

Focus on Prophecy GUIDE 12



Jesus Wins!

- **They were taking a walk together. The little boy darted here and there among the boulders and tumbleweeds, but the older man walked steadily along the crest of the hill. A bright afternoon sun illuminated the landscape for father and son. Suddenly the boy decided he'd try to run as fast as he could and took off down the gentle slope. He kept going faster and faster. The father climbed up on a rock and froze. From his vantage point he could see that the slope ended in a cliff. His boy, who could now barely keep up with his flailing legs, couldn't see the drop ahead.**

Jesus Wins!

- **Immediately the father yelled as loudly as he could, “Jason, fall down! Fall down now!” The message didn’t make much sense to the boy. But he instantly obeyed, compelled by some instinct inside him. He dropped to the grass—and tumbled to a stop a few feet from the cliff.**
- **Sometimes quiet suggestions aren’t enough. Sometimes love has to shout. God much prefers to talk to us, His children, in a quiet, gentle voice.**
- **While on Earth, Jesus spent most of His time mending crippled limbs, making leprous features whole, lifting up the oppressed, and encouraging outcasts. But sometimes Jesus had to shout. When confronted by demons unwilling to let go of their victims, He raised His voice to force them out.**

Seven Trumpets

- **In Revelation 8-11 seven angels blow seven trumpets. Here God is raising His voice in warning about judgment and the need for a relationship with our heavenly Father. Here God is calling for a repentance that changes our lifestyle.**
- **In order to create the proper setting for the blowing of the trumpets, God first takes us back into the sanctuary in heaven.**
- **READ REVELATION 8:2-6.**

Seven Trumpets

- **READ REVELATION 8:2-6.**
- **John says about the vision God was giving him of the heavenly sanctuary and its throne room: “I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.**
- **Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel’s hand” (Revelation 8:2-4).**
- **Incense is usually fragrant and pleasing to the senses. It represents Jesus—His sweet, kind, gentle spirit, His own perfect merits blending with our prayer requests as He gladly responds. I’m glad Jesus lets us know our prayers are important to Him!**

Seven Trumpets

- **But then John watched as the angel “took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth.**
- **There were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake” (vs. 5).**
- **These calamities represent the fact that rebuke, discipline, and punishment may follow warnings.**
- **God is merciful, but He is also just. Remember, Jesus told the church of Laodicea, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent” (Revelation 3:19).**

Seven Trumpets

- **As we shall see in the next few verses, God sometimes removes His protection. In an earlier lesson we learned about the vision of the seven churches and how they portray the spiritual decline of God's people from the beginning of Christianity till just before the second coming of Jesus.**
- **In love and mercy, God calls people to repentance. However, there comes a time when disasters strike the earth. God uses these to get people's attention. The vision of the trumpets shows God's warning to the people He loves.**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION: God loves His people too much to actually punish them for their sins. (False or True)**
- **The seven trumpets represent warnings (judgments) from God.**

A Historical Summary of Events Under the Seven Trumpets

- **In our interpretation of the seven trumpets we'll focus on the historical view of Revelation, which sees this series of trumpets as a vision covering similar time periods in history as the visions of the seven churches and seven seals. The same important political and religious events are represented again, from a different point of view. Applying the seven trumpets to history, we see the following sequence of events.**
- **The trumpets fall into three distinct groups: the first four present judgments connected with objects in nature such as hail, stars, and the sun. Numbers five and six present judgments connected with living things such as locusts and horsemen. And the seventh presents the great, final, all-encompassing judgment that affects all mankind.**

A Historical Summary of Events Under the Seven Trumpets

- The symbolic language used in these verses has perplexed Bible scholars. Though we may not be able to understand every symbol perfectly, God does want us to understand the reason for the trumpet judgments.
- The trumpets come because of sin—God hopes that those He loves will turn to him. Bible scholars have seen an application of the seven trumpets in the history of Rome. Rome became a “Christian” empire, but as we have seen in our past studies, persecution and following man’s traditions over Scripture was part of its lifestyle. Because historically, Rome disregarded God’s leading, He needed to get its attention. Thus came the seven trumpets.
- The first judgments fell upon the western portion of Rome. Barbarian tribes such as the Goths attacked Rome by land.
- These attacks were followed by the Vandals, a tribe whose ships controlled the Mediterranean. During the fifth century the Huns pillaged and overran Rome, taking taxes from the citizens and making their personal lives miserable. Finally, in A.D. 476 the Heruli tribe dethroned the last emperor and extinguished the imperial glory of the Western Empire.

