

Chapter Eighteen

Trumpets and the End

"The day of the Lord is indeed great and very awesome, and who can endure it? 'Yet even now,' declares the Lord, 'Return to me with all your heart, And with fasting, weeping and mourning; rend your heart and not your garments.'"

Joel 2:11-13

John's vision again allows us to see a picture in heaven. He describes a period of silence "...for about half an hour."¹ See the Tribulation Chart at the end of the Sixth Seal. What does that mean?

The verse suggests 30 minutes passes in heaven but how much time does that mean goes by on the earth? It could be 30 minutes but that short time is hardly worth mentioning in the context of months and years. Could it be a figurative expression? I believe so.

We all agree that this actual seven year tribulation period is also figuratively known as Daniel's 70th week.² Could there be a time relationship between the actual seven years and Daniel's 70th week? If seven years equal one week, a 360 to 1 ratio, then it is reasonable to believe the figurative one-half hour equals 360 times as long which is 7.5 days.

Could heavenly time travel 360 times faster than on earth? Anyway, a week is much more meaningful here in our context of months and years.

This period of silence is the proverbial calm before the storm. And storm is a gross understatement.

Trumpets One thru Four

Refer to Revelation Chapters 8,9 and 11. The first four trumpets involve nuclear holocaust but this time it is directed toward the land and oceans.³ One-third of the land area burns when

the First Trumpet sounds. Another earthquake jars the earth along with thunder and lightning. Or is it nuclear bombs exploding many miles away from where John is observing? Maybe he can only see the edge of the destruction.

Antichrist tries to keep his world empire together. He experiences resistance on several fronts. Although he controls the large cities of Russia, rebels hold much of the mountain area.⁴ One-third of the earth burns because he uses so many nuclear bombs around the world. Between fighting on two fronts and worrying about the 200 million man army from the East, he is busy.⁵

The oriental armies are on the move. The entourage winds its way across Burma, India and Pakistan like an endless line of ants. They clean the already poor land of any vestige of food. Thousands starve and Witnesses preach repentance to the world. The 144,000 Jewish evangelists are sealed, and they make disciples throughout the world. The disciples are tortured and killed as they are caught.

The second angel sounds his trumpet. Something like a great mountain of fire arises from the ocean and one third of the sea turns to blood.⁶ Here, John gives an accurate description of a nuclear device. If you have ever seen pictures of a hydrogen bomb exploding, it looks just like a half domed mountain rising. As it rises, it gradually assumes a mushroom shape.

The verse says a third of the ships were destroyed. Is it possible the Antichrist is trying to destroy some country's nuclear submarines?

1. Revelation 8:1

2. Daniel 9:27

3. Revelation 8:7-13

4. Daniel 11:44

5. ibid

6. Revelation 8:8

This could refer to the vestige of the U.S., CIS or Chinese nuclear navy. As we know, there is much sea trade especially in oil. Ships from many countries feed "Commercial Babylon".⁷

The third angel blew his trumpet in heaven, and on the earth a star called wormwood made the springs of waters bitter. The Sixth Seal also described the falling star. If I perceive this right, an ICBM that hits the atmosphere looks like a falling star. Remember the SCUD missiles falling on Israel during "Desert Storm" looked the same way. Apparently, the resulting fallout makes the underground springs radioactive which kills people that drink the water. Many men die from the bitter water.

The fourth angel sounds and a third of the Sun, Moon and stars are darkened. Just as with the Sixth Seal, the enormous nuclear activity throws up hundreds of tons of debris which hides the sun in the day and the moon and stars at night. In case you were wondering, the word "stars" is used here in the normal sense. And following the rules of interpretation, we would not look for a figurative definition. However, the stars mentioned under the Sixth Seal and Third Trumpet are figurative.

The Fifth Trumpet

With the sounding of the fifth trumpet comes warning that three final woes are starting.⁸ This means that the fifth, sixth and seventh trumpets are more harsh judgements than ever before. And each one of those will get progressively worse. Here God is trying to squeeze out the last of the believers. People remaining during the Seventh Trumpet will not repent.

