

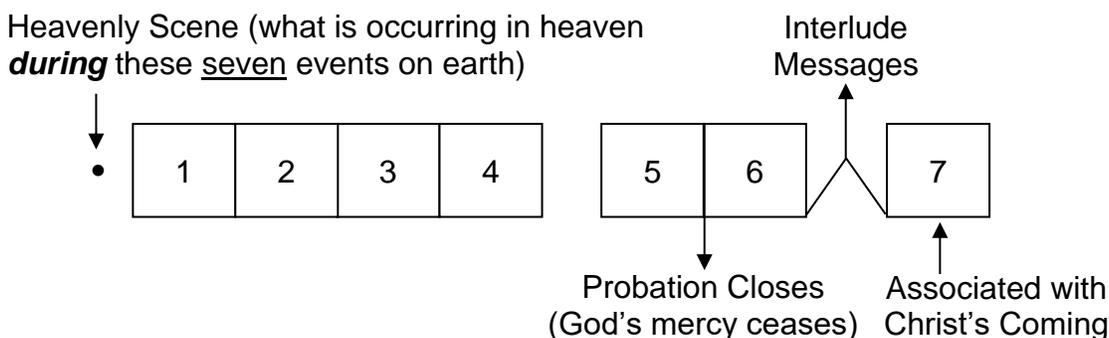
# The Seven Trumpets

## Unique Sevens

Within Revelation there are three prophecies that have seven numbered parts.

- Respectively:
  - Seven Seals (Revelation 6, 8:1) – end-time players surrounding the Second Coming
  - Seven Trumpets (Revelation 8–10) – God’s destructive warnings to repent – His wrath with mercy – Satan’s final horrors on mankind
  - Seven Plagues or Vials (Revelation 15–16) – God’s judicial desolating wrath without mercy

In the Seals and Trumpets there is a unique structure.



The Seven Plagues or Vials are similar, except that they all occur after probation ceases!

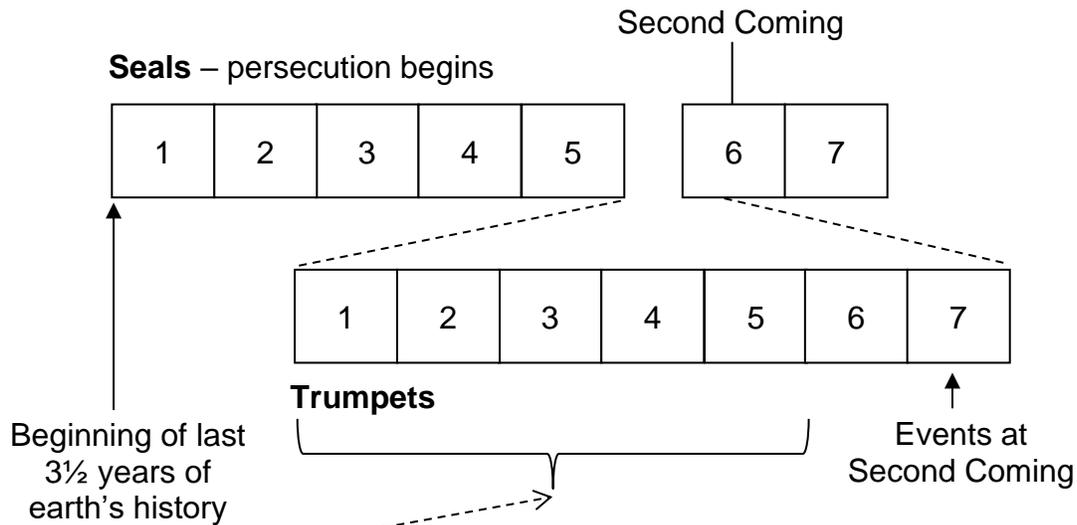
Our focus is on the Seven Trumpet series and what their ominous warning sounds mean. Note that the “seven churches” are not numbered; therefore, these rules and structures do not apply to them.

In an end-time setting, the Trumpets represent **when** the final warning comes to planet earth to repent.

- There is something unique about **God’s final alarm plan**.
  - The gospel and prophetic warnings that **man is to give** are represented as a “**loud voice**” or “**loud cry**” in prophecy (Revelation 14:7, 18:2).
  - The **Trumpet warnings** are what **God gives as judgments and punishments**, which reveal that mercy is about to end!
- The significance of this will unfold as our study continues – man warns, God warns.
- These Trumpets represent catastrophes of indescribable magnitude. It will be clear to the world that God is behind those events – and He will not be trifled with!

## When Do the Trumpets Occur?

Association of Seals and Trumpets:



- Here, the prayers of God’s saints are still pleading (onset of Trumpets). A Holy Place imagery with burning incense is given (Revelation 8:2-4). **Major heavenly activity is in progress.**
- Later, the temple is open into the Most Holy Place – **no activity** (Revelation 11:19).
- The temple is again noted to be open, and **final wrath begins** (Revelation 15–16).

This all means that something dramatic occurs in the courts of heaven during the Trumpets. They are end-time warnings!

***“And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets” (Revelation 8:2).***

### **Heavenly Sanctuary Activity**

Occurrences during the Seven Trumpets

***“And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand” (Revelation 8:3-4).***

What is occurring in heaven is a short video of **what Jesus is doing during most of the Seven Trumpets** that begins to answer the cry of the fifth-seal martyrs – “How long?”

Since this angel (Jesus) is standing in front of the golden altar of incense, He is functioning as a Priest. Since He has a golden censer in His hand, He is functioning as a High Priest anticipating the Day of Atonement.

The prayers of God’s saints are still being heard and answered! Much incense is being given to Him (by whom is not stated).

1. The prayers of the saints have reached a new intensity.
2. This would coincide with earth’s final drama, when the gospel work is being finished, persecution is heavy. The saints can’t buy or sell. Their cries reach to heaven.

