

Trumpets 5 - 7

“Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man. And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.

The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like *the teeth* of lions. They had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle. They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months. They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.

The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.” Rev 9:1-12 (NASB)

What can we make of such language? It’s clear that this Trumpet uses different imagery than the first four. In fact, it’s the sheer number of dissimilarities that stands out.

First Four Trumpets	Fifth Trumpet
Very terse. Uses brief descriptions to describe vast events.	Very wordy. Goes on in detail about the locust.
Focused on the harm sustained by the environment.	Focused on the hurt imposed on people by the locust.
Contain no time elements.	Contains time elements.
Focus is physical.	Focus is spiritual.

It is evident from the first sentence that literal, physical events are not being described, or if they are, that they are being described in figurative language. When did anyone ever give a key to a star that has fallen from heaven? When did a meteorite ever open an abyss with such a key? Clearly these terms are figurative. But they are not difficult figures. Isaiah tells us about the star that has fallen to the earth.

How you have fallen from heaven,
O star of the morning, son of the dawn!
You have been cut down to the earth,
You who have weakened the nations!
But you said in your heart,
“I will ascend to heaven;
I will raise my throne above the stars of God,
And I will sit on the mount of assembly
In the recesses of the north.
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.”
Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol,
To the recesses of the pit.
Those who see you will gaze at you,
They will ponder over you, *saying*,
“Is this the man who made the earth tremble,
Who shook kingdoms,
Who made the world like a wilderness
And overthrew its cities,
Who did not allow his prisoners to *go home*?”
Isaiah 14:12-17 (NASB)

It seems like a safe assumption that Lucifer - the devil - is the star that has fallen to earth. John certainly wanted his readers to know the identity of the leader of the force that is released at this time, even going so far as to give the name of this leader in both Hebrew (Abaddon, or destruction) and Greek (Apollyon, or destroyer).

If Satan is the leader of this force, then the force itself (described as locusts) must be the angels who are loyal to him. Their actions - hurting and tormenting men - bear witness to the evilness they represent.

What then is the abyss? Does the Bible elsewhere speak of evil angels and the abyss (or bottomless pit)? Indeed it does. In chapter 8, the Gospel of Luke tells of a battle that took place between Jesus and a host of demons that had taken possession of a man.

Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. And when He came out onto the land, He was met by a man from the city who was possessed with demons; and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs. Seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me." For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard, and yet he would break his bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert. And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.

Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and the demons implored Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission. And the demons came out of the man and entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. Luke 8:26-33 (NASB) (Emphasis supplied)

These demons had become quite comfortable in their "home," and did not want to be sent back to the abyss from which they had come. The Bible makes it clear that the evil spirits don't want to be in the abyss. In this story they *begged* Jesus not to send them there, and called it "torment" when He commanded them to return there.

The "abyss" seems to be the abode of the demons, and it isn't a place they enjoy being confined in. With the overcrowding of our prison systems, today's non-violent offender may find himself placed under home confinement. Not so with Satan. While we know that he has influence on us – that that he is able to tempt us, and that he and his angels can bring ruin into our lives – it is also a fact that he is not allowed to openly walk into our world and show himself as the mighty angel he is. God restrains him from doing so.

At the sounding of the fifth trumpet, Satan is given permission to open the doorway that separates their world from ours, and his evil angels will be allowed unprecedented access to the human family. They will be allowed at that time to directly show themselves - to walk and talk with us on our plane. Ellen White said that, "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." ¹

¹ Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 117, 118

The Bible notes that God restrains them from further damaging the environment. Their goal is the destruction of mankind, and were it not for God's command, they would undoubtedly complete the destruction that God has already started. They are also refrained from killing anyone at this time, but are given authority to hurt those who do not have the protective seal of God. I really don't think that words are adequate to describe the torment that these people will go through at this time. John describes it as being stung by scorpions, and says that during that time people will prefer death to life!

We have to question what possible gain Satan could have from hurting the people who are already on his side. One possible answer to that question shows up in the writings of Ellen White. Several times she spoke of Satan bringing calamities on people, and then causing the blame for these events to be laid at the feet of Sabbath-keeping Christians.² Pain and torment are great motivators. When people are hurting they will go to almost any length to set things straight, to make things normal again. Satan will cause these people to believe that if only the "Sabbath-breakers" could be brought into line, then God's favor would be restored.

These will be exceedingly dark days for God's people. It is perhaps for that reason that God lets us know in advance that this phase of the battle will not last long. Twice within the story of the fifth trumpet we are told that this period will last for 150 days. Five months. As this time frame seems to fit within the context of last-day events, and because God gives us no reason to consider it other than literal, I believe we must allow that this *might* be a literal 150-day period.

The Locust

In describing the locust hoard, John borrows from the writings of the prophet Joel. In Joel's time, a huge locust swarm passed through Judah, eating everything in its wake. Moved by the Holy Spirit, Joel used this imagery to describe the events of the "Day of the Lord." I've taken the liberty of emphasizing (in bold type) some of the significant portions of Joel's description.

Joel 1:4, 6 (NASB)

What the gnawing **locust** has left, the swarming locust has eaten;
 And what the swarming locust has left, the creeping locust has eaten;
 And what the creeping locust has left, the stripping locust has eaten...
 For a nation has invaded my land,
 Mighty and without number;

² See the Review & Herald, July 16, 1901 for one such reference.

Its teeth are the teeth of a lion,
And it has the fangs of a lioness.

Joel 1:15 (NASB)

Alas for the day!
For the **day of the LORD is near,**
And it will come as destruction from the Almighty.

Joel 2: 1-6, 10 (NASB)

Blow a trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm on My holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming;
Surely it is near,
a day of **darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness.**
As the dawn is spread over the mountains, so there is a great and mighty people;
There has never been *anything* like it, nor will there be again after it
To the years of many generations.
A fire consumes before them and behind them a flame burns.
The land is like the garden of Eden before them
But a desolate wilderness behind them, and nothing at all escapes them.
Their appearance is like the appearance of horses;
And like war horses, so they run.
With a noise as of chariots they leap on the tops of the mountains,
Like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming the stubble,
Like a mighty people arranged for battle.
Before them the people are in anguish; all faces turn pale.

