

7. The Seven Trumpets (1Q 2019—Revelation)

Biblical material: Rev. 8:1–13; Num. 10:8–10; Ezek.10:2; Rev. 10:1–11; Dan. 12:6, 7; Rev. 11:1–13; Leviticus 16.

Quotes

- Five of the seven have already sounded as evidenced by critical moments in recent history, and a third world war, which is the triggering event of the sixth trumpet, may have already begun. *Irvin Baxter*
- The effects of the first six trumpets will include an ecological disaster of epic proportion. And as the planet struggles to support life, humans will have to endure such intense pain that they will desire to die (Revelation 9:6); and many will indeed die, as noted in the description of the sixth trumpet (verses 13-19). *David Treybig*
- WLC's primary focus with the Trumpets is not the exact timing of their occurrence; rather, we wish to emphasize that the sounding of the Trumpets is yet future, and will take place before the close of probation. This is in contrast to the popular teaching that the Trumpets have already been fulfilled, which is not only erroneous, but most dangerous, as it leaves Yahuwah's people totally unprepared for the cataclysmic events about to unfold. *World's Last Chance*
- The first four trumpets deal with the breaking up of western Rome; the last three, with the overthrow of eastern Rome. *S.N. Haskell*
- The seven trumpets are seven phases of the history among the nations of the world, as they are connection with the church history. Each of the trumpets is directly connected with the church history; particularly the first four come as a consequence of the apostasy that is shown in the seals. *A.T. Jones*
- The seven trumpets are a history of seven peculiar and heavy judgments sent upon the earth, or Roman kingdom. *William Miller*
- The trumpets denote a series of events which transpire contemporaneously with the events of the seals, but of an entirely different character. A trumpet is a symbol of war; hence the trumpets denote great political commotions to take place among the nations during the gospel age. *Uriah Smith*

Questions

Once again, how do we see past the imagery and understand God's message for us today? While recognizing terrible times will come, how do we gain assurance from these chapters? What is the point of prophecy, and what should we *not* do with it? How can we make sure that even in these alarming scenarios we still speak well of God?

Bible summary

Revelation 8-11 details the seven trumpets blown by the angels, describing the disasters that fall on the earth. However all this leads up to the seventh trumpet, when loud voices from heaven declare, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. 11:15 FBV. While the terrifying judgments must not be ignored, it is the culmination of God's victory that is all important. Num. 10:8–10 reveals that the sound of the trumpets was associated with

both war and celebration. Ezek.10:2 shows some of the apocalyptic imagery used later in Revelation. Dan. 12:6, 7 gives a time prophecy of time, times, and half a time. Clear instructions as to how to enter the most holy place are given in Leviticus 16.

Comment

We're given chapters 8, 10, and 11 for study this week, and we really should not leave out chapter 9 as well. Once again Ellen White hardly comments on these chapters—she only refers to the seven trumpets of Revelation briefly in a couple of places. Perhaps this is a sign we should not spend too much time on them?

What should not be missed is that much of the language of Revelation comes from the Old Testament, in particular Daniel, Ezekiel and the prophets. In addition there are the prophecies of Jesus in Mark 13, Matthew 24, Luke 17 and 21 which also inform John's visions. Without this background Revelation is impossible to understand. The best approach is to first emphasize that the book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, and that he has to be seen in all of its pages. This ensures that the right focus is applied to all that is there. Any interpretation that does not speak well of God must be rejected. Secondly, go back and read the imagery of the Old Testament that is being reapplied here. In this way the links to God and his message of salvation are much clearer. For example note the seven trumpets (or horns) given to the priests in the time of Joshua as they marched around the city of Jericho. The mention of seven trumpets would not be lost on John's Jewish readers, since this was a sign of God's victory. It had also been a sign from God ever since Exodus (see for example 19:13). So while we may be alarmed at the terrible judgments on the earth, we should remember that this is a call to come back to God, to accept his rule, and to worship him as the true God, revealed by Jesus Christ.

The witnesses referred to in Revelation 11 are traditionally associated with the Old and New Testaments, since they are the primary witnesses to God. That they would be killed and their deaths celebrated by the people of earth shows the complete disregard for the Bible, in historical times as well as by many today. However, God brings them back to life and they ascend to heaven. This should be telling us something of the importance and power of the Old and New Testaments as God's witnesses, and should encourage us in sharing the Bible with as many as we can.

Ellen White Comments

Terrible are the judgments of God revealed. The seven angels stood before God to receive their commission. To them were given seven trumpets. The Lord was going forth to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth was to disclose her blood and no more cover her slain. {15MR 219.2}

Here is the work going on, measuring the temple and its worshipers to see who will stand in the last day. Those who stand fast shall have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. When we are doing our work remember there is One that is watching the spirit in which we are doing it. Shall we not bring the Saviour into our everyday lives, into our secular work and domestic duties? Then in the name of God we want to leave behind everything that is not necessary, all gossiping or unprofitable visiting, and present ourselves as servants of the living God (MS 4, 1888). {7BC 972.2}