

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Seven Trumpets

8:1-2—*‘When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.’*

- Half an hour was the amount of time it took the priest to enter the temple, offer the incense and return. Generally, the whole of the temple activities were quite during this time with people falling down before the Lord spreading their hands in prayer.
- In the Old Testament the trumpets were used for calling the people to war, for worship, in escorting the Ark in ceremonial processions and for marching orders.
- The Temple liturgy used seven trumpets—(1 Chron. 15:24, Neh. 12:41).
- Recall the march around Jericho (Jos. 6, 1 Chron. 15:24, Neh. 12:41).
- Trumpets were blown to proclaim the rule of a new king (1 Kgs. 1:34, 39, Ps. 47:5).
- Trumpets were the sound of an alarm of coming judgment declaring repentance (Is. 58:1, Jer. 4:5-8, 6:1, 17, Ez. 33:1-6, Joel 2:1, 15)
- Trumpets were blown at the feasts and on the first day of the month. The first day of the seventh month (New Year’s Day) was the Day of Trumpets acknowledging the Day of the Lord (Lev. 23:24-25, Num. 29:1-6).

8:3-5—*‘Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel’s hand. Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.’*

- The prayers of the saints, represented by the incense (5:8), are offered before the throne. God’s response to the prayers is to release judgment from the altar upon the earth. This encouraged the saints in the importance to pray.
- Fire on the altar originated from heaven (Lev. 9:24, 2 Chron. 7:1) and was kept burning by the priests. Fire from the altar was used in burnt offerings and in judgment (Dt. 13:16, Jud. 20:40, Gen. 19:28). Strange fire was viewed as man-made fire.
- As the saints call upon the Lord, the world experiences His judgments affecting history in view of God’s covenant. (Ps. 18:6-15)
- We see similar destruction to Jerusalem in 586BC in Ez. 10:2-19.
- Jesus referred to this as ‘I have come to cast fire upon the earth (land); and how I wish it were already kindled.’ (Lk. 12:49)
- Jesus was referring to this time of a speedy answer in Lk. 18:1-9.

8:6-7— *‘And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them. And the first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.’*

- The blowing of the trumpets uses the Biblical imagery from the fall of Egypt (plagues) and the fall of Babylon (prophetic judgments). Revelation uses Egypt to symbolize Israel and Babylon to symbolize to Jerusalem.
- God judges the false gods of the land by releasing plagues on nature.
- The blood of the martyrs is mixed with the judgment of hail and fire bringing wrath on the persecutors of the church.
- ‘The countryside, like the city, was a pitiful sight, for where once there had been a multitude of trees and parks, there was now an utter wilderness stripped bare of timber; and no stranger who had seen the old Judea and the glorious suburbs of her capital, and now beheld utter desolation, could refrain from tears or suppress a groan at so terrible a change...for though he was there, he would still have been looking for the city.’ Josephus, *The Jewish War*, vi.i.1.

8:8-9— *‘And the second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood; and a third of the creatures, which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.’*

- See parallel to the first plague of Egypt (Ex. 7:17-21).
- As Jesus was sharing about the destruction of Jerusalem (Mat. 20-25), He cursed an unfruitful fig tree, as a symbol of judgment on Israel. Instructing His disciples to pray imprecatory prayers in asking God to destroy Israel and cast the apostate mountain into the sea, Jesus said, ‘And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith, and do not doubt, you shall not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ it shall happen.’
- The common expression among the Jewish people for the Temple Mount was the term Jesus used as ‘this mountain.’
- ‘sea’ in scripture is used symbolically of the Gentile world.
- John is writing all this before the destruction of Jerusalem in order to encourage the saints to stand strong and on how to pray the will of God. Jer. 51:41-42
- Josephus records how many left the region due to war and became pirates when there came a day of violent winds and waves that destroyed many ships and people leaving the sea bloody and full of dead bodies. Wars, 3:9:2-3

8:10-11— *‘And the third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters; and the name*

of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood; and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.’

- In the Old Testament the term Wormwood is used to warn Israel of its destruction due to its apostasy (Dt. 29:18, Jer. 9:15, 23:15, Lam. 3:15, 19, Amos 5:7).
- ‘Behold I am going to feed them wormwood and make them drink poisonous water, for from the prophets of Jerusalem pollution has gone forth into all the land.’ Jer. 23:15
- A common tactic of armies was to poison and block up the water supply.