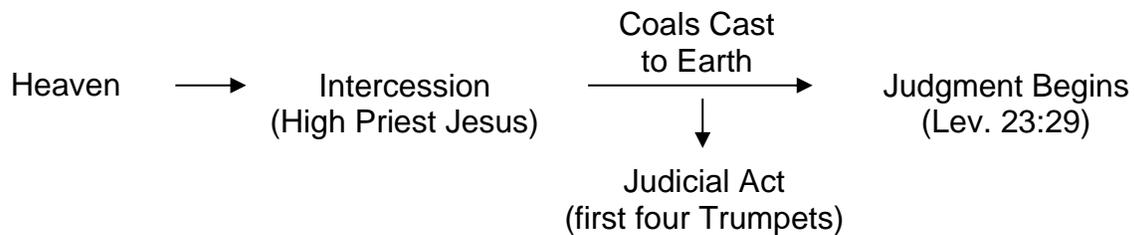
What is this “golden censer” in His hand?

- Remember the Day of Atonement?!
- That was when the High Priest made his **final intercession** for sin. The censer was carried with its smoking incense into the Most Holy Place!

**“And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand” (Revelation 8:4).**

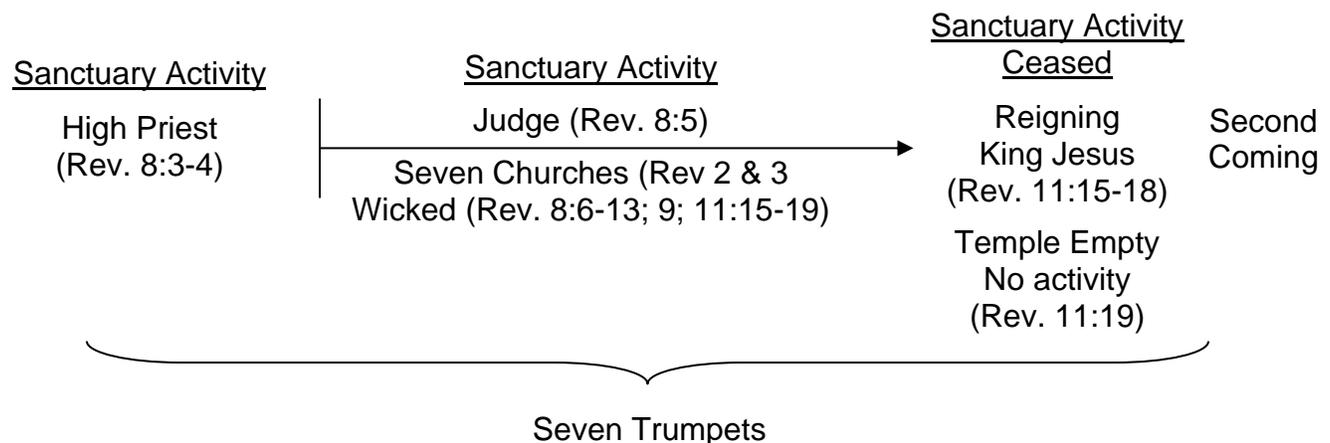
This imagery means that “Angel Jesus,” as our High Priest, is making final intercession and is **soon** to enter into the Day of Atonement **work** – the final work of cleansing the record of His people from sin. At that point, probation for mankind ceases.

**“And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake” (Revelation 8:5).**



**Our High Priest now becomes an avenging Judge** (Rev. 1:14b). During the Seven Trumpets, we expect Christ’s intercession will cease for some!

**The heavenly function of Jesus, thus, transitions during the Trumpets.**



## End-Time Purpose of the Coals

In the ancient atonement ritual, coals were taken from the golden altar and put into a golden censer – with incense placed on those hot coals. That censer was then carried into the Most Holy Place (Leviticus 16).

- The smoke of that incense (“cloud of incense”) covered the mercy seat of the ark.
- That veiled the glory of God that resided there, which preserved the priest’s life.
- He was there to atone (acquit – expiate) for his sins of and those of God’s people.

Here, the coals are instead cast to the earth. That has major prophetic significance.

- It is a judicial act of punishment.
  - The altar that traditionally is the place of God’s mercy becomes the source of divine wrath.

This is when a prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled:

- *“For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that **he may do his work, his strange work**; and bring to pass his act, **his strange act**”* (Isaiah 28:21).
- Referring to this time are provocative insights of expositor White:

“To our merciful God the act of punishment is a strange act. ‘As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.’ Ezekiel 33:11. The Lord is ‘merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, ... forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.’ Yet **He will ‘by no means clear the guilty.’** Exodus 34:6, 7. While He does not delight in vengeance, He will execute judgment upon the transgressors of His law. He is forced to do this, to preserve the inhabitants of the earth from utter depravity and ruin. In order to save some He must cut off those who have become hardened in sin. ‘The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.’ Nahum 1:3. By terrible things in righteousness He will vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. And the very fact of His reluctance to execute justice testifies to the enormity of the sins that call forth His judgments and to the severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor.”<sup>1</sup>

Such judicial displays are represented several times elsewhere in Revelation:

- Lightning – God’s power
- Thunder – judgment pending or occurring
- Earthquakes – God’s destructive wrath
- Voices – judicial decrees

All these events are *“the great day of his wrath”* (Revelation 6:17; 15:1, 7).

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<sup>1</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Pacific Press Publishing Assoc., Mountain View, CA; 1958), p. 628.

## Preparatory Image – Merciful Warnings

**“And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets” (Revelation 8:2).**

**Who** these angels are who are “standing before God” is not clear.

- We know of four “living beings” (Revelation 4:6-9) and
  - 24 elders (Revelation 4:4)
- } All are close to His throne

But – who are these “seven angels?” They could be the same “seven angels” John later sees with seven Plagues or Vials (Revelation 15:1).

