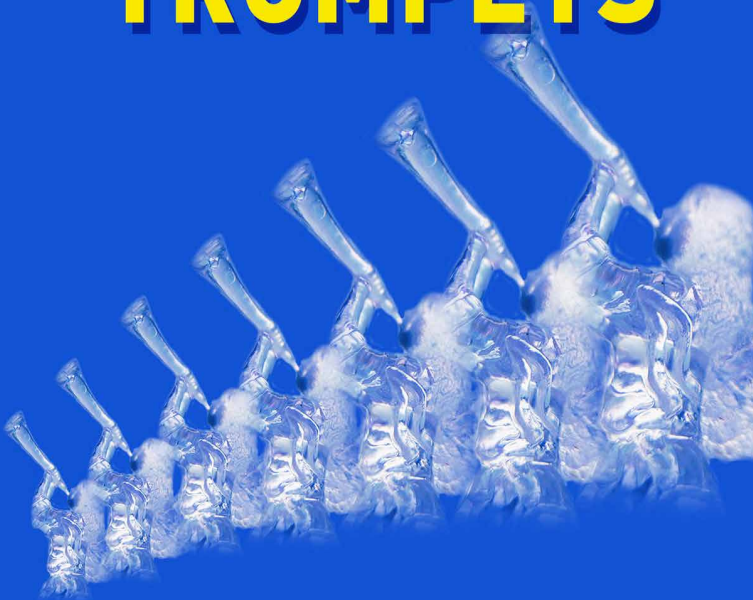


PROPHETIC STUDY SERIES

SEVEN TRUMPETS



WAKE UP AMERICA SEMINARS
Proclaiming the Revelation of Jesus

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May God bless you as you study this fascinating topic!

Larry Wilson

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Seven Trumpets

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

Satan delights when he can distort God’s character. He wants people to see God as a vengeful tyrant or a divine Santa Claus that will do no harm. Of course both extremes are false.

The same God who destroyed the world in Noah’s day and sent fiery brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah, also sent His Son to die on the cross for our sins.¹ God reveals His love for the human race using a balance of justice and mercy.

Bible history proves that God is longsuffering. He extends mercy to sinners day after day, year after year, until the time comes when extended mercy no longer has any redeeming effect. God will then justifiably respond in wrath to deal with defiant rebellion.

¹ John 3:16

God's Purpose for the Great Tribulation

The book of Revelation contains twelve prophecies that integrate into one large story. Some of the prophecies have been underway for centuries, while others are about to begin. When we properly assemble all of the prophecies, a mind-boggling drama unfolds.

Some of Revelation's prophecies are easy to understand and others are difficult, but we can say the same of God. Certain aspects about God are easier to understand than others. Ultimately, the book of Revelation confirms the good news that most people want to hear: A world of eternal joy and endless bliss is coming. It also contains bad news: God is going to test the inhabitants of Earth before He sets up His kingdom and the test is going to be painful.¹

God will separate "the sheep from the goats" before Jesus' Second Coming. This separation process is important in God's plan because God will not permit rebellious people (goats) to enter His coming kingdom. His kingdom is reserved for people who love Him and exalt His righteous ways.²

¹ Revelation 3:10

² Matthew 5:8; Revelation 21:27

The book of Revelation reveals that God will soon inflict the world with a series of fourteen plagues. These events will not occur in random order nor will they be freak disasters caused by nature. The seven first plagues are called “seven trumpets” because they are to warn or awaken the people of Earth about the glorious arrival of Jesus Christ.

The seven last plagues are called “seven bowls” because they represent seven full cups of God’s vengeance which He will pour out on His enemies. Although the Bible completely explains these events, they will come as an overwhelming surprise to most people. Our Creator has carefully designed these coming events to achieve His goals, and He will carefully execute these judgments so He can redeem the maximum number of people possible.

As you read this booklet, consider two points: First, God so loved this world that He gave His only Son to die in our place; and second, God’s patience with defiance and rebellion is limited. During the Great Tribulation, the people of Earth will see God’s perfect balance between justice and mercy. Remember this balance as you study the Great Tribulation and its purpose.

The seven trumpets of Revelation are seven horrible judgments that will impact Earth during the Great Tribulation. These judgments will devastate the ecosystems of this planet so completely that it will not recover. The book of Revelation describes these judgments as seven trumpets because a trumpet will sound in heaven's temple each time a judgment occurs.