Joel 2:10, 12-13 (NASB)

Before them the earth quakes, the heavens tremble,
The **sun and the moon grow dark and the stars lose their brightness...**
“Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “return to Me with all your heart,
And with fasting, weeping and mourning;
And rend your heart and not your garments.”
Now return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate,
Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and relenting of evil.

Joel 2:18-20 (NASB)

Then the LORD will be zealous for His land and will have pity on His people.
The LORD will answer and say to His people... “I will remove **the northern army**
far from you, and I will drive it into a parched and desolate land,
And its vanguard into the eastern sea, and its rear guard into the western sea.
And its stench will arise and its foul smell will come up,
For it has done great things.”

For those tempted to think that the reference to the sun and moon growing dark (Joel 2:10) is just referring to the darkening caused by the locust swarm, remember that this passage is quickly leading up to the great Holy Spirit promise of Joel 2:28-32. There, the darkening of the sun is accompanied by columns of smoke and fire, and is a result of God performing signs and wonders.

“I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.” Joel 2:30-31 (NASB)

As in John’s description of the satanic influx, Joel saw a mighty army, prepared and ready for battle, well disciplined and ruthless. He described them as having lion’s teeth, and said their appearance is like war-horses. No wonder that John could borrow this language! Not only are the passages essentially identical in their key elements, but also Joel clearly wrote in a manner that pointed to the greater, last-day application of his prophecy.

While bearing in mind the essential equivalence of these two passages, note these further significant facts from Joel’s passage.

- ◆ Joel stated that this invasion was allowed by God, and was intended to drive people to repentance. God’s grace and longsuffering are still in force.
- ◆ Joel called this locust invasion “the northern army.” Daniel warns us of a last-day northern army that will come to its end at God’s hand. Are we here given a clue as to the identity of that invading force? Are we witnessing the invasion of the northern army under the fifth trumpet?

The 6th Trumpet

“Then the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, ‘Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.’ And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they would kill a third of mankind. The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: *the riders* had breastplates *the color* of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone. A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths. For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads, and with them they do harm.

The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of

brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.”
Rev. 9:13-21 (NASB)

This is the second “woe”. Like the fifth trumpet, this trumpet-event is unlike the first four. Like the fifth trumpet, the focus is on demonic activity, and its impact on humanity. Like the fifth trumpet, it is long on descriptive details - many of which are yet hard to understand.

For example, who are the four angels that are bound to the Euphrates River? They appear to be evil angels, judging by their actions. They are clearly “prepared” for the battle in which they partake. Who prepared them? When these events unfold, can we take comfort in knowing that they have been preordained to happen at this very hour, day, month and year?

The four angels seem to accomplish their work through a huge army of 200 million soldiers. [This is 40 times larger than the combined armies of the United States and the USSR at the height of the cold war.] Are these human combatants? The description of the horses and riders is very similar to that of the fifth trumpet. Does that indicate that these are demonic forces, and not human?

What we *can* state with certainty is that under the sixth trumpet a large percentage of mankind (one third) is killed. In this regard it is quite different from the fifth trumpet, where the released forces were not allowed to kill anyone. We can also see that as the events of the sixth trumpet come to a close, the human survivors have reached a spiritual terminus. They have hardened their hearts like Pharaoh, and are seen to be in rebellion against the God of heaven.

With somewhat less certainty we can draw a conjecture about the 1/3rd of mankind that was killed. If the ones that the army does *not* kill are those who reject God, is it possible that those who *are* killed are those who do accept God? It would appear that under the Sixth Trumpet, the animosity of Satan against God is allowed nearly full expression, as he tries to consolidate humanity under his banner. Those who don’t capitulate to his authority are condemned to death.

I’m not sure it’s actually a word, but “theocide” seems to fit this situation. While “genocide” is the eradication of a population based on their genes, theocide would describe the eradication of a population based on their relationship with God. This has always been Satan’s wish, as he demonstrated in the time of Ester. At that time, God turned the fortunes of his people, and they were spared.

But Revelation paints a different picture. We see in Revelation 11 that the beast will make war on Gods servants and “overcome them and kill them.” (Rev 11:7) It will appear as if the beast has won.

But it only seems that way – for in Revelation 12 we read that the saints overcame the beast because they put Christ first, even when faced with their own death. (Rev 12:11)

Now lest all this implication of trouble and death get us thinking too negatively about the time ahead of us, let me point you to a wonderful promise inherent in this story. **If** the people who survive this time period do so through throwing in with Satan’s kingdom, and surrendering to his demands – and **if** the others are killed because they refused to submit to Satan’s demands – then the good news – the *really great news* – is that fully one third of humanity – over two billion people may in fact be saved through this great tribulation! Hallelujah! There’s room for you and me!

No wonder that when John was shown those in heaven that came out of the Great Tribulation that he described them as “a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues.” (Rev 7:9)

The Story So Far

As with the story of the Seven Seals, the events that have unfolded under the first six trumpets provide a backdrop - a stage setting. They are events that will happen right here on planet earth. They are significant events from which no one will be able to hide. But they are just the backdrop. They don’t provide all the information we need to understand the reason that God allows such events.

