

The Trumpets of Revelation: The Punishment of the Unsealed By Hugo Leon



Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide an interpretation of the seven trumpets that takes into consideration the structure, background themes, immediate context and the intratextual connections within the book of Revelation. The seven trumpet plagues are eschatological and sequential with the seven bowl plagues of Revelation. Both the trumpets and the bowls have a similar OT background and as we shall see they describe the judgments of God against the same group. There are also numerous linguistic and thematic links between the trumpets and other major sections of the Apocalypse. We will try to analyze the meaning of all these connections. We will begin with an analysis of how the trumpets interact with the literary structure of the Apocalypse and then we will see how the background OT and NT motifs influence the interpretation of the trumpets. This will be followed by a careful analysis of the introduction of the seven trumpets and a detailed analysis of each individual trumpet. The writings of Ellen White concerning the trumpets of Revelation have been quoted when they elaborate on the meaning of the text.

The Trumpets and the Literary Structure of Revelation

The literary structure of Revelation appears to be chiasmic. A detailed analysis of the structure of Revelation is beyond the scope of this paper.¹ Nevertheless some

¹ For excellent studies on the structure of Revelation see Strand, *Eight Basic Visions of Revelation*. La Rondelle, *End Time Prophecies*, 82-107. Lund, *Studies in Revelation*. M. Wilson, *Victor Sayings*, 3-30. Harris, *Hymns in the Apocalypse*, 310-319. Lee, *Call to Martyrdom*, 164-194. Paulien, *Role of the*

scholars believe the trumpets and the bowl plagues of Revelation form an *inclusio* around the central section of Revelation (chapters 12-14).² This demonstrates the parallel nature of the trumpets and bowls. We can expect these two cycles of judgments to be similar in purpose, timing, content and theme.

Chiastic Outline of the Structure of the Book of Revelation

- A Rev. 1:1-8 – Prologue
- B Rev. 1:9-3:22 – Messages to the Seven Churches – Preparation for Judgment
- C Rev. 4:1-5:14 – Throne scene – Initiation of Investigative Judgment
- D Rev. 6:1-8:1 – Seven seals
- E Rev. 8:2-11:19 – **Seven trumpets**
- F Rev. 12:1 – Rev. 14:20 – Central visions/warnings
- E' Rev. 15:1-16:21 – **Seven bowls**
- D' Rev. 17:1- 18:24 – Fall of Babylon
- C' Rev. 19:1 – 20:15 – Second Coming, 1000 years, Final Executive Judgment
- B' Rev. 21:1 – 22:5 – New Jerusalem – Fulfillment of promises to Seven Churches
- A' Rev. 22:6 – 22:21 – Epilogue

The Trumpets as Eschatological Judgments

According to the literary structure of Revelation, the trumpets are the second of three cycles of seven judgments (seals, trumpets and bowls) located in the central part of the Apocalypse (Rev. 4:1-Rev. 20:15). The throne scene of Revelation 4-5 is the opening of this large section and the throne scene of Revelation 20:11-15 is the closing of this literary segment.³ The open door of the heavenly sanctuary in Rev. 4:1 takes us to the time of the antitypical Day of Atonement⁴ and the throne scene that follows (Rev. 4-5) is parallel in timing and content with the judgment scene of Daniel 7.⁵ The seals, trumpets and bowls that follow all come from the throne of God during this eschatological time period (Rev. 4:5; 8:5; 11:19; 16:17-21).⁶ One of the most important literary markers that help us understand the timing of the trumpets is the connection between the fifth seal (Rev. 6:9-11) and the introduction to the seven trumpets (Rev. 8:1-6). As we shall see there is a progression of judgment that occurs between the plea of the martyrs under the altar (Rev. 6:9-10) and the angel that presents the prayers of the saints on the golden altar (Rev. 8:3-4). This connection let us know that the trumpets occur after the time of the fifth seal and not during the time of the apostle John. Furthermore, the introduction of the

Hebrew Cultus, 247-255. Gallusz, *Throne Motif in Revelation*, 240-247. Tavo, *Structure of the Apocalypse*, 47-68. Kuykendall, *Twelve Visions*, 533-556. Mach, *Macrostructure of the Apocalypse*.

² Bandy, *Prophetic Lawsuit in Revelation*, 158.

³ Snyder, *Combat Myth in the Apocalypse*, 86.

⁴ Anderson, *Unfolding the Revelation*, 48-49, 56. E. Gane, *Heaven's Open Door*, 26-30. Treiyer, *La Crisis Final*, 16-17. Treiyer, *Dia de Expiacion*, 434-436, 445, 456.

⁵ Beale, *Use of the OT in the NT*, 1098-1099.