I believe the first four trumpets will occur in rapid succession. These four judgments will be so catastrophic that they will sever the past from the future. Once these events begin, life for everyone on Earth will dramatically change. Thousands of cities will be destroyed by fire and water. 25% of the world's population will die during the first few weeks, and global infrastructures such as communication, travel, banking, manufacturing, and shipping will all but disappear. God's judgments will impose tremendous tribulation on everyone. The first four trumpets will cause the entire world to perceive and acknowledge God in a way that is presently unimaginable.

The *full cup principle* is a policy that God consistently uses to manage groups of people; and we must understand it before we can study the seven trumpets. A group of people can be represented

as cities like Sodom and Gomorrah, a nation like Israel, a world empire like Medo-Persia, or even the whole world as in Noah's day. This principle is fairly easy to understand. When the majority of a group becomes so degenerate and defiant that extended mercy has no redeeming effect, God reveals His love for the innocent victims of sin and future generations. He responds to the current generation by sending warnings and redemptive judgments so that, if possible, His wayward subjects will change course. If His warnings are ignored and His redemptive judgments do not produce repentance and reformation, God destroys that group by sending totally destructive judgments. This principle explains the appearance and disappearance of civilizations in world history.

The *full cup principle* is found throughout the Bible. For example, God destroyed the world with a flood in Noah's day; God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah in Abraham's day; God collapsed the walls of Jericho for Joshua; God destroyed two-thirds of Israel and sent the remainder into Babylonian captivity from 605-538 B.C.; and finally, God sent the Romans to destroy Jerusalem in A.D. 70. God will soon apply the *full cup principle* again to the entire world as He

did in Noah's day. The seven trumpets (seven first plagues) will be redemptive judgments, and the seven bowls (seven last plagues) will be totally destructive.

God thoughtfully designed the seven trumpets to accomplish His objectives. One objective is *confrontation*. God wants to confront the false religions of the world with gospel truth. The first four trumpets will set the stage for this confrontation. When billions of people see the sudden destruction of notably wicked places all over Earth and the obliteration of 25% of the world's population, almost all survivors will be in a state of genuine anguish, fearing the wrath of almighty God.

The first four trumpets will produce unimaginable destruction. The chaos that follows will be so great within each nation that each government will question whether it can remain sovereign. After the first four trumpets occur, the nations of Earth will realize that mankind is dealing with one angry God. All of Earth's political and religious leaders will humbly unite in a full-scale effort to appease God so that His wrath will cease.

Driven by fear and humbled by overwhelming destruction, the religious and political leaders of the

world will implement a terribly misguided solution to appease God's wrath. Unfortunately, their solution will stand in direct opposition to what God actually wants, and the confrontation between man's solution and God's plan will commence.

Another objective embedded in the seven trumpets is *redemption*. The shock of the first four trumpets will shatter religious paradigms. All people, despite religious backgrounds, will listen and thoughtfully consider a gospel that is different from what they have ever heard. This receptivity to another paradigm will be miraculous given the religious antagonism that has existed for centuries between Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Atheists, Catholics, Protestants, and Pagans.

Today, no one religious body can claim to know more about almighty God without being condemned by the other six. God will displace man's arrogance by uniting mankind through fear. Overwhelming destruction will produce unimaginable suffering and hardship. God will level the playing field through humiliation so that all people will hear His gospel.

This will provide the opportune opening for people to listen to God's servants, the 144,000. The 144,000 will boldly proclaim the gospel of Jesus

Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Thus, every religious and nonreligious nation will hear and thoughtfully consider a gospel which they would have refused to hear at any other time.¹

There are other important objectives in the seven trumpets, but these two examples demonstrate that God has carefully planned His forthcoming actions. God is love. He is deliberate and purposeful in all that He does. It is a shame that God has to implement His full cup principle and destroy a large portion of Earth to gain mankind's attention. What does this say about the human race when God has to use these judgments to force man to listen? Yet, the good news is that millions of people in every nation will listen.

The Great Tribulation will ultimately produce two distinct groups of people. One group, the sheep, will consist of people with pure hearts who will exalt righteousness and love truth. The other group, the goats, will consist of people who will do anything to save themselves from suffering and death.

The Four Rules

Because God is deliberate in everything He does, I call the seven trumpets and seven bowls *designer*

¹ Matthew 24:14

judgments. God's plan for Earth and its inhabitants predates Creation, and His plan will be consummated soon. The Bible teaches "Intelligent Design": Jesus created this world in six literal days and rested from His creative works on the seventh.¹ The Bible also teaches "Intelligent Demise": Jesus will destroy this creation over a course of 1,335 literal days. Nothing can stop Him once He begins the trumpet judgments.