8:12-13—*‘And the fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were smitten, so that a third of them might be darkened and the day might not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way. And I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in mid-heaven, 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 to sound!"’*

- Biblical imagery used to depict the fall of nations and rulers (Is 13:9-11, 19; 24:19-23; 34:3-5; Ez. 32:7-8, 11-12; Joel 2:10, 28-32).
- The ninth Egyptian plague was a thick darkness (Ex. 10:21-23).
- During this time of judgment Roman emperors, governors and leading High Priests of Jerusalem perished by death, violent hands and in disgrace.
- Prophetic warnings against Israel and stated curses were often symbolized by eagles (Dt. 28:49, 26; Jer. 4:13; 7:33-34; 16:3-4; 19:7; 34:18-20; Ez. 39:17-20; Lam. 4:19; Hos. 8:1; Hab. 1:8; Gen. 15:9-12; Rev. 19:17-18).
- The Roman armies’ national symbol was an eagle on their banners and flags carried by the Roman legions.

CHAPTER NINE

Declared Judgments Magnify

9:1-3—*‘And 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. And 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. And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.’*

- Satan is the star from heaven, fallen, and given the key to the abyss (Rev. 12:4, 9, 12; Is. 14:12, Lk 10:18). The verb tense indicates that Satan had already fallen.
- The locusts are demons from the abyss. The abyss is the domain of the Dragon (Job 41:31; Ps. 148:7; Rev. 11:7; 17:8), the prison of demons (Lk. 8:31; Rev. 20:1-3; 2 Pt 2:4; Jude 6) and the place of the dead (Rom 10:7).

- John is warning the church that all hell is about to be unleashed in the judgment of demonic attack.

9:4-6—*‘And they were told that they should not 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; and they will long to die and death flees from them.’*

- Those without the seal of God are the unbelieving Jews and other unbelievers.
- Five months was the period that locusts normally appeared from May-September.
- Five is a term associated with military power.
- These actions may reference Gessius Florus, the procurator of Judea, who tormented the Jews inciting them to rebellion beginning May 66AD by killing 3600 peaceful citizens. Josephus dates this event as the beginning of the Jewish War.
Josephus, The Jewish War, ii.xiv.9-xix.9.
- Jesus prophesied these things saying, ‘The men of Nineveh shall stand up with this generation at the judgment, and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. *The Queen of the South* shall rise up with this generation at the judgment and shall condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places, seeking rest, and does not find *it*. Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came’; and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order. Then it goes, and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation.’ Mat. 12:41-45
- Rev. 18:2 says that Israel would be ‘a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird.’

9:7-12—*‘And the appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads, as it were, crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. And they had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions. And 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. And 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.'

- The invading heathen armies of judgment in the Old Testament are described in similar ways as the demon locust army (Jer. 51:27; Joel 1:6, 2:4-10; Lev. 17:7, 2 Chr 11:15).
- 'With their insatiable hunger for loot, they ransacked the houses of the wealthy, murdered men and violated women for sport; they drank their spoils with blood, and from mere satiety they shamelessly gave themselves up to effeminate practices, plaiting their hair and putting on women's clothes...devising in their excess of licentiousness unlawful pleasures in which they wallowed as in a brothel. They entirely polluted the city with their foul practices. Yet though they wore women's faces, their hands were murderous...' Josephus, The Jewish War, iv.ix.10.
- Apollyon and Abaddon mean Destruction and Destroyer (Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Ps. 88:11; Pr 15:11; 27:20).
- Joel 2:4 refers to locusts like horses.

9:13-16—*'And 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 might kill a third of mankind. And the number of the armies of the horsemen was myriads of myriads; I heard the number of them.'*

- The mention of the altar before God was intended to encourage the saints in worship and in prayer as to the will of God.
- The four horns of the altar speak of the purification offering for the pollution and defilement of a place (land) by sin. This was an encouragement to the believers that Christ's blood had saved them from the death sentence.
- The land of Israel was polluted with the sin of generations and the rejection of Christ (Lev. 18:24-30); therefore, the land was under the curse of Lev. 26, a seven-fold judgment against the nation. Note the repeated seven fold judgments of Revelation.
- The Euphrates River formed a northern boundary between Israel and the forces of judgment (nations) God used to bring His will against a rebellious people. (Gen. 15:18; Dt. 11:24; Josh 1:4; Jer. 6:1, 22; 10:22; 13:20; 25:9, 26; 46:20, 24; 47:2; Ez. 26:7; 38:6, 15; 39:2).
- God's throne is pictured in the north (original location of Eden) (Is. 14:13) showing that God is in control of the invading demonic hosts.
- 'the hour and day and month and year' reference Dan. 9:26—'Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end

will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.'

