

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

The seven trumpets have a basis. The line of prophecy of the seven trumpets is a consequence. The events foretold therein occur because of certain things that have been done, and these certain things are shown in the first three steps in each of the two preceding lines of prophecy in the book of Revelation—the seven churches and the seven seals. Therefore, to find the basis of the seven trumpets, we must glance at these things, which are their cause.

The line of prophecy of the seven churches is composed of seven letters addressed by the Lord to his church in the seven phases of her experience, from the first advent of Christ unto his second. In each of these seven letters, not only is counsel given in the way of right, but there are pointed out the dangers and evils that beset the church, against which she must be especially guarded, and which, in order to remain pure, she must escape.

To the church in her *first stage*—“the church of Ephesus”—he says: “I have somewhat against thee, because thou *hast left thy first love*. Remember therefore from whence thou art *fallen*, and repent, and do the first works.” Rev. 2:4, 5. This points definitely to the “falling away” that is mentioned by Paul to the elders of the church at *Ephesus* (Acts 20:30), and that is dwelt upon especially in 2 Thessalonians 2; which falling away, when continued, developed “that man of sin,” “the son of perdition,” “who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” 2 Thess. 2:3, 4.

The letter to the church in her *second phase* is wholly commendatory. This shows that, while *individuals* had continued in the apostasy mentioned in the first letter, yet the *church herself* had heeded the counsel given by the Head of the church, and had repented, and returned to “the first works.” The *time* of this phase of the church’s experience is definitely suggested in the word that she should “have tribulation ten days.” Rev. 2:10. This refers to the ten years of persecution in the reign of Diocletian, from A.D. 302-312; which was ended by the Edict of Milan, issued by the two emperors Constantine and Licinius, March, A.D. 312.

Then comes the *third phase* of the church, in which the counsel from Christ mentions with commendation the fact that she had held fast his name, and had not denied his faith, “even in those days wherein

Antipas was my faithful martyr.” Rev. 2:13. This word “Antipas” is not a person’s *name*, but is a *term* characteristic of the times. It is composed of two Greek words,—*anti anti*, and *papas pappas*. *anti anti* signifies *against*, and *pappas pappas*, which is our English, and also the universal, word for “papa.” The word “papa” is simply the repetition of the original root word “pa.” And this word “papa” is the original word “pope.”

Therefore this word “Antipas”—“against ‘pas,’ or ‘papas,’”—shows the growth of the *papa-cy* in the period immediately following A. D. 312. This was the period of Constantine, and onward, in which the *papa-cy* itself was distinctly made, and began openly to assert its authority. And in that time the history records that while the other principal bishops of the church bore the title of “patriarch,” “the bishops of Rome studiously avoided the title of ‘patriarch,’ as placing him on a level with other ‘patriarchs.’ He always preferred the title of ‘papa,’ or ‘pope’ (*Schaff*); and this, because ‘patriarch’ bespeaks an oligarchical church government, that is, government by a few; whereas ‘pope’ bespeaks a monarchical church government, that is, government by one.”—“*Two Republics*,” page 485. Thus the *history* and the *word of the counsel of Christ* unite in marking, as the characteristic of that phase of the church, the formation of the *papacy*, and the assertion of the authority of the pope.

This definitely brings us to the time of the making of the papacy; and corresponds exactly, in point of time, to the facts of history following the Edict of Milan, which put an end to the “tribulation” mentioned in the previous letter to the church.

Thus the “falling away,” the leaving of the “first love,” mentioned in the *first* letter, had, in this time of the *third* letter, culminated in the papacy.

Now this same course is marked in the first three steps of the line of prophecy of the Seven Seals. There, under the *first* seal, was seen going forth a *white* horse (Rev. 6:2), corresponding to the church in her first phase, in her purity. But the counsel of Christ in his first letter said that there was a falling away from her first love; and this is signified in the *second* seal, under which “there went out another horse that was *red*.” And under the *third* seal “I beheld, and lo a *black* horse.” Rev. 6:5. Thus the symbols in the seals, passing from white to black, mark the course of the apostasy from the first love, in which Christ was all in all, in the *first* stage, to the *third* stage, in which, “where Satan’s seat” was, and where Satan dwelt, *a man was put in*

the place of God, in the temple, the church, of God (Eph. 2:21), showing himself that he is God. Verses 20-22.

