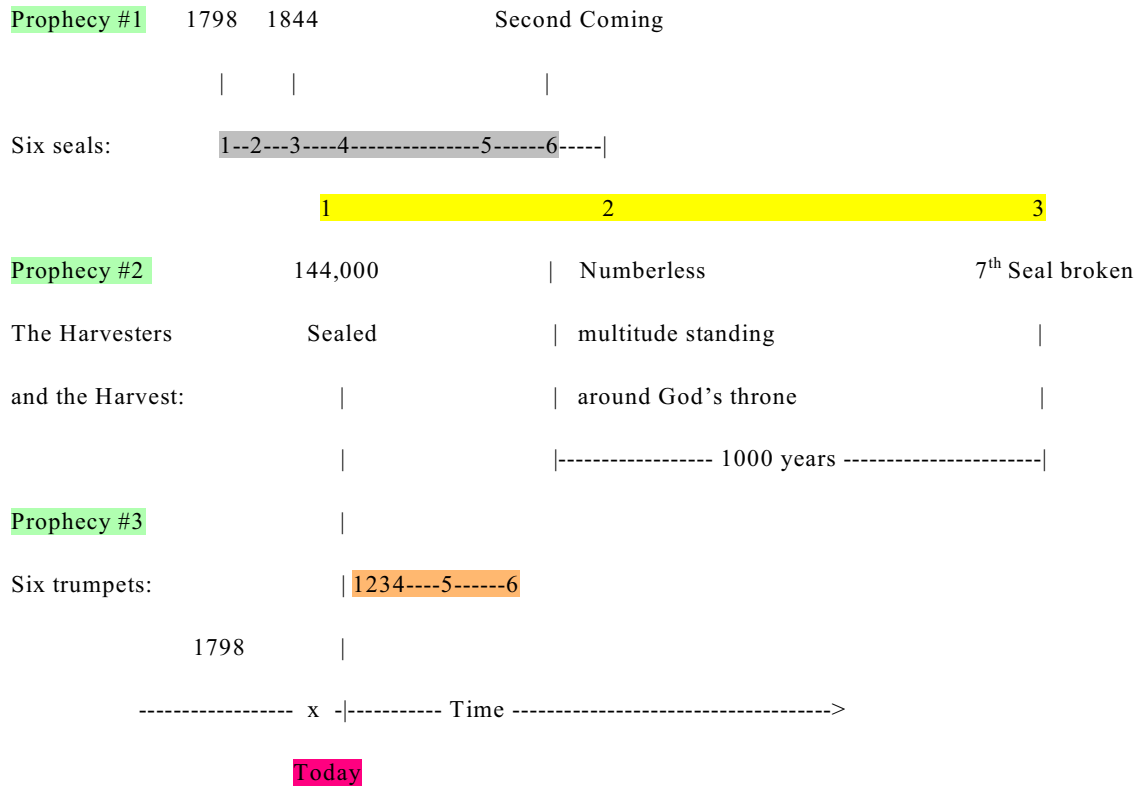


Diagram 12:1 (Not drawn to scale)

The Bottom Line

An accurate understanding of the seven trumpets is crucial to understanding Revelation's story. *If we do not properly understand the timing, nature, and purpose of the seven trumpets, we cannot accurately interpret the book of Revelation.* Ironically, most Christians do not appreciate the necessity of understanding the Seven Trumpets. I can think of three reasons why Christians do not consider this a priority. First, many Christians have been misled. They believe they will be "raptured away" from Earth before the Great Tribulation begins. Because they believe they will not be on Earth during the Seven Trumpets, they are not especially concerned about them. "Yes, the Seven Trumpets are interesting," they may say, "but not critically important. As long as we are ready for the rapture, we have nothing to be worried about." A second group of Christians have been misled in the opposite direction. They believe the Seven Trumpets occurred in the distant past and essentially say the same thing as the first group! "Yes they are interesting, but not critically important. As long as we have a good relationship with Jesus, we have nothing to be worried about." The last group of Christians are those who scoff at Bible prophecy. If you belong to this group, you may say, "Bible Prophecy is a nose of wax. People can make the Bible say anything they want. As long as I have a good relationship with Jesus, I have nothing to be worried about." Even though all three views are in opposition to each other, they produce the same outcome: The seven trumpets are interesting, but there is nothing to be worried about. These Christian responses remind me of the foolish virgins in Matthew 25. Tragically, when the seven trumpets begin, millions of Bible-owning Christians will wake up and discover they have been deceived. Many will become angry and bitter toward God and whose fault will it be? Before it is too late, let each Christian take personal responsibility for what he or

she believes. The Bible is clear, study to show yourself approved. (2 Timothy 2:15)

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 unique event, the seven trumpets that follow will make a great deal of sense. Keep this thought in mind as you investigate the seven trumpets: God is love. This means God's actions *are eternally consistent* with the principle 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." Even God's wrath is motivated by love for righteousness, fairness, and equity. Consider the flood in Noah's day. A "God of love" destroyed the whole world with a flood because a majority of people had become exceedingly wicked. (Genesis 6:7) Then, the following question needs to be asked. How is Noah's flood consistent with the principle of love? 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 loves oncoming generations just as much as He loves the present generation. So, at times, God has destroyed a decadent generation so that the oncoming generation can have freedom from the heavy load that sin imposes on subsequent generations. (The sins of the fathers are passed down to the third and fourth generations! (Exodus 20:5) Over time, sin grows exponentially. Sin is like gravity: It creates a downward vortex that pulls everyone (including the innocent) into its sickness. A new generation gets a chance at life when the old order is destroyed. Thus, it becomes necessary for God to destroy degenerate groups of people when they pass the point of no return.

Saints sometimes have to be destroyed along with degenerate groups. God's wrath against a corporate body of people because of its wickedness is not discriminating. King Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem affirms this point. Nebuchadnezzar's army killed many of God's saints and they took some, like Ezekiel and Daniel, to Babylon as captives. When God's wrath breaks out against a corporate body whose majority is beyond redemption, it is like the indiscriminate destruction of an atomic bomb. This feature of the full cup principle should not concern God's people because God judges each person individually and He will decide each case accordingly. So, whether a person dies of illness, a crime, a tragic accident, or during an expression of God's wrath, the cause of death has nothing to do with one's eternal destiny. God will carefully and thoughtfully judge every person according to his actions at the appointed time. (Ecclesiastes 12:13,14, 2 Corinthians 5:10)

The Censer Comes Down

The story of the Seven Trumpets begins in Revelation 8:2: **“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 ¹peals of thunder [heavy darkness and violent winds], ²rumblings [supernatural voices speaking], ³flashes of lightning [crackling as it lights up the sky with great glory] and ⁴an earthquake [that breaks the world into thousands of small geographic cells]. 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 [fiery] ⁵hail 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 mine)

Five Physical Phenomena

If you noticed, five small superscript numbers are inserted in the above passage. Each number identifies a fearful and spectacular event. These five events will come as a package and this package will occur on *three separate occasions* during the Great Tribulation. The Bible indicates the first display of power (package) will occur at the beginning of the seven trumpets. The second display will occur at the end of the seven trumpets (Revelation 11:19) and the final display will occur at the end of the seven bowls (Revelation 16:18-21). Whether these events will transpire over a few hours or a few days, the Bible does not say. However, according to Rule Three, these five events are not symbolic. They are physical phenomena that will stop the world in its tracks. Everyone on Earth will be arrested 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 are global events, I believe they will be global events because:

1. The seven trumpets will be universal events. They will affect the whole world.
2. God’s coming wrath against Earth will be global in scope, and not a local matter.
3. The seven trumpets will terminate world order as we presently know it. These phenomena will give notice to the world that Jesus Christ now rules over the

world as *Almighty God*.

4. As mentioned, these five phenomena will come as a package and this package will be delivered three times. The third display will occur at the Second Coming, which will obviously be a global event. Since the Second Coming will be global in nature, it is reasonable to conclude that the other two packages will be global as well, since all three packages are designed to get the whole world's attention.

5. Revelation's story is global in nature. These five phenomena will occur *in the same way at the same time in every country*. The Great Tribulation will begin with a fearful display of divine power and the whole world will immediately find out that something unusual is about to occur.

Commentary

I have found the most direct and informative way to offer Bible commentary is to insert words or phrases into those portions of Scripture that are being discussed. This is not an attempt to translate nor change Scripture. I use the process of interlacing my words within Scripture as a method of commentary that uses the fewest words. You will find my words, notes, and phrases throughout this study enclosed in brackets [].

“And I saw the seven angels who stand before God [It is important to realize that the God who sits on the throne when Revelation 8:2 occurs is Jesus. In an earlier study, I have explained how Jesus was found worthy to ascend the throne as “Lord *God Almighty*” in 1798. (See also Revelation 11:17 where Jesus is called “Lord God Almighty.”) The seven angels *stand* in God's awesome presence. Their posture indicates they have positions of highest authority. These seven angels are the seven angels of the seven churches and they are the seven angels who will

eventually pour out the seven bowls] **and to them were given seven trumpets.**” (Revelation 8:2, insertion mine) The number seven indicates totality and completion. The seven trumpets are linked to seven punitive judgments (punishments) that God will administer to the world at the appointed time. One purpose for these coming judgments is the revelation of Jesus Christ. The Father has predetermined that everyone should know that Jesus has been exalted to the position of “Lord God Almighty.” (Revelation 11:17) Currently, very few people on Earth understand who Jesus really is or all that He is doing to save man. In addition to this, only a small percentage of people on Earth realize their need of Jesus as their Savior. During the Great Tribulation, the religions of the world will discover that their views about God, in general, and Jesus Christ, in particular, are false. This discovery will create all kinds of turmoil. However, one truth will become as clear as the noonday Sun to people who are honest in heart: Jesus Christ reigns as Almighty God and He is returning to Earth to take possession of what is rightfully His, and everyone who submits to His love and authority will be saved.

The Timing of Revelation 8:2

It appears that 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. A certain amount of skepticism* 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 give a “biblically reasoned” date for Revelation 8:2, the responses range from silence to a diversionary question to avoid answering the question. 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, or finally, some people have

said, “It does not matter when they received the seven trumpets because if it did matter, God would have told us.”

***Note:** The Bible does not explicitly state a number of important dates, but important dates can be determined. For example, 1798 and 1844 are not explicitly mentioned in Scripture, but they are prophetically important dates. Neither is the date of Christ’s birth announced in Scripture, but the wise men figured it out!

Nothing in Scripture connects Revelation 8:2 with any of the aforementioned dates. For those who duck the question by saying, “It does not matter,” my response is simple: There are seventeen prophecies 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 starting dates cannot be determined. However, there is a thorny problem involved with the dating of Revelation 8:2 and getting to the bottom of this problem is very important. 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 one hundred fifty years (30 days per month x 5 months = 150 day/years)? This question raises more questions: *If time is translated in apocalyptic prophecy, when did the translation of a day for a year begin? Does the translation of a day for a year ever end? If so, when?*

There are biblically reasoned answers for these questions and for three years, I focused on investigating the question of translating time. I believe, by God’s grace, that I stumbled upon the answer in 1990 and this discovery produced Rule Four. Rule Four states, “The presence or absence of the Jubilee Calendar determines how God measures time.” When the Jubilee Calendar is operating, translation (a day for a year) occurs. When the Jubilee Calendar is not

operating, there is no justification for translation. In other words, when the Jubilee Calendar is not in operation, the timing is literal time. I have concluded that the seven angels received the seven trumpets in the Spring of 1994 or at the culmination of the Jubilee Calendar. (Please examine carefully the matter of translation by reading the “Additional Notes” located at the end of this chapter.)

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. During the succeeding years since Spring 1994, we can say that the four angels in Revelation 7:1-3 have been *waiting* to hurt Earth because (a) the four phenomena described in Revelation 8:3-5 have not occurred, and (b) the trumpet judgments have not yet begun. The first four angels having the first four trumpets are waiting for the service described in verses 3-5 to take place. **“Another angel [that is, not one of the seven], who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of *all* the saints, on the golden altar [of Incense] before the throne.”** (Revelation 8:3, insertions mine)

The golden altar before God’s throne is the Altar of Incense. We know this is true because the golden altar in the earthly temple was the Altar of Incense (Hebrews 9:3,4) and it was located before the Table of the Presence. (Exodus 26:35; 40:5) The altar for sin offerings (or burnt offerings) was located in the outer court and it was covered with bronze. (Exodus 38:2) To understand the service conducted at the Altar of Incense in Heaven's Temple, we first need to understand how the Altar of Incense functioned in the earthly temple because the tabernacle built by Moses was a copy and shadow of the *true temple* in Heaven. (Hebrews 8:1-5)

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 Altar of Incense in the earthly temple stood before the Table of Showbread (or the Table of the Presence - Numbers 4:7) which was located on the north side of the tabernacle. The Table of Showbread represents the throne of God. Many people think the Ark of the Covenant represents the throne of God, but this is not the case. For further discussion on this topic, see pages 185-189 in my book, *Jesus, The Alpha and The Omega.*] **The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, 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)

Prayers Answered

Did you notice the 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 responds to the prayers of His saints by telling* the angel at the altar to cast down the censer.

***Note:** With His command, God evidently authorized the casting down of the censer. Given the nature of this service and prayers ascending to God, it does not seem likely that the angel would have thrown the censer down on his own.

In Old Testament times, people gathered around the tabernacle to present their petitions to God at the time of the evening and morning sacrifices. The reason for going to the tabernacle at the time of these services was twofold. First, God’s glorious presence radiated from the Most Holy Place.

The Jews understood this concept: **“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.”**

(James 4:8) Second, each evening and morning, priests conducted an atonement service on the Altar of Incense, and after they placed incense on the glowing coals, the tabernacle was filled with a very sweet fragrance. The worshipers believed that their petitions stood a better chance of being granted if they were presented with the incense because God would be more favorably inclined to grant petitions when sacrifices and the sweet fragrance of incense were offered up before Him. This background helps us better understand the setting. **“The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand.”** (Revelation 8:4)

When Revelation 8:3,4 occurs, the Bible says that **“all”** of the saints (God’s children everywhere) are petitioning God. The *only* thing that could move all of God’s children, as religiously diverse as we are, is a global crisis. What global crisis, after 1994, but prior to the commencement of the seven trumpets – would cause Jesus to issue a command to cast down the censer?

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

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 ⁵hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.” (Revelation 8:5-7, insertion mine)

Before we proceed, review this seven step sequence:

1. Spring 1994, seven angels are given seven trumpets, but they are told to wait.

2. Years later, an angel with a censer comes to the Altar of Incense with much incense to burn.
3. A sweet fragrance rises before God together with the prayers of *all* of God's saints. God responds by telling the angel to cast down the censer.
4. The angel fills his censer with fire from the Altar and throws it down on Earth.
5. Four physical phenomena occur.
6. The seven angels prepared to sound their trumpets.
7. Then, the first trumpet sounds and fiery hail, the fifth phenomenon, burns up a third of Earth.

The End of Corporate Mercy

The special service described in verses 3-5 marks the close of corporate mercy and the beginning of the Great Tribulation. To understand the close of corporate mercy, you have to first understand four elements:

1. In the beginning, when God first created Adam and Eve, God placed them under the obligation of obedience. **“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) Jesus told Adam and Eve that they would die *the very day* they ate the fruit of the forbidden tree. *The penalty for sin is immediate death by execution.*

We know that Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. Lucifer deceived Eve, and Adam ate the fruit because he loved Eve. 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. Instead of

killing the guilty pair that same day, Jesus immediately went to the Father and offered to die in their place. The Father consented and on that very day, Jesus became “subject” to the will of the Father for the next six thousand years. (Psalm 2:7-12; Hebrews 5:4,5) The Hebrew word for son, “*ben*,” means “subject.” When the Bible calls Jesus, “the Son of God,” this title does not mean that the Father created a “son” to die in man’s place, but it does mean that Jesus gave up His prerogatives as an equal to the Father. Jesus subjected Himself to the Father to save mankind from the penalty for sin, and this is why we call Jesus, “The Son of God.” **“During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission [to the will of the Father].”** (Hebrews 5:7, insertion mine)

This is important to understand: A “stay of execution” was put in place the day Adam and Eve sinned because the Father accepted Jesus’ offer to die in man’s place. Think of it this way: Jesus stands between the sinner and the penalty for sin. He has been “standing in the way” of the execution since the day that sin began. Many people do not understand that this intercession is not permanent.