- 'myriads of myriads' (Ps. 68:17) refers to an indefinite number of incalculable immensity.

9:17-19—*'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.'*

- 'An innumerable army is advancing upon Jerusalem from the Euphrates, the origin of Israel's traditional enemies; it is a fierce, hostile, demonic force sent by God in answer to His people's prayers for vengeance. In short, this army is the fulfillment of all the warnings in the law and the prophets of an avenging horde sent to punish the Covenant-breakers. The horrors described in Dt. 28 were to be visited upon this evil generation (see especially verses 49-68). Moses had declared: You shall be driven mad by the sight of what you see (Dt. 28:34).' Chilton, Days of Vengeance, p. 252.
- The Jewish rebellion, prompted by Gessius Florus during the summer of 66AD, was a factor in moving Cestius to invade Palestine in the fall with large numbers of mounted troops from the regions near the Euphrates River. Josephus, The Jewish War, ii.xviii.9-xix.7.
- Cestius' army arrived at the gate of Jerusalem in the month of Tishri, the time of the Day of Trumpets. After an intense battle when the city seemed doomed to capture, Cestius unexplainably retreated giving the city time to reorganize their defense. Many false prophets used this time to denounce the warnings of Christ and the apostles as false.
- Joel 2:3-4 prophetically describes a similar event.

9:20-21—*'And 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.'*

- The Zealots and other unbelieving Jews were crucifying their fellow Jews, up to 500 per day, while they were also participating in cannibalism and mass murders.
- Many signs (omens—Lk 21:11) happened during the different feasts—bright light shining around the altar for half an hour, temple gates of massive size

opening all by itself, a star looking as a sword standing over the city and a comet continuing for a whole year and ‘a supernatural apparition was seen... for before sunset chariots were seen in the air over the whole country, and armed battalions speeding through the clouds and encircling the cities.’ Josephus, The Jewish War.

CHAPTER TEN

The Angel, Christ, and the Book

10:1-4— *‘And 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. And 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. And 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."’*

- The strong angel is Christ (1:14-16, Ez. 1:25-28, Ps. 104:1-3, Song of Sol. 5:15, Ex. 33:9; 34:5; Num. 11:25; 12:5; Ex. 16:10; Lev. 16:2)
- The sea and the land together represent the Gentile nations and the land of Israel. (2 Sam. 22:4-5; Ps. 65:7-8/ Is. 5:30; 17:12-13; 57:20; Jer. 6:23; Lk 21:25; Rev. 13:1)
- This message was intended for John only and not to be revealed to church.

10:5-7— *‘And 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 shall 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.’*

- Christ stands as a witness in the heavenly court swearing an oath.
- A Biblical generation of 40 years was coming to an end. In Jewish culture the number 40 symbolized fullness or completeness. God refers to 40 as a time of testing and trials.
- The mystery is ‘something formerly concealed and now unveiled... (Eph 3:5; Col. 1:26)...the union of believing Jews and Gentiles in one Church, without distinction (Eph. 3:6)...Gentiles, who had been strangers and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and from the covenantal promises, are now, through the work of Christ, full sons of Abraham, heirs of the Covenant, on an equal and

indistinguishable standing with believing Jews (Eph. 2:11-22; Gal. 3)...They form one 'new man,' on Church, one Body of Christ, in the one New Covenant. And this one covenantal Kingdom, the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises, will have universal dominion: All nations will now flow to the Mountain of the Lord, as the kingdoms of the world become the one Kingdom of Christ (11:15). The 'mystery of God,' the universalization of the Kingdom of God, is to be accomplished—'as He preached the gospel (lit.) to His servants the prophets.' Chilton, Days of Vengeance, p. 267.