The Fifth Trumpet is five months long,⁹ and is characterized by the opening of the bottomless pit. Satan and his demons are released upon the earth from the pit.¹⁰ The demons appear in the form of flying insects that sting the people who were not sealed by God earlier.¹¹ Apparently, they are intelligent and follow the

leadership of Satan. But this and the other Trumpet plagues are controlled by the Two Witnesses.¹² For clarity, let's look at when Satan comes to earth. Otherwise, Satan coming up out of the earth is confused with him coming down to earth (Revelation 9:2,3,11 versus 12:9).

As of this writing, Satan is in the presence of God, accusing the saints day and night.¹³ When Satan loses the war in heaven, he is thrown down *into* the earth.¹⁴ He lost the war because of the blood of the Lamb (Crucifixion), the testimony (2000 years of Church witness), and martyrdom of the Tribulation saints.¹⁵

As we saw earlier, most of the martyrs are killed during the fifth year (Fifth Seal). Perhaps Satan is thrown down by the end of the fifth year. But Satan with his demons come *out* of the pit at the Fifth Trumpet; in the seventh year. Which means they are captive inside the earth for about two years. But when they come up from the pit; watch out!

I would like to speculate for a moment on the nature of the Bottomless Pit. Revelation 9:1-3 and Numbers 16:30-33 suggest that the bottomless pit resides inside the earth. Let's assume that it is at the very center of the earth, and there is a large hollow area which could contain Satan and his angels. Perhaps, it is miles across. When they were thrown into the pit leading to the earth's center, because of gravity, each would fall as down a mine shaft. Their speed would increase to a peak, then be constant until they reached the center of the hollow cavity. Once past the center, they would slow down because gravity would be working against their momentum. From center, it is "up" in every direction. At some point, they would stop and start back towards center. Only this time, their momentum would not be as great. When they passed center, they would not go as far past as before. Gradually, they would slow down and come to rest in the center of the cavity. Gravity being equal on all sides, would cause them to hang in mid air; at the center of the cavity.¹⁶

7. Revelation 18

8. Revelation 9:12

9. Revelation 9:5

10. Revelation 9:1,11; 11:7; 12:7-9

11. Revelation 7:3

12. Revelation 11:6

13. Job 1:6-12; Zechariah 3:1-2; Revelation 12:6-14

14. Revelation 12:7-14, King James Version

15. Revelation 12:11-12

16. I heard this concept from Chuck Missler, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California.

Once in the middle, with no way to touch the cavity walls, they could never move from the cavity center to the walls. There would be nothing to push or pull against to overcome gravity. The best any could do would be to push against each other. That would merely reshape the mass of bodies against one another. Can you imagine how aggravating such a situation would be? The strife, anger, fighting and screaming would constantly be at fever pitch. That is one concept of what Hell (Sheol) might be like.

The Sixth Trumpet

In the United States, Antichrist is about to win, the remaining patriots are nearly beaten. In Israel, persecution is unbearable. Antichrist is worried about the Red Chinese entering the Middle East.

Meanwhile, the vast blanket of red crawls across southern Asia and the Middle East, one-third of mankind is killed.¹⁷ The Red army seems to pile up on the east side of the Euphrates River waiting for a way across.

The way across will probably come by closing the gates of the Tabaqah (tab-a-caw) Dam near Ar Raqqah, Syria which, temporarily, can stop the flow of the Euphrates River. This major agricultural development project was completed by 1978 with the filling of Lake Assad.¹⁸ At the right time, the floodgates will be closed and the river dried up.

About this time, the 1,260 day ministry of the Two Witnesses will come to an end. They will be a terrible thorn to the Antichrist. Many plagues will come upon the earth by their hand.¹⁹ Perhaps God will use them to administer the trumpet judgements. Their preaching will cause millions to repent.²⁰ God will finally allow Antichrist a short-lived triumph.

On international television, most of the world will see them killed.²¹ Satan, who will be released from the pit, will make war against them and eventually kill them. Their bodies will lay at the spot where they are slain.

This is Antichrist's triumph; He will go to

the Jewish Temple and declare himself God. He is at the pinnacle! He will believe he has beaten the true and living God. This is the Abomination of Desolation spoken of by Daniel, the Prophet.²² The whole world will celebrate; sending gifts to one another. Its party time; for awhile.