Jesus intercedes on behalf of sinners on two levels, an individual level and a corporate level. Notice how the full cup principle operates on both levels: Corporately speaking, *the world* became corrupt in Noah's day. When an overwhelming majority of the antediluvians had 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 told Noah to build an ark and he 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 did send total destruction), mercy was extended to *individuals* (He did provide the ark).

Corporate mercy and mercy for individuals are separate and distinct matters. For six thousand years, Jesus has been interceding on both levels for the benefit of mankind, and this dual intercession confuses many people. Consider this: There were two altars in the wilderness tabernacle. The bronze Altar of Burnt Offering (located in the courtyard) was used by individuals for the purpose of atonement. However, the golden Altar of Incense (located inside the tabernacle) was used for *corporate* atonement. Each evening and morning, priests offered atonement on the golden altar for the whole nation of Israel. Because there was atonement around the clock for Israel on the Altar of Incense, a holy God could dwell in a camp of sinners without destroying it!

At various times, God dealt with ancient Israel as though the whole nation was one person (a corporate body). For example, the Babylonian captivity was corporate punishment because a majority in Israel were defiant and rebellious. Even though God punished Israel corporately, there were some individuals in Israel at that time who still pleased God, men like Ezekiel, Daniel and his three friends. However, the majority in Israel displeased God, so He raised up a destroyer, King Nebuchadnezzar, to destroy the entire nation. Of course, God also dealt with individuals in Israel, too. You may remember names like Achan (Joshua 7), Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Numbers 16), Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5). Do not forget, God also punished King David for having an affair with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah (2 Samuel 11).

So, the first thing to understand about Revelation 8:2-5 and the service at Heaven's Altar of

Incense is that the Altar of Incense is used for corporate intercession. *The sudden termination of services at this altar indicates a sudden end of corporate mercy for the world.*

2. 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 (as bad as that can be), but human stench is our unrighteousness. God is totally selfless and pure, and we are just the opposite, totally selfish and impure – even after a good scrubbing in a hot bath. 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 they were still a stench in God's nostrils, God required the offering of a special fragrant incense each evening and each morning. Jesus designed this fragrance to mask man's sinful stench:

“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)

Remember that people would gather outside the temple to present their prayers and petitions to God. They gathered at the evening and morning services because they reasoned that their petitions would be more favorably presented if they ascended with the sweet fragrance of

incense. Think about this: If you petitioned a great king to grant a very important request, don't you think a fragrant atmosphere would be more favorable to the king than a "smelly" one? This explains why the angel in Revelation 8:3-5 is given much incense to burn on the Altar of Incense. God's people on Earth (a dear group of stinkers) are desperately praying for His help!

3. In Bible times, small metal buckets 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 above the Testimony [the Ten Commandments], 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) The 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. So, I conclude that God Himself ignited and sustained the fire on the Altar of Incense which made it holy. In other words, the fire on the Altar of Incense was "set apart" from the fire that burned on the Altar of Burnt Offering. I mention this point for two reasons. First, the "strange" fire that Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, used was probably taken from the Altar of Burnt Offering. Evidently, they came before the Lord with man-made or "unauthorized" fire to burn incense. This action

was a defiant sin and an insult to God. God's response was to send fire from His presence and kill them. (Leviticus 10:1,2) Second, I believe 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 atonement has nothing to do with the efforts or desires of Earth's inhabitants. It is God's gift to all of us. The perpetual burning fire on the Altar of Incense represents His perpetual burning love for us.

4. There is one last topic that will firmly secure the conclusion that Revelation 8:3-5 marks the end of corporate mercy. Look at Daniel 12:11,12: **“From the time that the daily [service] sacrifice* is abolished [in Heaven] and the abomination that causes desolation is set up [this Hebrew phrase points to a universal death decree that will be set up to destroy all of God's saints – see *Daniel Unlocked for the Final Generation*, pages 228-233], there will be 1,290 days.**

Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days [allotted for the Great Tribulation].” (Insertions and deletion mine.)

***Note:** The word “sacrifice” in verse 11 is not in the original Hebrew text. It was supplied by well-meaning translators. This inserted word is misleading. If a word should be supplied, a better choice would be the word, “service.”

Remember, the tabernacle on Earth was a copy and shadow of Heaven's temple. According to Paul, Jesus serves in Heaven's *true tabernacle* as our High Priest. (Hebrews 8:1-5) This is the wonderful aspect about the doctrine of parallel temples. We can understand Heaven's process to save mankind by studying the various services conducted in the earthly temple. In other words, 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 was for corporate atonement. Evening and morning, the priests presented an atonement service for the camp of Israel before the Lord on the Altar of Incense. The priests conducted a second daily routine on the Altar of Burnt Offering. During daylight hours, people brought their sin offerings to the Altar of Burnt Offering. Both services were considered perpetual or “daily.” Daniel 12:11 indicates a daily service at Heaven’s Altar of Incense will come to an end and 1,290 days later, a universal death decree (the abomination that causes desolation) will be imposed on God’s saints. How do we know that Daniel 12:11 is speaking about a daily service in Heaven’s temple?

The context of Daniel 12 clearly concerns the end of time. Consider the first two verses: **“At that time [the seventh trumpet] Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress [tribulation] such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people – everyone whose name is found written in the book – will be delivered. [At the Second Coming] Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others [those who participated in the crucifixion of Jesus - see Rev 1:7 and Matt 26:64] to shame and everlasting contempt.”**

(Daniel 12:1,2, insertions mine)

Now that the context has been established, consider the final words in Daniel 12: **“He [Gabriel] replied, ‘Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. 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. From the time that the daily [service in Heaven] sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation [a universal death decree] is set up, there will be 1,290**

days. Blessed is the one who 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** [in death], **and then at the end of the [1,335] days you will rise** [as will all of God's saints] **to receive your allotted inheritance.'** ” (Daniel 12:9-12, insertions mine)

It should be easy to see that the end of the daily in verse 11 points to an event that occurs near the end of the world. Further, 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 – the earthly temple parallels certain processes that occur in Heaven's temple. Last, we already know that corporate mercy will end when the censer is cast down and God's wrath will follow.

So, the next challenge is to establish when corporate mercy ends. Corporate mercy ends when the censer in Revelation 8:5 is cast down. When corporate mercy is terminated, God's wrath breaks out on the whole world. Revelation 8:5 makes it clear that there will be four global phenomena announcing that God's wrath is coming. Physical phenomena will occur simultaneously all over the world. The whole world will suddenly and unexpectedly come to a stop, arrested by awesome and violent displays of nature. The whole world will be put on notice with these physical phenomena that God's anger with man's behavior cannot be contained any longer. We know from Revelation 7 that God's wrath has been overdue since 1994. We also know from Revelation 8 that when the censer is cast down, four phenomena will immediately occur. A few days later, the first trumpet will sound and fiery hail will fall from the sky and burn one-third of Earth. The global scope and destructive nature of the first trumpet is “a prophetic sample” of the burning hail that will fall from Heaven and destroy the world at the end of the

1,000 years.

Nuclear War?

You might be wondering about the prayers of all the saints. What would cause “all” the saints to petition Jesus and cause Him to end corporate intercession? The Bible does not say what the saints are praying about. Of course, saints have been praying to God every day for thousands of years, but the events described in Revelation 8:3-5 are not typical and neither are the prayers.

Personally, I believe there is one thing that would cause *all* of God's saints to pray for the same thing at the same time: Nuclear war.

Here is a possible scenario. I believe that one day, a war could erupt and quickly escalate into a nuclear exchange. Tens of millions could die in this war. This war could affect our distressed global economy and affect the distribution of oil, food, clothing, building materials, and commerce of all kinds. This war would be a fearful event for each person living on Earth. If such a war occurred and the global consequences were far reaching, the whole world would cry out (demand) “peace and safety.” This war 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)

Notice that within a context of people saying “peace and safety” that “sudden destruction” comes from God. We can be sure that during a nuclear war, world leaders will do their best to stop the war for the sake of *global* peace and safety, but these human efforts will not be able to stop this

war fast enough. The speed of intercontinental missiles is measured in seconds and the carnage of a nuclear exchange would be incalculable. Besides, once a nation's sovereignty is threatened by the impact of one nuclear bomb, what would be the point of any nation using restraint against a deadly enemy? The maxim for nuclear war is simple: "Annihilate or be annihilated."

Here's a possible scenario I hope you will consider: During a nuclear exchange, an angel rushes to the Altar of Incense, and together with the petitions of *all* the saints, he puts much incense on the coals of the altar and a sweet fragrance ascends. *Jesus favorably responds to the petitions of His saints.* As Almighty God, He answers the prayers of His saints by stepping into the din of war with great authority and sends five physical manifestations that are so magnificent that the war actually stops! He who calmed the storm on Galilee will stop this war. The nations of Earth will 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. Jesus will step into the affairs of mankind with something far bigger and far more powerful than mankind has to offer. In fact, the first trumpet will burn up a third of the entire world! Suddenly, man's biggest problem is not nation against nation, it is mankind versus one angry God.

A Summary

By now, you should understand that (a) there were two altars in the earthly temple because there are two levels of atonement, corporate and individual, (b) incense was used each evening and morning on the Altar of Incense to mask the stench of sinners, (c) censers were used daily for atonement services in the earthly temple, and (d) the termination of daily services in Heaven's temple is dated 1,335 days from the Second Coming. When we put these four subjects together 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 confirm this conclusion. When all of God's saints are praying for divine help, Jesus will respond by terminating the daily service at the Altar of Incense. He tells the angel to cast down the censer. God's corporate wrath begins because corporate mercy has ended. After the censer at the Altar of Incense is cast down, the Bible continues the sequence by saying, **"Then the seven angels who had [been holding] the seven trumpets [since 1994] prepared to sound them."** (Revelation 8:6, insertions mine)

Once a person understands the particulars involved in the scene described in Revelation 8:2-6, two elements become self-evident. First, the seven trumpets could not have occurred in the past because the censer was not cast down long ago. We know that corporate mercy has not yet ended because the physical phenomena marking the end of corporate mercy has not occurred. Even more, the first four trumpets have not occurred because the wrath of God described by the four trumpets has not begun. There is no historical evidence supporting the notion that the seven trumpets have taken place. You would think that zero evidence would cause rational people to rethink their historical position on the seven trumpets, but religious beliefs can be so blinding that "a man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." When faulty rules of interpretation are used, errant conclusions follow.

There is a second self-evident matter that we have to consider. The book of Revelation indicates that the answer to the prayers of all the saints is not a pre-tribulation rapture! Jesus answers the prayers of His saints by having the censer cast down. Unfortunately, "pre-trib" Christians and "historicist" Christians have been misled. The seven trumpets are critically important and they

have never been more relevant than right now. The last group of Christians – those who say that Bible prophecy is a “nose of wax” are in for a big surprise. They are going to discover that it was not Bible prophecy that was a “nose of wax;” instead, it was their own theology.

The First Four Trumpets

Remember, the first four trumpets will come in a group of four rapid-fire judgments. These four judgments could fall over a period of about sixty days. These four judgments will occur in their order, as four distinctive blows. They 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 small team of just 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 He wants to say to this diverse world. To get everyone’s attention, He will use a display of power and destruction that will silence the din of a 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 a number of objectives and one objective is to prompt a unified response from mankind.

Fire and Water

The wrath of God will begin with judgments of fire and water. The first trumpet judgment will come as a fire storm of burning hail. I believe that God will send white hot meteors to rain down on wicked places and burn them up (just as Jesus destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah). The second

trumpet judgment will be an asteroid impact into an ocean. The resulting tsunami will destroy *thousands* of coastal cities. It appears that God will use the fire of the first trumpet to sterilize wicked cities that cannot be saved with water and 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 corporately beyond redemption. This powerful 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 indicate the cause of this darkness, but it could be caused by hundreds of simultaneous volcano eruptions. If the Pacific “ring of fire” ignited and belched enough ejecta into the atmosphere, the jet stream could easily cover the *middle third* of Earth with enough soot and debris to darken the Sun, moon and stars. If the darkness lasts for a few weeks, agricultural crops would not produce food. Global famine would immediately follow.

I believe 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 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* all over the world in just two months will put the rest of the world on notice that there really is a God and He is angry with man’s degenerate behavior. Some scientists will argue that the geological history of Earth shows that catastrophic

events happen at predictable intervals every million years or so, and calamities like this have happened on Earth before. However, the first four trumpets will discredit science. Science will not be able to explain how notably wicked places all over the world were destroyed.

Hopefully, you now understand how the end of corporate mercy occurs and have some insight about the first four trumpets. Now, we can consider the Bible record:

Trumpet 1

“The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood [Fire and blood are mixed together *before* they are hurled down on Earth. This use of language 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** [Greek: *ge* which means land] **was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass** [Greek: *chortos* is the word for grass which includes vegetation and crops] **was burned up.** [The repetitive use of one-third indicates that judgment is mixed with God’s mercy.] (Revelation 8:7, insertions mine)

Trumpet 2

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, a third of the living creatures in the sea died** [from the oxygen deficient water], **and a third of the ships were destroyed** [by the tsunami resulting from the impact]. (Revelation 8:8,9, insertions mine)

Trumpet 3

The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star [a second asteroid, perhaps a mile or

more in diameter], **blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water – the name of the star is Wormwood** [poisoned water]. **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)

Trumpet 4

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.**

(Revelation 8:12, insertions mine)

Coming Trumpets

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 I conclude the first four trumpets are literal descriptions of literal events. In other words, what would fire, trees, and vegetation symbolize in the first trumpet if not fire, trees, and

vegetation? What *sinks* real ships and causes *real* people to die if not two asteroid impacts? For that matter, what do people represent in verse 11 if not *real* people? What do the Sun, moon, and stars represent in verse 12 if not the Sun, moon, and stars visible in our solar system?

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 fire, trees, and vegetation? What words would God have to use if He wanted us to understand that during the third trumpet thirsty 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 physical laws. So, asserting that the first four trumpets should be treated as symbols is not a valid argument for several reasons.

If the first four trumpets are in fact symbolic descriptions of things other than what they say, then

where are the 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. Consider these two relevant examples. The great prostitute introduced in Revelation 17:1 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.” I have used these two examples to show what *relevant texts* are. 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 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 trumpet judgments “symbolic” is unwarranted. God has described the seven trumpets with language that makes perfect sense once you understand God’s use of vocabulary. Everyone alive at that time will see and experience the first four trumpets. Unfortunately, they will be literal.

Jesus Sparing Two-Thirds

Did you notice the repetitive use of thirds in the first four trumpets – 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 that He is generous. Instead of destroying two-thirds of everything, Jesus spares two-thirds of everything! 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 would 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 eliminate a significant portion of his tax base. David knew that in years to come, the Moabites would recover from this war and repopulate their tribal nation. Their increase in taxes would mean additional future 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 repetitive use of destroying one-third in Revelation should make sense. This 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 *justifiably* destroying two-thirds of everything, the Lord restrains Himself by only destroying one-third. The repetitive use of thirds confirms that 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. If God destroyed two-thirds of everything, His wrath would be justified in the eyes of watching angels because corporately speaking, Earth today is similar to Earth in Noah’s day – beyond corporate redemption.

Sixty Days?

In the introduction of this chapter, I stated that the first four trumpet judgments will produce death and destruction on a biblical scale that exceeds human measurement and calculation.

These four judgments will ruin Earth to the extent that recovery will be impossible. I also wrote that the first four trumpets could occur during a period of about sixty days. Even though the Bible does not 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.

The Bible predicts that the human race will respond out of terror and ignorance 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 crisis government “Babylon” because its behavior will parallel that of 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), then mathematically, Babylon has to form within a maximum of ninety days after the Great Tribulation begins to have time to persecute the saints for forty-two months. It is ironic that when the whole world unites as a “family” to appease an angry God, man’s arrogance and ignorance will combine and produce persecution!