⁶ Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, 40-43. Davidson, *Sanctuary Typology*, 111-112. Valentine, *Temple Motif in Revelation*, 323-325, 327. Giblin, *Recapitulation and Coherence in the Apocalypse*, 84.

trumpets ends with a scene of judgment where all intercession comes to an end (Rev. 8:5). This alludes to the moment when Michael will stand up to unleash an unprecedented time of trouble upon the inhabitants of the earth (Dan. 12:1; cf. Rev. 22:11). The first three trumpets affect the earth, the trees and the sea signaling that the sealing of Revelation 7:1-3 has come to an end. This is confirmed by the explicit reference to the sealing of Revelation 7 in the fifth trumpet (Rev. 9:4). Although the trumpet plagues are eschatological, they are not synonymous with the bowl plagues of Rev. 16. The trumpet plagues are partial in their destruction but the bowl plagues are unmixed with mercy. In fact, the bowl plagues are called the seven last plagues indicating that they are sequential with the trumpet plagues. In short, the trumpets are post-probation judgments that will occur after the fifth seal but before the bowl plagues of the Apocalypse.

The Trumpets/Bowl Plagues and the Fall of Jericho Motif

Some Scholars have seen a connection between the trumpets/bowls of Revelation and the fall of Jericho (Jud. 7:16-22).⁷ ⁸ The seven angels with trumpets and the seven angels with bowls remind us of the seven priests with Jubilee trumpets that marched around Jericho for six days and then on the seventh day they marched seven times around the doomed city (Josh. 6:4-6, 8, 13).⁹ If the seventh trumpet is connected with the seven bowl plagues, then we have a 6 + 7 pattern in the fall of Jericho and in the trumpets/bowls of Revelation.¹⁰ This would place emphasis on the seventh bowl plague as the climax of the trumpet series. The fall of Babylon in the seventh bowl plague appears to parallel the narrative of Joshua 6. The great voices of Rev. 16:17-18 mark the fall of Babylon and this alludes to the great shout of the fall of Jericho in Joshua 6:20-21. The fall of Jericho appears to be a prophetic type of the Jubilee (see the use of *yowbel* in Joshua 6). John may have used the motif of the Fall of Jericho to connect the trumpets/bowls of Revelation with the fall of Babylon and the antitypical Jubilee.¹¹

Structural Parallels Between Joshua 6 and the Trumpets of Revelation

March in silence 6 days (Josh. 6:10)	Silence in heaven (Rev. 8:1)
Ark seen by enemies (Josh. 6:4, 6-9, 11-13)	Ark seen in heaven (Rev. 11:19)
7 priests with trumpets (Josh. 6:4-5, 8-9)	7 angels with trumpets (Rev. 8-9)
Great shout (Josh. 6:5, 10, 18)	Great voices (Rev. 11:15; 16:17)
Jericho falls (Josh. 6:20-21)	Babylon falls (Rev. 11:15; 16:19)

⁷ Paulien, *Revelation 8:7-12*, 231-232. Beale, *Commentary on the NT Use of the OT*, 1112. Ford, *Crisis! Vol.2*, 408. Davidson, *Blow the Ram's Horn in Zion*, 116-117. Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 482.

⁸ Some see a structural parallel here. Paulien, *Revelation 8:7-12*, 231-232. Briggs, *Temple Imagery in Revelation*, 149. De Waal, *Seven Trumpets*, 22. Valentine, *Temple Motif in Revelation*, 319-320.

⁹ Buchanan, *Revelation*, 227, 229-230. Blount, *Revelation*, 160.

¹⁰ Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 205.

¹¹ Buchanan, *Revelation*, 229-230. In the OT, the year of Jubilee is connected with the vengeance of God (Is. 61:2). Daniel 12:12-13 also appears to allude to the antitypical Jubilee.

The Trumpets/Bowl Plagues and the Egypt Plague Motif

Numerous scholars have noted that the first five trumpets and the first five bowls (Rev. 8-9; 15:2-4; 16) have a similar OT background in the ten plagues that fell upon Egypt as recorded in the book of Exodus. This is in sharp contrast to the seven seals that use the Olivet Discourse motif. The Egypt plague motif also alludes to the time of trouble from the prophecy of Daniel (Dan. 12:1) and to the great tribulation of the Olivet Discourse (Mat. 24:21; Mark 13:19; cf. Rev. 7:14). The phrase “such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time” (Dan. 12:1) is taken from the language of the Exodus plagues (Ex. 9:18, 24; 10:6, 14; 11:6; cf. Rev. 16:18).¹² The introduction to both the trumpets and the bowl plagues alludes to the standing up of Michael in Dan. 12:1 (cf. Rev. 8:5; 15:5-8). The trumpet and bowl judgments allude to the time of trouble of Daniel 12:1. See the table below.