After three days, everyone is terrified as God breaths life into the Witnesses again.²³ In the same hour, a voice from heaven says, "Come up here." They will disappear into the clouds. And not just them, but all the saints who have died during the Great Tribulation. They will meet the Lord in heaven.²⁴ That is the end of the Second Woe. The Third Woe is coming.

The Seventh Trumpet and Seven Vials of God's wrath

When Antichrist declares himself god, it is an open challenge to the Lord God Almighty of Heaven and Earth. And He will not let it go by. Blasphemy on a worldwide scale plays right into God's timetable of wrath and retribution. The scenes are described in Revelation Chapters 16-18.

The first angel's vial contains the power to produce loathsome and malignant sores upon the men who have the mark of the beast and who worship his name.

The second angel will pour his vial into the sea. And it will become like a dead man's blood. Everything in the sea will die.

And the third angel will pour his vial into the rivers and springs; and they will become blood. John says, "And I heard the angel of the waters saying, 'Righteous art thou, who art and who wast, O Holy One, because Thou didst judge these things; for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink. They deserve it.'"²⁵

The fourth angel will pour out his vial on the sun; and it will scorch men with fire. And they will blaspheme the name of God. But they will not repent nor give Him glory.

The fifth angel will pour out his vial upon the throne of the Antichrist, and his kingdom

17. Revelation 9:15

18. Refer to the book; Syria, A Country Study, P.115.

19. Revelation 11:6

20. Revelation 7:14 with 11:7a

21. Revelation 11:9-10

22. Daniel 12:7

23. Revelation 11:7-11

24. Revelation 7:9-11; 14:16; 15:1-8; 20:4-6; Daniel 12:1

25. Revelation 16:5,6

became darkened. It appears that light is taken away.²⁶ This probably will come as a consequence of nuclear war. A medium sized explosion could cause a crater one half mile across and 20 feet deep. Much of this material will stay in the atmosphere and tend to block out the light. When this situation is aggravated by many bombs and some volcanic activity then we can see how the prophecy could come true. But they will continue to curse God and not repent.

The sixth angel poured his vial upon the Euphrates River which stops the flow of water. This action makes a dry path for the Chinese Army to cross into the Middle East.

At this time, Satan, Antichrist and the False Prophet do miracles which convince the Chinese and other leaders that they should, at least temporarily, combine forces to fight against God.²⁷

Is it possible that the "miracle" is done by closing Tabaqah Dam? Let's suppose Antichrist wanted to counterfeit the miracle of Joshua and Israel crossing the Jordan River at flood stage. How could he do it?

First, he might let out much water to simulate a flood and make room in the lake for water coming in after closing the gates. Then, at the right time, shut off the water coming out of the dam. The river bed would dry up quickly allowing a "miracle" crossing.

And lastly, the seventh angel poured his vial upon the air which produces a massive earthquake throughout the world. Never in all of man's existence has there been such a great shaking. Jerusalem, the great city, is split into three parts.²⁸ Great tidal waves 100 feet high, called Tsunamis (su-nah-me), travel around the world pounding port after port. All the great cities of the world are devastated. Islands which were visible disappear. The glory of Antichrist and the European Economic Community will become so much rubble where people wail and struggle to pull themselves from the broken concrete and splintered timbers. Mountains flatten out and huge hailstones, about 100 pounds each, rain on men's head.

It is tragic to note that stoning was God's punishment for blasphemy under the Law of Moses. And with the plague of hailstones, we

again see men punished for not accepting Jesus for who He really is.

The Apostle John says,

"After these things I heard, as it were, a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, 'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; because his judgements are true and righteous; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her.'"

And so reads Revelation 19:1-2. It is a summation of the destruction of the False Prophet's church (the harlot of Chapter 18) and the empire of Antichrist (Chapter 19). So the armies of Antichrist and the Chinese gather at the place called Armageddon.

The battle of Armageddon is a confrontation between the armies of Antichrist and Jesus Christ leading His saints. It is the final episode of man's rebellion against God. The outcome determines who will rule the earth.