**“And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound” (Revelation 8:6).**

“The time is right upon us when there will be sorrow in the world that no human balm can heal. Even before the last great destruction comes upon the world [the sixth Seal and the Seven Last Plagues], the flattering monuments of man’s greatness will be crumbled in the dust. God’s retributive judgments will fall on those who in the face of great light have continued in sin.”<sup>2</sup>

***This concept of a prior warning before a final desolating judgment has always been God’s method of operation.***

This was described well:

**“God has always given men warning of coming judgments.** Those who had faith in His message for their time, and who acted out their faith, in obedience to His commandments, escaped the judgments that fell upon the disobedient and unbelieving.... So now we are given warning of Christ’s second coming and of the destruction to fall upon the world. Those who heed the warning will be saved.”<sup>3</sup>

The Trumpets will occur over an approximate one-year period. ***The first four notify the world that there is not much time left to repent – to be right with God.*** This appears to occur during a final Sabbatical year (*Shemita*) of a final three-and-a-half-year period.

## **The Wrath Begins** **First Trumpet Sounds**

**“The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up” (Revelation 8:7).**

- First, God’s “weapons” are described.
- Secondly, the outcome or results are then portrayed.

<sup>2</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Maranatha*, p. 175.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

## Weapons – God’s Arsenal

These judgments come from the sky and are “cast” onto the earth. Since there are similar “acts of God” described elsewhere, we must first look there:

- Since the word “cast” (*ballo*) means “throw down with **violent force**,” it reveals that a **dramatic turn** against sin is occurring out of God’s throne!
- This is similar to the picture of Christ throwing down the coals in verse 5 we just studied.
  - Jesus was interceding for His people.
  - Suddenly, He cast the coals to the earth in judgment.

The hail is not just “falling,” it is being divinely “thrown” to earth as a judicial act.

- Hail is alluded to as judgment against the wicked in the Old Testament (Job 38:22-23, Isaiah 30:29-32, Haggai 2:14-19).<sup>4</sup>
- The fire appears to be lightning. The National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) has studied lightning presenting as sheets of “fire.”

**Blood:** Since the Nile River was turned to blood (Exodus 7:20-21), this imagery suggests that a supernatural act of God is mingling actual blood with the hail.

- Literal harm comes to literal people.
- God has a distinctive objective: Death to some. To those surviving, “repent – or worse will come.”

## The Consequence

The things destroyed are fascinating and appear **both** literal (as we saw in the Egyptian plagues) and symbolic:

- The things that are literally lost in Trumpet one are of material importance to mankind – trees and plant life – that would especially include agricultural products.
- Things that are in **support of mankind** are targeted.

But “trees” and “grass” are also symbolic of “leaders” and the “general populace” (Isaiah 40:7, 51:12; I Peter 1:24). “Green” is *choros* (G) or pale green – like the pale horse in the fourth Seal – “Apostate Christians” ready to kill God’s people.

Earth	Literally and symbolically – what man materially depends on – “ <i>earthly</i> ”
Trees	Literally and symbolically – <i>leaders</i> , especially of the wicked in Revelation’s context
Grass	Literally and symbolically – <i>people</i> claiming to be God’s children but are in rebellion

God is now responding in this plague to the martyrs’ cry of the fifth Seal: “*And they cried with a loud voice, saying, **How long**, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*” (Revelation 6:10).

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<sup>4</sup> *Pictorial Encyclopedia*, vol. 5, p. 922.

## That Strange 1/3 that is Destroyed

This “prophetic fraction” is symbolic and refers literally to the wicked (Ezekiel 5:2, 12; cf. Zechariah 13:8-9).

In the Trumpets, 1/3 is used twelve times.

- 1/3 of the earth will be burned up
  - 1/3 of the trees will be burned up
  - 1/3 of the sea will turn into blood
  - 1/3 of the sea creatures will die
  - 1/3 of the ships on the sea will sink
  - 1/3 of the rivers and springs will become contaminated
  - 1/3 of the light from the sun will be taken away
  - 1/3 of the light from the moon will be taken away
  - 1/3 of the light from the stars will be taken away
  - 1/3 of the day will be without light
  - 1/3 of the night will be without light
  - 1/3 of the troops will be killed in the sixth Trumpet war
- } 1/3 of the world is destroyed with its rebellious religious leaders and their followers.

This unveils two divine messages:

1. God’s desolating wrath has begun against ***a select part of the wicked world*** and ***against some apostate leaders*** and ***people***.
2. God’s mercy is still extended to ***two thirds*** that yet might repent!

**A de-creation process has begun (important)!**

### **It Must Be an Asteroid** Second Trumpet Sounds

***“And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed” (Revelation 8:8-9).***

John has a problem in actually describing what he saw. He, therefore, uses a simile:  
“As it were a great mountain burning with fire”

Since the mountain is cast into the sea, it falls from the sky. Since sea life dies and ships are destroyed, a literal interpretation is suggested. It plunges into the sea violently.