Now, *the effect* of this apostasy, which developed the papacy in the Roman Empire, was *the complete ruin of the Roman Empire*. And this *consequence* of the apostasy marked in these first three steps in the two lines of prophecy of the seven churches and the seven seals, is marked in the line of prophecy of the Seven Trumpets. The trumpet is herein used as a symbol, because the trumpet is the symbol of war; and it was by the war of the floods of barbarians from the north that there was swept away that mass of corruption that was heaped upon the Roman Empire by its union with the apostate church in the making of the papacy.

Thus the Third Angel's Message has a basis in the Seven Trumpets. The Seven Trumpets have their basis in the apostasy noted in the first and third of the Seven Churches, and the first three of the Seven Seals. And thus, *through the Seven Trumpets*, the Third Angel's Message finds its basis in the apostasy noted in the first and third of the Seven Churches and the first three of the Seven Seals. This, because that apostasy made the Beast; and the Third Angel's Message rises in the time of the making of *the Image* of the Beast, and utters its warning against the worship of *the Beast* and *his Image*. And, in the nature of things, the *Image* of the Beast finds his original in *the Beast*.

The result, *to the Roman Empire*, of the making of the Beast *in* the Roman Empire and by the Roman Empire, was the *utter ruin* of that empire. This ruin was accomplished by the mighty armies of the peoples of the north marching forth under the first four of the Seven Trumpets. And the result, *to the world*, of the making of the Image of the Beast, and the worship of the Beast and his Image, *in* the world and by the world, will be the utter ruin of *the world*, by *the mighty armies* of *another people* marching forth under the sounding of the *Seventh Trumpet*, accompanied by the mighty notes of "*the last trump*."

"And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets." Revelation 8:2.

Now we are to see world history in a different light. Trumpets in Bible prophecy are a symbol of war. The blowing of trumpets is a call to prepare for trouble, a warning. These trumpets warn of events that are similar to the seven last plagues of chapter 16, but they cannot be identical for several reasons: First, the trumpet disasters are mixed

with mercy whereas the last plagues are unmixed with mercy; second, trumpets are a warning to people to prepare whereas once the last plagues begin to fall there is no more opportunity to prepare. All the disasters of previous history are a foretaste of the final disasters of the seven last plagues.

Thus the seven trumpets will be a view of the “kingdoms of this world” (Rev. 11:15) in their strife among themselves—always of course, in relation to God’s work on earth.

But first, a message of hope and good news! While “seven angels” overrule the war and strife on earth, “another angel” is commanded to remember the needs of God’s people.

“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.

The clash of arms is never so loud that it drowns out the prayers of God’s saints. We are assured that there is mercy mingled with the judgments about which the seven trumpets warn us. Indeed, all through the agonizing times when the seven trumpets are blown, God has remembered His mercies.

The “golden altar” and the “incense” take us again to the sanctuary in heaven. Incense is fragrant to breathe. It masks the disagreeable odors. It was offered continually on the altar in the Hebrew sanctuary, representing the fragrance of Christ’s righteousness which covers human selfishness and sin. When we pray, heaven does not see us as sinners unworthy to be heard. Rather, heaven sees us in Christ, and our prayers are rendered fragrant and sweet to the Father in that Christ takes our place.

This is what it means to pray in Jesus’ name. He knows the trials of His people living in a world of pain and strife. Christ has put His arms about all of us, so that when the Father accepts Christ, He receives us also. In Christ’s perfect righteousness, the Father has gladly accepted the whole human race of sinners. You are Christ’s kin, His own flesh and blood. So, whoever you are, do not fear to pray in His name.

Do you hesitate to pray because you do not know how to do so acceptably? Here is encouragement: “The Spirit also helps are weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we

ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. . . . He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Romans 8:26, 27).

“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. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.” Revelation 8:5, 6.