10:8-11—*'And 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." And I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, "Take it, and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." And I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was in my mouth 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."'*

- Eating the book is similar to Ezekiel (Ez. 3) in symbolizing the prophetic denouncing of the rebellious house of Israel. (Job 20:12-14)
- The Covenant lawsuit was John's commission to prophesy against apostate Israel.
- Sweet and bitter symbolize the triumph of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Two Witnesses

11:1-2—*'And there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and those who worship in it. And 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.'*

- Measuring is the symbolic action to divide between the holy and the profane indicating divine protection from destruction (Ez. 22:26; 40-43; Zech. 2:1-5; Jer. 10:16; 51:19; Rev. 21:15-16).
- John is to measure the inner court and holy of holies and not the outer court. In Ez. 40-43 the priest measures the ideal temple, the new covenant people of God, the church.
- This action is between the sixth and seventh trumpets. Between the sixth and seventh seals, the 144,000 saints were protected from judgment (7:1-8). This action is declaring protection of the true temple (1 Cor. 3:17; 6:19).

- John, an authoritative priest of the new covenant, is told to ‘cast out’ (excommunicate) the outer court (unbelievers).
- Jesus prophesied these things in saying, ‘Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, ‘Lord, open up to us!’ then He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know where you are from.’ Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets’; and He will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you are from; DEPART FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS.’ There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out. And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline *at the table* in the kingdom of God.’ (Lk 13:24-29, Mt 8:11-12)
- Forty-two months (1260 days=3 _ years) is from Dan. 7:25 symbolizing wrath and judgment and a limited time when the wicked will triumph.
- ‘The church will be saved through the coming tribulation, during which Jerusalem is to be destroyed by an invasion of Gentiles. The end of this period will mean the full establishment of the Kingdom.’ Chilton, Days of Vengeance, p. 275.
- The Roman siege of Jerusalem under Vespasian and Titus lasted 3 _ years from 67-70.
- Lk. 21:20-24—‘...you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near...Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.’

11:3-6—*‘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 desires to harm them, fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their enemies; and if anyone would desire to harm them, in this manner he must be killed. These have the power to shut up the sky, in order that rain may not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.’*

- 1260 days=42 months (Dan.9:24; 12:7, 11-12)
- Two witnesses represent the prophetic line of the Old Covenant prophets as witnesses against apostate Israel of covenant breaking. This witness was revealed by Jesus in Mt. 23.
- Biblical law requires two witnesses (Num 35:30; Dt. 17:6; 19:15; Mt. 18:16).
- ‘clothed in sackcloth’ was the typical prophet’s dress signifying mourning over national apostasy.

- Zechariah (Zech. 3-4) shows the two witnesses, Joshua the priest and Zerubbabel the king, as the two sons of oil, anointed ones, ‘olive trees,’ representing the officers of the covenant.
- Fire=symbol of the power of the prophetic word (Num. 16:35; 2 Kgs. 1:9-12) Jer. 5:14—‘Behold, I am making My words in your mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall consume them.’
- ‘the power to shut up the sky...’ refers to Elijah and the drought of 3 _ years (1 Kgs. 17). ‘the power over the waters...’ refers to Moses (Ex. 7-13). Both of these represent the prophetic line of the old covenant seen as appearing before Christ in the transfiguration.
- ‘Revelation combines the two witnesses, Moses and Elijah, Joshua and Zerubbabel, priest and king, into the one person of Jesus Christ.’ R. Bass, Back to the Future, p.270

11:7-10— *‘And 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. And 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 make merry; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.’*

- As each prophet ‘finished’ his testimony (witness of the covenant), the beast (Satan) would make war against them in order to stop the kingdom (seed of the woman) from progressing. The martyrdom of the prophets is one of God’s reasons for judgment against the nation (Mt 23). The culmination of this war was the murder of Jesus who is God’s final prophet and the embodiment and fulfillment of all prophetic ministry.
- ‘their dead bodies in the street...’ speaks of their blood crying out for vengeance ‘from righteous Abel to Zechariah.’ (Mt. 23:35)
- Israel as Sodom is seen in Dt. 29:22-28; 32:32; Is. 1:10; 3:9; Jer. 23:14; Ez. 16:46.
- Israel as Egypt is seen in Jesus being regarded as the new Moses (Acts 3:20-23; Heb. 3-4, 1 Cor. 10:1-4).
- The ‘great city’ is obviously Jerusalem where ‘their Lord was crucified’ and is here noted as being as Sodom and Egypt in nature and in receiving judgment.
- ‘With the death of the Witnesses, their voice of condemnation is silenced; and now ‘those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations’ regard the Church itself as dead, openly displaying their contempt for God’s people, whose ‘dead bodies’ lie unburied ‘in the street,’ under an apparent curse, for they ‘will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb.’ (1 Kgs. 13:20-22; Jer. 8:1-2; 14:16; 16:3-4, Ps. 79:1-3)

- Many rejoiced and mocked at the death of Christ and the martyred prophets.