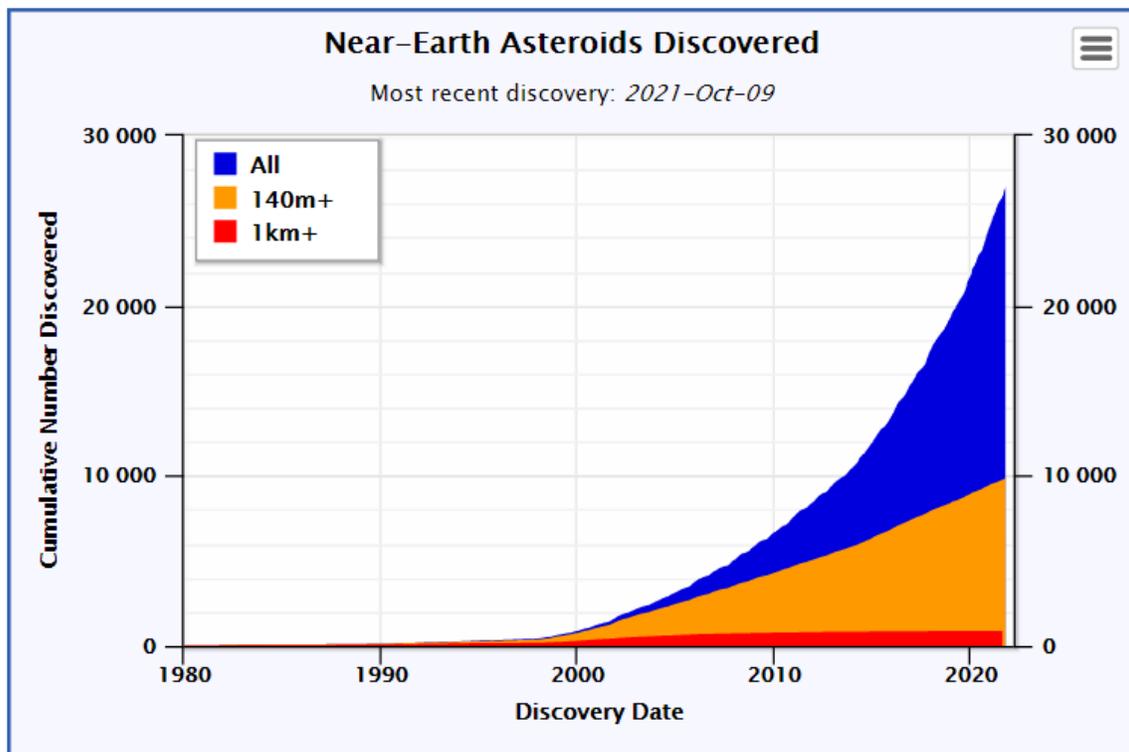
We have seen God’s judicial wrath in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Those cities were turned to ashes from showers of fire and brimstone (Genesis 19:23-29, II Peter 2:6, Jude 7). The earth’s desolation at the flood followed God’s “remorse” (Genesis 6:6) in even creating man. ***Now 1/3 of the sea is harmed.***

## The Burning Mountain from the Sky

A growing number of individuals are concluding that this second Trumpet describes an asteroid impact on planet earth.

- Many descriptions of devastation have been predicted based on asteroid size and impact location.
- It was in 1992 that NASA started the Spaceguard Survey to discover what earth-crossing asteroids existed.
- By 1998 the project was in full operations. Up through 2014 these are the annual discoveries of such space objects:

The following chart shows the cumulative number of known Near-Earth Asteroids (NEAs) versus time. Totals are shown for NEAs of all sizes, those NEAs larger than ~140m in size, and those larger than ~1km in size.



5

Scientists are very cautious about predicting what asteroids might hit the earth. There have been surprises and others likely will follow.

By comparison, 26,115 NEAs and **2,185** potentially dangerous asteroids had been identified as June 25, 2021.<sup>6</sup>

- Those categorized as PHA's are potentially hazardous asteroids.
- These are large enough to cause regional to global damage.

<sup>5</sup> <https://cneos.jpl.nasa.gov/stats/totals.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.statista.com/chart/17453/space-collision-asteroid>

There is increasing concern also that smaller asteroids may cause far more damage than previously thought.

- The Tunguska explosion in Russia leveled 2000 square kilometers of Siberian forest on June 30, 1908 (an area equating 28 miles on each side of a square).
- It is now felt to that that was from an asteroid 67 feet in diameter.
- That was 1000 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb.

There are 1100 space objects in our **inner solar system** (between the nearest planets) of at least one-half mile across. Any one of them could unleash a global cataclysm.<sup>7</sup>

All this has led to websites where one might calculate probabilities of damage from asteroids.<sup>8</sup>

Prophecy tells us that something of a dramatic size (like a mountain) will plunge into the sea.

1. If a projectile five miles in diameter hit the ocean 1000 miles away:
  - a. It would ignite clothing, create third degree burns, would ignite or blow down trees and grass.
  - b. Multistory buildings would collapse; wood frame buildings would collapse or totally burn.
  - c. A tsunami could be as high as 250 feet.
2. If an asteroid were only 3000 feet in diameter:
  - a. 1000 miles away:
  - b. A tsunami of 50 feet would be likely.<sup>9</sup>

Again, an E. G. White notes:

***“The time of God’s destructive judgments is the time of mercy for those who [now] have no opportunity to learn what is truth (before probation closes).*** Tenderly will the Lord look upon them. His heart of mercy is touched, His hand is still stretched out to save, while the door is closed to those who would not enter. Large numbers will be admitted who in these last days hear the truth for the first time. – Letter 103, 1903.”<sup>10</sup>

### Third Part of the Sea Turns to Blood

A direct effect from the fiery mountain: The sea becomes blood.

- This echoes the horrific curse that God brought through Moses on the fresh water of Egypt (Nile River, streams, in containers and even ponds) (Exodus 7:17-18, 20-21; cf. Psalm 78:43-44).
- It involves 1/3 of the sea – presumably the oceans.



Literal blood is in mind.

<sup>7</sup> University of Hawaii’s Institute for Astronomy – August 2006.

<sup>8</sup> <http://impact.ese.ic.ac.uk/ImpactEffects/>

<sup>9</sup> University of Hawaii’s Institute for Astronomy – August 2006.

<sup>10</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Last Day Events*, p. 182; cf. Osborne, Grant R.; *Revelation* (Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 354.

Note: Tied to the 1/3 area becoming blood is the fraction loss of sea life and ships (symbolizing commerce).

To this point we see God interdicting life and its routines.

1. Enough vegetation has been destroyed to blight 1/3 of the earth with famine.
2. 1/3 of the food from the sea and the commerce sea lanes are now seriously impacted.

## A Falling Star Third Trumpet Sounds

With the sound of the third Trumpet we find another “object” falling from heaven.

- For the wicked who refuse to repent, **looking up** reveals the source of divine wrath.
- This apocalyptic metaphor will be repeated two more times:
  1. With 70-pound chunks of hail at the seventh Vial Plague (Revelation 16:21).
  2. Intolerable brightness of Christ’s coming (Revelation 7:16).