Some people believe events in the book of Revelation are listed in chronological order, but this is not the case. Consider these two verses: **"When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them."**² These two verses are not in chronological order. If we approach the book of Revelation with the presupposition that its contents were written in chronological order, we will become hopelessly confused. There is chronological order, but it is found within each prophecy. I use the following four rules as a basis for my understanding of apocalyptic prophecy. These rules cover four primary aspects of apocalyptic inter-

¹ Genesis 2:1-3

² Revelation 8:1-2

pretation: Chronology, Fulfillment, Language, and Timing.

Chronology – Each apocalyptic prophecy has a beginning and ending point in time and the events within each prophecy must occur in the order they are given.

Fulfillment – A fulfillment of apocalyptic prophecy occurs when all of the specifications within that prophecy are met. This includes the order of events outlined in the prophecy.

Language – Apocalyptic language can be literal, symbolic, or analogous. To reach the intended meaning of a prophecy, one must consider: (a) the context, (b) the use of parallel language in the Bible, and (c) relevant statements in the Bible that define that symbol if an element is thought to be symbolic.

Timing – God measures apocalyptic time in two ways: (a) as a day for a year and (b) as literal time. The presence or absence of the Jubilee Calendar (1437 B.C. – A.D. 1994) determines prophetic timing.

Consider the rule of chronology. The prophecies in both Daniel and Revelation have many elements that occur simultaneously. For example, in Revelation, the breaking of the fourth seal in Prophecy #1

(sword, famine, plague, and wild beasts) and the sounding of the first trumpet in Prophecy #3 occur at the same time. In fact, the seven trumpets cause sword, famine, plague, and wild beasts to occur!

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

Whenever the chronological order is broken, it forces us to declare the ending point of the previous prophecy and the starting point of a new prophecy. This makes Revelation 8:2 the starting point of a new prophecy, because Revelation 8:2 does not follow Revelation 8:1 chronologically.

Proper Understanding

If a person does not properly understand the timing, nature, and purpose of the seven trumpets, he cannot understand Revelation's story. Sadly, most

Christians do not appreciate the necessity of understanding the seven trumpets. Even sadder, is the fact that they have been misled by the doctrine of a pre-tribulation rapture. Because these Christians believe they will not be on Earth during the seven trumpets, they are not especially concerned about them. Their attitude is, “Yes, the seven trumpets are interesting, but not critically important. As long as we are ready for the rapture, we have nothing to worry about.”

Another group of Christians have also been misled on the seven trumpets. They believe the seven trumpets occurred in the distant past; interestingly, their attitude is similar to the previous group. Their attitude is, “Yes, the trumpets are interesting if you are interested in history, but they are not critically important today. As long as we have a good relationship with Jesus, we have nothing to worry about.”

Additionally, other Christians scoff at the importance of Bible prophecy. Their attitude is, “Bible prophecy is a nose of wax that people manipulate according to whim and bias. The Bible can be made to say anything. Bible prophecy has no bearing on my salvation; as long as I have a good relationship with Jesus, there is no cause for worry.”

Even though these three Christian views are in opposition to each other, they produce the same careless attitude and result: “The seven trumpets mean nothing and I have nothing to worry about.” This indifference reminds me of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. **“The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’”**¹ Christians have truly gone to sleep. When the first four trumpets awaken them, many will suddenly discover that they have been deceived. Although most will become angry and bitter toward God, each individual must bear the blame for his own slumber!

What Happens Before the Seven Trumpets?

Before the seven trumpets begin, a series of significant events occur in heaven. Once you understand these events, the judgments that follow will make a great deal of sense. As you read, keep this thought in mind: God is love. This means that God’s actions are eternally consistent with principles of love. The Father gave us Jesus because He “so loved the world” and Jesus willingly died on the cross because He “so loved the world.” God’s wrath against evil

¹ Matthew 25:5-6

and degenerate behavior is motivated by His love for righteousness, fairness, and equity. Do not forget the flood in Noah's day. A "God of love" destroyed the whole world when a majority of people became hopelessly wicked.¹ God's love for oncoming generations demanded this sort of action.

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

Sin multiplies over time; it metastasizes like cancer. Sin penetrates society quickly and exponentially. It is like gravity. Sin creates a steady downward tug

1 Genesis 6:7

2 Genesis 13:13

3 2 Peter 3:9

that eventually pulls everyone (especially the innocent and uninformed) into its deadly vortex. A new generation receives a chance of having a better life only when the old order is destroyed. Thus, it becomes necessary for a God of love to destroy degenerate groups of people when they pass the point where it is impossible for them to repent.

When God destroys degenerate groups of wicked people, innocent people perish because God's wrath is not necessarily discriminating. For example, many little children drowned in Noah's flood, and many good people died during King Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem. When God's wrath breaks out against a corporate body whose majority is beyond redemption, it is like the indiscriminate destruction caused by an atomic bomb.