Traditionally, Armageddon is thought to be the valley of Megiddo (also called valley of Jezreel), about 55 miles North of Jerusalem. It is nearly eight miles wide by twenty miles long of lush farmland which would make a great place to bivouac a large army. Since we are talking 200 million plus men, they will probably be camped all over Israel. Center stage will be at Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives as we shall soon see.

The armies of the world gather to face the King of Kings. Their foolish pride causing a blindness to His almighty nature. Let me ask a rhetorical question. Can the broad sword win over the machine gun? Can the buffalo survive men with repeating rifles? So goes the battle of Armageddon. So goes puny man before Almighty God.

It will be dark on that day; merely twilight. As we saw from the fifth vial, the sun and moon are obscured; probably by the hundreds of tons of debris thrown into the atmosphere. Zechariah describes the scene in Chapter 14:2-7,12-15.

"2 For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city

26. Revelation 16:10 similar to Exodus 10:21,22

27. Revelation 16:13-16

28. Revelation 16:19

will be captured, the houses plundered, and the women ravished, and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cutoff from the city.

"3 Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle.

"4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

"5 And you will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord, my God, will come, and all the holy ones" (Christians from the Rapture)" with Him!

"6 And it will come about in that day that there will be no light; the luminaries" (Sun and Moon) " will dwindle.

"7 For it will be a unique day which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night; but it will come about that at evening time there will be light.

"12 Now this will be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth.

"13 And it will come about in that day that a great panic from the Lord will fall on them; and they will seize one another's hand, and the hand of one will be lifted against another.

"14 And Judah also will fight at

Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments in great abundance.

"15 So also like this plague, will the plague on the horse, the mule, the camel, the donkey, and all the cattle that will be in those camps."

Isaiah 63:3-7 adds a different perspective.

"3 'I have trodden the wine trough alone, And from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in my anger, And trampled them in My wrath; And their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, And I stained all My raiment.

"4 'For the day of vengeance was in My heart, And My year of redemption has come.

"5 'And I looked, and there was no one to help, And I was astonished and there was no one to uphold; So My own arm brought salvation to Me; And My wrath upheld Me.

"6 'And I trod down the peoples in My anger, And made them drunk in My wrath, And I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.'"

That is also similar to the picture given in Revelation 14:18-20.

"18 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.'

"19 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.

"20 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."

Apparently this will be a bloodbath of monumental proportions. The backbone of world power and strength will be broken. Jesus and His Saints will then begin the task of clean-up and rebuilding. Jerusalem will become the center of world religious worship. The Jews will become the priests of God in the Temple there.

Isaiah 61 records, in a beautiful way, the transition from the peace of Jesus' first coming to the peace of His second coming in power and great glory.

You may remember the story when Jesus first began His ministry in Nazareth, that He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read. He read from Isaiah 61 which prophesies about the Messiah. However, He read only half of the sentence because the rest was not yet fulfilled. And it would not be fulfilled until His second coming which we have been discussing. Let's look at Luke 4:17-20 then compare it to Isaiah 61 and the fulfillment.

"17 And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written,

"18 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are downtrodden,

"19 To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.'

"20 And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him.

"21 And He began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'

Where He stopped reading in the Isaiah text is the significant point. He stopped at a comma. Let's look at the rest of the sentence which He

didn't read (61:2).

"And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, To grant those who mourn in Zion, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting, So they will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.

"4 Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, They will raise up the former devastations, And they will repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations.

"5 And strangers will stand and pasture your flocks, And foreigners will be your farmers and your vine dressers.

"6 But you" (Israel) "will be called the priests of the Lord; You will be spoken of as ministers of our God. You will eat the wealth of nations, And in their riches you will boast.

"7 Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, And instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore, they will possess a double portion in their land, Everlasting joy will be theirs.

"8 For I, the Lord, love justice, I hate robbery in the burnt offering; And I will faithfully give them their recompense, And I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

"9 Then their offspring will be known among the nations, And their descendants in the midst of the peoples. All who see them recognize them because they are the offspring whom the Lord has blessed."

And so the world enters the 1000 year period of peace under the leadership of Jesus Christ and His Saints. Every part of the prophetic decree

has been fulfilled; to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place.²⁹

29. Daniel 9:24