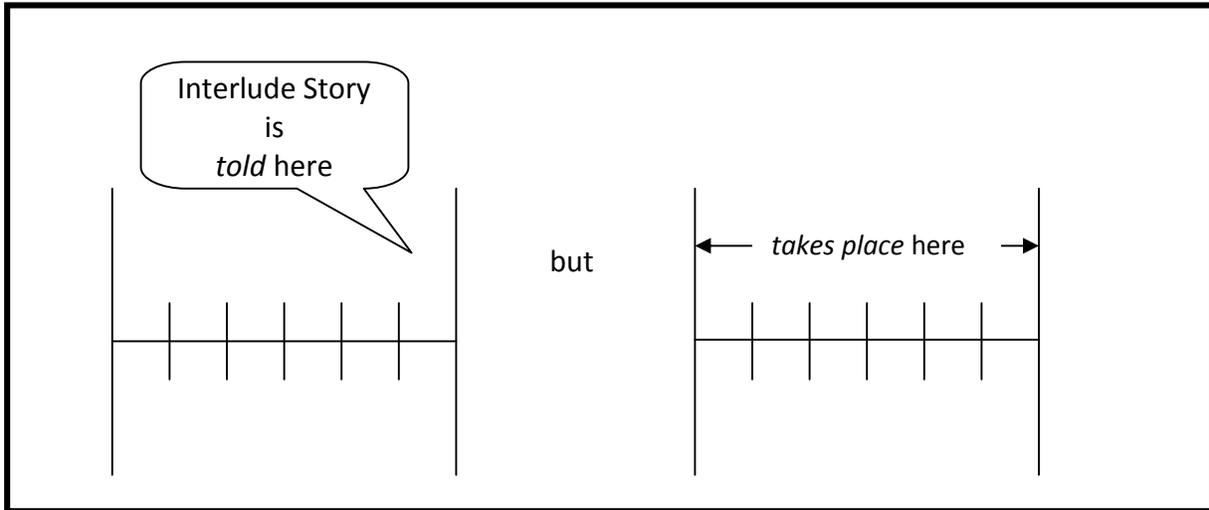
So far, we have seen:

- ◆ a dramatic change in God’s dealings with earth.
- ◆ a series of cataclysmic events as the earth is struck with deathblows from space.
- ◆ the unleashing of Satanic forces to torment - and then to kill - much of mankind.

Other than allowing these things to take place, where is God in all of this? Why is He allowing it? Is He sitting by silently? What are His people doing while these events transpire? Much of the information needed to answer these questions is given by the “interlude” story that is inserted between the sixth and seventh trumpet.

In the lesson on the Seals, I proposed “that even though these ‘interlude’ stories are dropped in between the sixth and seventh seal and trumpet, they actually happen over the entire period of the timeframe under discussion. It’s as if a storyteller breaks into a story to say, ‘Meanwhile, back at the farm...’ and then goes back to show us another set of parallel events that weren’t apparent from the original perspective.”

I illustrated that perspective with the following chart:



In the case of the Seals, the interlude told of the selection and sealing of the 144,000 “servants” of God, and showed the great multitude that will be saved as a result of God’s ministry through these servants. In the case of the Trumpets, the story line has more elements - but is just as relevant. Since it is a fairly long passage, and since it has multiple themes, we’ll take it in sections.

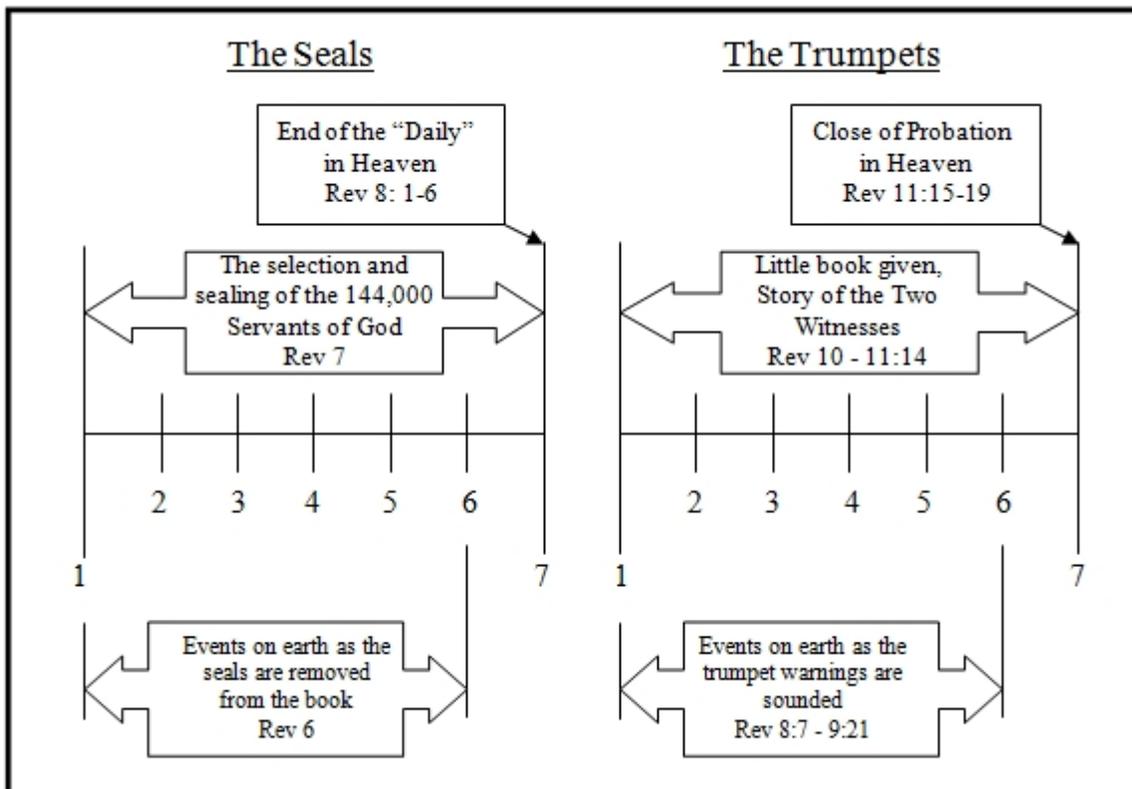
The Interlude - Part 1 (The Little Book)

“I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire; and he had in his hand a little book which was open. He placed his right foot on the sea and his left on the land; and he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when he had cried out, the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices. When the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, ‘Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken and do not write them.’ Then the

angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT, that there will be delay no longer, but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets.