Allusions to Daniel 12:1 in the Trumpets/Bowls of Revelation

Trumpets/Bowls	Daniel 12:1
Introduction to Trumpets (Rev. 8:1-5)	Michael Stands Up (Dan. 12:1)
Introduction to Bowls (Rev. 15:1-8)	Michael Stands Up (Dan. 12:1)
Trumpet Judgments (Rev. 8-9)	Time of Trouble (Dan. 12:1)
Bowl Judgments (Rev. 16)	Time of Trouble (Dan. 12:1)
Trumpets use Egypt Plague Motif	Time of Trouble uses Egypt Plague Motif
Bowls use Egypt Plague Motif	Time of Trouble uses Egypt Plague Motif

Parallels Between The Trumpets and Bowls

Scholars have long noted very strong thematic and linguistic parallels between the trumpets and bowls of Revelation.¹³ This demonstrates the close relationship between the two cycles of judgments. Both allude to the Exodus plague motif in the first five judgments of their cycle.¹⁴ Both allude to the fall of Babylon motif in the sixth judgment of their cycle. There are linguistic parallels between the seventh trumpet and seventh bowl plague. The introductory scene to the seven last plagues (Rev. 15:1, 5-8) parallels the introductory scene to the seven trumpets (Rev. 8:1-5) and they both appear to allude to the end of all divine intercession presented in

¹² Z. Stefanovic, *Daniel*, 435. Charles, *Daniel*, 325-326. Alomia, *Daniel*, 458-459. Buchanan, *Daniel*, 373-374. Cf. Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 207.

¹³ Beale, *Revelation*, 808-812. La Rondelle, *End Time Prophecies*, 101-102.

¹⁴ See Casey, *Exodus Typology in the Book of Revelation*. Isbell, *Exodus Typology in the Apocalypse*. DeSilva, *John's Way of Seeing Things*, 162-163, 305-308. Kio, *Exodus as a Symbol of Liberation in the Apocalypse*, 312-326. Wold, *Exodus Plagues in Revelation 16*, 249-257. Lichtenwalter, *Exodus and Apocalypse*, 395. White, *GC*, 627-628. Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, 70-72. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 546. Moore, *Trumpets of Revelation*, 96-97.

Daniel 12:1 (cf. Rev. 22:11).¹⁵ Both scenes are connected with the throne (Rev. 8:2-4; 15:5-6) and both scenes describe seven angels as the agents of judgment (Rev. 8:2; 15:1, 6).¹⁶ Both cycles end with a reference to the storm elements connected with the throne of God (Rev. 4:5; 11:19; 16:18-21). Both scenes describe the opening of the heavenly temple (Rev. 11:19; 15:5-8). Furthermore, both scenes allude to the Day of Atonement (Rev. 8:3-4; 15:8) and both sets of judgments are referred to as “plagues” (Rev 9:20; Rev. 15:1, 6, 8; 16:9, 21; 18:4, 8; 21:9; 22:18). In both scenes objects of divine intercession (censer and golden bowls) become objects of divine judgment (Rev. 5:8; 8:3-5; 15:7; 16:1). Both sets of judgments describe the wicked as unrepentant idol worshippers (Rev. 9:20-21; 16:9, 11).

Seven Trumpets

Egypt plague motif
 Throne scene intro (Rev. 8:2-5)
 Censer filled with fire (Rev. 8:5)
 No intercession (Rev. 8:5)
 Seven angels (Rev. 15:1; 16:1)
 Earth affected (Rev. 8:7)
 Sea turns to blood (Rev. 8:8-9)
 Rivers and fountains (Rev. 8:10-11)
 Sun, moon, and stars (Rev. 8:12)
 Darkness (Rev. 9:2)
 Woes on unsealed (Rev. 9:4)
 Voice from altar (Rev. 9:13)
 River Euphrates (Rev. 9:14-21)
 Men unrepentant (Rev. 9:20-21)
 Men worship idols (Rev. 9:20)
 Loud voices (Rev. 11:15)
 Temple opened (Rev. 11:19)
 Storm elements (Rev. 8:5; 11:19)

Seven Bowls

Egypt plague motif
 Throne scene intro (Rev. 15:5-8)
 Bowls with plagues (Rev. 15:7)
 No intercession (Rev. 15:5-8)
 Seven angels (Rev. 8:2, 6)
 Earth affected (Rev. 16:2)
 Sea turns to blood (Rev. 16:3)
 Rivers and fountains (Rev. 16:4)
 Sun (Rev. 16:8-9)
 Darkness (Rev. 16:10-11)
 Bowls on marked (Rev. 16:2)
 Voice from altar (Rev. 16:7)
 River Euphrates (Rev. 16:12-16)
 Men unrepentant (Rev. 16:9, 11)
 Men worship image (Rev. 16:2)
 Loud voice (Rev. 16:17)
 Temple opened (Rev. 15:5)
 Storm elements (Rev. 16:18-21)

