

# The 7 Retributive Judgment Trumpets of Revelation, I

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## The Trumpets Blows Are Heralds of Retributive Judgments

1. The blowing of the 7 trumpets with their attendant calamities and plagues are designed to tear down kingdoms and nations that have long opposed and oppressed the Christian church; the blowing of 7 trumpets in Revelation is highly reminiscent of the 7-fold blowing of the trumpets in the time of Joshua which resulted in the collapse of the city of Jericho (**Josh 6:1-21**);
2. These punitive judgments from the heavenly sanctuary that are inflicted on the enemies of the church are in answer to the prayer of God's beleaguered people;
  - a. **Rev 6:9-11**--"How long, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"
  - b. **Dan 8:13** "How long shall be the vision. . .of the sanctuary and the host to be trodden underfoot?"
3. This retributive or punitive action is also dramatized by the angel throwing down the censer filled with fire to the earth (**Rev 8:5**);

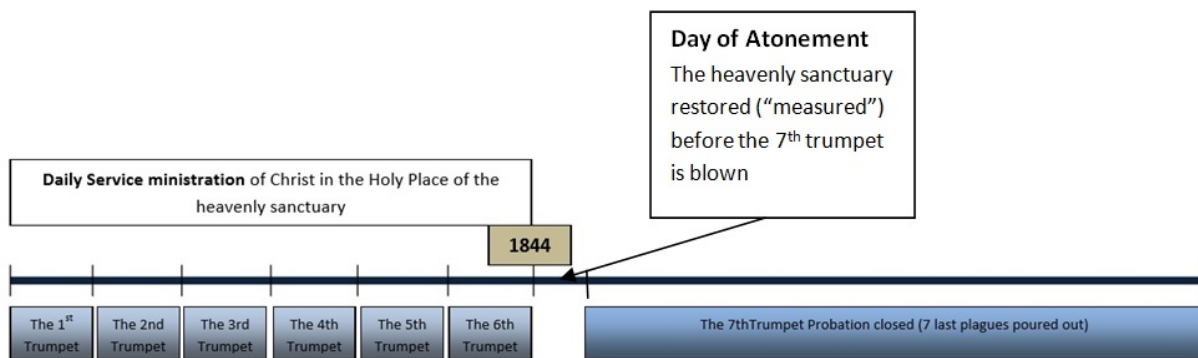
## The Trumpets Blows Are Wake-up Calls

4. The trumpets can also be looked at as wake-up calls throughout the Christian dispensation, they are appeals to repentance. Each trumpet blast brings with it a plague of a more disastrous nature than the one before it;
5. Just as the plagues of Egypt were in reality calls to the Pharaoh and his servants to humble themselves and repent of their pride and of their sin of oppressing God's people, refusing to let them go (**Exo 9:16-17; Exo 10:3**), the 7 plague trumpets were appeals for humility and repentance;
  - a. **Rev 9:20-21**—the men which were not killed by the plagues still refused to repent
  - b. **Rev 2:20-23**--The church of Thyatira refuses to repent

## The Timeline of the Blowing of the 7 Trumpets

6. The 7 trumpets and the 7 seals are related in that they both go over the sweep of events of earth's history, i.e. from the 1<sup>st</sup> coming of Christ until His second coming;
  - a. **The vision of the 7 seals**--The punishments inflicted on the enemies of the church are expressed in covenant curses
  - b. **The vision of the 7 trumpets**—the same punishments inflicted on the enemies of the church are expressed in tangible calamities;