The star that enters earth’s space following Trumpet three is portrayed as being “thrown from heaven.” A definitive act of God is depicted.<sup>11</sup>

***“And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter” (Revelation 8:10-11).***

### **“and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp,” (vs 10)**

- The incendiary element is so hot, it is portrayed as **a torch** (*hos lampas* – G).

God is judicially active through fire. For those killed, His terminal pre-advent wrath has come. To those spared and still careless, it is another merciful invitation to repent.

“The Lord will not suddenly cast off all transgressors or destroy entire nations; but He will punish cities and places where men have given themselves up to the possession of Satanic agencies. Strictly will the cities of the nations be dealt with, and yet they will not be visited in the extreme of God's indignation, because **some souls will yet break away from the delusions of the enemy, and will repent and be converted**, while the mass will be treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.”<sup>12</sup>

“It is clear that this is a meteorite or falling star [perhaps a comet] blazing through the atmosphere as it falls to earth.”<sup>13</sup> Clearly, of enormous size.

- There is no evidence from the Biblical description that this star is an angel.

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<sup>11</sup> Beale, G. K.; *The New International Greek Testament Commentary; The Book of Revelation* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1999), p. 478.

<sup>12</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Evangelism*, p. 27 (1906).

<sup>13</sup> Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 354.

- It is a divine judgment of nature **sent to cause disaster**.

In the ancient world falling stars signaled the imminence of death and disaster.<sup>14</sup>

**“And the name of the star is called Wormwood:” (vs 11)**

“Wormwood,” in Greek is *apsinthos*. It means something most objectionable – bitter.

**“and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; ... and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.” (vss 10-11)**

Water is a source of life. How does “one star” affect many fresh water sources? We aren’t told.

- Not only are rivers affected – but
- Fresh water springs – a special source of life
- So important were these springs that God used that term to represent spiritual themes.
- He was the “fountain of life” (Proverbs 10:11, 13:14, 14:27), “spring of living water” (Jeremiah 2:13, 17:13, Revelation 7:17), “spring of the water of life” (Revelation 21:6)<sup>15</sup>

**For God’s people – water of life is assured.**

**For wicked people – water for survival is compromised.**

The usually **non-lethal Wormwood** plant now reveals **this** Wormwood Star’s “bitterness” is far different. **The fresh water becomes poisonous**. Many die as the result of drinking it (not 1/3).

This fiery star’s devastation is judgment three of divine wrath.

We can hear an echo from the past: “My Spirit shall not always strive with man” (Genesis 6:3).

- Divine grace is slowly being withdrawn.
- By now the inhabitants everywhere know that there is no place to hide and no one to lean on.
- Survivors are being called to look up for salvation through God’s messengers. This helps create an urgent affect to the Loud Cry appeal.

## Mystery Darkness Fourth Trumpet Sounds

The fourth Trumpet replicates the ninth Egyptian plague (Exodus 10:21-23).

- Moses **stretched out his hand** and God sent **darkness** to selectively cover Egypt.
- A **trumpet blast signals** the onset of this next plague.

<sup>14</sup> Aune, David E.; *52B World Biblical Commentary; Revelation 6–16* (World Books; Publisher, Dallas, Texas), 1997, p. 520.

<sup>15</sup> Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 354.

***“And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise” (Revelation 8:12).***

Mankind’s attention is, once again, ***turned upward.***

- How this Plague of “celestial lights out” occurs is not revealed.
- But it says that 1/3 of the sun, moon and stars were darkened.

Scholars have been puzzled by the Greek expression in this Trumpet plague. There are two considerations that they make:

1. 1/3 of the day and night are darkened – or
2. 1/3 of the world is darkened

The latter appears to be correct on two counts:

1. 1/3 of the world is affected within the first three Trumpets; so it is here.
2. The Egyptian plague of darkness was partial:

*“And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: **but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings**” (Exodus 10:22-23).*

Total blackness covers 1/3 of this planet. For that area, daytime will also be night.<sup>16</sup>

- Darkness characterized the primal world at Creation (Genesis 1:2).
- Another step backwards to before Creation is taken.

A literal, local effect is also portrayed in the fifth Vial.

- *“And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was **full of darkness**; and they gnawed their tongues for pain” (Revelation 16:10).*

**Now a transition occurs.**

## **WOE UPON WOE UPON WOE**

***“And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!” (Revelation 8:13).***

### **New Trumpets – New Meaning About to Begin**

A distinct change in the prophetic missive now occurs. Based on the 4–2–1 structure of the “prophetic sevens”:

- The nature of the next two Trumpets must change from the first four.

<sup>16</sup> Osborne, Grant R.; *Revelation* (Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 356.

- And – they do!
  - **Trumpets 1–4** – demonstrate God’s early judicial wrath against sin and the unrepentant sinner. It commences what the outcome of separating from God will be like.
  - **Trumpets 5–6** – demonstrates what Satan is like when he is given almost total unbridled freedom.

Before this next “duo” gets underway, God has distinctive announcements for earthings, especially those studying these end-time Trumpets.

- It is given as a “commentary insert,” just like verses 3-5!
- Right between Trumpets 4 and 5 is this **advisory**:
- “The Bible is disregarded, the wisdom of men exalted, and Satan and the man of sin worshiped by the wisdom of this age, while the angel is flying through the midst of heaven crying ‘Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth.’ (Revelation 8:13).”<sup>17</sup>

In a three-fold adulation, God had been previously addressed “holy, holy, holy” (4:8). **Three-fold is idiomatically the greatest possible emphasis.**

- “Woe, woe, woe” is also the pinnacle of God’s final warning.
- Judgment is about to occur!