“Then the voice which I heard from heaven, I heard again speaking with me, and saying, ‘Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land.’ So I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, ‘Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey.’ I took the little book out of the angel’s hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. And they said to me, ‘You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.’” Revelation 10 (NASB)

Before going any further, this might be a good time to look at an illustration to help us clarify the time frame in which these events happen.



Notice the clear pattern in how these stories are told. First we see the six outward, physical or environmental events that take place on earth. Then we see what God is doing in the lives of His people during that period of time. Then we see the seventh event that takes place in heaven. In both cases this seventh event is a change in Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.

Because of the interleaving of the story line, the two interlude stories - even though separated by two intervening chapters - describe events that occur one after the other. (See the above chart.)

This perspective gives continuity to the story line of God's activity through His people. It also gives meaning to the placement of these "interludes" within the story of Revelation. Some interpreters believe that the censer scene in Revelation 8 is the close of human probation, which would argue that the trumpet judgments are part of God's final outpouring of wrath upon the impenitent. But as we see above the second "interlude" story (dropped into the middle of the Trumpets) is full of witnessing, grace and Gospel, proving that Grace is still active, and man still has the opportunity to find salvation through Jesus Christ.

Let's backtrack just a bit now to reestablish the earlier story line that we are now rejoining. In Revelation 4, John was invited to heaven to learn about the things what were going to occur in the future. The parallel with Ezekiel shows that John was called into the throne room of God to receive a special message. It is my belief that since John's one burning desire was to see the return of his Lord and Savior, that the message he was to receive contained information regarding the events that would proceed, and lead up to, the return of Jesus.

In Chapter 5, John sees a book in God's hand, but weeps when he sees it is sealed and cannot be opened or read. Before it can be read, the seals must be removed.

As these seals are removed from the book the events of Revelation 6 take place. The Holy Spirit begins to work in dramatic fashion. War and turmoil accelerate. Revelation 7 shows that despite these external circumstances God is at work. As the seals are removed from the book, a group of people are "sealed" as God's last-day servants. In the past, God has always spoken through His servants (the prophets) before any judgment was poured out. So in our day, we should expect that God would have a distinct message to give the world as its end draws near.

The 144,000 servants are ready to receive the message they are to give. The seals have been removed from the book.

Now, as the time of the Trumpets begins, we see a “strong angel” descending to the earth with a book in His hand to give to John. The similarity of this angel, “clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire,” to John’s earlier description of Jesus, whose “face was like the sun shining in its strength” and whose “feet *were* like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace” leaves little doubt as to the identity of this mighty being.

Seven Thunders

When Jesus arrives He cries out “with a loud voice.” Immediately, and as if in response, seven thunders are heard. These are not just weather-related thunderclaps, but are some form of divine pronouncement. John clearly understood them, which implies that God’s people on earth at the time these thunders sound will also understand them and the messages they relate. But since John was commanded not to write down these messages, and scripture makes no other reference to them, we are completely unable to fathom their meaning. This is exactly as it should be with information that God has commanded be withheld.

However, when the events of the vision unfold, and Jesus comes to earth to give this last-day understanding to His servants, we **will** hear and understand these “thunders” just as John did.

The fact that the thunders will be heard and understood within the framework of the fulfilling of this vision presents a dilemma to Historicists. Those who claim that the events of Revelation 10 have already occurred must also explain why the seven thunders were not clearly heard and immediately understood. To fit the parameters of this vision, the “thunders” must sound *in conjunction with* God delivering a message to His people *after* the 144,000 have been sealed, and the events shown in the Seals have taken place. And when they sound, they will be immediately understood - just as John understood them.

No more Delay

When Jesus delivers the little book to John, He does something rather extraordinary. He raises His right hand to heaven and swears to the truth of two solemn assurances.

- ◆ This time, the prophecies will not apply to a distant time, but will be fulfilled immediately. There will be no delay between the prophecy and the event.
- ◆ This message will result in a culmination of the great Gospel work just prior to the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

This is not the first time that God has had to warn people about the immediacy of prophecy. In the Old Testament times, the Jewish people became so accustomed to hearing prophecies that were going to be fulfilled in the distant future, that they tended to disregard them. When the first of the Jews were taken into Babylonian captivity, God graciously sent Ezekiel with messages for them. But when he told them that Jerusalem was about to be destroyed, they were slow to listen, because often prophecy was not fulfilled in a timely manner. Finally God had to warn them in no uncertain terms that He meant “NOW.”

Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, “Son of man, what is this proverb you *people* have concerning the land of Israel, saying, ‘The days are long and every vision fails’? Therefore say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “I will make this proverb cease so that they will no longer use it as a proverb in Israel.” But tell them, “The days draw near as well as the fulfillment of every vision... For I the LORD will speak, and whatever word I speak will be performed. It will no longer be delayed, for in your days, O rebellious house, I will speak the word and perform it,” declares the Lord GOD.’ ”

Furthermore, the word of the LORD came to me, saying, “Son of man, behold, the house of Israel is saying, ‘The vision that he sees is for many years *from now*, and he prophesies of times far off.’ Therefore say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “None of My words will be delayed any longer. Whatever word I speak will be performed,” ’ ” declares the Lord GOD. Ezekiel 12: 21-28 (NASB)

He had to tell them that His words would be fulfilled in their time, and indeed they were. Likewise, in our day people are loath to believe that the Lord will really return in our day. Christians have been anticipating and predicting this event since Christ left. For nearly 2,000 years we have been crying “Wolf,” until most people believe that the event - if it will happen at all - has been put off until sometime in the indefinite future. Indeed, the words of Christ’s parable seem to define the world’s disbelief; “My Lord delayeth His coming.”³ Luke 12:45

³ 1901 American Standard Version, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1994.

As in Ezekiel's day **reality will finally overtake prophecy**, and God will announce "that there will be delay no longer."

The second assurance is equally extraordinary. Jesus assures His servant that "the mystery of God" will be finished - brought to conclusion - just before the seventh angel sounds his trumpet.