7. **VERY IMPORTANT:** The timeline of the blowing of the 7 plague trumpets of Revelation may be divided into three parts; this timeline is synchronized with the ministration of Jesus going on in the heavenly sanctuary;
- a. **Part 1 (synchronized with the Daily Service)**--the blowing of the first 6 trumpets is synchronized with coincides with the ministration going on in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary;
    - i. The offering of incense at the golden altar of incense in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary is brought to view as the 7 angels with the trumpets prepare to sound (**Rev 8:2-5**)
    - ii. Ministration in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary is still on progress when the 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet is blown (**Rev 9:13-14**)
  - b. **Part 2 (synchronized with the Day of Atonement Cleansing of the sanctuary)** —a short period of lull is found between the blowing of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> trumpets so that the mystery of God can be finished (**Rev 10:7**); the events occurring during this time period are synchronized with the final ministration in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary (antitypical Day of Atonement); the events to take place during this period include:
    - i. **“thou must prophesy again”**—final proclamation of the warning messages of the three angels (**Rev 10:11**) and the final gathering of God’s elect from the nations, kindred and tongue and people (**Rev 14:6-12; Rev 7:9**)
    - ii. **“measure the temple, the altar and them that worship therein”**—The final ministration of Jesus in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary to cleanse and restore it along with the worshippers is brought to view in the symbolic work of “measuring the temple, the altar and them that worship therein” (**Rev 11:1**);
  - c. **Part 3 (Sanctuary Service closed)**—The blowing of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet is the signal that Christ’s work in the heavenly sanctuary is over and probation closes (**Rev 11:15**);
    - i. **The work of intercession in the heavenly sanctuary is over** --the 24 elders and the 4 living creatures cease assisting Christ in His work of intercession
      1. are shown to be no longer having in their hands the censers and vials full odours which are the prayers of the saints (**Rev 11:16-17 cf Rev 5:8**)
      2. There is a change in their prayer of acclamation:
        - a. During probationary time--“And hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign upon the earth (**Rev 5:10**)
        - b. After probation closes--“Thou hast taken thy great power and hast reigned” (**Rev 11:17**)
      3. They are no longer in the first apartment but in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary where the ark of testament is located (**Rev 11:19 cf Rev 4:1-5**)
    - ii. **The kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ;** work of intercession is finished and human probation closes; the wrath of God poured out in the 7 last plagues (**Rev 15:1**)



## Close of Probation throughout Human History

8. **Rev 8:4**--The casting down of the censer represents the end of probation for those whose probation have ended; this is not the final close of probation for mankind in general—this is still future, but only the end of probation for the targets of the plagues brought in by the blowing of the trumpets;
9. The Close of probation must not be understood as one single event to take place in the time of the end, but rather something that has already occurred at different times in the past for different groups of people;
  - a. Close of probation in past history:

### CLOSE OF PROBATION FOR THE EGYPTIANS

The end of probation for the Egyptians in the time of Moses When the whole army,--"all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen,"-- were in the very bed of the sea, the Lord said unto Moses, "Stretch out thy rod over the sea." Israel had passed over on dry land, but they heard the shouting of the armies in pursuit. As Moses stretched out his rod over the sea, the embanked waters that had stood as a great wall, rolled on in their natural course. Of all the men of Egypt in that vast army, not one escaped. All perished in their determination to have their own way and to refuse God's way. **That occasion was the end of their probation** (MS 35, 1906). 1BC 1101.

### CLOSE OF PROBATION FOR THE AMORITES

**The close of probation for the Amorites** God in his infinite mercy bears long with the transgressors of his law. In the days of Abraham he declared that the idolatrous Amorites should still be spared until the fourth generation; for their iniquity was not yet full, and he could not give command for their destruction. For more than four hundred years he spared them, but when, instead of turning to repentance, they hardened their hearts in iniquity, and made war upon his people, their day of probation closed, and the mandate went forth for their utter extinction. . . --**LP 318**

### BELSHAZZAR'S CLOSE OF PROBATION

Close of Belshazzar's Probation When **Belshazzar's period of probation closed**, the Lord no longer protected him from the sure result of his own course of action. **1888 Materials, 1396.**

### END OF JEWISH PROBATION

Close of Probation for the Jews in the time of Christ For a few moments the Son of God stands upon Mount Olivet, expressing the intense yearning of his soul that Jerusalem might repent in the last few

moments before the westering sun shall sink behind the hill. That day the Jews as a nation would end their probation. Mercy, that had long been appointed as their guardian angel, had been insulted, despised, and rejected, and was already stepping down from the golden throne, ready to depart. **ST, February 27, 1896.**