11:11-14— *‘And 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 beholding them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies beheld them. And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; and 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.’*

- 3 ½ days points to the resurrection of Christ as the enemies ‘behold them’ (Acts 2:43; 5:5; 19:17; Mt 27:52-53)
- ‘Come up here’ is the ascension of the saints to rule with Christ (Eph 1:20-22; 2:6; Heb. 12:22-24).
- Scripture connects as one theological event the birth of Christ, His death, burial, and resurrection, the outpouring of the Spirit and the outpouring of wrath on Israel as the last days and ‘that day.’
- ‘Because the triumph of Christ meant the defeat of His enemies, ‘a tenth of the city fell.’ Actually, the whole city of Jerusalem fell in AD70; ...in conformity to the nature of the trumpet as an alarm, God’s taking a ‘tithes’ of Jerusalem in the first siege was a warning to the city.’
- In the Old Testament 7000 faithful existed (1 Kgs. 19:18); whereas, in the New Testament, 7000 wicked were destroyed.
- ‘the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven’ is Biblical language for conversion and belief (Josh. 7:19; Is. 26:9; 42:12; Jer. 13:16; Lk. 17:15-19; 18:43; 1 Pt. 2:12). The role of judgment in God’s ways is to bring to salvation and repentance.

11:15-19— *‘And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose 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 Thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who was, because Thou hast taken Thy great power and hast begun to reign. And the nations were enraged, and Thy wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to Thy bond-servants the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear Thy 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.’*

- The kingdom of God, as the fifth kingdom of Dan. 2, becomes universalized.
- The seventh trumpet was sounded on Tishri 1, the first day of the year, the Day of Trumpets. Gen. 8:13—Noah removed the covering of the ark and saw dry

ground, the new birth of the earth. Tishri 1 was also the day of blowing the trumpets to signify the coronation of kings. It is also regarded as the actual birthday of Christ. Jewish elders today say the Day of Trumpets commemorated the beginning of the world (Gen. 1:1-5). M'Clintock & Strong, Cyclopaedia, vol. X, p. 568.

- Notice that 'who art and who was' (11:7) is not concluded as normal with the phrase 'and who is to come.' (Rev. 1:4, 8; 4:8) That which was then future, His judgment coming, has not arrived, and He has come!
- The prophets were vindicated as Christ declared (Mt 23:35-36) receiving their just reward.
- God destroys those who destroy the land (Lev. 18:24-30).
- The temple of God in heaven was opened through Christ's atonement meaning the old temple was now to be closed since it no longer carried the ark of the covenant.
- 'The early Christians who first read the Book of Revelation, especially those of a Jewish background, had to understand that the destruction of Jerusalem would not mean the end of covenant or kingdom. The fall of old Israel was not 'the beginning of the end.' Instead, it was the sign that Christ's worldwide kingdom had truly begun, that their Lord was ruling the nations from His heavenly throne, and that the eventual conquest of all nations by the armies of Christ was assured. Fro these humble, suffering believers, the promised age of the Messiah's rule had arrived. And what they were about to witness in the fall of Israel was the end of the beginning.' Chilton, Days of Vengeance, p. 293.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The War

Chapters 1-11 show the victory of Jesus over His enemies and the establishment of the glorious church as His holy temple. Chapters 12-22 show the victory of the church over her enemies establishing her as God's holy temple. The second half of Revelation will repeat certain scenes and add a diversity of portrayal. This type of repetition is common among prophets.

12:1-2—*'And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.'*

- The woman was easily recognizable as a prophetic symbol of the true seed, the church, the people of God, specifically the church of the old covenant in this context. (Is. 26:49-50; 54; 66; Jer. 3-4; Lam 1; Ez. 16; Hos. 1-4; Mic. 4, Song of Sol. 6:10)
- 'she was with child' is the same wording used of Mary concerning Jesus.

- Sign is the same word as zodiac. Virgo has 12 stars as a crown representing this symbolic woman. Twelve recalls Joseph's dream (Gen. 37:9) and the 12 tribes of Israel. The astrological significance of the location of the sun and the moon in relation to the woman show that the birth of Messiah was on September 11, 3BC, the Day of Trumpets.
- This is a picture of the corporate Christ birthed out of the true seed of God.