The loss of innocent life does not prohibit God from doing what needs to be done because God knows that everyone on Earth dies sooner or later, and He has the power to resurrect every dead person. Remember, Jesus will judge each person individually. He will decide each person's case accordingly. So, whether a child died in Noah's flood or a person dies of illness, 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.¹

The Angel Hurls the Censer Down

The story of the seven trumpets begins with Revelation 8:2. Become acquainted with this segment of the story: **“And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. 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 God's people, on the golden altar in front of the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God's people, 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 peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an 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 hail and fire mixed with blood [mercy], and it was hurled down on the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the**

¹ Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; 2 Corinthians 5:10

trees were burned up, and all the green grass [including food crops] was burned up.”¹

The story of the seven trumpets begins with a simple statement. John saw seven angels standing before God (actually, Jesus Christ). From my book *The Lamb's Book of Life*, we see that Jesus ascended the throne as “Lord God Almighty” in 1798.² The standing posture before God’s throne indicates angels have a hierarchy of authority. These seven angels are described throughout Revelation in different ways, such as: the seven spirits of God, the seven angels of the seven churches, the seven angels who received the seven trumpets, and the seven angels who will eventually pour out the seven bowls.

Dating the Events of Revelation 8:2

I conclude the seven angels were given the seven trumpets in the spring of 1994. Since this date is not specifically declared in Scripture, some people scoff at the suggestion that 1994 is prophetically important. To be fair, I agree that 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 for a biblically

1 Revelation 8:2-7, insertions mine

2 See Revelation 11:17 where Jesus is called “Lord God Almighty.”

reasoned date-stamp on Revelation 8:2, responses range from silence to avoidance.

Some people suggest the seven angels were given the seven trumpets at the cross; when Jesus returned to heaven at the end of the 70 weeks; in 1798, 1844, or at the time of Noah's flood. Others even say, "It does not matter when they received the seven trumpets because if it mattered, God would have told us." Bible prophecy does not always explicitly state important dates; however, we can determine these dates by studying Bible prophecy. For example, 457 B.C., A.D. 30, 1798, and 1844 are only implicitly mentioned in Scripture, but these dates are very important. In another case, the date of Christ's birth was not announced in Scripture, but the wise men figured it out!

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

The Tribulation Begins

The Great Tribulation will begin suddenly. It will begin with a global earthquake that effectively disrupts the activities of the entire world.¹ God has important messages for the human race, and intends to arrest the attention of the world with a massive quake that literally brings the world to a halt. The sudden cessation of life, as we know it, will force survivors to stop and wonder what is going on. The book of Revelation predicts there will be a total of four global earthquakes² that will increasingly rip the surface of the world. Infrastructures, communication, and manufacturing will collapse. These earthquakes have no equal in recorded history. Each will have greater strength than the previous. The final one will be so violent that it will literally move all of the mountains and islands from their places.³

The First Trumpet

Shortly (perhaps 30 days) after the first global earthquake, showers of white-hot hailstones will rain down from the sky. Meteoric firestorms will

1 Revelation 8:5

2 Revelation 8:5; 11:13; 11:19; 16:18

3 Revelation 16:20; 6:14

ignite unquenchable fires all over the world and the accompanying windstorms will destroy billions of acres of trees, food crops, and vegetation within a few days. Of course millions of people will be left homeless and many more will suffer and die.¹

The Second Trumpet

A few days after the meteoric showers of burning hail, Earth will experience two horrific asteroid impacts which happen in quick succession. The first will affect creating a series of tidal waves that will inundate coastal cities around the perimeter of an ocean. Seaports and coastal cities will completely disappear with overwhelming loss of life. Survivors will be frightened and distressed by the angry tossing of the sea.² Ships will not be able to cross oceans and men will be powerless to do anything about the churning of the deep.

The Third Trumpet

The second asteroid will impact one of Earth's continents with devastating results.³ The impact will contaminate water supplies and cause extensive death. Ground waves from the impact will fracture

1 Revelation 8:7

2 Luke 21:25

3 Revelation 8:8-11

geologic strata for thousands of square miles. Sewage, deadly bacteria, toxic chemicals, and other garbage buried in the Earth will seep into underground aquifers. Underground rivers will carry this deadly mixture for thousands of miles, and Revelation predicts that many people will die from drinking this poisonous water.

The Fourth Trumpet

Shortly after the second asteroid impact, the world will hear a terrible roar. Hundreds of powerful, violent volcanic eruptions will occur. These will cause extensive damage. Millions of people will perish. The jet stream will carry megatons ejecta and soot around the world in dense clouds that cause complete darkness. Revelation 8:12 predicts this!