#### **FINAL CLOSE OF HUMAN PROBATION**

The **final close of human probation** I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven. An angel with a writer's inkhorn by his side returned from the earth and reported to Jesus that his work was done, and the saints were numbered and sealed. Then I saw Jesus, who had been ministering before the ark containing the ten commandments, throw down the censer. He raised His hands, and with a loud voice said, "It is done." And all the angelic host laid off their crowns as Jesus made the solemn declaration, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." **EW 279-280.**

10. **The meaning of the act of casting down of the censer**---When probation closes for individuals and groups of people, no more prayers are said in their behalf; this is the meaning of the casting of the censer without incense.

11. **The 7 trumpets bring partial damage**—the fact that the 7 trumpets are not blown after the final close of probation can also be seen in the language used in the trumpets  
a. "A third part of vegetation burned; a third part of the sea became blood; a third part of the sun, moon and stars darkened; a third part of mankind killed. . ."

### **The Pioneer Position on the Blowing of the Seventh Trumpet**

12. Now, some of our leading brethren in the previous century took the position that that the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet started to be blown in 1844;

#### **Uriah Smith**

**On the commencement of the blowing of the 7th trumpet** --"From the events to take place under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, its commencement may be located with sufficient definiteness at the close of the prophetic periods in 1844. Not many years from that date, then, the mystery of God is to be finished." --**DR 525.**

**On the timing of the finishing of the mystery of God**--"This seventh trumpet is not that which is spoken of in 1Cor. 15:52 as the last trump, which wakes the sleeping dead; but it is the seventh of the series of the seven trumpets, and like the others of this series, occupies days (years) in sounding. In the days when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished. Not in the day when he shall begin to sound, **not in the very commencement of his sounding, but in the early years of his sounding, the mystery of God shall be finished.**" -- **DR 525.**

" . . . **Although the seventh trumpet has begun to sound**, it may not yet be a fact that the great voices in heaven have proclaimed that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, except it be in anticipation of the speedy accomplishment of this event." **DR 538.**

## S. N. Haskell

**On the time between the 6th & 7th trumpets**—“The 6th trumpet ended in 1840. Between the 6th and 7th trumpets is a short interval that the loud cry of the mighty angel was given. The close of the prophetic period was 1844, so that the ‘quickly’ would be the time between 1840 and 1844, and **the trumpet began to sound when the prophetic time was at an end, that is, in 1844.**” --S. N. Haskell, *The Seer of Patmos*, p. 187.

## James White

**“We think the seventh angel, or third woe trumpet began to sound in 1844.** . . . When the seventh angel sounds, it is said “And there were great voice in heaven saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.” Rev 11:15. We think Daniel the prophet speaks of the same event, chap 7:13, 14, “ I saw in the night visions and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Day, and they brought him near before him.” -**James White, An Exposition of the Seven Trumpets of Revelation 8 & 9, p. 95.**

13. The pioneer position can be summarized as follows:

- a. The 6th trumpet ended in August 11, 1840:
- b. The 7th trumpet started blowing in 1844
- c. The finishing of the mystery of God happens during the early part of the blowing of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet

14. Is this position taken by some of our leading brethren to be taken as absolutely correct and infallible?

## Why the Pioneer Position Should Be Re-examined

15. Doctrinal position should always be open for close investigation:

There is no excuse for any one in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation. **RH Dec 20, 1892.**

16. The pioneer position on the timing of the 7th trumpet needs to be re-examined in the light of the following:

- a. If the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet began sounding in 1844 based on **Rev 10:7**, then why is there another reference to the sounding of the trumpet in **Rev 11:15**? Does this sounding of the trumpet also point to 1844? Why are there 2 references to the blowing of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet?
- b. Evidence from the Greek text--The regular Greek word “begin” is “*archomai*” and is used to denote to start or initiate something (**1 Pet 4:17; Luke 21:28**); this is not the word used in **Rev 10:7**; “*Begin to sound*” in **Rev 10:7** should really be translated “*about to sound*”