The Fifth Seal and the Trumpet/Bowl Plagues

As was stated earlier, we see a definite progression in the theme of judgment from the fifth seal (Rev. 6:9-11) to the introduction of the trumpets (Rev. 8:1-5).¹⁷ The prayers of the saints, together with much incense, is offered up to the throne of God by the angel with a golden censer standing at the altar (Rev. 8:3-4). The angel fills his censer with fire from the altar and cast it to the earth (Rev. 8:5). At the beginning of the fifth trumpet, an angel is seen flying in the midst of heaven crying

¹⁵ E. Gane, *Trumpet After Trumpet*, 35-36. Moore, *Trumpets of Revelation*, 14-17. Treiyer sees the close of probation in Rev. 15:5. See Treiyer, *Dia de Expiacion*, 453-454. Hayden, *Vision By the Tigris*, 209-210. Murphy, *Fallen is Babylon*, 333-334.

¹⁶ For an excellent comparison of the trumpets and the bowl plagues see Beale, *Revelation*, 808-812. Streett, *Violence in Revelation*, 148, 152.

¹⁷ Stefanovic, *Angel at the Altar*, 88-94.

out in a loud voice to the inhabitants of the earth (Rev. 8:13). This makes a strong linguistic connection with the loud voice of the fifth seal that calls for vengeance against the inhabitants of the earth. In the judgment woe of the sixth trumpet a voice is heard from the four horns of the altar (Rev. 9:13). This makes a most definite connection with the souls under the altar of the fifth seal. At the seventh trumpet the heavenly council proclaims that the time to judge the wicked has come (Rev. 11:18). This is the answer to the prayer of the martyrs of the fifth seal. In a later judgment scene, an angel comes out from the altar during the harvest of the grapes (Rev. 14:18). This also makes an allusion to the altar of the fifth seal.¹⁸ In the third bowl plague we once again hear a voice coming from the altar declaring that the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous (Rev. 16:7). This makes a strong linguistic connection with the plea of the fifth seal. Thus, we see that John the Revelator has used the language of the fifth seal to connect the trumpet plagues with the bowl plagues.

The OT Feast of Trumpets and the Seven Trumpets of Revelation

There are some scholars who see a connection between the Annual Feasts of the Hebrew cultic calendar and the book of Revelation.¹⁹ These expositors see an allusion to the Feast of the Trumpets in the seven trumpets of the Apocalypse. In the OT the Feast of Trumpets was held in the autumn during the first 10 days of the seventh month (Lev. 23:23-25). On the tenth day of the seventh month, the children of Israel observed the solemn Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:26-32). Just as the Feast of Trumpets in the OT announced the coming judgment of the Day of Atonement so the trumpets in Revelation announce the judgment connected with the antitypical Day of Atonement (Rev. 11:18-19).²⁰ According to Jewish tradition, it is during the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement that the final decision is made whether or not the believer's name will be sealed in the book of life or in the book of death.²¹

The Sealing of the 144,000 and the Seven Trumpets

The sealing of the 144,000 in Revelation 7 is an important background text for the seven trumpets of the Apocalypse. This is most obvious in the fifth trumpet where the sealing of chapter 7 is explicitly mentioned (Rev. 9:4) as a protective sign for the people of God. This reminds us of the blood of the Passover lamb that was placed on the doorposts of the Israelites to protect the firstborn from the deadly tenth plague of Egypt (Ex. 12:13, 23). Scholars have also noted that the trumpets affect the earth, the trees and the sea (Rev. 8:7-11), which are the very elements mentioned as preserved until the sealing of 144,000 has been completed (Rev. 7:1-3). Furthermore, the sixth trumpet (Rev. 9:14-15) appears to make a reference to the

¹⁸ Heil, *The Fifth Seal as a Key to the Book of Revelation*, 237.

¹⁹ Davidson, *Sanctuary Typology*, 121-126. Bacchiocchi, *God's Festivals*, 102-109.

²⁰ Paulien, *Hebrew Cultus in Revelation*, 259-260.

²¹ Newton, *Prophecies of Daniel*, 265-267. Paul, *Heavenly Tablets*, 350-351. Snyder, *Combat Myth in the Apocalypse*, 330.

loosening of the four restraining angels of Rev. 7:1. Finally, the unsealed of the sixth trumpet are presented as unclean idol worshippers (Rev. 9:20-21) and this appears to set them in direct contrast with the pure, undefiled 144,000 (Rev. 7:9, 14).