Paul speaks frequently about the mysteries associated with the gospel, but he speaks only once or twice about the mystery of God. Making just that specific reference in Colossians 2:2-3, he wrote, "...that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of **God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself**, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (NASB)

For Paul, this mystery only deepened as he contemplated the fact that Jesus was truly Emanuel - God with us, and that by union with Jesus we could partake of the very nature of God. And so he wrote in Colossians 1:27, "...to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this **mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**" (NASB)

For Paul, the gospel was not a one-dimensional message. While he spoke freely about the forgiveness that God grants to mankind through the gift of grace, he also spoke glowingly about the new life that God thereby granted us - a life in which we experience the reality of Christ in us. This was, for Paul, the "mystery of the gospel."

And this "mystery" - this work of God in the lives of men - will come to its conclusion in the final minutes before the seventh trumpet sounds. Not until this time - after the first six trumpets have sounded - is God's gospel work completed.

This promise of the "mighty angel" is indeed solemn. God's work on behalf of man has an expiration date. We do not now know when this date is. But when God delivers the final invitation to His trusted messengers, they will know for certain that their message is the *last one* - that the fate of *every person* is to be decided by their acceptance or rejection of their witness.

Implicit in this promise is another promise. If the gospel is to reach its conclusion, the great commission of taking the gospel to every person must finally be realized. "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come." Matt 24:14 (NASB)

The Sweet but Bitter Book

In the last vignette in Revelation 10 we see John commanded to take the book out of the angel's hand. When he does so, the angel tells him he must eat the book. John obeys, and finds the book sweet to the taste, but "bitter" in his stomach. Even the casual reader of the Bible would be reminded by this passage of Ezekiel's story. In our study of the Seven Seals we detailed some of the remarkable parallels between these stories. Since we are now looking again at this little book and the message it contains, the parallels are worth noting again - especially as we may be able to pick up on some hints as to the contents of the message entrusted to John at this time.

Story Element	Ezekiel	Revelation
Open Information	"A hand was extended to me; and lo, a scroll was in it. When He spread it out before me, it was written on the front and back" (2:9-10)	"I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire; and he had in his hand a little book which was open." (10:1-2)
Command to eat	"He said to me, 'Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you.'" (3:3)	"I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, 'Take it and eat it.'" (10:9)
Sweet & Bitter	"Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth." (3:3) "and I went embittered in the rage of my spirit." (3:14)	"I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter." (10:10)
Command to Prophecy	"Then He said to me, 'Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them.'" (3:4)	"You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings." (10:11)

What was the nature of the message that was in the scroll that Ezekiel was commanded to eat? The answer is given in Ezekiel 2:10 (NASB). “When He spread it out before me, it was written on the front and back, and written on it were lamentations, mourning and woe.” It was not good news. In fact, the words on the scroll were messages of lamentation, mourning, and woe that Ezekiel was commanded to share with the Israelite people. This was no time for soft words. The destruction of Jerusalem, the capital city, was imminent. Lives were at stake. The destiny of a nation hung in the balance. God had words of rebuke and warning that this rebellious people needed to hear.

Notice the similarity to Revelation. When the last day messengers for God are asked to “eat” the little book, and they are thereby given the last warning message that is to be given to planet earth:

- ◆ It will not be a time for soft words.
- ◆ The destiny of a world will hang in the balance.
- ◆ The final destruction will be imminent.
- ◆ God will have a message of rebuke and warning that the rebellious people will need to hear. And last,
- ◆ This last warning message will also speak of “woes,” as did Ezekiel’s.

It is certain that the parallels between the stories of Revelation and Ezekiel are not accidental. It is not by chance that God structured these two narratives as virtual duplicates. Both contain messages particularly relevant to a final generation. Both have solemn warnings of woes. Both contain God’s sworn promise that the messages are relevant to the generation that will receive them - that there will be no delay.

Before moving on to the next part of this remarkable “interlude,” two questions need addressed.

1. Why is John pictured as receiving the little book from Jesus?

The story of Revelation 10 says that John receives the book from the angel. Can we take this literally? Does it make sense to take it literally? A strictly literal interpretation would point out that John was invited to heaven to receive a book from God, and that as soon as the seals were taken off the book, it was given to John as promised. Therefore, the

book in question must be the Biblical book of Revelation, as that was the book given to John on Patmos.

This interpretation fails to take into account the timeframe in which the open book is brought to earth. This timeframe is the sounding of the Seven Trumpets. This story must be understood in that context. At the time the Trumpets begin to sound God will send a special message to His servants. John is here merely seen “standing in” for the 144,000 prophets that have been readied to receive this message.

Remember that John has already been identified as a servant (i.e., a prophet) in Revelation 1:1, and will be again in Revelation 19:10 and Revelation 22:9. John has also told us that there will be 144,000 servants chosen to serve God at the end of time. So here in Revelation 10 we are being shown that God will have a special message for the people *like John* who will serve Him at that time.

2. If this is yet future, does that imply that we do not - or can not - know everything now?

Yes. This fact should not concern us in the least. We are not God, and we are far from being omniscient. “We know in part, and we prophecy in part,” as Paul pointed out in 1 Corinthians 13:9. Study though we might, we cannot know now what God has elected to reveal at a later date.

Daniel confirms this view. In Daniel 12, Daniel was told that he was not to understand his vision, but that it would be understood in “the end time.” The angel then went on to describe the very conditions that would be present on earth during the time that this understanding would be granted. “Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.” Dan 12:10 (NASB) The angel described a time when the people of earth would be separating into two camps, the righteous and the wicked. There are no fence sitters in his description, only the purified and the wicked.

The angel told Daniel that when these conditions exist on earth - at that stage of the “end time” - then the righteous would be given a full understanding of Daniel’s prophecies. These conditions have not yet been met.

Both Daniel and Revelation say that there is more information to be given to God’s children. Both point to the same timeframe in which this information will be given. Both show that this message of enlightenment will be given when it is needed most - when the fate of every person is being decided.