- i. "Begin" comes from the Greek word "**mello**" which literally means "to intend to do something," "to have a mind to do something"; it denotes intent rather than action;
  - ii. Usage of "*mello*" in **Rev 3:16**—I am "about" (*mello*) to spew you out of my mouth (**NIV**)
  - iii. Usage of "*mello*" in **Rev 12:5**: And she brought forth a man child, who was about (*mello*) to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.
  - iv. Usage of "*mello*" in **Rev 17:8**: The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall (*mello*) ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.
  - v. Usage of "*mello*" in **Rev 10:4**: And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about (*mello*) to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.
- c. Evidence from other mainstream translations
- i. **NIV**—But in the days when the seventh angel is **about to sound** his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished. . .
  - ii. **ISV**—In the days when the seventh angel is **ready to blow** his trumpet, the secret of God will be fulfilled. . .
  - iii. **NAS**—but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is **about to sound**, then the mystery of God is finished. . .
  - iv. **Amplified**—but that when the days come that the trumpet call of the seventh angel is **about to be sounded**, then God's mystery—his secret design, His hidden purpose—as he had announced the glad tidings to His servants the prophets, should be finished.
  - v. **ASV**-but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is **about to sound**, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets.
- d. **Rev 8:13**—the identical word in the Greek "*mello*" is used to describe the 3 woe trumpets that are about to be blown:
- i. **NAB Revelation 8:13** Then I looked again and heard an eagle flying high overhead cry out in a loud voice, "Woe! Woe! Woe 1 to the inhabitants of the earth from the rest of the trumpet blasts that the three angels are **about** (*mello*) to blow!"
  - ii. **NAS Revelation 8:13** And I looked, and I heard 1an eagle flying in amidheaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe, to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are **about** (*mello*) to sound!"
  - iii. **NIV Revelation 8:13** As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts **about** (*mello*) to be sounded by the other three angels!"

- iv. **NKJ Revelation 8:13** And I looked, and 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** (mello) to sound!"
- v. **RSV Revelation 8:13** Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice, as it flew in midheaven, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets which the three angels are **about** (mello) to blow!"
- vi. **YLT Revelation 8:13** And I saw, and I heard one messenger, flying in the mid-heaven, saying with a great voice, 'Woe, woe, woe, to those dwelling upon the land from the rest of the voices of the trumpet of the three messengers who are **about** (mello) to sound.'

## The Sanctuary Cleansed and Restored Just Before the 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet Is Blown, Not After . . .

17. Hence, the text of **Rev 10:7** clearly shows that the finishing of the mystery of God (Christ making a final atonement and blotting out the sins of God's people) takes place **before** the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet is blown (when the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet is about to sound); in other words, it is not part of the events delineated under the blowing of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet;
18. This explains why there are two references for the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet in **Revelation**:
  - a. **Rev 10:17**—when the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet is about to sound
  - b. **Rev 11:15**—when the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet is actually sounded
19. **Rev 10:7** then says that when the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet is about to be blown, the mystery of God will be finished; in other words, the mystery of God is finished before the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet is blown; the finishing of the mystery of God takes place, when there is a lull in the blowing of trumpets; a time of relative peace is given so that the mystery of God can be finished;
  - a. This period of relative peace is the same period described in **Rev 7:1** where the 4 angels are holding the 4 winds of the earth so that the people of God can be sealed on their foreheads;
20. Events delineated in the finishing of the mystery of God just before the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet is blown:
  - a. Thou must prophesy again to kindred, tongues and people (Rev 10:11)—a reference to the final proclamation of the 3 angels messages and the judgment hour (**Rev 14:6-12**)
  - b. The temple altar and worshippers measured (cleansing of heavenly sanctuary and the blotting out of the sins of God's people (**Rev 11:1**))
21. Events not included in the finishing of the mystery of God:
  - i. "But the court which is without, measure is it not"—the earth (the courtyard of the heavenly sanctuary) is not cleansed and restored at this time (**Rev 11:2**); it is allowed to remain defiled until the great controversy is over; the cleansed and restored earth is measured in **Rev 21:15-17**;