The Trumpets and the Bowl Plagues Are Directed Against the Same Group

According to the text of Revelation, the trumpets are directed against the unsealed inhabitants of the earth (Rev. 9:4). This fact confirms that the trumpets are post-sealing in their timing. Interestingly, the bowl plagues are eschatological judgments directed against the marked and the worshippers of the image of the beast (Rev. 16:2; cf. Rev. 14:9-11). Furthermore, there is a remarkable similitude between the introduction to the three trumpet woes (Rev. 8:13) and the introduction to the warning of the three angels (Rev. 14:6-7). This obvious parallelism is not accidental but rather serves to inform the hearer that there is a close connection between the unsealed and the marked. As we shall see the characteristics of the unsealed and the marked are almost identical leading us to the conclusion that the two groups are one and the same.

The Abomination of Desolation Motif and the Trumpets of Revelation

At the center of the Olivet Discourse, Jesus makes reference to the abomination (*bdelygma*) prophecy of Daniel (Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20). This event is connected with the setting up of idolatrous worship as a sign of impending desolation (*eremosis*) and destruction. This prophecy had a first century fulfillment just before the desolation of Jerusalem and it will have an end time fulfillment in the last days just prior to the desolation of the earth (Luke 17:30-31; 21:20).²² This prophecy is a crucial OT and NT background for the book of Revelation. In the Apocalypse we also see the promotion of end time abominations (*bdelygmaton*) by the harlot Babylon (Rev. 17:4-5; cf. Rev. 21:8, 27). These idolatrous acts lead to the desolation (*eremoo*) of Babylon (Rev. 17:16; 18:17, 19). For this reason God calls His end time people to come out of Babylon before she is desolated (Rev. 18:4). As we shall see the trumpet and bowl plagues are directed against those who have rejected the true worship of God (Rev. 9:4; 20-21) and have accepted the idolatrous worship of the beast and the harlot (Rev. 14:8-11; 16:2, 9, 11; 17:2; 18:2-4; 19:2). The trumpets and the bowls will lead to the desolation of the earth (Rev. 11:18; 15:1; 16:10, 17-21; cf. Dan. 12:1).

Analysis of the Introduction to the Trumpets (Rev. 8:1-6)

The seven trumpets appear to come out of the seventh seal (Rev. 8:1).²³ The literary structure of Rev. 8:1-6 appears to be a chiasmic unit that serves as the climax

²² Ellen White applies the abomination prophecy of Matt. 24:15 to the time of the end. See White, *Ms16-1884.11* and White, *Mar*, 180.

²³ Ladd, *Revelation*, 80, 122. Treiyer, *Dia de Expiacion*, 498. Murphy, *Fallen is Babylon*, 231.

of the seals and the introduction to the trumpets.²⁴ This demonstrates that there is a close connection between the seven seals and the seven trumpets. Scholars have noted that the seals affect $\frac{1}{4}$ of the elements (Rev. 6:8) whereas the trumpets affect $\frac{1}{3}$ of the elements (Rev. 8:7-12; 9:15), thus showing a progression of intensity in the judgments of God in the book of Revelation. The bowl plagues that follow the trumpets will be the wrath of God unmixed with mercy (Rev. 14:10; 15:1; cf. Rev. 16:19). The introductory sanctuary scene of Rev. 8:1-6 appears to allude to the moment when Michael stands up and His intercession for man comes to an end (Dan. 12:1; cf. Rev. 22:11).²⁵ The silence in heaven tells us of the solemnity of this moment because the time for God's wrath has come (Rev. 8:1; cf. Rev. 15:5-8).^{26 27} In the OT, silence in the heavenly temple is connected with God's judgments (1 Sam. 2:9-10; Ps. 31:17; Is. 47:5; Lam. 2:10-11; Dan. 4:19; Amos 8:2-3; Hab. 2:20; Zech. 2:13).²⁸ In response to the silence of the seventh seal, seven angels are given seven trumpets (Rev. 8:2, 6). This scene is similar to the beginning of the seven last plagues where seven angels come out of the temple and are given seven golden vials full of the wrath of God (Rev. 15:1, 6-8; 16:1; 17:1; 21:9; cf. Rev. 14:14-20).²⁹ Rev. 8:3-4 presents an angel who offers up incense with the prayers of the saints before the altar (cf. Rev. 5:8; Ps. 141:2).³⁰ Scholars have connected this altar with the other altars mentioned in Revelation (Rev. 6:9-11; 9:13-14; 14:18; 16:7).³¹ The altar of Rev. 8:3 is described as "the golden altar which was before (*enopion*) the throne" (cf. Lev. 16:13). This lets us know that we are "in the presence of" or "before" the throne of God in the Most Holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.³² Some scholars see an allusion to the Day of Atonement in Rev. 8:2-4 (cf. Ex. 30:8-10; Lev. 16:12-13).³³ The parallel passage of the seven last plagues also makes an allusion to the Day of Atonement in Rev. 15:8 where "no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angles were fulfilled" (cf. Lev 16:17).³⁴ The angel

²⁴ De Villiers has written a tremendous essay on this subject. See *Message of Revelation 8:1-6*. See also Stefanovic, *Angel at the Altar*.