A Historical Summary of Events Under the Seven Trumpets

- **Following the first four trumpets, an angel blasts on the trumpet with the fifth judgment. The Eastern Roman Empire followed in the footsteps of the Western Empire in turning against God's law.**
- **Finally, judgment came, not from barbaric tribes this time, but from out of the desert of Arabia. The Ottoman Turks swept through the Eastern Empire. The sixth trumpet marks the end of the Ottoman Empire. The seventh trumpet heralds the coming of Jesus.**
- **Now let's take a more detailed look at the events associated with each trumpet.**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION: The seventh trumpet presents the final judgment and heralds the second coming of Jesus. (False or True)**

First Trumpet: Vegetation Stricken

- **READ REVELATION 8:7 and notice the events that followed the blowing of the first trumpet.**
- **“The seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. The first angel sounded [his trumpet]: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up” (vss. 6, 7).**
- **Hail, fire, and blood represent destruction in Bible prophecy. Trees and grass symbolize people. Isaiah, for example, writes that God’s people will “spring up among the grass” and be “like willows” by the water (Isaiah 44:3, 4). Historically, it represents the successful invasion of the Roman Empire by a tribe called the Visigoths. The hail, fire, and blood symbolize the destruction that came as a result of the warfare.**

Second Trumpet: Seas Stricken

- **The angels continue to blow their trumpets one after the other. “The the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed” (vss. 8, 9).**

Second Trumpet: Seas Stricken

- **In prophecy water represents nations and people (Revelation 17:1, 15). Jeremiah and Daniel refer to a nation also as a “mountain.” Jeremiah the prophet describes Babylon as a “destroying mountain” (Jeremiah 51:25). After this second trumpet sounds, we see blood, ships destroyed, and sea creatures dying. There’s a great deal of death and destruction.**
- **And it’s initiated by a huge mountain being thrown into the sea. In other words, a nation or empire falls on (attacks) a large group of people.**
- **Applying the historic timeline, the event being symbolized here is the fall of the Roman Empire in A.D. 476, some 400 years after Jerusalem’s destruction. Various tribes from Europe attacked Rome relentlessly until she fell to her knees in submission.**
- **Stop for a moment and reflect on what you have just read.**

Second Trumpet: Seas Stricken

- **Have you ever faced a tragedy that seemed like a huge mountain? Are you facing obstacles now that seem insurmountable? What mountain—either in the past or in the present—would you like God to remove?**
- **God wants to help you deal with the things that haunt you and the things that trip you up. He cares about your personal life. That is why He gives us this warning and tells us in the book of Revelation about future events. Do you know how special you are to God? This prayer is for you:**
- **Father, take the problem that I've just spelled out and turn it into something positive. Please prevent it from causing pain and difficulty in my life. Please replace my worry, guilt, and doubt with Your peace, hope, and comfort. Thank You in the name of Jesus. Amen.**

Third Trumpet: Waters Stricken

- **READ REVELATION 8:10, 11.**
- **When the third trumpet is sounded, John sees a great star blazing through the sky and splashing down in the rivers and springs of Earth. The burning star is called “Wormwood.” Wormwood is a poisonous and very bitter plant. In these verses, it poisons the water and kills one-third of the people who drink the water.**
- **In Bible prophecy, water symbolizes multitudes of people and nations. Later in the book of Revelation, John is shown a harlot sitting “on many waters” (Revelation 17:1). The angel tells him, “The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues” (Revelation 17:15). And Revelation 1:20 tells us that a star represents an angel: “The seven stars are the angels.”**

Third Trumpet: Waters Stricken

- **So let's interpret. There are two applications for us to consider. One is historical; the other is spiritual. First, the historical: Historically, these verses describe the invasion of the Roman Empire by Attila the Hun in the fifth century. The people of Rome thought the Devil had fallen upon them. The Huns raped, murdered, pillaged, and burned the cities of Rome without mercy or compassion. Life was bitter and extremely difficult.**
- **Spiritually, Satan is treating the world in the same way. From a spiritual perspective, we see the following in these verses: An evil (bitter) angel (star) representing Satan, fell to Earth among people (into the water) and polluted them. Applying an historical progression of events, this symbolizes what happened during the darkest part of the Middle Ages. Church leaders, influenced by Satan, filled Christendom with spiritual error. The worst kind of superstition prevailed. This corruption resulted in great spiritual loss (many people died).**