22. As with the vision of the 7 seals, the vision of the 7 trumpets highlights the restorative and retributive theme of the entire book of Revelation, following the same thematic framework as the book of Zechariah
- a. **Vision of the 7 seals**—focuses on the restoration of the people of God (wearing of white robes)
  - b. **Vision of the 7 trumpets**—focuses on the restoration of the heavenly sanctuary to its original clean state as well as its worshippers (measure the temple, the altar and them that worship therein)
  - c. **Vision of the new heavens and the new earth**—focuses on the restoration of the city (the New Jerusalem when sin and sinners are no more)

### The Blowing of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet

23. **Rev 11:15**—The 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet is not blown until the mystery of God is finished; when the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet is blown, the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is over and human probation closes;
24. This is suggested by the fact that the 7 events listed when the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet blows clearly occur after the close of probation:
- a. **the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ**--the kingdoms of this world did not become the kingdoms of our Lord in 1844, when Jesus moved to the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary to begin His final ministration. When that work is over, then He received His kingdom and the kingdoms of this world become His.
    - i. The blowing of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet is the signal that the work of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary is over;
    - ii. The Spirit of Prophecy is in harmony with **Rev 11:15**:

"And, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away." Daniel 7:13, 14. The coming of Christ here described is not His second coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of Days in heaven to receive dominion and glory and **a kingdom, which will be given Him at the close of His work as a mediator.** GC 479-480.

He "shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne." Not now "upon the throne of His glory;" the kingdom of glory has not yet been ushered in. **Not until His work as a mediator shall be ended will God "give unto Him the throne of His father David," a kingdom of which "there shall be no end."** Luke 1:32, 33. **GC 416.**

- b. **The nations are angry**—a reference to the time of great time of trouble
- c. **Thy wrath is come**—a reference to the outpouring of the 7 last plagues (**Rev 15:1**)
- d. **Time of the dead that they should be judged**—judgment of the wicked during the millennium (**Rev 20:12-13**)



- e. **that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great**—The saints receive their reward at Christ’s second coming (**Rev 22:12**)
- f. **and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth**—a reference to the destruction of Babylon at the second coming of Jesus (**Rev 19:2**, “for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt (destroy) the earth with their fornication. . .)
  - i. “destroy” (**Rev 11:18**) and “corrupt” (**Rev 19:2**) are translations of the Greek word “*diaptheiro*” which means to utterly destroy, to corrupt

## Conclusion

25. The pioneers loosely assumed that **Rev 10:7** and **Rev 11:15** are referring to the same event, i.e. the blowing of the 7th trumpet; they failed to see an important distinction between these two references to the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet:
- a. **Rev 10:7**—the seventh angel did not begin sounding the trumpet, but rather is described as “about” to sound his trumpet; the sounding of the trumpet is **delayed** in mercy to allow for the finishing of the mystery of God;
  - b. **Rev 11:15**—the seventh angel commences blowing his trumpet and the events associated with the general close of human probation take place;
26. This idea also harmonizes well with **Rev 7:1-3**. The finishing of the mystery of God and the sealing work are one and the same work, one and the same event and occupy the same timeline in prophetic history.
27. While the Lord gives His people today a little time of peace, they should use time wisely and be in earnest; this short time where no plague trumpet is blowing must be used in diligently studying the prophecies that pertain to the time of the end, a time for searching of hearts, afflicting the soul and preparing oneself for the impending crisis. . .

While the work of salvation is closing, trouble will be coming on the earth, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check so as not to prevent the work of the third angel. . . .

Angels are now restraining the winds of strife, until the world shall be warned of its coming doom; but a storm is gathering, ready to burst upon the earth, and when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture. . . .

A moment of respite has been graciously given us of God. Every power lent us of heaven is to be used in doing the work assigned us by the Lord for those who are perishing in ignorance. **Mar 259**.