Extended absence of sunlight over the middle third of Earth (the breadbasket of the world) will prevent surviving crops from reaching maturity. In a very short time, the first four judgments will create a horrible domino effect radiating into every aspect of life. Worldwide famine, illnesses, and diseases will be rampant. Clean water and food will become scarce overnight and the misery index will be “off the scale.”

The population of Earth currently is nearly eight billion people. 25% of eight billion is two billion people! According to Revelation, 25% of Earth's population will perish from these four judgments which could occur during a very short period, perhaps 30 to 60 days.¹ The level of devastation, suffering, and death is unimaginable.

The Fifth Trumpet

By the time the fifth trumpet sounds, Earth will have experienced a worldwide situation so desperate that we can only compare it to the flood in Noah's day. God deliberately places the whole world in a dire situation because He knows it is the best way to grasp everyone's undivided attention. From a parental perspective, God puts the warring nations of Earth in a type of "time out" because He wants everyone to consider several issues. God wants the world to know it is time for the nations of Earth to end.² He is about to establish His kingdom and He wants everyone to know the terms and conditions required to enter His coming kingdom.

A few days before the Great Tribulation begins, God will anoint 144,000 servant messengers with excep-

¹ Revelation 6:8

² Daniel 2

tional Holy Spirit power. These individuals from every nation, kindred, tongue, and race will speak for God for 1,260 days. They will be ordinary persons who come from every religious background, and they will harmoniously proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to the human race. As strange as it may sound, most of the world's population will reject the terms and conditions of salvation.

About two and a half years after the Great Tribulation begins, God permits that ancient serpent, the devil himself, to physically appear on Earth. Satan will come with millions of his demonic angels and he will masquerade as almighty God.¹ The devil is the dreaded Antichrist. Deceptively cloaked in brilliant light and charming benevolence, he will claim to be God. He will declare that he has come to establish a thousand years of peace on Earth.

At this time, there will be three identifiable groups of people. The first group will consist of people who have rejected the devil and decided to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. The second group will readily receive the devil as God because of the miracles he performs. The third group will defy both Satan's demands and the prompting of

¹ Revelation 9:1-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; Revelation 13:11-18

the Holy Spirit because they refuse to obey anyone.

Since God is separating the people of Earth into two camps, sheep and goats, He will allow the Antichrist to inflict great pain and suffering upon the third group of people who have chosen to defy both God and the devil's authority. Fortunately, the devil will not harm the saints with this affliction. Many of his victims will eventually relent and join the devil's camp. However, a few of his victims will come to their senses, repent of their defiance against the gospel of Jesus, and receive salvation. Satan will even call fire down from heaven to prove his assumed divinity. Consequently, millions of people will ultimately conclude that the devil is God and they will obey him with astounding zeal and devotion.

The Sixth Trumpet

When the devil's control over earth and popularity reach a sufficient level, he will tell his followers that anyone who refuses to recognize him as God must be annihilated. During this time, God will allow Satan and his angels to kill one-third of

the world's population.¹ The devil will establish a one-world government and exalt himself as King of kings and Lord of lords.

He will control all the necessities of life; if a person wants to buy or sell items for survival, that person must become a member of the devil's kingdom. To demonstrate citizenship in his one-world government, the devil will force the inhabitants of Earth to receive a tattoo or brand on their right hand. This mark will be the number "666." People who serve as officials in the kingdom of the devil will receive a tattoo or brand on their foreheads to show their superior rank. The mark on the foreheads of the devil's lieutenants will be the chosen name used by the devil.² The placement of a mark on the forehead of Satan's lieutenants is a blatant counterfeit of what Jesus intends to do for His faithful servants, the 144,000, after He takes them to heaven.³

The Seventh Trumpet

Before Satan implements the mark of the beast, everyone on Earth will have heard the gospel and everyone will have made an informed decision either

1 Revelation 9:14-15

2 Revelation 13:17

3 Revelation 14:1; 22:4

for it or against it. When every person has made a decision, Jesus will close heaven's door of mercy. Jesus will announce that the offer of salvation is closed by saying, **“Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who does right continue to do right; and let the holy person continue to be holy.”**¹ Then, the third global earthquake occurs.²

World's Infrastructures Destroyed

As stated earlier, according to the time periods in the books of Daniel and Revelation, the first four catastrophic events could occur during a very short period of perhaps 30 to 60 days. The magnitude, extent, and rapidity of these horrible events will catch all people by surprise and cause every survivor to ask three questions.