12:3-4— *'And another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven, and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.'*

- 12:9 explains the dragon as the devil, Satan.
- The dragon has the same seven heads and ten horns as the Beast empires of Dan. 7:3-7. He is pictured again as the age long enemy of God's people and purposes in the earth.
- Stars are a typical symbol of angels. John is describing the fall of Satan and his angels. (2 Pt. 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 12:9; Lk 10:18)
- The dragon has always worked to devour, kill and abort the purpose and people of God.

12:5-6— *'And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.'*

- John refers to Ps. 2 in describing Christ and shows that Christ was born to ascend and reign.
- The woman's flight (believers) into the wilderness (a fortress called Pella) is the picture of the Judean Christians fleeing the destruction of Jerusalem so the dragon's wrath would come on the unbelieving apostates.
- According to early church father, Eusebius (bk.Iii, chap. v), 'the whole body of the church in Jerusalem, commanded by a divine revelation, fled to Pella, beyond the Jordan.'
- The church is nourished for 3 ½ years (time, times and half a time—vs.14) as Elijah. God protects her during the 42 months of the Gentiles treading down the city of Jerusalem.

12:7-12— *'And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with*

him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death. For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time.'

- John is explaining why the church had to flee into the wilderness.
- Most theologians relate Michael to Jesus as the archangel, chief of the angels, captain of the Lord's hosts, the great prince of Daniel 10 who is the Guardian over God's people.
- Jesus spoke of this, 'Now the judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out...because the ruler of this world has been judged.' Jn. 12:31; 16:11
- 'A woman who is pictured as the Bride of the Lord bears a Son; she is the new Eve, and therefore her son is to crush the serpent; she is the virgin of Isaiah, and therefore he is a warrior king. There follows a war with the serpent, in which an opponent casts him out of heaven; and the serpent then went off to make war with the rest of the seed of the woman.' Carrington, The Meaning of Revelation, p. 222.
- Once the devil is cast down, salvation is achieved, great power has been demonstrated, the kingdom of our God has come and the authority of His Christ is displayed!
- Worship comes forth to make clear the main action that is depicted in the symbols.
- The earth (land) represents Israel and the sea represents the heathen nations, which the devil will torment and turn together against the church while he has time.

12:13-17—*'And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, in order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth. And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.'*

- The wings of the eagle represent God's protection (Dt. 32:10-11; Ps. 91).

- ‘The great thought in all these images is that divine power is put forth to deliver and sustain the New Testament Church of God in the day of her persecution—the same power that of old wrought the miracles of Egypt, and of the Red Sea, and of the wilderness.’ M. Terry, *Biblical Apocalypics*, p. 390.
- ‘the rest of her offspring (seed)’ refers to the Gentile Christians of the Roman empire who began to come under persecution during this time (Rev. 1:9).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Beasts

The Revelation is a covenant document that reveals the ways of God concerning His church and the wicked in order that all glory would go to Him. It is an ethical treatment of the covenant.

13:1-6—*‘And he stood on the sand of the seashore. And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; and they worshiped the dragon, because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?"*

And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven.’

- The beast coming from the sea is a symbol of coming from the Gentile nations in the westerly direction from Jerusalem and Patmos.
- The blasphemous names refer to the names of the Roman emperors that were titles of deity with each one building images to himself and demanding people to bow to them and the images.
- The beast is the mirror image of the dragon (12:3), who ‘gave him his power and his throne and great authority.’ The ten horns are the ten governors of the ten imperial provinces (Rev. 17:12) and the seven heads are the Caesars (Rev. 17:9-11).
- ‘like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion’ are the same animals describing the world empires of Dan. 2:31-45 while the Roman empire is pictured as partaking of all the characteristics and being much worse (Dan. 7:7).