Since Babylon has to form and pass laws that will begin the persecution within a maximum of ninety days after the censer is cast down, this suggests that the first four trumpets will come in a rapid-fire sequence. Let me explain the conclusion:

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, what else would move diverse religions and nations to unite and form Babylon so that the global persecution of God’s people 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 testimony of the 144,000 which will begin 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 everything they currently believe. 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 clearly on the warpath,” and (b) something must be done quickly to appease God or He will destroy everyone.

3. If the first four trumpets occurred in a rapid-fire sequence, the resulting shock and awe would overwhelm the whole world. Panic and trembling would be so great that a war involving nuclear exchanges would end. Panic and a fear of “The Living God” would bring world leaders (religious and political) into humble union. United by terror and motivated by the unknown, they would move *quickly* to appease Almighty God. *Fear explains the sudden formation of Babylon.* Everyone on Earth will conclude that God is angry. Of course, extreme circumstances require extreme solutions and the Bible predicts that man’s solution to appeasing God’s wrath will be extreme (otherwise unthinkable).

When these three factors are combined and mathematically aligned, it is reasonable to conclude that the first four trumpets have to occur within a maximum of ninety days. Furthermore, it seems that Babylon’s persecution could begin on the sixty-fourth day of the Great Tribulation. (This calculation will be covered later.) Babylon appears to form during the darkness of the

fourth trumpet, and Babylon’s directors will humbly, logically, and out of necessity, move quickly to do everything possible to appease God by reversing man’s degeneracy. However, in the process of attempting to do good, Babylon ends 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 will become 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

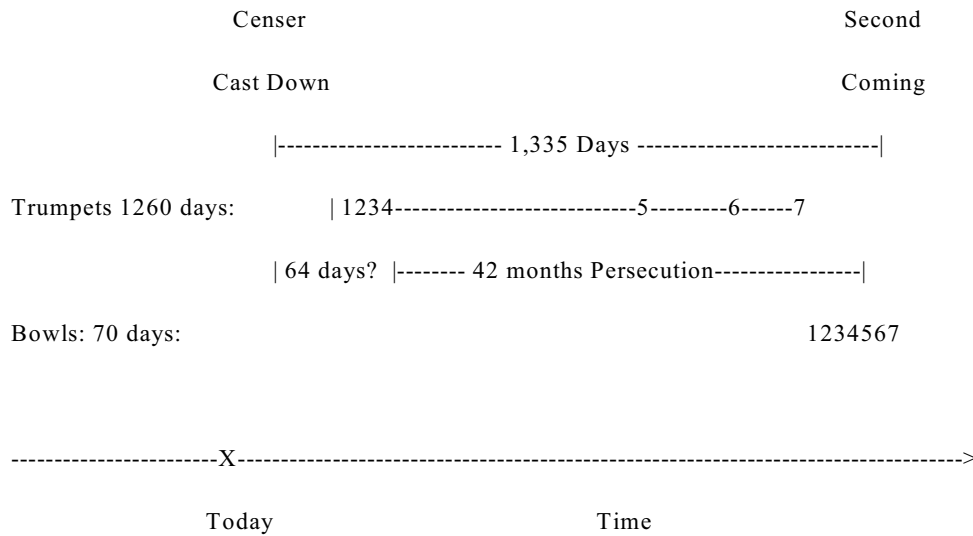


Diagram 12.2 (not drawn to scale)

Part II

Introduction to 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 last three trumpets are God’s response to Babylon’s blasphemy, the rebellion of the wicked, and the persecution of His saints. However, before we examine the last three trumpets, we need to consider the gap of time between the fourth and fifth trumpets. This gap will be significantly longer than the ninety day period of the first four trumpets. I believe this interval will be 826 days between the time persecution begins (during the fourth trumpet) and when the fifth trumpet begins.

Babylon is represented in Revelation 13:1-8 as a leopard-like monster that rises out of a sea. The sea represents “a sea of people, many nations.” (Revelation 17:15) In other words, Babylon will organize and rise up from *within* the nations of Earth and it will be *given* authority over *every* nation without going to war or firing a single bullet! The Bible speaks clearly about this amazing event: “. . . **And he** [the leopard-like beast] **was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.**” (Revelation 13:7, insertion and italics mine)

The leopard-like beast will be a “monster-sized” church-state. Babylon’s religious 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. It is utterly astonishing that the world’s political leaders will *voluntarily* submit to Babylon’s authority! This amazing submission is unthinkable and impossible today, but the Bible predicts it will occur. Consider this scenario: When the human race experiences the magnitude and scope of God’s wrath on thousands of notably wicked places and realizes that God has killed 25 percent of the world’s population, everyone will tremble at God’s awful wrath. If the wrath of Almighty God (actually, Jesus Christ) can dwarf and extinguish a nuclear exchange, it can certainly humble the egos of clergy and politicians. During the gloomy and foreboding darkness of the fourth trumpet, political leaders of the world will readily agree with their “religious experts” that God’s wrath must be promptly appeased or everyone could die. The question of that moment will be, “What should man do to appease God’s wrath?”

Religious leaders will conceive a well-intended, but foolish plan to appease God. Their real problem will be ignorance. The religious experts of the world do not understand God’s Word and they do not know that their efforts to appease God will only end up offending Him! However, from their perspective, their first challenge will be that of not appearing arrogant. The problem is that every religion claims to know God and His truth better than the rest. This arrogance makes it difficult, if not impossible, for antagonistic religions to compromise with each other. Conceivably, when religious leaders meet to discuss ways to appease God, they will conclude that if one religious body embarks on a unilateral course to appease God and God is not pleased, God’s wrath will not stop. However, religious leaders will be able to agree on this,

“One God is angry with *all* of us. We have seen the enormity of His wrath in every nation. If each religious body attempts to appease God on its own, God will not be pleased *with the whole world because no religion is perfect*. On the other hand, if *all* nations and *all* religions unite as a *world family*, our chances of offending God would be reduced. Perhaps God will have mercy on *all* of us when He sees that our humility and sincerity is global.”

The Enabling Lie

In their effort to appease God’s wrath, the world’s religious leaders will embrace a “reasonable” lie that almost everyone can accept. *This lie is that everyone on Earth worships the same God, even though He is called by different names*. This lie will enable opposing and antagonistic religions to unite as a world family. When the religious leaders try to use different sources of authority (such as the Bible – Christians, the Koran – Muslims, the Mishna – Jews, the Sutras – Buddhist, the Four Bedas – Hindu, Canon law, Church Traditions, Sacred writings, etc.) they will not be able to find common ground, and consequently, their conflicting views about God will not be resolved. After the trumpet destruction, however, religious leaders will find common ground with this summary: “We know that God hates decadent behavior. Therefore, it is reasonable that all religions can appease the *same* God by outlawing immoral behaviors.” Think about this declaration for a moment. God is not interested in a reduction of decadent behavior if it is achieved through force. God did not reduce decadent behavior in Noah’s day, God did not reduce decadent behavior in Sodom and Gomorrah, and God did not reduce Israel’s decadent behavior to appease His wrath. God gives people the power of choice and if we choose to live decadent lives, God will allow this to continue until the full cup principle is implemented. When Babylon is formed, religious leaders will not know that corporate intercession has ended.

They will not know that the end of world is less than 1,335 days away. They will not know that this planet is destined for total destruction. Most of all, they will not know that their actions will be offensive to God! The only thing that will interest Jesus during the Great Tribulation is what *individuals* will do when confronted with His gospel which contains the unvarnished truth about God and His demands upon mankind. Jesus wants to reveal who will choose submission and who will choose rebellion. The Great Tribulation will prove that it is impossible for the seven religions of the world to admit their errors and embrace the truth. This is why the clergy of Babylon will seek and find common ground. They will embrace the lie that everyone worships the *same* God, even though He is called by different names.

This brings us to the second problem that religious leaders will face when setting up a global church/state. Religious leaders will want to avoid the risk that one nation or one religious body might further offend God through defiance. Given the global crisis that will exist at the time of the fourth trumpet and the potential risk of offending God, religious leaders will insist that *all* nations and *all* religions must unite *as a one-world family* to appease the *same* angry God. By insisting that religious bodies and nations avoid unilateral action and demanding that a one-world union is necessary to avoid any show of arrogance and defiance, religious leaders will justify the creation of Babylon with the lie that everyone worships the *same* God. Ironically, the very thing that Babylon attempts to avoid, Babylon does. Babylon will offend God with blasphemy and persecute His saints. Ultimately, Babylon will make war on Jesus when He appears! False religion always stands in opposition to the will of God – sometimes ignorantly, sometimes arrogantly. Nevertheless, the formation of Babylon will appear to be reasonable to most people and almost everyone on Earth will “follow” after the beast – at first.

The Bible clearly predicts, “**The *whole world was astonished and followed the*** [lies that justified the formation of the leopard-like] **beast.”** (Revelation 13:3, italics and insertion mine)

The nations of the world will approve the formation of Babylon and they will voluntarily submit to Babylon’s directives. Political leaders will blindly *follow* the recommendations of their religious experts. Given Earth’s present political diversity and the religious antagonism that constantly fosters hatred and separation, we have to ask, “What else could bring the whole world together *as one family* of human beings? What else can put everyone on the same side of the table, that is, being part of the solution rather than part of the problem?” The answer is so simple that it is hard to believe. *The first four trumpets were carefully designed thousands of years ago to bring our religiously diverse world together as one family for the purpose of appeasing a God that most of the world doesn’t worship, which is Jesus Christ.*

The Nightmare Begins

Once Babylon is formed, the nightmare begins. Religious leaders will decide on laws that will reduce decadence and immoral behavior. The political leaders and the nations of Earth will move quickly to implement these laws so that God’s wrath might be appeased. Ironically, the formation of a global church/state will prove to be more embarrassing and humiliating than world leaders could ever have anticipated. What seemed to be a great idea in the beginning will turn into a horrible experience. By the time the fifth trumpet sounds, the failures of Babylon will force the world into admitting that a religiously diverse world cannot please or worship the *same* God. The real problem is that every man thinks that his “god” is the only true God. The amount of religious misery, friction, and infighting that will come as a result of Babylon’s formation cannot be calculated. Jesus wants everyone to see and experience Babylon’s spectacle.

Jesus also wants everyone to understand that He is sovereign and He rules over Earth. He designed the first four trumpets to obtain a unified response from the whole world. During the process of trying to appease the *same* angry God, everyone who is honest in heart will discover that *none* of the world's religions actually worship the God who is actually angry! Rather, the sincere in heart will see that the world worships false gods, manmade gods – worthless gods. As time passes, everyone who is honest in heart will see that everything Babylon stands for is evil and deceitful. Babylon will become a giant cage of vultures and a brood of vipers full of demonic power and clever lies. (Revelation 18:2)

In Daniel 2, God used a simple dream to prove to King Nebuchadnezzar that the god of his forefathers, Marduk, was no God at all. With the same dream, God also proved that Babylon's religious leaders were just sophisticated hypocrites and clever liars. In case you do not remember the details, here is the story: One night, God disturbed the mind of Nebuchadnezzar with a dream and when the king awoke, he was deeply impressed that Marduk had spoken directly to *him*, but the king could not remember the dream. Desperate, King Nebuchadnezzar called Babylon's religious leaders together and demanded that they tell him what he had dreamed. This request seemed perfectly reasonable to Nebuchadnezzar because Babylon's religious leaders had convinced the king that they regularly communicated with Marduk, the great God of the Babylonians.

Of course, the king's request put the religious leaders of Babylon in a very difficult place. They knew immediately that they could not meet the king's demand. After a bit of procedural stalling, the king clearly saw that his religious experts could not and had not communicated with Marduk. The king realized that his religious experts were hypocrites and liars. This revelation made him

so angry that he was prepared to kill them, but Daniel came to the rescue. Daniel came before the king and revealed the dream. The king was delighted to recall the dream, but the king's religious paradigm was shattered in the process. He learned that (a) the God of the Jews (not Marduk) was "the most high God," (b) Babylon would eventually fall to a more powerful nation, and (c) Babylon's religious experts were nothing more than a bunch of common liars. Think about Nebuchadnezzar's situation. Three *inescapable* truths demolished his confidence in everything he once believed to be true!

The parallel between modern Babylon and ancient Babylon is obvious and important. When the first four trumpets occur, the religious paradigms of billions of people will be shattered with the inescapable truth that Almighty God is angry with mankind. Religious experts will insist that the world must unite as one family to appease the *same* God, but "thinking" people will soon begin to challenge their religious leaders. "Where is the pre-trib rapture you promised?" or "You said the seven trumpets of Revelation were fulfilled long ago – so what are these judgments?" or "If you knew God's will and plans, why didn't you warn us of these coming judgments?" or "You said that we would not suffer God's wrath. How long this will last?" Many godly people will become angry with their religious leaders after the first four trumpets occur because they will clearly see, like Nebuchadnezzar, that their clergy misled them with lies. *Actually, the only thing that Babylon has to offer the world is the lie that man-made laws mandating moral behavior will appease God's wrath.* "Religious experts" will promote this lie because they do not know God's Word or His plans. The blind will lead the blind and a horrible experience will be the result. It will not take long for the honest in heart to realize that Babylon is another corrupt church/state exercising absolute power.

Three Prerequisites

The last three trumpets are as deliberate and purposeful as the first four, but the last three trumpets are called three “woes” or curses. The basic objective of these three “woes” is to “capture and condemn” everyone who refuses to embrace the eternal gospel of Jesus Christ. To understand the capturing and condemning process, you have to understand three prerequisites:

1. Babylon’s persecution of the saints
2. The work of the 144,000 and the advance of the gospel
3. The full cup principle and God’s use of a destroyer

Since these prerequisites are key to a complete understanding of the seven trumpets, the explanations of the prerequisites will be quite lengthy.

Prerequisite 1: Babylon’s Persecution

Currently, none of the world’s religious and political leaders anticipate the first four trumpets. It also goes without saying that world leaders will react to God’s wrath with “well-meaning intent,” but their sincere efforts to appease God will be misguided because the leaders of Babylon will be ignorant of God’s plans. Later on, this ignorance will turn into defiance because the 144,000 will explain God’s plans. The defiance that Babylon wanted to avoid in the beginning, Babylon will commit! Ironically, at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, the religious and political leaders of the world will not know that the God they are actually trying to appease is Jesus Christ Himself! However, as time passes, this revelation will become increasingly clear. This truth will prove to be a big surprise and embarrassment for Atheists, Heathen, Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Hindus and Jews. (Even Christians will be surprised and embarrassed.) The revelation of Jesus Christ and His gospel will unmask the error of all religions and the honest in heart will

begin to understand aspects of the gospel they had never contemplated before!

The Seven Heads

The leopard-like beast (Babylon) has seven heads and ten horns. When this beast rises to power, the Bible says that **one** of the seven heads “**had been healed.**” (Revelation 13:3) The seven heads represent the seven religious systems of Earth, and each religious system is a blasphemous organization – that 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) The Bible is clear. The world’s religious systems in place during the Great Tribulation will be arrogant and defiant. Each religious system will falsely claim to know God and speak for God. It is more than ironic that when brought together by a crisis, they will try to avoid arrogance and defiance! Nevertheless, during the Great Tribulation, the honest in heart will clearly see the testimony of Jesus (presented through the 144,000) which exposes the arrogance and defiance of the world’s religious systems.

The *head* that was wounded and “had been healed” when Babylon rises to power is the Roman Catholic Church. The authority of the Roman 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 kings and nations lasted 1,260 years. (Daniel 7:25) When this prophetic period ended, the authority of the Church was fatally wounded during the French Revolution (1789-1799) when Pope Pius VI was dethroned and put in prison in February 1798. On June 7, 1929 the Lateran Treaty was ratified. This treaty with Italy gave the Roman Catholic Church Vatican City. Since then, the religious and political strength of the Catholic Church has been healing – steadily growing in popularity and global

respect. In recent years 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 just one event that demonstrates the Church has *regained* a position of international respect and power. Many nations (170 at this writing) now have ambassadors assigned to the Vatican. However, the deadly wound *is not healed* completely until the pope once again exercises authority over secular governments.