When the book has been eaten, the command is heard, “You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.” The word that is here translated “concerning” is the Greek word **epi**, which is usually interpreted as “over”, “against” or “before”. The New American Standard Bible, contains the following number of occurrences:

<u>Translated Word</u>	<u>Number of Occurrences</u>
Over	57
Against	41
Before	24
Concerning	4

I don’t know what particular nuance of the Greek language may have driven the translators to choose the word “concerning.” However the more common uses - over, against, and before - all seem to fit the story better. God’s last-day people - represented here by the prophet John - are told that their job isn’t over. They must carry their message to the entire world.⁴

This command to prophesy given at the start of the Trumpet period, shows that God is not yet done with humanity. He has this one, last invitation to present.

The Interlude - Part 2 (The Two Witnesses)

“Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, ‘Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months. And I will grant *authority* to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.’ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their

⁴ If John had wished to convey the meaning “about”, or “concerning”, he certainly had the verbal tool to do so. The common Greek preposition **peri** means just that, and is so translated 152 times in the NASB New Testament.

mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

“When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. And their dead bodies *will lie* in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations *will* look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. And those who dwell on the earth *will* rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

“But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, ‘Come up here.’ Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them. And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

“The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly.”

Rev 11:1-14 (NASB)

As we press on to consider the rest of the “interlude” we need to remember that the original text had no chapter divisions. The entire interlude is one continuous narrative, and should be understood as such. But what do we do with the apparent discontinuity of the command to witness, and the command to measure the temple?

The act of measuring and weighing something is used in the Old Testament as a metaphor of judgment. Remember when Belshazzar was weighed in the balances and found lacking? This same idea is carried into modern times by “lady justice” who is pictured as blindfolded and carrying a balance scale. She does not judge by what she sees, but by what she can measure objectively.

When we move on to studying Revelation 12-14, I will attempt to show the direct application of the three angel’s messages to this trumpet time period. The first of those messages announces that the time for judgment has arrived. It is during this trumpet period that the destiny of every person will ultimately be determined. It is truly a time for judgment - for measurement. And the first thing that gets measured as the witness of God’s servants begins is the temple - the church. This is consistent with Peter’s statement that judgment begins with the church. 1 Peter 4:17

Doesn't that make a lot of sense? I would imagine that as the prophetic ministry of the 144,000 starts, that God will first speak through them to the people closest to them - fellow church members and friends. As the recipients of these messages decide to accept or reject the counsel that God sends, they will demonstrate whether their hearts are dedicated to following and obeying God, or not. They will either submit to the Spirit of God, speaking through His servants, or they will rise up in rebellion against Him, thereby sealing their solidarity with the father of rebellion.

Just before Christ left earth, He called the disciples together and "commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised... 'for...you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'" Acts 1:4-5 (NASB) Upon receiving this gift, He said, "you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." Acts 1:8 (NASB)

Notice the progression. They were to stay in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit empowered them. When that happened, Jerusalem would be the first to feel the convicting thrust of this powerful witness. But Jerusalem couldn't contain it. It would spill out into Judea. And then - almost unbelievably - it would overflow Judea and roll into Samaria, and then outward into the rest of the world.

Jerusalem - the "people of God" - got the message first. Those who accepted it became charter members of the new Christian church. Those who rejected this powerful testimony sealed their fate - and the fate of their nation. The message continued to spread to those who had not had the opportunity to hear and accept it.

So will it be in the final years of earth.

The Two Witnesses

In Revelation 10:11 John - standing in for God's last-day servants - is told that he must witness again. Three verses later we are introduced to the two witnesses. Since this is a connected story, we are led to conclude that the command to witness is here being obeyed, and that the "two witnesses" are the same group that has just received the open-book message from God.

Revelation is clear in the identification of these two witnesses. They are said to be the:

- ◆ two olive trees and
- ◆ the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

Scripture has used the symbolism of lamps to point to God’s Word - the Bible. Olive oil is used to represent the Holy Spirit. The two lamps could be the Old and New Testament, whereas the two olive trees could represent both the early and latter rain. The combination of these symbols shows that the 144,000 messengers of God will speak the truth of Scripture, and that their presentation of this truth will be accompanied by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

Why didn’t God just call them His 144,000 witnesses? That would have prevented some confusion. But by calling them His *two* witnesses He brings the following to light:

1. It won’t be the 144,000 that will be the focus of attention, but the message that they bring. They will speak with a united voice, all around the world. Their listeners will hear the truth of the Bible spoken to them, and they will feel the convicting power of the Holy Spirit telling them that this is God’s Truth. The Word of God and the conviction of the Holy Spirit will confront every person. These are the two witnesses.

2. The Word of God and the convicting power of the Holy Spirit as evidenced in the ministry of the 144,000 will be the two witnesses that will determine the fate of every person. In the Old Testament law, the Israelites were told that they could not put anyone to death on the witness of one person. At least two witnesses were required to determine someone’s guilt. (Deuteronomy 17:6)⁵ So now, these two powerful witnesses will determine the guilt or innocence of every person. Everyone will hear God’s last message for mankind - clearly explained, and spoken in his or her own language. Everyone will be convicted of the truth. No one will be able to say they didn’t understand, or they were confused. It will be clearly seen who loves God and is willing to follow Him. This will be the most powerful outpouring of Grace that the world has ever seen.

In describing the ministry of the 144,000 Revelation uses very descriptive language to evoke pictures of the great Old Testament prophets, Elijah and Moses. Some Evangelicals believe that Moses and Elijah will actually return to earth at that time and will

⁵ It was with this law in mind that the Pharisees (in John 8:13) told Jesus that they couldn’t believe in Him. He was just one person, and since He spoke for Himself, there was only one witness. They needed two.