First, “What does God want?” In ages past, God sent warning judgments mixed with mercy in an attempt to awaken people to their true condition.³ In this sense, the seven trumpets will be no different. By gaining the world's attention through His wrath, God will put His servants, the 144,000, in

1 Revelation 22:11

2 Revelation 11:19

3 Ezekiel 6; Zephaniah 2

an authoritative position to present the terms and conditions of salvation. The overwhelming evidence of God's wrath will be obvious to religious as well as nonreligious minds. Through a sequence of carefully designed events, God will ultimately separate the survivors of Earth into two categories – those who are willing to submit to His authority and those who defiantly stand in rebellion.

The second question will be, “Why is God so angry?” Great terror will fill the hearts of those who survive the first judgments of God. Each infrastructure will be broken or demolished. Even the availability of food and water will be questionable. Because the Holy Spirit will empower the 144,000 to proclaim God's end time message, the world will clearly hear why God is angry. Everyone throughout the world must hear why God's anger has boiled over.

In this painful setting the third question will be, “What is coming next?” The first four events will cause many to think that God has decided to destroy Earth one piece at a time. The rich and poor, the arrogant and humble, the educated and uneducated, the powerful and powerless will be dumb-

founded. Depression, anxiety, and grief will render many survivors dysfunctional.

Few people are mentally or spiritually prepared to cope with the coming tribulation, and physical preparation to save ourselves from God's wrath is useless. Jesus said, **"As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."**¹ The Bible reveals that God always takes action when the majority of people violate His laws and do evil. The Bible speaks of God's wrath: the flood in Noah's day; the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; the destruction of Jericho; the destruction of Jerusalem; and at the end of the age, the destruction of Earth.

Man Responds to God's Judgments

Because God's judgments will be overwhelmingly destructive, world leaders will immediately declare

¹ Matthew 24:37-39

the obvious: “These horrific events are acts of God.” Religious leaders from all faiths will sincerely and promptly react by forming a coalition of religions from all nations. With one voice, this coalition will agree that God is angry with the whole world.

They will also agree that humanity needs a solution to appease God; however, the solution will be problematic. Diverse religions do not agree on what constitutes God’s will. For example, the Catholic or Protestant view of God is different from the Islamic view. The Islamic view of God is different from the Jewish view. The problem will be simple in definition: humans face one angry God; but there are many religions on Earth – each trying to appease God according to its flawed understanding of God!

Revelation calls the initial coalition of religious leaders “Babylon” because it will be a totally confused membership of diverse religions.¹ The word Babylon is derived from the word Babel, which means confusion.²

Overnight, a religious revolution, which springs from fear and terror, will catch the world by surprise. God’s judgments will harm every nation,

1 Revelation 13:2-4; 14:8

2 Genesis 11:6-9

state, city, and community. The fragile line of separation between church and state, especially in the United States and other western nations, will quickly vanish.

The message from the coalition of religious leaders will be simple to understand: “God is angry with our decadence and violence. He has expressed His anger toward man’s wicked behavior. We must repent of our sinful ways and worship God or He will destroy the rest of us.” The irony in this situation is that the coalition will correctly identify the problem, but their solution will be diametrically opposed to God’s will! Interestingly, this is exactly what God wants.

God intends to set up a situation throughout Earth where His laws stand in direct opposition to the new laws that the coalition will advocate. This conflict over laws will set a global stage that will show with whom our highest loyalties lie.

The Global Response

Communal suffering is a powerful force that can bring diverse and antagonistic groups of people together for a common goal. Sociologists have long noticed this phenomenon. For example, Hurricane Harvey wiped

out Houston, Texas, (USA) in August 2017, but the hurricane actually brought about a new “Houston,” a new community of friendship and caring.

Before the hurricane, people lived next door to each other for years without even knowing their neighbor’s name. Suddenly, the aftermath of the hurricane placed the survivors “in the same boat together.” Talk about “fellow-ship!” Tied with Katrina as the costliest hurricane ever to hit the shores of the United States, Harvey may have destroyed the neighborhood, but it formed a community. Neighbors soon discovered that they needed each other to survive – a typical response to shared suffering.

Shared suffering can produce a communal effect on a national scale as well. When the twin towers were destroyed on September 11, 2001, the United States became a nation of United States overnight. For a few weeks, partisan bickering on Capitol Hill ceased. The communal effect produced national unity and because people’s minds focused on patriotism, political infighting stopped for a few weeks. Citizens proudly displayed the American flag on thousands of buildings and millions of automobiles because a strong wave of patriotic sentiment swept

over the nation. These reactions to the tragedy on September 11 were visible evidences of the “communal effect.”