## When Satan is Given Greater Freedom Fifth Trumpet Sounds

**For God’s People** (Joel 2, Zechariah 10 and Revelation 11 are filled with promises for the end):

**“Near the close of earth’s harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the **latter rain**; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest ‘in the time of the latter rain.’ In response, ‘the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain’ (Zechariah 10:1).”<sup>18</sup>**

**“Under the showers of the latter rain ... the Holy Spirit will speak through the living, human agent with convincing power.”<sup>19</sup>**

**“As the Spirit of God illuminates the minds of His servants, the truth will be presented in its divine power and preciousness.”<sup>20</sup>**

**“The light increases, and it **shines out to all** the nations of the earth. It is to go forth as a light that burneth. It will be attended with great power, until its golden beams have fallen upon every tongue, every people, and every nation upon the face of the whole earth.”<sup>21</sup>**

<sup>17</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Ellen G. White 1880 Materials*, p. 485.

<sup>18</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 317.

<sup>19</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The General Conference Bulletin*, February 15, 1895.

<sup>20</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 354.

<sup>21</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Review and Herald*, August 18, 1885.

## For Satan's People (Revelation 9, 16, 17):

"As we *near the close of time*, there will be **greater and still greater external parade of heathen power**; heathen deities will manifest their signal power, and will exhibit themselves before the cities of the world; ... All need wisdom carefully to **search out the mystery of iniquity that figures so largely in the winding up of this earth's history.**"<sup>22</sup>

"The **power of Satan** now to tempt and deceive is ten-fold greater than it was in the days of the apostles. His power has increased, and it will increase, until it is taken away. **His wrath and hate grow stronger as his time to work draws near its close.**"<sup>23</sup>

**This is now illustrated with the fifth Trumpet, when the "abyss," or "hell," is unlocked!**

## Hell is Unlocked

**"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit" (Revelation 9:1).**

A new vision occurs with the sound of this fifth Trumpet. Undoubtedly, several months went by during the first four!

Unfortunately, the King James Version is mistranslated regarding parts of this verse.

- John sees a star that **had fallen** [past tense] from heaven to the earth.
- John did not see the star fall.

## "To him was given the key to the bottomless pit" (Revelation 9:1)

In Revelation "bottomless pit" (*abyssou* – Greek) always refers to the place of demons and the devil.<sup>24</sup>

- Satan is given a "key" to this abyss or hell.
- Does this mean that hell is a confinement for evil angels?
  - When Jesus cast out the legion of demons from a man
  - They pled with Jesus not to be cast into the abyss (Luke 8:31); cf. II Peter 2:4, Jude 6). He permitted them to enter swine on a nearby hillside.
- Why wouldn't they want to go there?
- Since a "key" is given Satan to that abyss, **it is a place of confinement.**
- For reasons not revealed, **Satan's host abhors the abyss.**

Jesus said that He had "the keys of hell and of death" (Revelation 1:19).

- We conclude that Jesus is handing Satan **one** of those keys.
- Later, another angel who imprisons Satan has a "key" (singular) (Revelation 20:1). There, Satan himself will be confined to the abyss for one thousand years!

<sup>22</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Maranatha*, p. 140.

<sup>23</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, p. 277.

<sup>24</sup> Brighton, Louis A; *Revelation, Concordance Commentary* (Concordance Publishing House, Saint Louis), 1999, p. 232.

***And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.” (Revelation 9:2).***

Though John sees this as a literal event, it is also **symbolic of great spiritual darkness** that Satan brings to earth (II Corinthians 6:14, Ephesians 2:2).

This billowing darkness from the demonic realm spreads throughout planet earth. It is Satan’s last chance to ensnare the human mind. The light of the sun of righteousness is going out (Malachi 4:2). Mankind’s last chance to repent has come.

***“And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power” (Revelation 9:3).***

***“And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth:” (vs 3)***

- The destructive power of locusts is proverbial (Deuteronomy 28:38, II Chronicles 7:13, Joel 2:25, I Kings 8:37, Psalm 78:46).
- As is their seemingly limitless number (Psalm 105:34, Naham 3:14).<sup>25</sup>

These “locusts” characterize another metaphor for an almost unlimited destructive power.

- These locusts are fallen angels who will invade the earth to afflict mankind like the “sting” or “power” of a scorpion.
- Their mission? ***Give non-lethal torment, misery and deception to the wicked!***

Note: Their “power” to harm is **“given”** them. ***This alludes again to divine permission.*** This is intriguing! Christ gave authority to the demoniac demons to enter swine. Here He allows the demons to express their evil on the rebellious – their own people!

***“And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads” (Revelation 9:4).***

This is another constraining directive from God:

- Since the green grass and trees were a focus of Trumpet one, why is this restriction given for the remaining 2/3s? There is to be no further harm to the planet in this plague and to what it symbolizes.

The caveat: ***“but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads” (vs 4)***

- The focus is **directed at people**, not nature. It is directed at the “unsealed.”<sup>26</sup>
- This recalls 7:3-4, where those who are **sealed** clearly **“belong to God.”**

“It is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a **settling into the truth**, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved.”<sup>27</sup> (Ephesians 1:13 – by the Holy Spirit)

<sup>25</sup> Thomas, Robert L.; *Revelation 8–22 – An Exegetical Commentary* (Moody Press, Chicago), 1992, p. vol. 2, p. 29.

<sup>26</sup> Osborne, Grant R.; *Revelation* (Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 366.

This plague lasts for several months (discussed in the next verse).

- One question: “Will there be additional souls converted and sealed during that time?”
- The weight of evidence from the Biblical context and the work/writing of many expositors suggest – Yes!

“Thousands in the eleventh hour will see and acknowledge the truth.... These conversions to truth will be made with a rapidity that will surprise the church, and God’s name alone will be glorified.–2SM 16 (1890).