Third Trumpet: Waters Stricken

- **False teachers, who pollute water, contrast sharply with Jesus, the living water who gives life. Satan pollutes what is pure; Jesus purifies what is polluted.**
- ***The Living Water***
- **One day Jesus met a lonely woman who'd come to Jacob's well to draw water. Relationships just hadn't worked out for her. She'd lived with five men and now she was trying number six.**
- **Jesus quickly recognized what she needed—a relationship with Him that could bring healing and stability into her life.**
- **Jesus told her, "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). Jesus was referring to the Holy Spirit dwelling inside us and reproducing in us the fullness of God.**

Third Trumpet: Waters Stricken

- **As you look at your life, perhaps you see too many dead-end relationships. Perhaps you struggle with days and nights of pain and loneliness. Jesus says to you right now, “Ask Me to give you the Holy Spirit in your life—just like you ask someone for a glass of water—and I will do it.” If your desire is to receive the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus, repeat the following prayer:**
- **Jesus, I want so much never to thirst again. Yes, I want the Holy Spirit to continually live within me, giving me peace, hope, joy, fulfilment, and trust in You.**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION: Jesus promises us the Holy Spirit in our lives. The Spirit will be like a fountain of water that will spring up into everlasting life. (False or True)**

Fourth Trumpet: Heavens Stricken

- **READ REVELATION 8:12, 13.**
- **When the fourth trumpet sounds, “a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night” (Revelation 8:12).**
- **Historical, we find the darkening of these heavenly luminaries represents two applications: the collapse of the Roman Empire and the loss of spiritual truth. Under this trumpet, the emperors, senators, and consuls of Rome (the sun, moon, and stars) ceased to exist when the Roman Empire collapsed in A.D. 476.**

Fourth Trumpet: Heavens Stricken

- **From a spiritual and historical perspective, the fourth trumpet is the continuing result of events under the third trumpet when false teachings diluted biblical principles. Jesus is the “light of the world” (John 8:12) and the “sun of righteousness” (Malachi 4:2). But now vital truths about His sacrificial life and death are obscured.**
- **The Christian church of the Roman Empire introduced its own system of salvation. Indulgences, which could be purchased, replaced the “free gift” of eternal life offered to all who place their faith in Jesus. The church’s bloody efforts to compel orthodoxy replaced God’s gracious appeals to the conscience of human beings.**

Fourth Trumpet: Heavens Stricken

- **Verse 13 mentions three “woes” about to befall the inhabitants of Earth. “I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, ‘Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound.’ ” What John is saying is that events under the first four trumpets were bad, but the next three will be worse.**
- **The calamities that each of the seven trumpets introduces can make people fearful. They are tragedies. So it is important to remember that, in the middle of terror and difficulty caused by Satan, we can listen to God’s promises designed for just such occasions. He says to you and me: “The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them” (Psalm 34:7). God’s promise is that, no matter what your circumstance, if you are His friend, you are surrounded by angels whom He personally sends to be close by you. How can you say “No” to a God who loves you like that?**

Fifth Trumpet: Locusts from the Bottomless Pit

- **READ REVELATION 9:1-12.**
- **This passage can seem difficult to understand. But the historical sequence we are following will help. The next big historical event was the invasion of the Eastern Roman Empire (the Byzantine Empire) by the Arabs. We can see how various symbols highlight key elements in this conquest. Applying the historic events of the invasion to the words of these verses would look like this:**
- **Out of the desert, the Arabs swept through eastern Rome. The warriors were expert horsemen. With long hair flowing from under their turbans, they would ride straight toward the enemy, then pretend to turn around and retreat. When the enemy was close behind, the warriors would unleash a hail of arrows over the tails of their horses. The skill and swiftness of these armies caused them to be compared to locusts that scourge the land or to scorpions that sting, poison, and kill.**