The seven religious *systems* of the world are: Atheism*, Heathenism, Judaism, Islam, Eastern Mysticism, Catholicism, and Protestantism. Of these seven, Protestantism is the *only* religious system that puts a wall of separation between church and state. History records how Protestantism created a democracy in the United States of America by separating the powers of the church from the powers of the state. When secular people and religious people generally agree on moral values, a democracy can flourish without serious conflict between church and state. However, when religious people and secular people widely differ on what constitutes immoral behavior (issues such as abortion, birth control, same sex unions, ordaining gay pastors, God's day of worship, etc.), conflict threatens the freedoms of everyone. *Six of the world's religious systems already believe that civil government should be subservient to religious authority.* Since Protestantism is the smallest and youngest religious system of the seven (Protestants make up less than ten percent of the world's population and Protestants are no longer a majority in any nation), you can see that the formation of Babylon (a global church-state) will not be difficult to achieve since 90 percent of the world's population *already* embraces the idea of a church-led state.

***Note:** Some people claim that Atheism is not a religion, but I maintain that it qualifies as a

religious system and is one of the seven mentioned in the book of Revelation. This is because Atheism is a comprehensive school of thought concerning the non-existence of God. Atheism denies man's accountability to God, Atheism rejects God's sovereignty over the nations, and Atheism explains the origin of mankind through evolution because there is no God. Some people have argued that Atheism insists on the separation of church and state. Historically, this premise is not correct. Whenever Atheism controls government, it does not permit the free exercise of any other religion because *Atheism is a religion*. Atheistic governments are church/state governments. Like other church/state governments, Atheism dictates what people can believe and not believe about God.

The only people speaking directly for God during the Great Tribulation will be the 144,000. Period. God will not use any other clergy such as priests, imams, rabbis, pastors, or evangelists. The 144,000 solely will present the testimony of Jesus – no one else. The 144,000 will begin proclaiming the first angel's message ("Fear God – worship Him," Revelation 14:6,7) on the day the censer is cast down. A few weeks later, when Babylon begins persecuting God's saints, the 144,000 will begin proclaiming the second angel's message ("Babylon is fallen," Revelation 14:8). I am sure that Jesus will give some of His 144,000 servants the opportunity to speak before legislatures, parliaments, kings, prime ministers, dictators, and presidents. (Revelation 10:11) The 144,000 will explain the Bible, including the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, to young and old, rich and poor. They will present the love and salvation of Jesus Christ and His gospel. They will boldly declare that "**Babylon is** [a corrupt organization that it is full of blasphemy and lies. In a word, Babylon is] **fallen.**" (Revelation 14:8, insertion mine)

The 144,000 will tell the world that to believe "everybody worships the *same* God" is a lie. The

God who is angry is Jesus Christ, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and He, alone, is worthy of our love and worship. The 144,000 will also tell political leaders that legislating moral conduct **will not** appease God's wrath. If God had wanted to impose His Ten Commandments on mankind, He could have easily done so by sending legions of angels with torturing devices. 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 behavior that is coerced through force. Tortured confessions are unacceptable to God. Jesus will only forgive us of our sins when we are truly sorry (repentant) for our sins. A God of love will not accept coerced repentance. Jesus said, **"If you love me, you will obey what I command."** (John 14:15) Of course, this testimony will not set well with the religious leaders who insist on the formation of Babylon. Religious leaders will demand that politicians punish these "fools" who know nothing about God and are inciting and misleading others to offend God!

The 144,000 will plainly say, "There will be no more devastating judgments until the fifth trumpet occurs!" However, few of the world leaders will 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 called Babylon. Everyone will be looking to their religious experts for direction and instruction. No nation on Earth will be willing to risk 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 the *same* angry God.

In an effort to diminish decadent behavior, Babylon will dictate a series of laws aimed at defining moral behavior, and civil authorities will see to it that everyone violating Babylon's laws is

punished. Persecution is precisely what Jesus wants because this is how He will determine who has a heart and a mind for truth. *When the price for truth is great, the honest in heart will not fail to pay the price.* Jesus will confront each person on Earth with His gospel, the unassailable truth about God, to see what each person's choice will be. Jesus will speak through the mouths of the 144,000, and the Holy Spirit will confirm His message with miracles and wonders. The 144,000 will present Bible truth with great power and clarity that has never been seen before, and every reasonable argument against truth will be silenced. The Holy Spirit will deeply stir every heart who hears "the testimony of Jesus." Jesus will present His gospel in the clearest of terms through the mouths of the 144,000, and the people who love truth will embrace it without regard for the price. Thus, God will thoroughly inform and test each person on Earth. Individuals obeying the laws of Babylon will receive the wrath of God during the seven bowls. Individuals obeying the laws of God will receive the wrath of Babylon. Either way, the Great Tribulation will be a time of wrath for everyone. (Daniel 8:19)

One Mediator between One God and One World

One last point needs to be presented in this segment on Babylon's persecution of God's people. We know that once the wrath of God begins, fear and panic will overtake mankind. After a few weeks of bedlam, I believe the Roman Catholic Church will assert spiritual leadership and call for a meeting of all religious bodies to discuss a solution to God's wrath. Some scholars within the Catholic Church anticipate a series of powerful judgments or "divine events" that will come upon Earth because of increasing moral decadence, and these judgments will produce a great opportunity for the Church. They believe the Roman Catholic Church will be exalted *above* the other religious systems of the world as "the only true religion" on Earth. When this happens,

they believe the Church will be able to offer salvation, hope, and leadership through the Church.

The Roman Catholic Church does not have a formal position on the seven trumpets. In fact, since the sixteenth century, the Catholic Church has had scholars teaching the seven trumpets were in the past, as well as in the future. So, its anticipation of coming judgments is not Bible based.

This anticipation is largely based on apparitions of Mary and the third vision of Fatima.* Given the fact that the Bible says the deadly wound “will be healed” when Babylon is formed, I conclude the pope will take the initiative to invite the world’s religious and political leaders to a great council sometime during the first sixty days of the Great Tribulation. I believe three amazing decisions will come from this meeting that would otherwise be unthinkable and this is how the deadly wound will be healed and persecution will begin.

1. Given the religious diversity of mankind and given the obvious fact that there is **one** angry God, this council will unanimously agree that all nations must unite *as one family* to appease *the same* angry God so that His wrath will cease. This council will agree that moral values have to be *imposed* on mankind or God’s anger will continue to burn. They will agree on two guiding principles: repentance and worship. *Religious leaders will call for global repentance and to worship God. They will also agree that anyone conducting himself in an immoral way will be punished.* Isn’t it better for one person to suffer than for the whole world to suffer God’s wrath? Enforcing moral standards of conduct, they will conclude, is the only option that men have to terminate the decadent behaviors that offended God.

2. Because everyone at the council will know that God’s anger was directed at notably wicked places all over the world, secular leaders will easily yield to the claims of their religious experts. This means political leaders will humbly accept the responsibility of enacting and enforcing laws

that will reduce sinful behavior so that God's wrath might be appeased and His judgments cease.

All of the nations will agree to participate in this global effort because God's wrath could possibly break out against the *whole* world if any *part* of the world family fails to participate.

Political leaders will go along with **Babylon's** mandates in hopes that Babylon's recommendations will resolve the awful **crisis** that exists between God and man.

3. Leaders of the world understand that every organization requires qualified leadership in order to be effective. To lead the whole world toward repentance and reformation, a "supreme council" composed of various religious and political leaders will be created. This council will be something like the Security Council of the United Nations, except it will be religious in nature. Its urgent mandate will make it far more effective. *I believe the pope will be selected as the leader of Babylon.* Because the healing of the deadly wound has been ongoing for several decades, the pope will be given this exalted position because he is best qualified to oversee and direct the process of appeasing God on a global basis. The pope is uniquely prepared to serve the world in this role because (a) the Roman Catholic Church believes in a church-led state (The pope is both a head of state (Vatican City) and the head of the Church.), and (b) the Roman Catholic Church is the only religious body that already has diplomatic relations with most of the nations on Earth.

***Note:** Some Catholics anticipate a global crisis that will be caused by displays of divine displeasure. They believe this phenomenon will catapult the Church onto the stage of global leadership. See Martin, Dr. Malachi, *The Keys of This Blood*, (Simon and Schuster, 1990), Chapters 32, 33. See also Flynn, Ted and Maureen, *The Thunder of Justice* (MaxKol Communications, 1993). Second, even though the Bible predicts the fatal wound will be healed

when Babylon begins to persecute the saints, understand that the pope **will not** be put in a position whereby he can 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 the chief facilitator. He and the supreme council of Babylon will direct *the religions and governments of the world in their efforts to appease God*. The leopard-like beast (Babylon) **will not** displace the civil governments of the nations. The demands of Babylon will be adjusted and applied according to the prevailing religion in each nation. Civil governments will enact and enforce religious laws so that people will commit fewer sins. For example, certain laws that are morally important to Muslims will not be applicable to 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. Even worse, the leaders of the world will learn, after it is too late, that Babylon's laws cannot bring God's wrath to an end because corporate mercy ended forever the day the Great Tribulation began!)

Religious Police

This is an example of how Babylon's religious authority could function in a Moslem country:

On February 7, 2008, Fox News reported the arrest of a married woman in Saudi Arabia for sitting at a table with a non-relative male in a Starbucks coffee shop in Riyadh. Remember, the government of Saudi Arabia is a monarchy, so this arrest is compatible with the religious beliefs of its Muslim king. Here is her report:

“I [Yara - not her real name, an American working for an American company in Saudi] was

boasting about Riyadh, telling him [a news reporter that] it [the Saudi kingdom] doesn't deserve its bad reputation [for religious intolerance],’ she said. ‘I told him [that in seven years] I never experienced any harassment. I'd had no trouble as a woman. It was business as usual.’ But on Monday [February 4], Yara learned that she had been wrong. She was thrown in jail, strip-searched, threatened and forced to sign false confessions by the kingdom's ‘Mutaween’ police. ‘When I was arrested, it was like going through an avalanche,’ she said. ‘All of my beliefs were completely destroyed.’ ” The Mutaween are the religious police in Saudi Arabia. Their role is to enforce Islamic righteousness and they have the support of the king and his administration. “Yara's crime was that of sitting with a male business partner in the “family-only” section of Starbucks – the only area of the café where women and men can sit together. In Saudi Arabia, public contact between unrelated men and women is strictly prohibited.”

As you can see, Yara was arrested and treated as a criminal for a *moral* violation. This incident demonstrates how religious police can enforce religious values with the approval of civil authorities. Perhaps you would like to examine some Christian examples of this process. A casual review of Europe’s history, especially the Spanish Inquisition (1478-1834) will leave nothing to the imagination. The Catholic Church has a long history of using “religious police” to eliminate immoral behavior.

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 this coming crisis, world leaders will do whatever it takes. Food and water supplies will be rationed. Medical care and energy reserves

will be scarce. Hunger will drive millions of dazed and bewildered people crazy. Desperate situations require desperate solutions. Earth's population has never seen a global crisis like this! (Matthew 24:21) This crisis will be so huge that political leaders in every nation will be set free of their constitutional obligations almost immediately, enacting and enforcing laws which would have been strongly opposed during ordinary times. The declaration of martial law will make it very easy and expedient for a small group of people to comply with the demands of Babylon's clergy – and 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 restrictive. For example, laws will be enacted demanding that everyone set aside one day for God and worship. Later on, these laws will be amended for worship on specific days. Currently, Moslems must meet every Friday at noon for mandatory sermons and prayers, Jews and some Christians worship on Saturday, and Catholics and most Protestants worship on Sunday. So, which day of the week should be declared holy if everyone worships the *same* God? The majority religion within each nation will determine the solution to this dilemma, until the fifth trumpet* occurs. In Moslem countries, Friday will be dedicated to the worship of Allah. In Israel, Saturday will be dedicated to Jehovah. In Catholic and Protestant countries, Sunday will be dedicated to God as a day of rest. *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 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, italics mine)

***Note:** When Lucifer arrives, he will establish a new day of worship for everyone. This will end the question of which day is holy to God.

Hot Topic

Through the years, I have presented the perpetual obligation imposed by the Ten Commandments in many articles and books. I am again introducing this topic because the fourth commandment will become a hotly debated issue during the Great Tribulation. When Babylon mandates that everyone worships the *same* God, naturally the question of “when” and “how” will arise.

Babylon’s worship mandate will put the whole world in a strange predicament: When it comes to appeasing God’s wrath, whose law should we obey – God’s law or man’s laws? Jesus Christ Himself wrote the Ten Commandments in stone and His law is changeless, inseparable, and unimpeachable. James said, **“For whoever keeps the *whole* law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘Do not murder.’ If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.”** (James 2:10,11, italics mine)

There is a critical difference between faith in God (true religion) and legalism (false religion). Faith in God means doing what you believe God wants you to do and trusting God with the outcome. Faith in God springs from love and it brings a peace and joy that passes understanding. Grace from God enables faith-full people to serenely face whatever the consequences might be for obeying God. (Hebrews 11) The Bible clearly teaches that salvation has always come through faith, and by definition, this means that good works (even martyrdom) cannot merit salvation. **“If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.”** (1 Corinthians 13:3)

Legalism, on the other hand, is the foundation of false religion. Legalism is based on the idea that righteousness comes through obedience. The Pharisees in Christ's day were notorious for their legalism. Their treatment and persecution of Jesus shows what legalism produces. They murdered Jesus, thinking in their distorted way, that they were doing God a service. During the Great Tribulation, Jesus will prove that all seven religious systems of the world are legalists.* When the religious systems of the world unite in an unified effort to appease God's wrath, they will be only able to offer legalism – laws mandating righteous behavior. They will do this because they believe that a reduction in sinful behavior, even if it is forced, will appease God. This is another lie.

***Note:** Even though most Protestants would deny they are legalists, many Protestants will actively participate in Babylon's efforts to appease God *through legislation*. Their participation will prove that Protestants are legalists who do not properly understand God or His Word. An important relationship exists between faith in God, the assurance of eternal salvation, and the role of God's law. Many Protestants believe the Ten Commandments were abolished at the cross. They think we now live in an age of "Grace." But when God's wrath breaks loose and there is no evidence of a pre-tribulation rapture, millions of Protestants will be stunned and unable to justify God's wrath. Many Protestants believe the Ten Commandments were abolished at the cross, but they believe that somehow, nine of the ten commandments were reinstated in the New Testament. Protestants have generally accepted this view because they cannot reconcile observing the "Jewish Sabbath" with salvation that comes through faith in Christ. They like to argue that keeping God's seventh day holy is contradictory to God's grace because salvation comes through faith alone. But, the seventh commandment is not any less contradictory to

salvation than the fourth commandment. Most Protestants would agree that a person cannot break the seventh commandment, that is commit adultery, on a weekly basis and expect to receive salvation. So, we have to ask, “Does refraining from adultery guarantee salvation?” Many Protestants would correctly say, “No!” Whatever we conclude about the relationship between faith, salvation, and the seventh commandment holds true for the fourth commandment as well.

During the Great Tribulation, *Jesus will test the faith of every person to see who loves His truth and who doesn't.* The law of the Lord is perfect. (Psalm 19:7) Watch for this amazing development: All who **love** truth, regardless of their religious heritage, will embrace God's Sabbath upon hearing the testimony of Jesus. To be sure, the Holy Spirit and the Bible will bear witness in each truth-loving person's heart and mind that God's law of love is perfect and true. Those who are cowardly or hostile toward God will comply with Babylon's laws to escape persecution and many of these people will join in Babylon's persecution of those who uphold God's law. (Revelation 21:8)

Jesus wrote the Ten Commandments on two tables of stone and they were kept inside a golden box that was called, “The Ark of *the Covenant.*” God took the Ark of the Covenant to Heaven after Jeremiah hid it from Nebuchadnezzar's army. I believe that God took the Ten Commandments to Heaven for a very important reason. During the Great Tribulation, the leaders of Babylon will blaspheme God's law. Man's rebellion and hostility toward God's law will be revealed because the 144,000 will present the truth about God's law to the whole world in the clearest terms! After every decision has been made and the sealing of the saints is complete, Jesus will display the Ark of the Covenant to the whole world at the time of the seventh trumpet.