“There will be thousands converted to the truth in a day who at the eleventh hour see and acknowledge the truth and the movements of the Spirit of God.–EGW’88 755 (1890).<sup>28</sup>

When the sealing process is completed, the final phase of the battle of Armageddon will come (next Trumpet):

*“As yet the four winds are held until the servants of God shall be sealed in their foreheads. Then the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle.”<sup>29</sup> This will be Satan’s “last gasp” – and it will again be against his own people.*

***“And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man” (Revelation 9:5).***

The instruction given to the locust, Satan’s angelic host, is a restrictive order in their mission of terror and harm:

1. Can’t harm those who are sealed (vs 4)
2. Can’t kill those not sealed (vs 5)
3. Can torment those not sealed (vs 5)
4. Only during a 5-month period

God’s request means they must torment their own – and must do it for many months!

***“and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man” (vs 5)***

The pain that the wicked experience (likely repeatedly) over the five-month period is excruciating, primarily psychological.<sup>30</sup>

- Though part of another study, this five months appear to be the ***last part*** of a ***Sabbatical year***, finishing the “appointed time” of three and a half years (Daniel 9 context).
- It would also be the period of time that God’s last call to planet earth has swelled to a ***loud cry***.
- The weight of evidence suggests that it is during this time that the ***death decree*** will go forth against God’s people.

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<sup>27</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, p. 252.

<sup>28</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Last Day Events*, p. 212.

<sup>29</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Maranatha*, p. 63.

<sup>30</sup> Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 497.

***“And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them” (Revelation 9:6).***

- Suicide appears to be the only “way of escape” – but during the fifth Trumpet that is not permitted.
- A literal application again is appealed to!

Job talked of this during his intense suffering.

- *“Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures; Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?” (Job 3:21-22).*
- ***This is all ironic.*** They have killed the martyrs (6:9-11) – but God won’t let them kill themselves.<sup>31</sup>
- This is part of God’s “law of retribution” (13:10, 16:6, 18:6).

**This time period serves many significant purposes in God’s redemptive plan.**

1. Probation has not closed (but will close at the end of this Trumpet). Repentance is still possible.<sup>32</sup>
2. If no one dies during this time – and that appears to be the case – then the world’s living inhabitants move quickly into either God’s or Satan’s camp.
3. The 144,000 will be intensely making their final appeals in a cry that will be heard worldwide.
4. Satan and all his angelic and human hosts plan for earth’s final phase of Armageddon.
5. It will remind mankind how powerless they are against this Trumpet.
6. In this period (“in those days”) these sufferers are survivors of the first four Trumpets! They are alive! Yet, Satan and his angels have brought intense anguish emotionally, so deep that they want to die. They hear the cry of the fourth angel (Revelation 18:1-4) – but they appear to be mourning the religious and material loss associated with the harlot Babylon (Revelation 17 and 18). This is a summation of man’s focus on man. It reveals the restless horror of earthly loss (from the first four Trumpets).

***“And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon (Revelation 9:7-9).***

In that 5<sup>th</sup> Trumpet Satan, a star that had fallen from heaven, is given the key to “hell” or the “bottomless pit.” Jesus had that key (Revelation 1:18).

<sup>31</sup> Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 368.

<sup>32</sup> Brighton, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

The light of truth is now fading. Those minions appear as **locusts**.

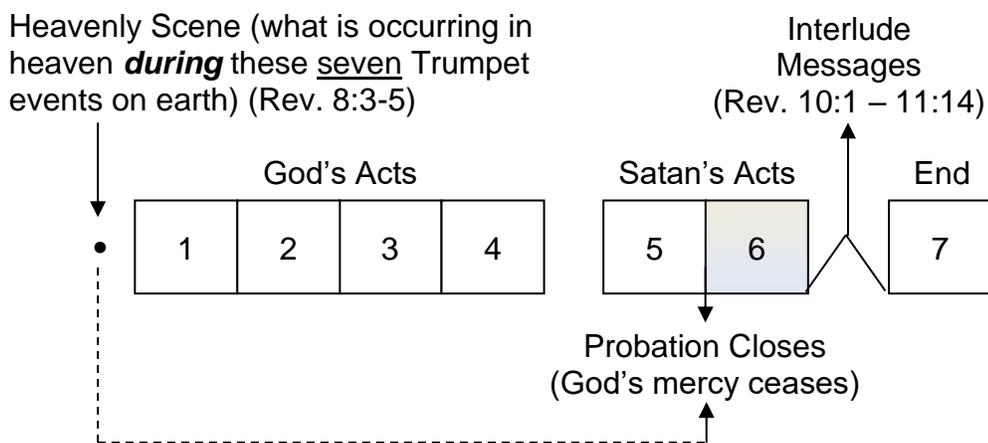
The “**locusts**” = Satan’s evil angels. Shaped like “**horses**” = prepared for battle. “**Crowns of gold**” = Satan’s deception that he holds the key of victory. “**Teeth**” like a lion = ferocious/savage. “**Breastplate of iron**” = covers its heart, it will never change. “**Face**” like human = intelligent beings. “**Woman’s hair**” = seductive.

## Angry Angels – Warring Men

### Satan’s Last Act

#### Sixth Trumpet Sounds

Once again, we are analyzing the second of the first **two “woe” Trumpets**, known as a **couplet** in prophecy when the number “seven” is used (i.e., 4–2–1).



Trumpet angel number six now raises his instrument to his lips and sounds!

***“And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates” (Revelation 9:13-14).***

These four horns symbolize the “directional strength and power of Yahweh” that is now being heard.<sup>33</sup> As the cries of the saints continue to ascend during this time of great tribulation (Jacob’s Trouble), God’s voice is heard in this second woe (sixth Trumpet). Note: Probation has closed.

- The sound comes from the middle of those four horns.
- He issues a unique command to the sixth Trumpet angel.
- This is the first time a Trumpet angel is asked to do something to a special command.