²⁵ E. Gane, *Trumpet After Trumpet*, 48-51, 55-56. E. Gane, *Heaven's Open Door*, 97-98. White, *EW*, 279-280. U. Smith, *Daniel and Revelation*, 474-475. Moore, *Trumpets of Revelation*, 13-14, 98. Lambert, *Genuine New Light*, 43-44. Veloso, *Apocalipsis*, 133. White, *EW*, 270.

²⁶ Ladd, *Revelation*, 122-123. Witherington, *Revelation* 138. Streett, *Violence in Revelation*, 98-99. Some Adventist expositors hold this view. See *SDA BC* 7, 787-788. Treiyyer, *Dia de Expiacion*, 496, 498, 500. Stefansson, *Adventist Interpretation of Revelation* 9, 60-70. White connects the opening of the book of Rev. 5 with Rev. 6:8-11; 8:1-4. See *12MR*, 297.

²⁷ Beale sees here an allusion to Dan. 4:19. See *Commentary on the NT Use of the OT*, 1111.

²⁸ Beale, *Commentary on the NT Use of the OT*, 1110.

²⁹ E. Gane, *Trumpet After Trumpet*, 35-36. Moore, *Trumpets of Revelation*, 14-17.

³⁰ Briggs discusses the symbolism of incense and prayers. See *Temple Imagery in Revelation*, 120-121.

³¹ Briggs, *Temple Imagery in Revelation*, 122-132.

³² Veloso, *Apocalipsis*, 132-133.

³³ Beale, *Commentary on the NT Use of the OT*, 1111. Gane, *Trumpet After Trumpet*, 44-45. Anderson, *Unfolding the Revelation*, 84-86. I. Newton, *Observations on Daniel and Revelation*, 264-265. Buchanan, *Revelation*, 231-232. De Waal, *Seven Trumpets*, 89-90. Blount, *Revelation*, 162.

³⁴ Please note that the Day of Atonement is also alluded to in Rev. 11:1, 19; 15:8; 14:7 (cf. Dan. 8:13-14). See Davidson, *Sanctuary Typology*, 124. Others see an allusion to the Feast of Trumpets. See Moore, *Trumpets of Revelation*, 10. Snyder, *Combat Myth in the Apocalypse*, 207-208.

standing at the altar appears to be an angelomorphic representation of Christ.³⁵ The prayers referred to in this verse appear to refer back to the prayers of the saints in the golden vials of Rev. 5:8 and to the cry of the souls under the altar in the fifth seal (Rev. 6:9-10).³⁶ Thus, these prayers are part of the judgment scene of Rev. 4-5 and they are a plea for justice and vindication from God's oppressed people in the time of the end.³⁷ In response to the prayers and incense, the angel takes the censer and fills it with fire from the altar and casts it unto the earth (Rev. 8:5; cf. Rev. 14:18).³⁸ This appears to be the answer to the prayers of the saints offered up by the angel in front of the altar (Rev. 8:2-3; cf. Rev. 9:13; 14:18; 16:7) and it also appears to be the divine answer to the plea for vengeance of the fifth seal (Rev. 6:9-11).³⁹ The throwing down of the censer provokes voices, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.⁴⁰ These storm elements are connected with the throne of God (Rev. 4:5) and with His end time judgments in the book of Revelation (Rev. 11:15, 19; 16:18, 21).⁴¹ The throwing down of the censer in Rev. 8:5 appears to mark the end of the sealing time, because the trumpets that follow affect the elements of the earth mentioned in Rev. 7:1-3.⁴² In other words, the four winds of Revelation 7 have been let loose to damage the earth, the sea, and the trees because all the servants of God have been numbered and sealed. This lets us know that the four winds and the seven trumpets are synonymous with each other and will occur post-probation. The throwing down of the censor is based on the OT text of Ezek. 10:1-2, 6-7 (cf. Hab. 3:5)⁴³ and this continues the Ezekiel 9 motif that we saw in the sealing of Rev. 7.⁴⁴ Please note that the blowing of trumpets in the OT is connected with the theme of the "Day of the Lord" and other eschatological judgments (Jer. 51:27; Joel 2:1, 15;

³⁵ Gundry, *Angelomorphic Christology in Revelation*, 389-390. E. Gane, *Trumpet After Trumpet*, 46-47. See *SDA BC7* on v. 3, 787. Hayden, *Vision by the Tigris*, 98. De Waal, *Seven Trumpets*, 85-86. K. Matthews, *Revelation Vol. 1*, 423.