(Revelation 11:19) This display from the sky will be an awesome moment for saints and sinners alike. The saints will see the perfect law of Almighty God – the law that they accepted through faith and were persecuted for obeying. The wicked will also see the law of God that they refused to acknowledge and they will tremble when they realize its awful condemnation.

During the Great Tribulation, the obligation imposed upon all humanity by the fourth commandment will be hotly debated because worship will become a topic of paramount importance. The 144,000 will boldly present “God’s Sabbath rest test” with clarity and compelling power. There is only one reason for rebelling against the fourth commandment that I can find. It is our 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? All Ten Commandments were written 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)

The Sabbath Rest Test

Before God delivered Israel from Egyptian slavery, He required the Israelites to put their faith in Him by observing His Sabbath rest. The Hebrews knew what would happen if they rested from their work, and sure enough, obeying God produced immediate persecution. When Pharaoh saw his slaves taking time off for an *unauthorized* Sabbath rest, he became angry. He accused the Hebrews of being *lazy*. (Exodus 5:8) If they had time to “sabbath” from their labors, they should also have enough time to gather up the straw while producing the same quota of bricks. Of course, Pharaoh and the Hebrews knew that meeting this quota was impossible. Many slaves were beaten brutally for not reaching their quotas. (See Exodus 5.) The impressive point in this story (and many others in the Bible) is that faith in God means obeying God without regard for the consequences. **“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”** (Hebrews 11:6)

You may also recall that after leaving Egypt, but prior to giving the Ten Commandments, God *tested* Israel again to see if they would observe His Sabbath rest. (Exodus 16:4) God told Israel to gather up twice the amount of manna on Friday because no manna would fall from Heaven on Sabbath. Everyone in Israel knew that manna could not be kept overnight without spoiling, but what they did not know that first week was that manna gathered on Friday would not spoil! As is so often the case, many people refused to trust and obey God and subsequently, they did not gather up twice as much manna on Friday. The obvious result was they went hungry on that first Sabbath. The Bible states why it is so hard for human beings to obey God: **“The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.”** (Romans 8:7)

During the Great Tribulation, God will test the inhabitants of Earth with His Sabbath rest test.

The Sabbath rest test will become a test of faith because Babylon's laws will make resting on Sabbath a punishable offense. Consider this end time parallel with ancient Egypt. God required Israel to rest on His Sabbath before He delivered them from slavery. Similarly, God will require us 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.

The Bible warns that everyone who defies the authority of Jesus will experience seven horrible bowls of wrath. Incredible as it may seem, cowards will fear Babylon's persecution more than God's promise of punishment later. The issue of worship, specifically the Sabbath rest test, will become a hot topic throughout Earth. Those who sincerely love God will receive the gospel of Jesus and embrace the Creator's Sabbath. Phenomenally, a huge group of honest hearted Moslems, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, Catholics, Protestants, Heathen, and Atheists will receive the gospel and rest on God's Sabbath once they understand who Jesus really is and what He wants! Remember, keeping the seventh commandment and the fourth commandment will not produce eternal life. This is why the Sabbath rest test cannot be implemented until there is persecution. Babylon will persecute the saints for forty-two months. Faith in God means obeying God without regard for the consequences. (John 14:23,24) God's Sabbath has always been a sign between Him and His people. (Exodus 31:17) When we love Jesus enough to submit to His authority (John 14:15) and rest from our work on the seventh day of the week regardless of the consequences, He is pleased with our faith. Jesus declared from Mt. Sinai: **“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days [are common, during them] you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day [of the week is holy, Saturday] is a Sabbath to the Lord**

your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. [I have made the seventh day of the week a memorial to Earth's Creation.] **For in six days [I] the Lord [Jesus Christ] made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day [of the week]. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it [the Lord's Day] holy [unlike the other six days]."** (Exodus 20:8-11, insertions mine)

Two Point Summary

I hope you now understand two concepts about the first 890 days of the Great Tribulation:

- 1) Babylon will quickly form because mankind will agree that something must be done to appease God's wrath. The **first lie** told by religious leaders is that everyone worships the *same* God even though He is called by different names. The **second lie** is that legislating morality and creating laws to reduce sinful behavior will appease God's wrath. God does not accept forced or coerced obedience. Even so, Babylon will exalt different holy days in different nations. Since every nation is trying to appease the *same* God, this blatant inconsistency will eventually force the question, "Which day is holy in God's sight?" The 144,000 will present the fourth commandment and ask, "Who can change the law of God, but God?" The **third lie** is that Babylon has the authority to determine *when* God should be worshiped. Obviously, this is blasphemy against God.

From its inception, Babylon will be a corrupt church/state. Notice the predicted arrogance of Babylon's leaders: **"The [leopard-like] beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his [arrogant and insolent] authority for forty-two months. He [the leopard-like beast] opened his mouth to blaspheme**

God [thinking it could usurp God's higher law], **and** [it denigrated the character of Jesus] **to slander his name and his dwelling place and those** [the angels] **who live in heaven** [with Him]. **He** [the leopard-like monster] **was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.**" (Revelation 13:5-7, insertions mine) To resist Babylon's authority and its false teachings will be a forty-two month nightmare. However, resisting God's authority will prove to be eternally fatal. **"This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus."** (Revelation 14:12)

- 2) Babylon's efforts will seem perfectly logical and appropriate to billions of people during the first few weeks of Babylon's existence. However, the wheels will quickly fall off of the wagon because man's religious diversity will not permit a united world to worship the *same* God in the *same* way. Babylon will include seven diverse religions, and the religious doctrines will be inconsistent and internally conflicted. The problem is one religious system cannot and will not admit that another religious system is superior. Religious egos cannot make such an admission. Nevertheless, an internally conflicted Babylon will implement laws that will persecute God's people.

Once political power is concentrated in the hands of a few people, the pope and his supreme council will maintain control over the nations of the world because (a) the political leaders of the world will depend on "the religious experts" of false religions to properly guide them, and (b) the devil will work in tandem with Babylon, doing whatever he can to thwart God's servants, the 144,000. During the Dark Ages, when the pope dominated the kings of Europe, Protestants

coined this phrase: “Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely.” When the power of religious leaders exceeds political leaders, history documents that only the destruction of religion can set people free. From a historical perspective we can say of democracy, “Government makes a cruel master, but a wonderful servant.” We even call our elected officials, “public servants.” However, this same historical perspective teaches us that church-state arrangements are inherently evil because apparently, the first and highest mission of all church-state governments is that of ensuring the perpetual authority of a few.

Prerequisite 2: The Work of the 144,000 and the Advance of the Gospel

For more than two miserable years, Babylon will use persecution and intimidation (whatever it takes) to force people into obeying its laws. The honest in heart will see that Babylon’s efforts to appease God are in total opposition to God’s will. However, given the arrogance and ignorance of the world’s religious and political leaders, no one will be able to convince them otherwise. During the 890 days that lead up to the fifth trumpet, the 144,000 will proclaim the first and second angel’s messages. The 144,000 will add a third message (from the third angel) when the fifth trumpet occurs and a fourth message (from the fourth angel) will be added when the sixth trumpet occurs. Altogether, the 144,000 will present four messages. These messages will run concurrently until the offer of salvation ends on the 1,260th day of the Great Tribulation. When the 1,260th day is reached, everyone will be found in an irreversible state. The redeemed will have been tested, sealed with the seal of God, and their sinful natures removed. The wicked will be marked because they will have committed the unpardonable sin and received the mark of the beast. There is nothing further that God can do to save them.

The four messages presented by the 144,000 will operate like a giant magnet – they will attract

people who love truth and righteousness. The rest of mankind will find them inflammatory.

These four messages will separate the sheep from the goats. Consider these sobering statistics:

1. About 2.5 billion people on Earth have never heard of Jesus Christ.
2. About 2.0 billion people reject the idea that Jesus Christ is God.
3. About 1.5 billion Christians are essentially ignorant of who Jesus really is and what He wants.

Given the arrogance and ignorance that fills this planet, it is no wonder that the Father has determined there will be a “complete revelation” of Jesus Christ! *No topic on Earth is filled with more darkness and error than who Jesus really is and what He really wants.* The Father foreknew this darkness would occur and He predetermined thousands of years ago that Jesus Christ would be fully revealed. Everyone would learn about Jesus’ love for mankind, His death for our sins and His intercession for mankind as our High Priest. Every language, tribe and nation will hear this revelation before the Second Coming. **“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”** (Matthew 24:14)

During the 890 days prior to the fifth trumpet, 144,000 prophets will be busy preaching and teaching. Jesus will speak through the mouths of His servants and everyone on Earth will hear the testimony of Jesus. The truth will confront every person so that he might intelligently consider what Jesus really wants. After two years of persecution and tribulation, almost everyone on Earth will have decided whether or not he is willing to submit to the gospel of Jesus Christ. When the gospel’s penetration stalls, the fifth trumpet will occur. Jesus will release the devil from the spirit realm where he has been confined. When 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). Notice why “the man of lawlessness” is permitted to appear:

“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 rebellious will] perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. [That is, the rebellious also 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 Thessalonians 2:8-12, insertions mine)

God has carefully and deliberately designed the Great Tribulation to save the maximum number of people. (Remember, the seven trumpets are redemptive judgments.) Jesus will keep the devil and his angels locked up in the spirit realm for two-thirds of the time allotted to the Great Tribulation so that the world can have a chance to hear and consider the testimony of Jesus. When the gospel’s advance stalls because people are either rebellious or afraid of persecution, Jesus will put more pressure on them to receive His gracious offer of salvation by releasing the devil from the spirit realm. By allowing the devil to take over the world and allowing people to actually see Lucifer in action, Jesus knows that some wicked people will come to their senses, receive the gospel, repent of their rebellion, and submit to the terms and conditions of His

salvation!

Prerequisite 3: The Full Cup Principle Again and God's Use of a Destroyer

The final prerequisite for understanding the fifth trumpet involves the full cup principle and God's use of a "destroyer." The full cup principle is a process 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 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, but if the situation is not redeemable, He will send totally **destructive** judgments.

For example, Israel ignored the warnings which God mercifully sent through Jeremiah for twenty-three years. 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 extracted from Jeremiah 25 and applied to the Great Tribulation.

First, there is a clear parallel between the work of Jeremiah and the work of the 144,000.

Second, when God saw that extended mercy did not change Israel, He raised up a destroyer. The same will be true during the Great Tribulation. For 890 days, Jesus will give everyone a chance to receive the gospel and be saved. When it becomes clear that extended mercy no longer has a redeeming effect, Jesus will release a destroyer on the world to bring sin's drama to a close.

God released the king of *ancient* Babylon on Israel to bring Israel's rebellion to an end and God will release Lucifer, the king of *modern* Babylon on the world to bring the drama of sin to a close.

We already know that Jesus is a double-generous king. Instead of destroying two-thirds of everything and sparing one-third, as generous kings did in ancient times, twelve times during the seven trumpets Jesus spares two-thirds! God's love for the oncoming generation (the redeemed of all ages) will move Him to destroy the last generation of wicked people so that His children can inherit Earth made new. **“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth.”**

(Matthew 5:5) Understand, 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 they] *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, insertions mine)

Judgments on Individuals

Earlier we examined the differences between corporate mercy and mercy for individuals. (Remember the difference between the Altar of Incense and the Altar of Burnt Offering?) We know the first four trumpets are corporate judgments because (a) they begin when corporate mercy ends, and (b) they will fall upon the whole world (two-thirds are spared). On the other hand, the last three trumpets are called “woes” or “curses” because they will inflict those who insist on remaining in rebellion against God. Jesus punishes the wicked with the trumpets to save as many as possible from the penalty of sin. Jesus loves every person more than we can imagine; He loves even the worst of sinners. He came to Earth and died so that “whosoever will” can have eternal life. This is the boundless love of God and Jesus will do whatever He can, short of violating a person’s will, to save a rebellious sinner from making a decision that leads to eternal death. This is God’s love.

This might sound strange, but the one thing that impresses me most about the seven trumpets of Revelation, is the love of God. The seven trumpets reveal God’s ways, His laws, His truth, and His love in a dynamic and multidimensional way. When I study the cross, I am moved to repentance and surrender when I consider what Jesus did *for me*. However, when I study the seven trumpets, I am motivated to glorify God with *my life*, doing anything and everything I can to help others understand God’s great love for every sinner. Jesus not only came to save us from the penalty for sin, He came to save us from the curse that is within us! The curse of sin is at

work in our minds and bodies, and this curse causes us to do things that are harmful, stupid, and foolish. During the Great Tribulation, many people will reject the testimony of Jesus. They will refuse to accept the gospel of Jesus because they cannot, in their human strength, face the ridicule and persecution that comes with embracing the gospel. The solution is simple. Once we submit to the gospel of Jesus, Jesus enables us with special grace and strength to face whatever comes our way! (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Three Groups of People

At any given time, there are three groups of people on Earth:

1. The saints
2. The religious wicked
3. The non-religious wicked

- 1. The saints:** God has children in every nation, culture, religion, and language who are sincere and honest in heart toward God and man. The saints love God even though their knowledge about Him is not perfect. The saints listen to the Holy Spirit and obey His directives. They strive to live up to all they know and believe to be pleasing to God. Because God has saints in all religious groups, the saints do not agree on very much currently. One could say that most of God's saints are *honestly* opposed to each other because our religious views, cultures, languages, and ethnic differences are so great. Fortunately, God knows our motives and our hearts, even though our heads are all mixed up with all kinds of ideas (some true, some not true).
- 2. The religious wicked:** The term, religious wicked, may sound like an oxymoron. These are people who are self-righteous, self-seeking, and critical of those who do not

understand God as they do. (Luke 18:9) Although these people can be deeply religious, they are not spiritual. Instead, they are patriotic to a religious *system*. These people have not been born again. Most of the Pharisees in Christ's day belonged to this group. Even though Saul was a Pharisee, he did not belong to the religious wicked. Saul had the head of a Pharisee, but the heart of a saint! This is why Jesus called Saul to become His disciple even 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.”** As a Pharisee, Saul's heart was right and honest toward God, even though his head was totally wrong. Currently, there are many misguided people in every religion just like Saul!

- 3. The non-religious wicked:** The non-religious wicked group is self-explanatory. These people have no use for religion or God. These people are spiritually dead. Like the religious-wicked, they too are controlled by their carnal nature, but there are some saints living within this group, too! The saints in this group of people are honest in heart, but also totally wrong in their heads!

Now that you have been introduced to these three groups of people, you can understand that Jesus has a plan to find and unify the saints that are found in each group. The highest purpose of the Great Tribulation is the revelation of Jesus Christ as man's Creator and Savior. To accomplish this purpose, Jesus will release the four angels who are waiting at the four corners of Earth. Once the ears of billions of people have been pried open by the devastation of the seven trumpets to hear His gospel, 144,000 servants will deliver the testimony of Jesus all over the world! The gospel of Jesus will put the people of Earth in a difficult situation and this brings us

to the next important purpose of the Great Tribulation – that of separating sheep from goats.

(Matthew 25:32) When the 144,000 present the gospel of Jesus, He will see who truly loves God and trusts in Him. There is a reason you need to know about these three groups of people. When the fifth trumpet sounds, the process of totally eliminating the non-religious wicked (the third group) from Earth begins. By the time the seventh trumpet sounds, only two groups of people will be left: those worshiping the Lamb (Jesus) and those worshiping the lamb-like beast (Lucifer).

The Arrival of the Destroyer (The Antichrist)

Because God consistently uses the full cup principle, the Great Tribulation includes (a) four warning messages which the 144,000 will deliver, (b) the arrival of a destroyer who cannot be stopped, and (c) the total destruction of Earth (caused by the seven bowls). We consistently see the full cup principle used throughout Scripture. When a city, nation, empire, or civilization (even the whole world) reaches a point where extended mercy does not produce repentance and reformation, God follows a very predictable pattern. The full cup principle explains why Lucifer will be released from the abyss in the fifth trumpet as a destroyer. Notice this verse taken from the fifth trumpet:

“They [the 200 million demons released with Lucifer] had as *king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon* [Hebrew: destroyer], and in Greek, Apollyon [Greek: destroyer]. (Revelation 9:11, insertions and italics mine) The reason Lucifer’s mission is stated in both Hebrew and Greek is that God wants Jew and Gentile alike to understand who this angel king is and that his mission is one of destruction.