Fifth Trumpet: Locusts from the Bottomless Pit

- **Using the day-for-a-year principle established in symbolic biblical prophecy, the five months of torment would represent a 150-year time period (5 months x 30 days = 150 days, or years).**
- **The beginning date assigned to this period is July 27, 1299, when the Ottoman Turks attacked at the battle of Bapheus, near Nicomedia. The ending date is July 27, 1449.**
- **Verse 6 indicates that because of the suffering of war, many would prefer death, but would have to go on suffering for a time.**
- ***Can you think of ways in which Jesus helped you make it through times of intense pain and crisis?***

Sixth Trumpet: The Angels from the Euphrates

- **READ REVELATION 9:13-21.**
- **This trumpet sets off events that are a continuation of the invasion by the Ottoman Turks into the Roman Empire.**
- **The historical application of the symbols is as follows:**
- **The symbols apply to the continual warfare of the Ottoman Turks against Rome. The numbers of invaders, the fire, the smoke and sulfur, the destruction of a third of mankind—all these are references to fighting and destruction. The time period of one hour, one day, one month, and one year has been interpreted, following an historical perspective, to refer to the 391 years following the date given under the fifth trumpet. This brings us to August 11, 1840, the end of the Ottoman Empire.**

Sixth Trumpet: The Angels from the Euphrates

- **At the end of the sixth trumpet and all the destruction that occurs during this period, John writes, “But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts” (vss. 20, 21).**
- **Even the judgments they endured under the trumpets did not produce widespread repentance or reformation among Christians of the time.**
- ***Is there a particular sin or group of sins that has a grip on your life?* You want to break the habit, but every time you think you have the victory, you sin again. Jesus promises victory for you. That is why He left heaven and came to this earth—because He cares about you. There is victory in Jesus! Just ask Him. He is willing to help you.**

Seventh Trumpet: The Kingdom Proclaimed

- **After the blowing of the sixth trumpet there is a pause in the sequence.**
- **We don't come to the seventh trumpet until Revelation 11:15.**
- **That's because John needs to describe some important events in chapters 10 and 11 that lead up to the blowing of the seventh trumpet.**
- **These are events that precede the second coming of Christ. We will study the events in another lesson.**

Seventh Trumpet: The Kingdom Proclaimed

- **READ REVELATION 11:15-19.**
- **Exciting! The trumpet blasts and loud heavenly voices proclaim the good news,**
- **“The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” (vs. 15).**
- **Earth’s history comes to its climax! God terminates the rule of nations that have persecuted and oppressed His people. He sets up a nation of peace and justice.**
- **Death and suffering, grief and cruelty, will be gone forever. No one will ever distort the picture of God’s love and grace again.**

Seventh Trumpet: The Kingdom Proclaimed

- ***When you think about Jesus returning to Earth to let you live with Him forever, how does it make you feel?***
- **THOUGHT QUESTION:** In spite of Earth's troubled history through the centuries, the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of God. Death, suffering, and grief will be gone forever. (False or True)

A Basic Lesson from the Seven Trumpets

- **God is not pleased when religious or political leaders grossly misrepresent Him either by what they teach or how they mistreat people. After patiently working to persuade these individuals to see the light and change their ways, God has to remove His protection at some point and let them reap what they sow. These trumpet blasts remind us in no uncertain terms that God wants His people to be kind, considerate, understanding, and generous. That's the kind of person he longs to "seal" under His protection in the worst of times.**

Conclusion

- **Enemy nationals herded into Shantung Compound by Japanese forces in 1943 endured months of boredom, frustration, overcrowding, and fear. People got on each other's nerves. The camp split into hostile groups. But one man there, Eric Liddell, a missionary from Scotland, managed to stay friendly with everyone.**
- **The most profane businessmen among the internees came to respect and love this man. He stood tall during those long months of internment. He lived his life as an expression of unchanging principles, principles he meditated on every morning at six when he tiptoed quietly past sleeping companions and lit a small lamp to illuminate his Bible and notebook.**

Conclusion

- **Wouldn't you like to stand with Jesus when the trumpets start blowing? Wouldn't you like to shine for Him when the sky begins to darken?**
- **You can do it, because He will place His Spirit inside you, welling up to eternal life.**
- **You can be faithful, because He is faithful.**
- **The choice is yours. Say "Yes" to the One who longs to place His "seal" in your heart.**