³⁶ Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 292-293. Stefanovic, *Angel at the Altar*, 86-94. Gundry, *Angelomorphic Christology in Revelation*, 490. Farrer, *Revelation*, 113. De Waal, *Seven Trumpets*, 91-92, 95, 205. Yarbro-Collins, *Crisis*, 114. Heil, *Fifth Seal as a Key to Revelation*, 232. Streett, *Violence in Revelation*, 287-289.

³⁷ Streett, *Violence in Revelation*, 107. White, *9MR*, 7. White also connects the fifth seal with Rev. 8:1-4 in *20MR*, 197.

³⁸ The OT in Num. 10:9 connects the sound of the trumpet with a covenantal prayer of deliverance for God's people during times of war. See Paulien, *Revelation 8:7-12*, 222. Davidson, *Blow the Ram's Horn in Zion*, 124-126.

³⁹ Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 292-293. Beale, *Revelation*, 455-457. Treiyer, *Dia de Expiacion*, 498-499, 501. Ladd, *Revelation*, 124, 126. Bandy, *Prophetic Lawsuit in Revelation*, 271-275. Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 151. White, *15MR*, 219.

⁴⁰ Treiyer sees in Rev. 8:5 the end of the judgment. See Treiyer, *Dia de Expiacion*, 499.

⁴¹ Bauckham, *Theology of Revelation*, 41-42. Beale, *Commentary on the NT Use of the OT*, 1111. Gundry, *Angelomorphic Christology in Revelation*, 390. In the OT, these storm elements are connected with the Sinai theophany (Ex. 19:16, 18) and with divine judgments (Ps. 77:17-18; Is. 29:6; cf. Ps. 18:7-13). See Beale, *Commentary on the NT Use of the OT*, 1111.

⁴² E. Gane, *Trumpet After Trumpet*, 56. See also E. Gane, *Heaven's Open Door*, 95. Moore, *Trumpets in Revelation*, 73-74, 99. Lackey, *Revelation*, Ch. 8. Hardinge, *Jesus in the Sanctuary*, 522.

⁴³ R. Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 292. La Rondelle, *The Trumpets in Their Contexts*, 84-85. Beale, *Commentary on the NT Use of the OT*, 1111-1112. Treiyer, *Dia de Expiacion*, 499-501. Farrer, *Revelation*, 113. De Waal, *Seven Trumpets*, 88. Streett, *Violence in Revelation*, 107.

⁴⁴ Bandy, *Prophetic Lawsuit in Revelation*, 284-285 see footnote #182.

Hos. 8:1; Zeph. 1:16; Zech. 9:14).⁴⁵ The NT also connects the sound of the trumpet with Second Coming of Jesus (Matt. 24:31; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16).⁴⁶ In summary, the introduction to the seven trumpets confirms that they are post-probation judgments of God against apostates that have persecuted His people.

Analysis of the Seven Trumpets – Preliminary Remarks

The first three trumpets (Rev. 8:7-11) affect the earth, the trees and the sea. As stated before these are the very elements that were preserved by the four restraining angels of Rev. 7:1-3. The fact that the elements are being affected let us know that the sealing has finished and the four winds have been loosened. These judgments appear to be real life catastrophes described in symbolic language. This is very similar to the bowl plagues that are also literal judgments described in symbolic language. The purpose of the OT symbolism in these eschatological judgments is so the reader/hearer can understand who is responsible for these devastating plagues. It is interesting to note that the trumpet judgments affect only 1/3 of the elements (Rev. 8:7-10, 12), thus they appear to be preliminary judgments before the bowl plagues that will be the wrath of God without mixture (Rev. 14:10). Indeed, the bowl plagues are known as the seven last plagues (Rev. 15:1; 21:9), letting us know that the bowls come after the trumpet plagues. Rev. 8:13 tells us that the trumpet plagues are directed against the inhabitants of the earth. The inhabitants of the earth are those who persecute the covenant people of God (Rev. 6:10). Rev. 9:4 identifies the earth dwellers with the unsealed. Thus, the trumpet judgments are directed against those who have rejected the seal of God. The sixth trumpet gives us a detailed description of the characteristics of the unsealed (Rev. 9:20-21). This passage describes the earth dwellers as wicked idolaters that refuse to repent. The seventh trumpet tells us that the trumpet plagues are directed against those who destroy the earth (Rev. 11:18). Ellen White appears to have understood the trumpet and bowl plagues to be eschatological and successive in nature.⁴⁷ See the following quotation.