The books of Daniel and Revelation predict the physical appearing of Lucifer. The Bible uses a

number of titles to describe the devil so that we can understand this enemy of God and man. The devil is described as a serpent (deadly enemy) in Genesis 3, a roaring lion (unbelievably powerful) in 1 Peter 5, a stern-faced king (showing no mercy) in Daniel 8, a mortal god (exceedingly powerful, but subject to death) in Isaiah 14, a maniacal monarch (full of evil and arrogance) in Ezekiel 28, a man of lawlessness (not subject to any earthly authority) in 2 Thessalonians 2, an angel king from the abyss (the commander of demons) in Revelation 9, Abaddon and Apollyon (the destroyer of Jews and Gentiles alike) in Revelation 9, a beast coming up out of the earth in Revelation 13 (or the beast coming up out of the abyss in Revelation 11:7; 17:8) having two horns like the Lamb (Jesus has seven horns - Revelation 5:6), and finally, as the false prophet (the world's greatest liar) in Revelation 16.

It is so important to comprehend who Lucifer is and the power he has. Lucifer, the coming Antichrist, is so far beyond human ability and prowess that it is absurd to compare a mere mortal with him. Millions of Christians believe the coming Antichrist will be someone very powerful and evil like Hitler. Hitler was powerful and evil for a few years, but he is nothing compared to a mighty angel who has lived for thousands of years! Mimicking Jesus' second coming, Lucifer, the most powerful angel ever created, will descend from the sky shrouded in clouds of glory and attended by 200 million demons! **“The number of the mounted troops [that attended the angel king from the abyss] was two hundred million. I [John] heard their number.”** (Revelation 9:16, insertions mine) The size of Lucifer's attending army is astonishing when you stop to realize that if all of the world's armies in 2008 were combined, they would total less than thirteen million troops.

The physical appearing of Lucifer is a highly important topic and you need to understand

something about the dimensions involved. This enemy of mankind saw Adam and Eve created and he took on the form of a serpent in the Garden of Eden. He was there when Noah built the ark and saw the destruction of the antediluvians. About two thousand years later, he urged King Herod to kill Baby Jesus. Even though Herod failed, the devil later rejoiced to see Jesus die on the cross. This foe of God and man has been alive for thousands of years and he and his demons know each human being by name! After he is released from the abyss, Lucifer will cause astonishing destruction. Jesus will allow the devil to do as he wishes, within certain limits, and in doing so, Jesus will accomplish several goals during the fifth trumpet judgment.

The Fifth Trumpet

“[John wrote,] **The fifth angel sounded his trumpet** [in Heaven's temple], **and** [my attention was directed to Earth] **I saw a** [an angelic] **star that had fallen from the sky to the earth.**

[Lucifer was the first created being. Jesus made him the brightest and the highest of all the angels, but over time, he became jealous of Christ and rebelled against God’s authority. Lucifer and his angels were cast out of Heaven on *two* separate occasions. The first expulsion occurred before Earth was created. Even though Lucifer was expelled from Heaven, Lucifer and his angels were allowed to roam the universe and this is why Lucifer came to Earth and tempted Eve in the Garden. Adam and Eve’s sin allowed Lucifer to become the prince of this world and as such, Lucifer and his angels were permitted to meet with God and His angels at various times for administrative purposes. (See Job 1) Jesus *redeemed* Earth with His own blood at the cross. This is why it was necessary for Jesus to immediately ascend to Heaven on Resurrection Sunday

because He was entitled to Lucifer's seat in God's cabinet as the rightful representative of Earth. Lucifer's pride would not allow him to relinquish his position to Jesus and there was war in Heaven. Jesus and His angels cast Lucifer and his angels out of Heaven a second time. This time, Jesus confined Lucifer and his angels to the abyss. At the fifth trumpet,] **The [fallen] star [Lucifer] was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss.** [The Greek word for abyss denotes the habitat of demons. The Greeks regarded the *abussos* as a deep, dark dungeon for spirits, an unknown geographical place that evidently existed under Earth where the endless fires of hell burned. (Volcanoes were believed to be chimneys for the fires that burned in the abyss.) In John's day, Earth was thought to be flat and a bottomless pit was literally a hole that went through the flat Earth. The idea represented to John in Revelation 12 is that Lucifer and his demons were locked in the abyss on Resurrection Sunday and they are to be released at the fifth trumpet because Lucifer is given the key.] (Revelation 9:1, insertions mine)

When he [Lucifer] opened the Abyss, [there were so many demons ascending from the abyss 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* [from a distance, this horde of flying demons looked like a dense cloud of smoke that darkened the sun and sky. As they drew closer to Earth, 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** [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.** [In other words, the devil and his angels cannot hurt the 144,000 and those who have been sealed during the past 890 days. Of course, the devil and his demons will not hurt those who believe the devil is Almighty God. In other words, the devil and his demons will torture the non-religious wicked who stand in opposition to his blasphemous claims. These non-religious people will be the scientists, communists, agnostics, etc. and they will be painfully tormented. This painful intimidation will cause many of the non-religious wicked to give in and confess, “Yes, I believe this glorious being is Almighty God and I will obey him.”] (Revelation 9:4, insertions mine)

They [the demons] **were not given power to kill them** [the non-religious wicked], **but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they** [the non-religious wicked] **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 [flying angels] **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.** [Angels, also created in God’s image, resemble human beings. The crowns of gold on their heads (Greek: *stephanos* means crowns of honor, victory) reflect their high position as they masquerade as angels of God. The devil and his angels are part of a great delusion (2 Thessalonians 2:11) that is so deceptive that it could deceive the very elect, if that were possible. (Matthew 24:24) Standing about 15 feet tall (1 Kings 6:26, 2 Chronicles 3:10-13), Lucifer and

his angels will be very impressive as well as threatening to anyone who does not have the seal of God.] (Revelation 9:7, insertions mine)

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** [as they fly] **was** [deafening, powerful, intimidating] **like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle.** (Revelation 9:9, insertions mine)

[Because God speaks volumes with caricatures*, these demons were represented to me 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, insertions mine)

They [the demons] **had as king over them** *the angel of the Abyss*, **whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon.** [Both names mean “Destroyer.” The point of giving Lucifer both titles is that he will destroy the saints (when the fifth seal opens), as well as sinners (sixth trumpet).] (Revelation 9:11, italics and insertions mine)

The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come.”(Revelation 9:12)

***Note:** When Lucifer and his angels are released from the abyss, their appearance will be beautiful and glorious to behold. *They will not look like the ugly caricatures described by John.* God represented Lucifer and his angels to John with frightening features so that God might speak volumes to us with very few words. Remember, the book of Revelation was copied by hand for 1,900 years and a picture is worth a thousand words. For example, in Revelation 19, John saw a sword coming out of the mouth of Jesus. This caricature (of the sword) represents a command

that will come out of Jesus' mouth at the Second Coming and the wicked will be slain by this command. Revelation 19:21)

A Really Big Show at First

The devil will imitate Jesus and the Second Coming a number of times. Unlike the global appearing of the real Jesus, however, the devil's physical appearing will be a series of "local events." For example, it is possible that Lucifer and his angels will descend upon Houston, later they will descend upon Dallas, then Los Angeles, Mexico City, Paris and the other great cities of Earth. Remember, travel for human beings during the Great Tribulation will be limited. Jesus 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) In other words, the appearing of the devil will not be a global event, but the coming of Jesus will. 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)

The Bible indicates the fifth trumpet will last for five months. To delude the whole world with his deception, the devil and his angels will not stop. (They do not need to rest or sleep.) For five months, the devil will appear before large crowds. He will speak kind words, perform wonderful miracles of healing, and offer inspiring words of hope to a world in utter despair. He will show signs and wonders. He will be glorious and lovely to look upon and he will tell thousands of *sincere* lies. He will motivate people toward hope, assuring them that a thousand years of peace

and joy is coming. He will call for renewed efforts to make the world a better place to live. Meanwhile, his angels will be working night and day with Lucifer's opposition. The non-religious wicked will feel the horrible "sting" of his scorpions when they refuse to confess that Lucifer is Almighty God. When family members and observers see the horrible pain that comes from one demon, many will capitulate on the spot. I can see how demons could 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 advocated by the demons is nothing more than an imposter of the real Jesus, the Lamb-like beast. John wrote the book of Revelation about thirty years after the Apostle Paul died. However, God showed Paul that Lucifer would physically appear on Earth before the Second Coming. Notice Paul's contribution to this phenomenal event in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12:

“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* [Paul knew the gospel of Jesus would be presented to everyone on Earth before Jesus would return. “The rebellion” that Paul speaks about is a defiant response by men and women to the testimony of Jesus. This rebellion will eventually bring the work of the 144,000 to a standstill. When this happens, Jesus will release the devil from the abyss] **and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.** (1 Thessalonians 2:1-3, insertions and italics mine) Lucifer is also called a man in Isaiah 14:16,17 because Lucifer is mortal. Even though Lucifer has lived for thousands of years, he is mortal and he will be

destroyed in the fires of hell just like the rest of the wicked. (Revelation 20:9,10) Daniel wrote, **“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 king, a master of intrigue, will arise.”** (Daniel 8:23, insertions and italics mine) Paul continues, **“He [the man of lawlessness] will oppose [the teachings of every religion] 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.)** Paul is not talking about the devil sitting in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. Paul just said that the devil will oppose everything that is called “God.” In other words, the devil will be opposed to all religions, including Judaism. Paul’s language means the devil will exalt himself over everything that is called God so that he can sit on a throne of his creation as a self-made and self-defined God. Isaiah affirmed 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. For the secret [unseen and hidden] power of lawlessness [our sinful and rebellious nature toward God] is already at work; but the one who now holds it back [Jesus is holding back the appearing of the devil] will continue to do so till he [Jesus] is taken out of the way. [In other words, when Jesus is taken out of the way, corporate intercession ends and the wrath of God begins.] 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 will be in accordance with the work of Satan [even though the devil will look and act like God, but this is a deceptive masquerade. The devil will convince the world of his assumed divinity] 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.” (1 Thessalonians 2:6-12, insertions and italics mine)

“[About thirty years after Paul died, 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 [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)

Abrupt Change

When the five months allotted to the fifth trumpet comes to a close, the devil's glorious charade will come to an abrupt halt. His demeanor will suddenly change and he will assert and impose himself on the world. He will prove to be the meanest and cruelest dictator the world has ever known. Hitler would pale in comparison. The religious and political leaders of Babylon will be stunned and then **forced** to quit because Lucifer will take control of Babylon. A few words about this *coup de tau* are necessary because the devil will support the leadership of Babylon like a "hand in a glove" for five months, but once the devil takes control of Babylon, he will demand and revise Babylon to suit his evil plans.

The devil will destroy all man-made infrastructure. He will destroy the governments of the world, the religious systems of the world, and one-third of mankind. Once you understand his ability and desire to destroy everything that stands in his way, you will appreciate why the devil's title is given in both Hebrew and Greek: *Abaddon and Apollyon mean destroyer*.

During the fifth trumpet's five months, the devil will gain a large following of believers. World leaders will be delighted that "god" is on their side. But one day, an interesting question will arise. Why is religious diversity necessary when "god" dwells among men? How can Jews, Muslims, Christians, and Eastern Mystics defend opposing views of God when "god" lives

among men? How can nations remain sovereign when “god” is sovereign? God is the Ruler of Earth. The usual order of world governance will become more and more useless because “god” dwells among men. While the devil is putting on a really big show, the devil’s demons will be busy subduing Lucifer’s opposition by inflicting incredible torture on those who blaspheme “god.” Soon, the whole world will find itself in a dilemma and Lucifer will have the solution. At the end of the fifth trumpet, the devil will start dictating *his demands and mankind will be powerless to stop him*. The devil will demand the end of religious diversity. He will demand that a theocracy be established. (A theocracy is a church/state government where God rules as King of kings and Lord of lords.) Lucifer will also establish a new day for worship. I believe that the new day will be neither Friday, Saturday, nor Sunday! Lucifer’s theocratic government is called “an image to the beast.” **“Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he *deceived* the inhabitants of the earth. [After a few months] He *ordered* them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet *lived*.”** (Revelation 13:14, insertion mine)

In other words, the leopard-like beast (Babylon) will be modified at the end of the fifth trumpet so that there will be “one lord, one faith, one baptism” instead of seven opposing religions trying to appease God. The devil will dethrone the pope and destroy the religious systems of the world. He will subject the kings of Earth to “ten puppet kings” that he will choose. It is highly possible that the devil will select 144,000 imposter servants to make his counterfeit government appear “biblical.” Lucifer’s theocracy is described in Revelation 13 as “the image to the beast” and as “the great whore” in Revelation 17. Lucifer’s theocracy will control the leopard-like beast, Babylon, and suddenly, things will go from bad to worse.

At this point in time, Jesus will send a fourth message through the 144,000: **“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

Pretending to address all of Earth’s problems, Lucifer will take control of Earth at the end of the fifth trumpet as “Almighty God.” 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. He will declare all former religions hostile to his theocracy and any practice of religion outside his theocracy will be met with sudden death. His government will overtake all other governments. “The kingdom of God” will be the new world-order. Of course, these demands will create an enormous hue and cry from mankind, and Lucifer’s four demons will “fly” into action. The demons will be empowered to kill one-third of mankind. They will conduct a simple loyalty test and everyone refusing to wear the mark of the beast will be killed. The devil will demand that everyone participating and benefitting from his new government must wear a tattoo showing the number 666 on his right hand. Every business transaction will require a verification of the tattoo. The devil will make many demands on mankind, but obviously, rational people, even many of the wicked, will rebel against Lucifer’s outrageous demands. Rebellion will be short-lived – what can people do without being killed for insubordination?

When the sixth trumpet sounds, Jesus will give the devil free reign. He will permit the devil to

do as he pleases with the world because Jesus is not interested in saving this cursed planet.

Instead, Jesus is very interested in saving sinners, no matter how wicked they may be or may have been. By giving the devil free reign to destroy everything that man has made, Jesus hopes that many human beings will realize that the game is over. Man's powerless situation with the devil parallels man's inability to overcome the curse of sin on his own. This is the point of releasing the devil and his demons from the limitations imposed on them during the fifth trumpet. Jesus, our loving Savior, is eager to save the hopeless and rescue the weak.

Remember this story from Numbers 21: **“They [Israel] traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom** [because the king of Edom would not allow them to pass through his territory – Numbers 20:21]. **But the people grew impatient** [weary of living in the wilderness] **on the way; they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable [manna] food!’ Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, ‘We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us.’ So Moses prayed for the people. The Lord said to Moses, ‘Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.’ So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.”** (Numbers 21:4-9, insertions mine)

Sometimes, God uses suffering and death to overcome our self-centeredness and get our attention. God punished Israel with venomous snakes to subdue their rebellion. He also provided a means of redemption. The release of the devil on mankind is a punishment (a woe)

for rebellion against the gospel, but Jesus has provided a means of redemption and the door is still open! When the sixth trumpet begins, the 144,000 will present their final message: **“Come out of her [Lucifer’s government, the great whore], 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 Sounds

“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. John heard the four horns speak. Of course, the horns are not literally speaking. They are personified as speaking.

“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 guilt was transferred to the four horns evening and morning by an application of blood from the evening and morning sacrifices. (Exodus 29:38-44) Other than Leviticus 4, there is no textual evidence explicitly stating that blood was applied to the horns of the Altar of Incense. However, we can be sure that the blood of corporate lambs was applied to the corporate altar evening and morning because this altar, like the Altar of Burnt Offering, had to be cleansed of guilt on the Day of Atonement. In other words, the high priest was required to put some blood on the four horns of the Altar of Incense on the Day of Atonement to restore this altar to its

sinless condition. (Leviticus 16:18)

When the appointed hour, day, month, and year for the sixth trumpet arrives, the four horns speak. Their message is “Let the Destroyer destroy.” They say this because justice demands that Jesus bring the offer of salvation to an end. However, even at this moment in time, Jesus keeps the door open a little longer giving perhaps one lost sheep an opportunity for salvation. The only thing that might flush out one more sinner is by giving the devil and his demons total control of Earth. (Remember, during the fifth trumpet the devil and his demons could not harm Earth or those who had the seal of God.)