Expressing the scope of these matters in written form is very difficult. Worldwide devastation will change everything overnight. The fear of God will humble all of the nations of the world for a season. The infighting and bickering of nations will stop. Everyone will realize that there is an almighty God and the nations of Earth will be forced to realize humankind is accountable to Him.¹ In a setting of overwhelming destruction and death, it is easy to comprehend how global suffering and severe trauma can crescendo into a religious response that will culminate in a community of diverse, but united people.

Legislating Moral Codes

Revelation also predicts the coalition of religious leaders (Babylon) will have very close ties with the political leaders of the world.² The religious leaders of each nation will urge their respective lawmakers to sponsor laws that will appease God. The result will be the enactment and enforcement of laws demanding that people sin less.

¹ Genesis 6:5-6

² Revelation 13:6-8

Obvious sins such as sexual immorality and other immoral behaviors will be outlawed because religious leaders will argue that humanity cannot appease God unless those who defy God are punished. Christian leaders will use Leviticus 18, Daniel 9, Colossians 3, and other texts in the Bible to prove that God hates sexual immorality, murder, etc., as well as individuals who stand in rebellion against His laws.

They will design these well-intentioned laws to prohibit any action that angers God. Of course, this is where the heart of the crisis forms and it is precisely the conflict God will use for His purpose. The laws of man will mandate that God be worshiped in a way that is contrary to His law. The question of survival and a conflict over the worship of God will be the core issues of the Great Tribulation.

People will be torn between obeying God's laws as presented by the 144,000 and obeying the laws promoted by the religious leaders of Babylon.¹ Using this conflict, God will test every person on Earth to see who loves Him more than survival itself.

¹ Revelation 13:8

When fear rules, common sense is usually left behind. In this setting, religious leaders and lawmakers will exert enormous influence and authority over survivors. Due to the irreparable chaos caused by the first four catastrophic events, the leaders will establish martial law in all nations. Constitutional rights and privileges, due legal process, and other inalienable rights that many nations currently respect will be suspended.

Religious leaders will forcefully argue that God is justified in His great anger. What else could they say – that God is not justified? With one voice, leaders from all religions of the world will claim that man must repent of his evil ways and worship God. The religious coalition will maintain that God’s wrath will cease if there is less sin.

Therefore, “sin-less” laws will be necessary. Since most religious leaders do not understand Revelation’s story, they have no idea that God has ordained 14 specific judgments. The world’s religious leaders and most of the world’s politicians will unite and agree stating “We cannot tolerate sinful behavior or all of us will perish.”

Lawmakers will respect the spiritual guidance of their nation's religious leaders and enact laws mandating severe punishment for any person who offends God. Many such laws already exist in most Islamic countries now. Religious leaders will use the same argument the high priest used against Jesus, **“It is better . . . that one man die . . . than that the whole nation perish.”**¹

Opposition to the Moral Code

History proves that most people resent having another man's view forced upon them. Yet, the smoldering evidences of extensive destruction will be everywhere and government leaders will be looking for expedient ways to restore order. As time passes, people will begin to argue over the methods used to appease God and some will dispute the need to mandate righteous behavior through the imposition of law by legislating that God be honored and worshiped.

Over time, political leaders will increasingly capitulate to the demands of religious leaders. Like it or not, law enforcement officials will have no option but to enforce the laws enacted by the cri-

¹ John 11:50

sis government. The overwhelming destruction in every nation will silence most opposition. After all, what does a world do with an angry omnipotent God? This may sound surprising, but God's servants will voice the greatest opposition to the "sin-less" laws established by the governments of the world. The 144,000 will speak out against the views and doctrines of the religious coalition Babylon.

The mission of the 144,000 will be threefold. First, they will correctly explain why God is doing what He is doing. Second, they will explain how people are to worship God which will be contrary to the laws that religious leaders and politicians have implemented. Third, they will encourage everyone to stand on God's side and rebel against the manmade laws, which are contrary to God's laws. The 144,000 will proclaim that anyone who follows the laws of the religious coalition will be worshiping the devil instead of God.¹ Obviously, survivors will be listening, observing, and considering this powerful confrontation. The Great Tribulation will be an extremely trying time.

¹ Revelation 13:4

The Time of God's Wrath

We have already briefly summarized the events surrounding Revelation's story. Now, a few comments are necessary about God's wrath. God has three types of wrath: redemptive, destructive, and annihilative. According to the Bible, God will use redemptive and destructive wrath on Earth before Jesus appears at His Second Coming.