When Jesus died upon the cross there was lightning, thunder and an earthquake. At the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, when God came down there was lightning, thunder and an earthquake. In both cases it was not to frighten the people. It was to rivet attention upon the Divine action to save mankind. Likewise, the lightning, thunder and earthquake here underscores the saving ministry of Jesus as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. The sacrifice of our Saviour for sin on the cross was absolutely essential for the plan of salvation in the everlasting covenant. Equally important is Christ’s atoning work in heaven ministering the blood for the forgiveness of sins. He makes the cross a living reality to subsequent generations who lived not at the time of the crucifixion. This ministry of Jesus is a direct challenge to Satan in the great controversy. He hates the gospel work which Jesus prosecutes upon this earth which he claims as his territory, but Jesus is not going to concede the earth to him.

Satan is not going to back off either. He is going to agitate the inhabitants of the earth and keep them in constant turmoil as a distraction from the true work of the gospel commission to spread the good news that Jesus saves to the uttermost parts of the earth. The trumpets are a heavenly warning to Christ’s followers on the earth that as a consequence of the prosecution of the gospel there will be political strife and nation will rise against nation.

The great leading features of Daniel’s visions were the four great governments of antiquity, beginning with the Babylonian, and ending with the Roman, in its papal form. Not so, however, with John; he lived when three of those governments had passed away, and the fourth and last was in being, and in the height of its glory, as an universal monarchy. Under that government John was in banishment on the isle of Patmos, “for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Accordingly, instead of predicting the rise and triumph of either of those four great governments, it was his part to give the prophetic history of the fall of the last of the four, and give us the

various means by which that great persecuting system should come to ruin.

The first decisive step in the downfall of Rome, was the removal of the seat of empire from the west to the east. Until then its unity had been very faithfully preserved. After that, division and sub-division became the order of the day, until the final ruin of the empire.

The sounding of the seven trumpets I understand to shadow forth the instrumentalities by which the Roman Empire was to be overthrown and subverted, and finally ruined.

The empire, after Constantine, was divided into three parts; and hence the frequent remark, "a third part of men," &c., in allusion to the third part of the empire which was under the scourge. Under the first four trumpets the two western divisions fell, and under the fifth and sixth the eastern empire was crushed; but under the seventh trumpet great Babylon entire will sink to rise no more at all.

We have found that the Seven Trumpets prophesy the consequences of the making of the Beast, which grew out of the great apostasy from Christianity. The Beast was made in the Roman Empire by the union of the apostate church with that republic which had degenerated into an imperial despotism; and the result to the Roman Empire, of the making of the Beast, was the utter ruin of that empire. This ruin was accomplished by the mighty armies of the peoples of the north, which, in a succession of mighty tides, overflowed the western empire of Rome, in the time covered by the first four of the Seven Trumpets.

Although it was not the end of the world, yet, like the fall of Babylon of old, the fall of Rome is full of lessons that indicate exactly the things that will be at the end of the world. For that, with all its terrors, was the consequence of the evils heaped upon society by the making and the working of the Beast. And when the world shall really end, that, with the terrors that accompany it, will be but the consequence of the evil that is heaped upon the society of the world at this time, by the making and the working of the Image of the Beast. And as the Beast itself is the standard of comparison in all things respecting the making and the working of the Image of the Beast, so the state of society and the affairs of the empire and nations of that time of the Beast are a faithful standard of comparison by which to read correctly the course and condition of the nations in these times of the Image of the Beast.

The pagan superstitions, the pagan delusions, and the pagan vices, which had been brought into the church by the apostasy, and clothed with a form of godliness, had wrought such corruption that the society of which it was a part could no longer exist. From it no more good could possibly come, and it must be swept away.

By apostasy that gospel had lost its purity and its power in the multitudes who professed it. It was now used only as a cloak to cover the same old pagan wickedness. This *form* of godliness, practiced not only without the power but in defiance of it, permeated the great masses of the people, and the empire had thereby become a festering mass of corruption. When thus the only means which it was possible for the Lord himself to employ to purify the people, had been taken and made only the cloak under which to increase unto more ungodliness, there was no other remedy; destruction must come.

And it did come, by a host, wild and savage, it is true, but whose social habits were so far above those of the people which they destroyed, that, savage as they were, they were caused fairly to blush at the shameful corruptions which they found in this so-called Christian society of Rome.

These events of the Seven Trumpets are important in another sense also; that is, that the peoples by whom was wrought "the divine judgment of destruction upon this nominally Christian, but essentially heathen, world," are, in their descent, the great nations of to-day; and are to-day the living subjects of the prophecies relating to our times.