The four angels bound at the river are Lucifer’s demons, poised to kill a third of mankind. When the sixth trumpet sounds, these demons will be released and they will kill millions of saints (remember, God has predetermined the exact number of martyrs – Revelation 6:11) and whoever remains of the non-religious wicked. The language in this verse parallels the language in Revelation 7 where four angels waited at the four corners of Earth until the 144,000 were sealed. Ironically, God’s four angels and Lucifer’s four angels kill the *same* number of people!

Let us assume the population of the world will be six billion people when the censer is cast down. (The current world population is actually greater than six billion, but I have chosen an easy number for this illustration.) We know that 25 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 1.5 billion people or 25 percent of Earth’s population with their trumpet judgments. Subtracting 1.5 billion people from six billion leaves 4.5 billion people living. At the sixth trumpet, Lucifer’s four angels will kill a third of mankind. A third of 4.5 billion is another 1.5 billion people! This means two things. First, Jesus and Lucifer will kill the *same* number of people. Second, the

population of Earth will be reduced by 50 percent by the end of the sixth trumpet!

Releasing the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates means that God has removed all barriers on Lucifer. Consider how this language is used: The great river Euphrates formed Israel's northern boundary. The great river was a natural barrier, keeping advancing armies from the north out of Israel's territory. When the sixth trumpet sounds, Lucifer's four angels will be released (out of the north) to destroy their limit without impediment.

“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 9:16-19) This caricature of Lucifer's demons indicates there is no escape for mankind. No human army can overcome 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 bravely give the 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 been 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 gospel invitation will commit the unpardonable sin. Jesus does not close the door to salvation on a single soul. Instead, all people make their choice personally and after the last individual on Earth makes his choice, Jesus terminates His offer of salvation! By the end of the 1,260 days, six trumpet judgments will have occurred and every survivor will be found either worshiping the devil (the lamb-like beast) or worshiping Jesus (the Lamb).

Five Additional Matters

Before we close this segment on the sixth trumpet, I would like to introduce five additional matters.

1. After the devil is released from the Abyss in the fifth trumpet, sincere people will see and understand the true character of evil. Currently, most people poorly understand the demonic rage and cunning sophistry of Lucifer, but this will change. The world will 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 is a mirror reflecting every sinner who commits the unpardonable sin. Either you live under God's authority or live under Lucifer's authority, because there are no other options. God has allowed Lucifer and his angels to live for thousands of years to prove an amazing truth: Any departure from righteousness, no matter who may lead 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 will to get every undecided person to reject the lies and the authority of the devil and to submit to the authority of Jesus Christ who is righteous and loving. In Christ, there is love, freedom, and joy. His "yoke is easy and His burden is light." (Matthew 11:30)

2. The "religious wicked" will be in for a huge shock when Lucifer outlaws all of the religions of Earth. Religion and culture deeply permeates our thoughts and behavior, and it is almost impossible for one religious person from one religious system to convince another person from a different religious system that his understanding of God is better and more comprehensive. (For example, how can a Moslem tell Jews and Catholics that their knowledge of God is false?) God understands this gridlock. (It has been said that less than 5 percent of the world's population change religious systems.) When the sixth trumpet sounds and the devil establishes his theocracy, the devil, "who opposes all that is worshiped or called God," will condemn all of the religions of the world. This action will eliminate the religious gridlock that separates the people of the world. When Lucifer sets

up his theocracy, there will be one lord, one faith, and one baptism. Many of the “religious wicked” will face a conundrum when the devil does this because their religion and culture will be pulled out from under their feet! They can turn to no one for religious authority. There will be no pope, no Mohammed, no Bible, no Koran, no Dali Lama, no sacred writings or any religious authority, except Lucifer. Whom will the “religious wicked” now worship? This vacuum will cause a few rebellious people to consider the gospel of Jesus Christ for the first time. During the sixth trumpet, the devil will demand the death of everyone who refuses to submit to his theocracy and this death decree will quickly force everyone into a decision: Either worship the devil and live – or worship Jesus Christ and die. This situation will not alarm those who have been sealed. They have no fear of death. However, the message will alarm those people who have remained undecided. For them, this will be an opportunity to put their faith in Jesus. Notice how the Bible describes this death decree: **“He [the devil, the lamb-like beast] was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it [Lucifer’s theocracy, his church/state] could speak [with authority, make laws] and cause all who refused to worship [according to the demands of] the image to be killed.”** (Revelation 13:15, insertions mine)

3. When the sixth trumpet sounds, the devil, speaking as “the stern-faced king,” (Daniel 8:23) will demand that everyone wear a tattoo. This tattoo will have to be displayed whenever a person wishes to buy or sell. In other words, the saints will be “cut off” from all means of survival. This gives new meaning to the phrase, “The just shall live by faith!” Jesus will provide for His children as the devil rations food and water to those

wearing his mark. 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*, which means “an 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 comply. They will accept the mark of the beast even though they know that it is the dreaded mark of the beast! They 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 scenario to consider: During the fifth trumpet, the devil and his angels will work around the clock to convince the inhabitants of Earth that Lucifer is “Almighty God.” (For five months, the devil and his demons will travel the world without rest or sleep.) Billions of people will see the devil and embrace his glorious lies. They will submit to him as though he were “God,” and they will obey his commands and worship him. When the five months have ended, the devil will suddenly change character. He will *demand* the formation of a theocracy and a global purge to ensure that all opposition to his theocracy is eliminated. The devil will demand the death of everyone opposed to the establishment of his so-called “millennial kingdom.” The devil will set up “ten

kings” (with hardness of heart) to oversee the establishment of his one-world order. The people of Earth will be divided into units of one thousand (for purposes of rations) and then one-third of each group will be killed. This will leave 666 people alive in each group.

By killing one-third of mankind, the devil will give the illusion of being a “double generous” “God.” All people who want to live and participate in “the kingdom of God” will have to show their loyalty to the devil by accepting a tattoo on their right hand or their forehead. The owner of the tattoo will be entitled to buy and sell. **“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 his name.”** (Revelation 13:17, insertions mine)

Many people think a computer chip placed under the skin will be used to accomplish this. However, when the sixth trumpet occurs, there will not be enough electricity on Earth to run a laptop computer. These conditions necessarily make the mark of the beast a low-tech, non-transferrable, indelible tattoo. This tattoo will be the number 666 that will be engraved on the right hand or it will be Lucifer’s name tattooed on the foreheads of his lieutenants. Remember, four demons will kill one-third of mankind (Revelation 9:15) and this killing leaves 666 people alive in each group. There will be no mystery to the meaning of this number when the time comes. *The literal number, 666, indicates who belongs to Lucifer.* **“This calls for wisdom** [to understand the number before it is implemented]. **If anyone has insight, let him calculate** [do the math] **the number of** [belonging to] **the beast, for it is** [the man of sin, that] **man's number. His number** [of survivors] **is 666.”** (Revelation 13:18, insertions mine) Lucifer will also have his name

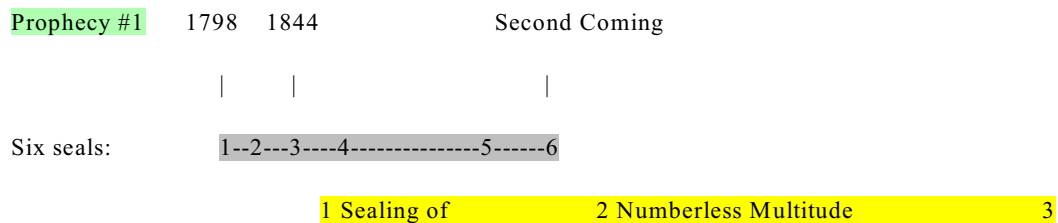
tattooed on the *foreheads* of his lieutenants – the employees of his theocracy (e.g., Pharaoh’s task masters) so that everyone can visibly see who his taskmasters are. This counterfeit tattoo is Lucifer’s attempt to mimic something God intends to do. The Bible says that the name of Jesus and the Father will be engraved on the foreheads of the 144,000! (See Revelation 14:1, 22:4) This glorious insignia will reveal their high rank throughout eternity.

4. The devil will change the weekly cycle so that God’s seventh day will move through the devil’s new weekly cycle. In other words, I anticipate the devil will establish a weekly cycle with a different number of days, perhaps a 10 day week with every tenth day set aside as a day of worship and rest. The effect would be twofold. First, there would be less rest for those working hard to build 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 on different days of the new weekly cycle so that anyone resting *during* the work week would be easily spotted and killed.
5. The destroyer arrives 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 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 imposed 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

Before we examine the seventh trumpet, please study Diagram 12.3 and locate the seventh trumpet and the seventh seal. Notice how the seven seals and the seven trumpets share the same “interrupted” structure, that is, the seventh seal and seventh trumpet are not in the same prophecy as their siblings! According to Rule One, six seals in Revelation 6 make up Prophecy #1, but the seventh seal marks the end of Prophecy #2. Prophecy #2 consists of three elements that are in chronological order. They are: (1) The sealing of the 144,000, (2) The numberless multitude gathered around the throne of God after the Second Coming, and (3) the breaking of the seventh seal at the end of the thousand years. Similarly, six trumpets in Revelation 8 and 9 make up Prophecy #3, but the seventh trumpet marks the end of Prophecy #4. Prophecy #4 consists of two elements that are in chronological order: (1) Jesus meets with His 144,000 servants, they are given words to speak (represented by the book in the angel’s hand that is given to John), and then, Jesus declares, “There will be no more delay,” and (2) the Two Witnesses testify for 1,260 days, the resurrection of the Two Witnesses occurs, and the seventh trumpet sounds.

Chronological Order within Each Prophecy



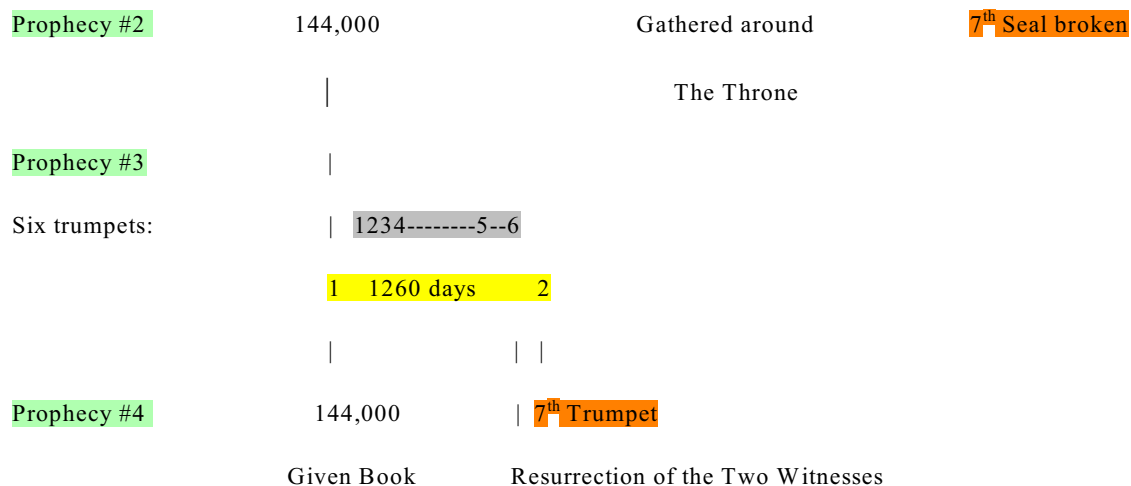


Diagram 12.3 (not drawn to scale)

For now, I am skipping over a discussion on the Two Witnesses in order to complete this study on the seven trumpets. But understand that most, if not all, of the 144,000 will be killed by the time the 1,260th day of the Great Tribulation arrives. But, do not be discouraged. On the 1,265th day of the Great Tribulation (Sunday?), God will resurrect 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 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. He] **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 and have] 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 “woe” or curse that happens to the wicked. This trumpet marks the end of mercy and it *includes* 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 will have proclaimed the gospel of Jesus. By the time the seventh trumpet has sounded, every person will have heard the gospel and made a decision resulting in either accepting the mark of the beast or being sealed by Jesus. Can you imagine the amazement of Heaven's angels as they witness the relentless, stubborn rebellion and arrogance of sinners? No wonder an angel calls out, **“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 Ten Commandments and 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 powerful 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 in 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 it 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” and it was *never visible* except to the High Priest who cautiously entered the Most Holy Place once a year, on the Day of Atonement. (Leviticus 16:13)

There is a reason why God kept the Ark hidden from view. He did not want Israel to begin worshiping two tablets of stone. God foreknew that Israel, like the nations of the world, had a

proclivity for idolatry – worshiping golden calves, the Baals, Asherah poles, and the starry hosts. So, God hid “the covenant” 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 Ten Commandments holy because His law is His constitution. God 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 survives for all eternity. He wrote the Ten Commandments on two tablets of enduring stone. The first tablet contains four commandments pertaining to man’s responsibility to God. The second tablet contains six commandments pertaining to man’s responsibility to man. 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 stealing anything from him. Therefore, the law’s prediction is fulfilled because the law says that a heart of love would never consider stealing from his neighbor!

Here is another thought to consider: The Ten Commandments were kept out of sight because God’s law is not an external matter. God wants His laws written on the “tablets of our heart.” 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 do not 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 legalists can make His law repugnant in the eyes of those who do not understand it. (Remember the Pharisees?)

The Testimony

The Ten Commandments are sometimes called the “Testimony [of God]” in the Old Testament. Five times 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 words or 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 Ten Commandments are not to be included with the temporary laws of Moses that were nailed to the cross.

The Ten Commandments are also called “The Covenant [of God]” and this explains why the golden box containing the Ten Commandments is also 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, insertions mine, 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 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 also a bilateral covenant and the marriage covenant remains intact as long as both parties are faithful to the marriage 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!

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 the court. The witness promises on oath to “tell the whole truth” regardless of what

others may say or do. God made a one-sided covenant with mankind after Noah's flood. 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)

Keep this point in mind when you study the Ten Commandments. They are unilateral and contain a one-sided promise. God *promises* that everyone who lives according to the intent of His law will be blessed with happiness and joy. This is why the Ten Commandments are called a covenant – they are a precious promise! They were given to mankind as a divine revelation from our Creator. They reveal the truth about life and they show the path to happiness and joy.

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 created this deception. God did not impose the Ten Commandments on mankind to determine who will receive eternal life. The devil has also created this deception.

Obeying the Ten Commandments cannot produce eternal life because eternal life comes through faith alone.

Notice how faith and the Ten Commandments will work together during the Great Tribulation: To keep people from thinking that obeying the fourth commandment will merit eternal life, Babylon will persecute everyone who keeps God's Sabbath holy. So, when people completely understand that (a) obeying the fourth commandment cannot produce salvation, and (b) obeying the fourth commandment will surely bring persecution, many people will argue, "So, what is the point of keeping the Sabbath?" The 144,000 will respond, "It is God's will that everyone live

according to His law of love. 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 Redeemer, your Creator, and Master of your life. The first four commandments reveal how love for God is expressed in terms of honor and worship, and the last six commandments reveal how love for our neighbors is expressed. When we love God with all of our heart, mind, and soul and our neighbor as ourself, the Ten Commandments declare how true love will be expressed, because love for God and man fulfills the law!”

God has promised that every human being will be blessed with happiness and joy if they happily submit to God’s authority and obey His Commandments. 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: **“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, has God’s law of love written in their hearts. In other words, unfallen beings are in perfect 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 their 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 the gift of an 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 much glory, violence, and commotion. The five global phenomena that will occur at the beginning of the Great Tribulation will be repeated as the Ark of the Covenant is displayed. Jesus will display the Ark of the Covenant during the seventh trumpet for a minimum of three reasons:

1. When the living are sealed by Jesus or marked by the devil, Jesus will then display the law which the righteous exalted through faith. Jesus will also want the wicked to visually see His covenant which they despised and rejected. When the drama of sin is over, when grace and faith have been completed, then the law that called for obedient faith can be

physically revealed because it will be written in the hearts of those who will live forever!