- God promised in the garden to ‘crush’ the head of the serpent (dragon, Satan, devil). The dragon’s head was crushed when God saved His people from Egypt along with many other head-crushings of the enemies of God that the dragon was controlling and operating through (Judg. 4:21; 5:26-27; 9:50-57; 1 Sam. 5:1-5; 17:49-51; 2 Sam. 18:9; 20:21-22; Ps. 68:21; Hab. 3:13).
- ‘I am entering on the history of a period rich in disasters, frightful in its wars, torn by civil strife, and even in peace full of horrors. Four emperors perished by the sword. There were three civil wars; there were more with foreign enemies; there were often wars that had both characters at once... This was the condition of the Roman state when Serius Galba, chosen consul for the second time, and his colleague Titus Vinius entered upon the year that was to be for Galba his last and for the state almost the end.’ Tacitus, The Complete Word of Tacitus, Histories, 1:2, 1:11, 425.
- God’s triumph over the dragon is described in Is. 51:9-10; Ps. 74:13-14, Is. 27:1.
- As Christianity began to grow in that first generation, it delivered a ‘death’ blow to the Roman authorities until they implemented a persecution along with the apostate Jews. Many believers fell away amidst the heresy, persecution and apostasy (1 Tim 1:3-7, 19-20; 4:1-3; 6:20-21; 2 Tim. 2:16-18; 3:1-9, 13; 4:10, 14-16; Tit. 1:1-16).
- The healing of the beast, Rome, came about in the form of the Roman general Vespasian putting an end to the civil and foreign wars and bringing stability again to the Roman government at a time when most had given up hope that the empire would survive. Josephus said, ‘So upon his confirmation of Vespasian’s entire government, ... and upon the unexpected deliverance of the public affairs of the Romans from ruin...’ Josephus, Wars, 4:11:5.
- The persecution of the church lasted from November 64 to June 68, 42 months, where it appeared that all began to worship the beast as the church was seen as vanishing.

13:7-10— *‘And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. If anyone has an ear, let him hear. If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.’*

- ‘to make war against the saints’ refers to Dan. 7:21.
- All those who dwell in the land (Israel) will worship the beast as apostates.
- ‘If anyone has an ear, let him hear’
- ‘...destined for captivity...’ is from Jer. 15:2 about God’s rejection of Israel. Jeremiah describes the coming judgment of the land (Jer. 15:5-9) in terms similar to Jesus (Lk. 23:28-31).

13:11-14— *‘And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.’*

- This beast coming from the earth (land) is the false prophet (Rev. 16:13; 19:20). Jesus warned of this in Mt 24:5, 11. Moses had warned that false prophets would arise among the covenant people performing signs and wonders (Dt. 13:1-5).
- The Jewish false prophets had the appearance of a lamb as Jesus had warned (Mt. 7:15).
- As the first beast was the agent of the dragon, the second beast was the agent of the first. Apostate Judaism was completely controlled by the Roman state which was controlled by Satan.
- Jesus warned that, ‘false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, the very elect.’ Mat. 24:24 Acts 8:9-24; 13:6-11; 16:16; 19:13-16, 19 shows the false prophets. Simon Magus boasted, ‘I have flown through the air; I have been mixed with fire, and been made one body with it; I have made statues move; I have animated lifeless things.’ M. Terry, *Biblical Apocalypics*, p. 400
- Jewish leaders excommunicated Christians from the synagogue and persecuted them to death.

13:15-18— *‘And there was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead, and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.’*

- The ‘mark of the beast’ is a parody of the ‘seal of God’ on the forehead and hands of the righteous (Rev. 3:12; 7:2-4; 14:1) for wholehearted obedience (Dt. 6:6-8), blessing and protection (Ez. 9:4-6) and the sign that one is ‘holy to the Lord’ (Ex. 28:36). It is not a literal mark but a designation of ownership and allegiance.
- The number of the beast is 666. It is the numerical value in Hebrew of Nero Caesar written as Neron Kesar in Hebrew. Nero’s name in Latin would give a

numerical value of 616 as some transcripts record the number. This was an encouragement to the early Christians to know who the beast was as they were seeing the fulfillment of God's promises in their generation.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The King Standing On Mount Zion

14:1-5—*'And I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth. These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.'*