In this story Jesus pointed out that they were ignoring the witness of the Father, which raised the count to two! At an earlier time (John 5) Jesus stated that the witness of John, the witness of the mighty miracles He did, and the witness of the Scriptures also supported His claims.

work mighty miracles. After all, they reason, didn't Moses and Elijah return to earth to help Jesus through His last, great trial?

It seems more reasonable to me to remember that God has identified and sealed 144,000 prophets to do His will at this time, and that He is here identifying Moses and Elijah as "types" of these last-day prophets. It was Elijah that stood for God when a nation was forced to decide. It was Moses that led captives to the Promised Land. Like those two great prophets, the 144,000 will be empowered to work many mighty miracles.

In the chapter titled "The Final Warning" of *The Great Controversy*, Ellen White penned the following descriptive paragraph about the "servants" of God. While she did not specifically identify them as the 144,000, I see nowhere else in her writings where she so clearly speaks of their mission.

Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works, with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Revelation 13:13. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.⁶

"Servants of God..." That's what John calls the 144,000.

"...proclaim the message from heaven." That's what prophets do.

"By thousands of voices..." Perhaps 144,000?

"...all over the earth..." So that everyone can hear.

"Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers." Just as happened at Pentecost - and just as predicted in Revelation 11.

3-1/2 Years

Twice in this passage a three and one-half year period of time is mentioned. First, as 42 months, next as 1,260 days. This is defined as the period of time that the two witnesses

⁶ *The Great Controversy*, p. 612

will be empowered to witness. Is this a literal 42 months or a figurative time period? Does a literal time period make sense? Can it?

Sure it can. Both Old and New Testament contain an example of a 3-1/2 year time period that was quite literal. In fact, Elijah is one of these examples. It was 3-1/2 years that the rains were withheld at his word, while Israel “halted between two opinions.” Jesus’ active ministry on earth was also 3-1/2 years.

If God allowed faithless Israel 3-1/2 years of trial and hardship to help them decide whom they would worship, might He not allow all of earth the same window of opportunity? If Jesus’ earthly ministry was 3-1/2 years, might not also the ministry of the 144,000 be the same?

The Death of the Two Witnesses

John states that the two witnesses will be empowered for 3-1/2 years, and at the end of that time the beast from the abyss (Satan) will rise up against them and put them to death. Their death is described in detail, as is their resurrection and ascension to heaven.

I’ve got more questions than answers on this topic. Even though scripture spells out the scenario so clearly, it’s possible to envision several different ways in which these simple words could play out. Here’s a couple:

Remembering that the two witnesses are the Holy Spirit and the Word of God as evidenced in the ministry and testimony of the 144,000, we can say with certainty that when Satan comes as Jesus that he will battle against the influence of the Holy Spirit and Scripture. He will effectively end the ability of the people of God to convert anyone else to the truth.

The arrival of the “beast from the abyss” coincides with the end of the 1,260-day ministry of the 144,000. Since the 7th trumpet is about to blow, we know that the power and influence of the gospel is coming to an end (Rev 10:7), and that probation is about to end for everyone.

This approach personifies the two witnesses, and makes Satan’s last battle against *them*, rather than against the 144,000 who are the feet and mouth of the Holy Spirit and the Bible.

The only real difficulty with this viewpoint is that it becomes very hard to assign meaning to the resurrection and ascension passages. How could the “bodies” of the Holy Spirit and the Bible be denied burial? How could they be brought back to life after 3 days? How could they be taken to heaven in clear view, causing consternation among the people? All this becomes quite fuzzy.

Another approach would have the 144,000 killed by Satan when he comes as the antichrist.

We know that the 144,000 will be the “point-men” for God during the time period of the Trumpets, and that they will clearly warn against the antichrist that is coming. This is sure to engender the wrath of Satan, and will make them prime targets for elimination when he attempts to consolidate control of the world. It is not unreasonable to think that they would be hunted down and eradicated as enemies of the state.

This current of thought, however, carries us into strange places. For if the execution of the 144,000 is what Revelation 11 is speaking about, then we must consider that the resurrection and ascension passages apply to them as well. Will the 144,000 be the objects of a special resurrection? Will they be taken to heaven prior to the rest of the saved?

We need to be careful here. Such a special resurrection is not part of accepted Adventist eschatology, and is not even hinted at in the writings of Ellen White. These facts alone - while not precluding the possibility - should make us cautious in putting forward such an explanation. But neither should we label the idea as heretical simply because it is new or different. If it is true, eventually we will come to recognize it through continued study of God’s Word.

Without coming down in favor of either option, I find the following tidbits quite interesting:

1. When at the end of the 3-1/2 year drought Elijah was victorious on Mt. Carmel, he had the false prophets put to death. This time, however, we are warned that the *false prophet* will call fire down from heaven. What will the likely result be for the *true prophets* be?
2. The period of Jesus active ministry was 3-1/2 years. At the end of that time Satan rose up against Him and had Him put to death. He lay dead for 3 days, then was resurrected and taken to heaven. *The experience of the two witnesses parallels this exactly.*

3. Revelation 14 is the first time the 144,000 are mentioned after the story of the death, resurrection and ascension of the two witnesses. And where do we see the 144,000? In heaven.
4. In Revelation 14:4 the 144,000 are referred to as those “who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” (NASB) Would it surprise us that the 144,000 continue to do in heaven exactly what they did on earth - they follow the Lamb. Their 3-1/2 year ministry follows the example of their Lord. Is it possible that in their death and resurrection they also follow Him?
5. Revelation 14:4 also calls the 144,000 the “first fruits to God and to the Lamb.” (NASB) In the Jewish system the first fruit or grain to come to ripeness was given to God in a special service *prior to the general harvest*.

None of this is conclusive. We can reason that the 144,000 are seen in heaven in Revelation 14 for the very reason that we saw them in heaven in Revelation 7. We are just being given a forward glimpse at their eventual state. But do we also apply the same reasoning to those seen in Revelation 15 who have “been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God”? Who are these victorious humans who give their assent to the justice of God before He pours out the seven bowls of wrath?