***“Loose the four angels that are bound in the great river Euphrates” (Revelation 9:14).***

***Those Euphrates angels are different from those holding the four winds of Revelation 7.*** Yet, it is important to note:

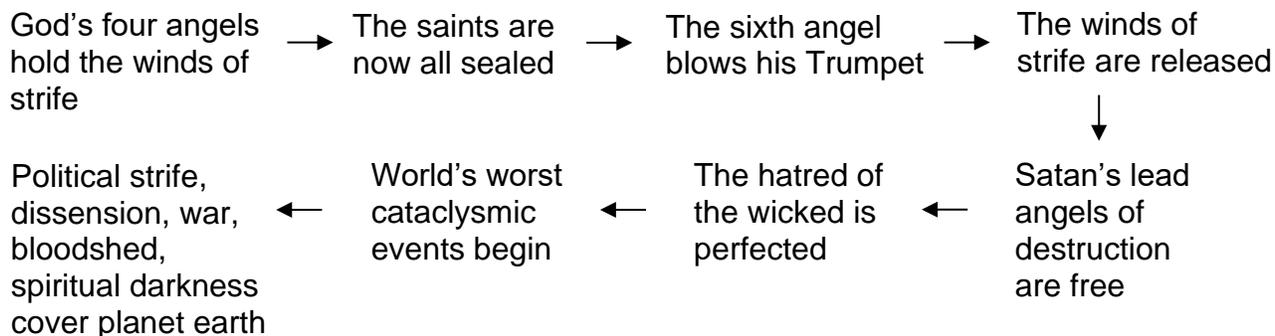
<sup>33</sup> Osborne, Grant R.; *Revelation* (Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, MI), 378.

1. The outcome of releasing the four winds and that of releasing the Euphrates angels is similar!
2. The angels of those winds symbolize God’s control of earth’s last events.
3. The four river angels represent Satan’s “four” leaders who have defined power over the earth (starting those four winds!) (“four” appeals to direction also).
  - They have been restricted to the river that supports Babylon – the Euphrates.
  - Water represents people (Revelation 17:15) in prophecy.
  - They are the leaders of the wicked people supporting that apostate “city” called a harlot or “*Mystery Babylon*” in Revelation 17.
  - Babylon is made up of the beast, the false prophet, and the dragon (Revelation 16:19). To the number 4 is apparently added one over the non-Christian world.
  - Those four satanic angels are now freed to bring harm to the world.

**That can all now occur because the four-winds angels have let go – and the vial angel freed them:**

“Men cannot discern the sentinel angels restraining the four winds that they shall not blow until the servants of God are sealed; **but when** God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there shall be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture [these four Euphrates angels at work].”<sup>34</sup>

- When the sixth Trumpet sounds –
- The four angels let loose the winds
- Those evil angels, the winds of strife, begin their worldwide destruction.



**“And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men” (Revelation 9:15).**

The timing expression “*an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year,*” is not a period of time but a **moment in time** that was divinely ordained.

*“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21).*

“God’s long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have

<sup>34</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 408.

no protection **from the wicked one**. **Satan** will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The **whole world** will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old. (This is part of the “desolation” noted in apocalyptic prophecy.)

- Here, the fractional intensity increases – another one third of the **world** lose their lives.<sup>35</sup> This is the purpose of releasing the “four generals” – to kill earth’s inhabitants – the wicked.
- Death, destruction and desolation are spreading over the whole world.

**“And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. ‘And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone’” (Revelation 9:16-17).**

- The army is represented as war-horse-like creatures.
- They are demonic and bent on torment and destruction.

The “heads like lions” are contrasted with “teeth like lions” of the fifth Trumpet (9:8). All this “weaponry” represents death.

Out of their mouths come fire, smoke and brimstone.

- This reflects the destructive imagery of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24-28; cf. Jude 7).
- It also suggests that the color he saw “on” the armor was a reflection coming from the fire of the lion-like mouth!

Satan’s destructive mission is completed by this inferno!

**“By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths” (Revelation 9:18).**

Fire and brimstone, with its attendant smoke, is an expression of total destruction (Revelation 9:17-18, 14:10, 19:20, 20:10, 21:8, Deuteronomy 29:23, II Samuel 22:9, Isaiah 34:9-10, Ezekiel 38:22).

This activity will be responsible for completing one of the largest death tolls in history.

### **Focus on Their Lethal Weapons:**

**“For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt” (Revelation 9:19).**

The reason one third of humanity dies relates to the lethal power of their mouths and serpent-like heads on their tails.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas, Robert L.; *Revelation 8–22 – An Exegetical Commentary* (Moody Press, Chicago), 1995, p. 45.

## Evil Still:

***“And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts” (Revelation 9:20-21).***

These verses identify God’s judicial view of rebellion and apostasy at the apocalyptic end of time for those that still remain. The imagery of that lack of repentance **does not imply** that they could have done so at this point.<sup>36</sup>

- It portrays the continued **hardness of their evil hearts** at this time – repentance is never considered a real possibility.

This last conflagration is the final satanic gasp of Armageddon.<sup>37</sup>

- At its end – the seventh Trumpet will sound and the mystery of God, vindicating his character, will be complete (Revelation 10:7).

In the interim, Jesus said:

***“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets” (Revelation 10:7).***

## God’s Grand Finale Seventh Trumpet Sounds

***“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15).***

When does that all occur? When will the kingdoms of this world merge into the kingdom of Christ?

*“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, **then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: ...** And before him shall be gathered all nations: ... Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:31, 32a, 34b).*

At the time of Christ’s second coming, He is on the throne as “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Revelation 19:16). This ties directly to the sixth Seal when the wicked cry for the rocks and mountains to hide them from *“the face of him that sitteth on the throne”* (Revelation 6:16).

<sup>36</sup> Aune, David E.; *52B World Biblical Commentary; Revelation 6–16* (World Books; Publisher, Dallas, Texas), 1997, p. 541.

<sup>37</sup> Stefanovic, Ranko; *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, p. 313. Brighton, Louis A; *Revelation, Concordance Commentary* (Concordance Publishing House, Saint Louis), 1999, p. 248.

There's far more to this point in time. It is "when" God's character becomes fully vindicated. He then cries, "It is done."

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