2. Jesus will display the Ark of the Covenant from Heaven's temple during the seventh trumpet so that everyone on Earth can see that no one escapes accountability. It is total foolishness for men and women to think that they are above the law or exempt from the obligations imposed on man by our Creator's Commandments. Those leaders in Babylon who will have claimed the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross will be speechless when they see the very law they refused to accept.
3. The Ark of the Covenant will be displayed to encourage the remaining saints. If I would venture a guess, I believe there will be about one billion saints who will be alive at the seventh trumpet, and all these saints will live through the seven bowls without seeing death. What a blessing these righteous people will experience when they actually see "the Ark of God's endless Covenant." Furthermore, after the Ark is displayed, all martyrdom will now end. (Daniel 12:1) The wicked will then be cursed according to "the covenant" by experiencing the seven bowls of God's wrath. (Revelation 16)

Has the Ark Been Found?

History suggests that Jeremiah hid the Ark as King Nebuchadnezzar approached Jerusalem to set siege in 605 B.C. As you probably know, claims have been made saying that the Ark of the Covenant has been found. However, no one has produced one shred of evidence to back up their claim! The silence of validating evidence convinces me that these claims are lies. Since God will show the Ark of the Covenant from Heaven's temple during the seventh trumpet, I conclude that He took the Ark of the Covenant to Heaven during the Babylonian exile.* Then He could show it to the people on Earth at the proper time. Consider the following points:

1. During the Great Tribulation, travel and communication for ordinary people will be non-existent at worst and almost impossible at best. So, there would be no value in finding the Ark in or near Jerusalem during the Great Tribulation if only a few thousand people in the area could hear about it and see it. Other than a local interest, there would be zero global impact.
2. If, prior to the Great Tribulation, the Ark of the Covenant was found 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 of the Covenant would be just another archeological find, something like the treasures found in Mayan temples. Again, there would be minimal global impact. In terms of affirming the obligation which God’s Law imposes on all mankind, a pre-trib discovery sitting in a museum in Jerusalem would have zero effect on the world.
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 worse, it would become the physical property of the Jews. I say “worse” because most Christians think the Ten Commandments are Jewish laws anyway. The impact of God's covenant on the world if the Ark was treated in this matter 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 (as Uzzah – 1 Chronicles 13:9,10). This would indicate that the Ark had “lost its divine power” and confirm that, indeed, the Ark was merely a relic from

antiquity. This would also give many Christians the proof they need that the Ten Commandments are Jewish and were abolished at the cross. Again, zero global impact.

5. Suppose that God took the Ark to Heaven during the Babylonian exile because He wanted to show it to the *whole world* at an appointed time. This is certainly possible. We rightly conclude from Revelation 11:19 that when the Ark is shown to the whole world during the seventh trumpet, the Ark *will not* be regarded as a relic or an archeological find. It will be a divine display from the Lawmaker Himself, blessing all who submitted to His covenant and condemning all who refused it.
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 will be even greater. Think about this: A dazzling Ark of the Covenant will be seen against a dark sky crisscrossed with violent lightning, deafening thunder, and shaking ground. This will be an awesome experience for billions of people. It will confirm the faith of the obedient, and it will condemn the wicked who rejected its authority. What will be the global impact? Huge!
7. The two tablets of stone placed in the Ark of Covenant were written by Jesus Himself. That makes them originals. In other words, the Ark of the Covenant on Earth was not a copy of an Ark in Heaven. The original on Earth had to be taken to Heaven for the seventh trumpet.

I think it is appropriate to close this segment with some words taken from the Song of Moses.

The 144,000 will sing this tribute song in Heaven (Revelation 15:3) during the seventh trumpet:

“The Lord will judge his people and have compassion on his servants when he sees their

strength is gone and no one is left, slave or free. He [the Lord] will say: ‘Now where are their gods, the rock they took refuge in, the gods who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offerings? Let them rise up to help you! Let them give you shelter [from my wrath]! See now that I myself am He! There is no God besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand. I lift my hand to heaven and declare: As surely as I live forever, when I sharpen my flashing sword and my hand grasps it in [righteous] judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and repay those who hate me. [Restitution will be extracted from the wicked. They will surely pay.] I will make my arrows drunk with blood, while my sword devours flesh: the blood of the slain and the captives, the heads of the enemy leaders.’ Rejoice, O nations, with his people, for he will avenge the blood of his servants; he will take vengeance on his enemies and make atonement for his land and people.” (Deuteronomy 32:36-43, insertions mine)

***Note:** Jeremiah 3:16 indicates that under “Plan A,” the Ark of the Covenant “would not be missed” and another Ark would not be made if Israel cooperated with God after the Babylonian captivity. This promise suggests the Ark would not return to Israel after the exile because it would not be necessary. I find this verse to be in harmony with the idea that the Ark was taken to Heaven for safe keeping during the exile until the time should come to display it to the whole world.

Summary

This study on the seven trumpets of Revelation has been lengthy because the topic is full of crucial details. By now, I am sure it is clear why I say the book of Revelation will not make

sense without a proper understanding of the seven trumpets. The seven trumpets are the catalyst that brings Revelation's story into sharp focus. 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 1994.
2. The first four angels of the seven trumpets went out to hurt Earth, but were told to wait until the 144,000 are sealed. (This is the time we are in now as of the date of this book.)
3. In a few years, a nuclear war will break out, causing God's saints on Earth to pray for intervention.
4. The censer will be cast down. Corporate mercy will end. The wrath of God will then begin.
5. The first four trumpets, occurring over a period of about 60 days, will immediately stop the war and will devastate Earth.
6. The first four trumpets are (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, perhaps caused by hundreds of simultaneous volcano eruptions. Twenty-five percent of Earth's population will die from the first four trumpets. The world's notably wicked places will be destroyed.
7. World leaders, fearing God enormous anger and even greater destruction, will convene to figure out a way to appease God's wrath.
8. Religious leaders will conclude that God can be appeased because (1) everyone worships the *same* God, although He is called by different names, (2) a reduction in decadent behavior through legislation will please God, and (3) all religions and all nations must

come together as one family to seek God's mercy.

9. Without firing a single bullet or going to war, Babylon (a global church/state) will form and will be given authority over all nations. Political leaders will humbly submit to their religious experts. The religious leaders of Babylon will tell political leaders 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 the sixth trumpet.
11. Babylon will persecute the 144,000 and those who embrace the gospel of Jesus. The saints will be persecuted for 42 months.
12. The advance of the gospel will stall about 890 days into the Great Tribulation. Everyone will have taken a position on the gospel.
13. The fifth trumpet will sound, and the devil and his angels will be released from the spirit realm to physically appear before the people of Earth.
14. For five months, the devil will masquerade as "Almighty God" and his demons will torture the non-religious wicked into submission.
15. At the end of the five months, the sixth trumpet will sound, and the devil will suddenly change character. He will become a stern-faced dictator/king. He will demand that a theocracy be established and that all religions and governments be abolished. He will appoint ten kings (task masters).
16. For purposes of administering rations, the devil will divide the people into groups of one thousand. Four of his angels will kill one-third of mankind. The result will be 666 people per unit remaining. The devil will require the survivors to wear a tattoo showing

the number 666 on their right hand. The devil's lieutenants will wear the devil's name tattooed on their foreheads. This will indicate their high rank in the devil's theocracy.

17. At the end of 1,265 days, the seventh trumpet will sound. God will display the Ark of the Covenant from Heaven. 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, so they become the subjects of its curse. They will be condemned to death because they have rejected love and embraced selfishness and rebellion.
18. One thing will become very clear after the devil physically appears. Man was created lower than the angels. We are no match for their superior strength and intelligence. The physical appearing of the devil with 200 million demons is designed to awaken the wicked, if possible, to their need of a Savior because men and women are required to worship. Until the seventh trumpet, we have a choice.

Addendum – Information on the Jubilee Calendar

I believe that 1994 is the only possible date for the event described in Revelation 8:2. Here is why:

1. 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 (70 weeks x 7 days/week = 490 days). The seventy weeks 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. There are other 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 literal time. So, how can we tell when God is translating time or using literal time? I believe there is a self-evident rule in Scripture that answers this question. Rule Four 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 translates a day for year according to this calendar. On the other hand, when the Jubilee Calendar is not operating, there is no translation, meaning the time is literal. (Note: When God imposed “seven times” on King Nebuchadnezzar for his arrogance in Daniel 4, God did not violate Rule Four because the prophecy concerning King Nebuchadnezzar was “a local prophecy,” not an apocalyptic prophecy. Each type of prophecy has its own rules. The various types of prophecy are discussed in detail in the book, *Daniel Unlocked for the Final Generation*.

2. God Himself created the Jubilee Calendar. It is a marvelous device for measuring and tracking time and God put this calendar in motion two 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 upon them. (Exodus 12:1) Although this is not the place to present the function and fullness of God’s Calendar, four topics about the Jubilee Calendar need to be clarified.
 - 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. The proof that God started counting cycles of seven years at the time of the Exodus is rather simple and 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.

Now, at least one Jubilee year must be identified. After we positively identify one Jubilee year, all 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 helps to resolve questions to a point, but sometimes, history is not enough.) 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, all Jubilee cycles can be calculated. By counting forward or backward in 49 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. The Jubilee Calendar treats the synchrony of time in a different way than we commonly treat time today. First, time is always counted 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. This counts as three days and three nights when counting inclusively. 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 in A.D. 14. (Luke 3:1)

The Jubilee Calendar also treats the weekly cycle in a different way than we commonly do. For example, God's *weeks* always begin 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 and the forty-ninth year always fell on a seventh year Sabbath that was synchronous with Israel's deliverance from Egypt. (Leviticus 25:8) *The weekly cycle and the seven year cycle of years 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). Here is how the countdown to Pentecost occurred: The Feast of Passover fell on different days of the weekly cycle (like our birthdays). 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 because of the issues surrounding the fiftieth year. The Jubilee cycles were 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, and (c) the seventy weeks in Daniel 9 totals four hundred ninety years. If Jubilee cycles were 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 precisely ten Jubilee cycles in length.

The Jubilee Calendar is important to this discussion on the seven trumpets because God's patience with mankind appears to be seventy Jubilee cycles. In other words, God gave the seven angels the seven trumpets *when* His patience with mankind ran out. *When God's patience ran out, He handed out the seven trumpets.* If you can accept the premise that seventy Jubilee cycles ended in 1994, and God's patience with mankind expired that year, then our knowledge of the delay described in Revelation 7 is perfectly consistent with everything written in Scripture about this matter. The year 1994 is an important part of Revelation's story and it plays a crucial role in the question concerning the translation of time, so consider the intricate relationship that exists between God's patience and the operation of His calendar.

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. For about 800 years, the Jews failed to live up to the covenant they made with God at 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 231 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) 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) With God, timing is everything.

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. He took a brilliant young Jew, Saul of Tarsus, who became a Christian, and he became 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. Instead, God created a New Covenant and He redefined Israel. Believers in Jesus are now the heirs of Abraham. (Galatians 3:28,29) History

confirms that God granted forty Jubilee cycles to Gentile believers! (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 1844. This means their translation (a day for a year) has to continue past the date of the cross without interruption *until* 1844. So, at a minimum, we are forced to admit that the Jubilee Calendar with its day/year translation endured until the Thursday year of 1844. The Jubilee Calendar did not end in 1844.

This brings us to the second step. From top to bottom, the Jubilee Calendar is based on the template of a weekly cycle of seven days. 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 obviously suggests that the seventy weeks in Daniel 9 is a unit of time.

The Great Week

I believe that God used the seven day week as a template for a much larger concept that I call the "Great Week." I believe there are seven days of seventy weeks each which I call a "Great Day." As you can see from the chart, I call the week of seven "Great Days" the "Great Week." If this structure truly exists, the seventy weeks in Daniel 9 would be called the "Great Day" of Tuesday. It is very 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 four hundred ninety years. (I call this group of 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 are another seventy weeks or 490 years. (I call this group of seventy weeks the “Great Day” of Monday.) Then, from the decree of Artaxerxes to restore and rebuild Jerusalem to Saul’s conversion in the Sunday year of A.D. 34 is another seventy weeks or four hundred ninety years. (I call this group of seventy weeks the “Great Day” of Tuesday. This seventy weeks is the same seventy weeks mentioned in Daniel 9.) I have shown you a pattern for the first three Great Days. 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 allow the Jubilee Calendar to have four more “Great Days” of seventy weeks each, we end up with “The Great Week” having seven Great Days of seventy weeks each, totaling 3,430 years. (1437 B.C. - 1994)

Counting inclusively, the Thursday year of 1844 falls one hundred fifty years short of Spring, 1994 (the end of “the Great Day” of Sabbath). We have to ask, “Would God terminate the final seventy weeks of the “Great Day of Sabbath,” with one hundred fifty years remaining? The weekly template *forces* the seventh day of the “Great Week” to end on time, April 10, 1994. Once the Great Week ends, the Jubilee Calendar with its weekly template of seven Great Days expires and we discover an amazing outcome: God treats all apocalyptic timing *after* the Great Week expires without translation. If you can accept the premise that all prophetic time periods occurring *after* 1994 are calculated in literal units, then everything stated in Scripture will perfectly fold into an even larger calendar called, the “Grand Week.”

The Grand Week

The Grand Week is a week of millenniums totaling 7,000 years. Each day in the Grand Week represents a thousand 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. This is why I call this period of seven millenniums, the “Grand Week.” 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 to Revelation 8:2 concerns the operation of the full cup principle as it pertains to timing. Notice how this works. We find that God's patience with Israel ended when Israel violated *seventy* Sabbath years. When this limit was reached, God promptly 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. 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 four decrees to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, however] **From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem** [that will occur during 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 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, “four hundred ninety 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 as important 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. Why did God deliberately describe the countdown to Messiah with a segment of “seven weeks” and “sixty-two weeks?”

I keep repeating 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” because *one day* in His Great Week is exactly seventy weeks long. God graciously granted Israel one more “day” to accomplish His objectives. (Hebrews 4:8) God chose the words “seventy weeks” instead of saying “four hundred ninety years” because a week always begins on Sunday in His calendar. This feature alone should have been a very big clue for Israel. 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 should have easily been able to determine the appearing of Messiah.)

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, it would also occur in a Jubilee year! (**Note:** 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 would do no less! He moved on the heart of King Artaxerxes and he returned the land of Judah to the Jews free of charge! He even gave

them much wealth to help rebuild.) Since Jubilee years are forty-nine years apart, God used the seven weeks portion of the sixty-nine week to help Israel's generations locate the appropriate decree and count off the prerequisite years. 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, this can be accurately calculated because 701 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 Christ's birth is no different than the attitude of Christians today. The 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. How sad you say, but the same problem exists today. The second appearing of Jesus is imminent. Bible prophecy has never been clearer and more understandable, yet the books of Daniel and Revelation are treated by many Christians as though they are full of darkness, gloom and doom. But I tell you, 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!

“He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.” (John 1:11)

“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)

Seventy: Random or Deliberate?

Do you think the number *seventy* is important to God or is it just a random number? I am

generally opposed to the private nature of numerology in general, because numerology is based on the notion that numbers have hidden or obscure meaning. There are no defined rules that everyone can plainly see to verify any conclusion. It has taken some time for me to come to terms with the fact that certain numbers might have special meaning to God. From my study, this is what I have finally concluded. See if this makes sense to you: 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 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 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.

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. 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 that the whore rides in Revelation 17 all have *seven* heads and *ten* horns. For reasons beyond the scope of this study, 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 nothing more than 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 eighteen prophetic time periods 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 Final Punch 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. Creation’s template is very revealing. 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 a thousand 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 (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 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 fourteen 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

When everything written previously is coupled with a working knowledge of God’s Jubilee Calendar, I am so impressed with God’s punctuality (down to the very day). This is why I say there is only one “biblically reasoned” date for Revelation 8:2 and I believe 1994 is that date.