While I certainly don't want to go out on a limb here, I do have to admit that I think it would be really great for the 144,000 to truly have a “first fruit” experience. If we understand Revelation correctly, Jesus is not opposed to having human representation in heaven. We believe the 24 elders to be part of just such a group. They were given a special resurrection and ascension experience. How exciting it would be for the 144,000 to see the conclusion of the battle for earth from heaven. How thrilling it would be to pronounce God's justice before the plagues were poured out. How exhilarating to ride out with the armies of heaven as Jesus mounts his white horse to lead the final charge for the deliverance of the saints on earth.

Again, let me state that this is speculative at best. If the Bible has little to say on the subject then we should not be overly assertive. This is clearly an area for God to offer more light as the time for fulfillment approaches.

As to the identity of the city that experiences the great earthquake, and the seven thousand who will be killed, I have no clue. I can only assume that God has given this signpost for the benefit of those who will be living in those times.

This lack of clarity on the identity of this earthquake-stricken city doesn't bother me in the least. However, if I held a Historicist view of this passage, and believed that these events had already taken place - and still couldn't identify this city or the earthquake - that would trouble me immensely.

The 7th Trumpet

“Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.’ And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, ‘We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time *came* for the dead to be judged, and *the time* to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.’

“And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.” Rev. 11:15-19 (NASB)

Though startlingly different from the first two woes, this is the third woe. The first two actually looked like woes - demon armies riding over the earth, inflicting pain and suffering on a defenseless humanity. To say that the first one was bad is an understatement of enormous proportions. It was so bad that it made men long for the sweet release of death. So bad that nothing worse could be imagined - that is, until the second woe was unleashed. Then the literal life and death nature of the spiritual struggle was seen. Men no longer pined for death. They died.

As we build to the third woe we are left to wonder, how could things get worse? What *could* be worse?

And at first glance, this woe seems too mild to be called a woe. Isn't Jesus always praised in heaven? But on closer reading we see that an extraordinary event is implied in these words. An event of such momentous importance to unrepentant and sinful mankind that it truly qualifies as worse than the first two woes. For here we see the close of human probation. The sealing of everyone's fate.

The close of probation is indicated in two ways. First, in the statement “You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign,” and second, by stating “the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple.”

The three most important offices in the Jewish monarchy were the king, the High Priest, and the prophet. All three of these offices have been ascribed to Jesus, who, according to song, is “prophet and priest and king.” What we may not consider is that these are three distinct phases of Christ’s work. While on earth He was the consummate prophet. When He ascended to heaven He took on the role and office of High Priest. In the text under consideration, that phase has come to an end, and we see Jesus lay aside His priestly garments and take up His kingly role. His work as priest over, His work as king begins.

At the death of Jesus, Matthew records that “the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.” (Matt. 27:51 NASB) This made it possible to see into the Most Holy place, and to see that the Ark of the Covenant was *not* there, and that the presence of God (the Shekinah) was absent. The rending of the veil showed that this avenue for approaching God was no longer effective.

Likewise, the opening of the temple in heaven indicates that the temple is no longer being used by Jesus to officiate on behalf of mankind. Work there has ceased.

A Word on the Close of Probation

Growing up in the Adventist church, I was troubled by the “close of probation.” I was taught that it would come upon us unaware, and that none could mark its passing. If we had unconfessed sins on our record at that time, then we would be lost forever. I reasoned that if we could not tell when it passed, maybe it already had, and I was lost - because I certainly had sins on my record. Even if it hadn’t passed yet, the threat of it loomed large.

All this muddled thinking cast God in a very unfavorable light, for He was made to seem unforgiving and arbitrary. Unforgiving, because He was going to cut off any chance for people to repent and change. Arbitrary, because He was just going to pick a time of His own choosing to enforce the irrevocable fiat, “Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.” (Rev 22:11 NASB)

We frequently point out to people that the misunderstood doctrine of hell-fire creates agnostics because of how awful it makes God appear. But some of our doctrines -

when misunderstood - can have that same effect. God is love, and every doctrine must start and end with that truth. He is not arbitrary. He is not unforgiving. He is not unreasonable.

The study of the Trumpets puts the close of probation in a completely different light. We see that the close of probation is a process. It starts with the church. Those that have the greatest exposure to the truth will have to make up their minds what to do about it. As their decisions are made, their fates are sealed. They receive either God's mark or Satan's. As the truth spreads throughout the world, one after another is brought to the point of conviction and decision. For each person, his probation closes when - with the full awareness of truth and the illumination of the Holy Spirit - he makes his decision for or against God.

When all these decisions have been made - when there is no longer any work for Jesus to do in the heavenly temple - the event that we have referred to as the "Close of Probation" takes place. Jesus simply lays down His priestly garments and takes up His royal robe. He is no longer our priest. He is now the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. This change in His heavenly role - seen in the 7th trumpet - is not arbitrary. It may be unmarked by humanity. We may not know just when it takes place. We may not know that our destinies have been sealed. But Jesus sees that all the decisions have been sealed, and that no more benefit could come to a single person by delaying longer.

In Summary

The events of the seven trumpets are designed by God to be a crucible for mankind. Everyone will feel the heat of these events, and will be forced *by these events* to make choices that will determine his ultimate destiny.

You will remember that on pages 128-130 of this guide I proposed ten events or characteristics that would mark this period of the Trumpets. A critical reader would point out that that I have not yet established all these assertions. The elements mentioned were:

1. The close of probation.
2. Satan's impersonation of Christ.
3. False prophets who herald Satan's "coming."
4. Worldwide events.
5. Intense demonic activity.
6. Events that are qualitatively different than the Seal events.
7. The Gospel going to the entire world.
8. Martyrdom continuing on a vast scale.

9. Events that are so bad that the world can be led to believe that they are going through the seven last plagues.
10. Significant damage to the environment (the earth, sea and trees).

While most of these items have already been demonstrated, two of them – the second and third – have yet to be addressed. That part of the story will unfold as we progress to Revelation 12 and 13.