In the destruction of the Western Empire there were planted, in its place, the ten kingdoms of the seventh chapter of Daniel, of which the seven that remain after the rooting up of the three before the papacy, are the kingdoms in whose "days," according to Dan. 2:44, "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

The first four trumpets are not, however, an account of the planting of the ten kingdoms. These are prophetic pictures of the most terrible of the mighty invasions by which Western Rome was ruined, and through which the ten kingdoms were planted.

"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.

Daniel had predicted that the Roman Empire, strong as it was, would fall and be replaced with ten independent kingdoms (see

Daniel 2:40, 42, 7:23, 24). The citizens of the empire became rich and corrupt, and thus invited their own destruction. In the north were many wild heathen tribes eager to seize the wealth and comforts of the weak and corrupt people in the south.

Alaric who had been an officer in the Roman army, united the powerful Germanic peoples and led the first invasion of Rome. The death of Theodosius, the Roman emperor, occurred in January, A. D. 395, and before the end of the winter the Goths, under Alaric, were in arms. After several years of ravaging the eastern empire, they crossed the Danube and came like a hailstorm from the Alps, thus answering the apocalyptic description. The city of Rome fell to this plundering invader in A. D. 410. The dramatic description of the terrible slaughter that followed the invasion by the Goths, was represented by hail and fire and blood. For six days the armies of Alaric pillaged the palaces, carrying off gold and silver plate, furniture, and priceless statuary.

“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.

This describes a maritime war invading the Roman Empire from the sea. The Vandals invaded Rome from Africa through the Mediterranean. Their ambitious leader possessed no scruples. Once in the waters of the Mediterranean, Genseric set his heart on Rome. In the year 455 he sailed into the mouth of the Tiber, pillaged the city, and took thousands of citizens prisoner, including the empress and her two daughters. The fleet of Rome, thirteen hundred ships, far outnumbered the fleet of the invader. Therefore the Romans entered the battle with some assurance of victory. But this clever admiral of the Vandals, under cover of darkness, towed some ships loaded with combustibles among the ships of the Roman fleet, setting fire to them. That night saw more than eleven hundred ships destroyed.

“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.

The work of destruction of the old world of Rome was not yet complete. Something worse was yet to come. A new warrior arose to destroy Rome, whose name was Attila. He led hordes of savage and cruel men known as Huns (from which we get the name of the country Hungary today). Writers of history have described Attila's appearance on the stage of history as a brilliant meteor flashing in the sky. He came from the east, gathering his followers, and poured them down suddenly on the Roman empire.

Attila devastated great portions of Europe. "It was the boast of Attila that the grass never grew on the spot where his horse had trod. 'The scourge of God' was a name that he appropriated to himself. . . . The Western emperor with the senate and people of Rome humbly and fearfully submitted to the rough Attila."

"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.

Thus the three parts of the mighty government of Rome,—emperors, consuls, and senators, symbolized in the Revelation by the sun, moon, and stars,—passed into oblivion, and Italy became divided into a number of little duchies and provinces.

The splendor and power of Rome was linked to its religion which was attributed to the heavenly bodies. During the Christian era, the worship of the sun, the moon, and the planets became more common, for it was supported by the Roman Empire. The present names of the days of the week in the Western countries come from the cult rendered to the sun, the moon, and the other planets on the respective days of the week. The power and authority of Rome were believed to come from these heavenly bodies. Even the Roman emperor was deified as the "god sun."

The fact that only a third of the sun, the moon, and the stars is struck, damaging the light during both day and night, shows us that the heathen cult was losing power, but that it was not completely extinguished. Actually, as Christians were overcoming the heathen, the cult of the heavenly bodies was disappearing. But their worship was replaced by a similar idolatry which took many of the heathen symbols and applied them, first to Christ and then, by extension, to His presumed vicarious saints and virgins of the church.

This happened with the disk of the sun drawn behind the head of a man in the pagan cult, which at that time was introduced in the Christian pictures of the saints.

The first four trumpets show a progressive weakening of the heathen Roman Empire. Rome had shed the blood of many Christian martyrs. The empire was weakened by progressive barbarian invasions and the burden of heathenism which self-imploded. The imperial heathen system of government ended in the fifth century.