- Zion (Mt. 21:5; Jn 12:15; Rom 9:33; 11:26; Heb. 12:22; 1 Pt. 2:6) is the holy mountain of Jerusalem, symbolizing God's presence with His people, His reign over the earth and all kingdoms gathering together to serve Christ (Ps. 9:1-20; 14:7; 20:1-2; 48:1-14; 69:35; 87:1-3; 99:1-9; 102:13-22; Is. 24:21-23; 51-52; 59:16-20; Jer. 31:10-37; Zech. 9:9-17).
- 144,000 represent the church, those with the seal of God on their foreheads (2 Tim. 2:19).
- Only the redeemed can sing new songs to the Lord.
- 'Virgin is frequently used in the Old Testament for Zion, the people of God (2 Kgs. 19:21, Is. 23:12; 37:22, Jer. 14:17; 18:13; 31:4, 21; Lam 1:15; 2:13). More particularly, the chastity here is a symbolic reference to the requirement of sexual abstinence by soldier-priests during holy war (Ex. 19:15; Lev. 15:16; Dt. 20:7; 23:10-11; 1 Sam. 21:4-5; 2 Sam. 11:8-11)...religious infidelity is called chastity (2 Cor 11:2).
- 'follow the Lamb...' is the term describing disciples.

14:6-8—*'And I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."*
And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality."

John is making a transition from the trumpet vision (proclamation of judgment) to the chalice visions (the applications of the judgments determined).

- The first angel (messenger) preaches the gospel, especially to those ‘who live on the earth’ (lit. who sit over the land (Israel)) which focuses on the leadership of the apostate Israelites. They have already declared, ‘We will not have this man to rule over us!’ (Lk. 19:14).
- Before the end came in AD70, the angel (messengers) preach the gospel to ‘every nation and tribe and tongue and people.’ Paul verifies this historically in Rom. 1:8; 10:18; col. 1:5-6, 23 and Jesus declares it in Mt. 24:14, 31.
- The second angel declares Babylon’s fall, which is Jerusalem (Rev. 17-18). Jerusalem had long been the seat of Judaism seducing Jews from all nations to drink of the wine of idolatry and rebellion.

14:9-13— *‘And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.” And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name. Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Write, ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!’ “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.”’*

- Those who worship the devil by bowing to the state of Rome and the apostate leaders of Israel will drink of the inflammation and indignation of the wrath of God (Is. 51:17; Lam. 4:21; Jer. 25:15-16; 49:12; 51:7; Ez. 23:31-34; Job 21:20; Ps. 75:8)
- The imagery of the ‘fire and brimstone...the smoke of their torment’ recalls the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24-28; Is. 34:9-10).
- The patient confidence, hope, expectation and faith of the saints can be in the covenant justice of God governing all the earth.

14:14-16— *‘And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head, and a sharp sickle in His hand. And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Put in your sickle and reap, because the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe.” And He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth; and the earth was reaped.’*

- This recalls Dan. 7:13-14 revealing Christ exalted in sovereign rule.
- Christ sends His angels (apostolic messengers) to gather the elect (Mt. 24:30-31) meaning to synagogue. Jesus described the kingdom at harvest in Mk. 4:26-29.

- Christ had exhorted the church to pray for ‘laborers into His harvest’ (Mt. 9:37-38) and from His throne, He is answering their prayer.

14:17-20—*‘And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. And another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe." And the angel swung his sickle to the earth, and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God. And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses’ bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.’*

- John is showing how the gathering of the true church is the excommunication of Israel. Gen. 21 shows how recognizing Isaac as the true son (only son) of promise meant the bondwoman and her son must be cast out. Paul reveals this in Gal. 4:22-31.
- The angel having power over the fire of the altar signifies the prayers of the saints invoking judgment on God’s vineyard, Israel, that is ripe for judgment. (Is. 5:1-7; 63:1-6; Joel 3:13)
- Jesus said, ‘Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers.’ Mt.23:32, 35
- Sixteen hundred stadia is the length of Palestine drowning in the judgment as the horses of Egypt in the Red Sea.
- ‘Galilee was all over filled with fire and blood,’ as the troops of Vespasian and Titus overran the country. The whole land, except for Jerusalem was covered with death and devastation. Josephus, The Jewish War, Book iii.
- The Jewish leaders understood that Jesus was condemning them—Mt. 21:33-45—‘...they understood that He was speaking about them.’

In Nero’s Circus Maximus where Christians were slaughtered by wild beasts, crucifixion, fire and sword, there was a stone obelisk erected to honor those who overcame the tribulation. This obelisk now stands in St. Peter’s Basilica. Chiseled on its base are these words, taken from the overcoming martyr’s hymn of triumph:

CHRISTUS VINCIT
CHRISTUS REGNAT
CHRISTUS IMPERAT

**CHRIST IS CONQUERING
CHRIST IS REIGNING
CHRIST RULES OVER ALL**