The seven first judgments (seven trumpets) are redemptive in nature. God mixes mercy with His judgments so, if possible, many people will choose salvation. God will use redemptive judgments to open the minds of billions of people to consider a gospel that is different from anything they have ever heard. He will use 144,000 people anointed with Holy Spirit power to preach the everlasting gospel, and millions of people will receive Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Unfortunately, an even larger number of people will reject the gospel and rebel against the authority of the coming King. After 1,260 days, God will terminate His offer of salvation and implement a second type of wrath, called "destructive wrath."¹ When sinful behavior goes beyond the point of re-

¹ Genesis 6:5-7; Revelation 15:1; 16:1-21

demption, God cauterizes the growth of sin with total destruction and starts over.

The flood demonstrated this type of wrath in Noah's day. It also explains the total destruction of sinful nations and empires since God will use this type of wrath during the seven last plagues (seven bowls).¹ The third type of God's wrath is "eternal annihilation." God has never before implemented this type of wrath on Earth.

At the end of the 1,000-year millennium, God will resurrect all of the wicked. They must stand before the judgment bar of Christ and hear why He has refused to grant them eternal life. After the wicked confess that Jesus is righteous and fair in His decision, God will punish the wicked and totally annihilate both sin and sinners. **"Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire."**² **"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood."**³

1 Revelation 15:1

2 Revelation 20:15

3 Revelation 22:14-15

The topic of God's wrath is enormous. It requires study to understand the right balance between His mercy and His justice. This topic is covered in more detail in my book *Jesus, The Alpha and The Omega*.

A Test for the World

Because the Bible gives the order of coming events, it is possible to identify and anticipate each phase of the Great Tribulation. Each person needs to know that God has deliberately and purposefully designed each step of the Great Tribulation. A sovereign and righteous God plans to confront a world of many religions, cultures, and languages. The 144,000 will present Bible truth, which will confront thousands of errors. Those who love God and seek to know His truth will submit to Him and receive eternal life. Many people who know nothing about God will turn to Him during Earth's last hours and be saved! Even though there are nearly eight billion people living in more than 195 countries, God has a very precise plan that will test everyone in every religion in the same way!¹

According to Revelation, this is the process: The first four trumpet judgments will overwhelm everyone

¹ Revelation 3:10

on Earth. The amount of destruction and loss of life will put the whole world in a state of shock. The fear of God will be palpable. Survivors of the first four judgments will react intellectually and emotionally. God will use man's reaction to His judgments to set up a critically important test throughout the world.

God wants His laws to stand in direct opposition to the laws of man. This juxtaposition will put every person in a difficult situation because either rebelling against God or rebelling against man's laws will have severe consequences. By setting up a global situation where there are only two options the innermost allegiance of every human being will be revealed.

God will reveal who is willing to obey Him even if it puts people at odds with their family, their religion, and the laws of their government. By doing this, God will determine who loves Him above everything else. God has designed the Great Tribulation to be a great controversy, and the Bible reveals how this controversy will end. There will be enormous casualties on both sides, but God will triumph in the end because He is omnipotent and has the power of resurrection!¹

¹ Revelation 19:20-21; 1:18

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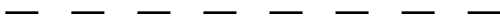


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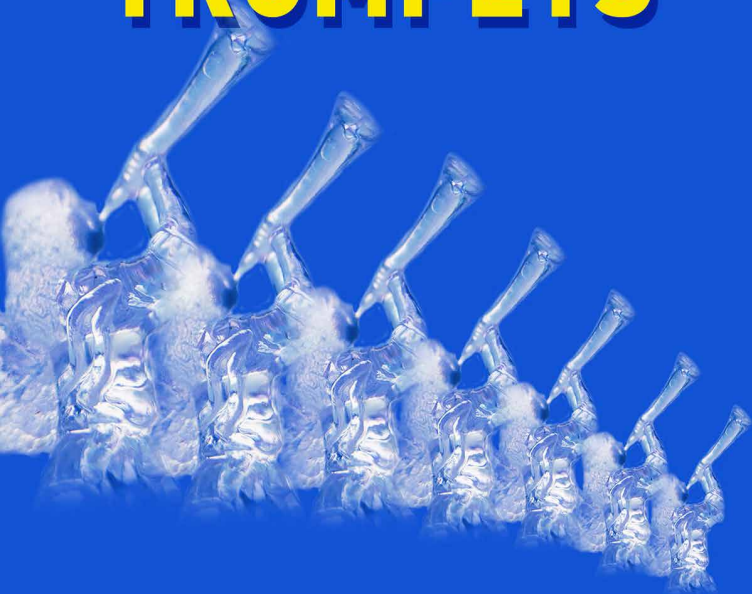
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