Solemn events before us are yet to transpire. Trumpet after trumpet is to be sounded; vial after vial poured out one after another upon the inhabitants of the earth. {LDE 238.1}

Analysis of the First Trumpet (Rev. 8:7)

The first trumpet describes a plague of hail mixed with blood that devastates one third of the earth, one third of the tress, and all the green grass (Rev. 8:7). This appears to be a reference to a literal destruction of the earth elements. The first trumpet has an OT background in the Exodus plagues (Ex. 9:23-25) and in the

⁴⁵ Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 282. E. Gane, *Trumpet After Trumpet*, 41-42. De Waal, *Seven Trumpets*, 28-29.

⁴⁶ E. Gane, *Trumpet After Trumpet*, 42. De Waal, *Seven Trumpets*, 29-31.

⁴⁷ Contra see La Rondelle, *Trumpets in Their Contexts*, 82-89.

eschatological battle against Gog in the book of Ezekiel (Ez. 38:22-23). Both of these OT passages describe the wrath of God against the oppressors of His people (cf. Ps. 18:12-14; Is. 30:30).⁴⁸ In the OT the burning of trees figuratively described the punishment of apostate Judah (Jer. 11:15-17; Ez. 20:46-48). Jesus compared the apostate Jews of his time with a dry tree (Luke 23:31) and with trees that did not give fruit (Luke 13:6-9). John the Baptist declared that the Messiah would come to judge the unfruitful trees and have them thrown in the fire (Matt. 3:10). Furthermore, Jesus describes the wicked as tares that grow among the wheat (Matt. 13:38). At the end of time, the tares will be collected and thrown in the fire (Matt. 13:40-42). The fifth trumpet appears to make a reference back to the earth elements of the first trumpet (Rev. 9:4). In summary, the first trumpet plague appears to affect the literal earth elements. The OT background of this trumpet tells us that this punishment is a result of apostasy against the covenant of God.

Analysis of the Second Trumpet (Rev. 8:8-9)

The second trumpet judgment (Rev. 8:8-9) describes a great burning mountain that is cast into the sea devastating one third of the sea, one third of the sea creatures and one third of the ships in the sea. This appears to be a literal destruction of a significant part of the oceans of the earth. The second trumpet has an OT background in the fall of Babylon mentioned in Jeremiah 51:24-25, 42, 63-64. It also has an OT background in the first plague against Egypt where the Nile and her waters were turned into blood (Ex. 7:17-25). Interestingly, the fall of Babylon described in Revelation 18 appears to use the language of the second trumpet (Rev. 18:21). The inhabitants of Babylon are the ones who fornicate with the harlot woman (Rev. 14:8; 17:2; 18:3; 19:2; cf. Rev. 2:20-23; 18:4). Thus, the second trumpet appears to damage the literal oceans and it appears to be the result of apostasy by spiritual Babylon and her inhabitants.

Analysis of the Third Trumpet (Rev. 8:10-11)

The third trumpet plague (Rev. 8:10-11) describes the falling from heaven of a great burning star by the name of Wormwood. This fallen star pollutes one third of the rivers and the springs of water causing the death of many people. This appears to be a symbolic portrayal of the literal death of human beings from a real illness. The great star falling from heaven appears to be a symbolic description of Satan (Is. 14:12-15; Luke 10:18; Rev. 12:3-4; 7-12). The fifth trumpet identifies this same fallen star as Abaddon or Apollyon who is the king of the locusts and the angel of the abyss (Rev. 9:1, 11). Rev. 12:12 tells us the Devil has come down from heaven to afflict the inhabitants of the earth and the sea. In the OT wormwood is associated with idolatry (Deut. 29:18; Jer. 9:15) and it is connected with divine punishments against apostasy (Jer. 9:13-15; 23:15; Amos 6:12; cf. Jer. 8:14). Thus, we can deduce that the third trumpet plague is a literal illness caused by Satan and a consequence of disloyalty to the holy covenant by the inhabitants of the earth.

⁴⁸ Stefanovic, *Revelation* 293-294.

Analysis of the Fourth Trumpet (Rev. 8:12)

The fourth trumpet (Rev. 8:12) alludes to the cosmic signs of the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:29; Luke 21:11, 25-26; cf. Is. 13:10)⁴⁹ and the Sixth Seal (Rev. 6:12-13).⁵⁰ Some have even seen an allusion to the cosmic signs of the Olivet Discourse in all four of the first four trumpets.⁵¹ The signs of the fourth trumpet are literal cosmic disturbances that will occur shortly before the coming of the Son of Man or the Lamb. In the OT, the darkening of celestial bodies is a consistent symbol of the appearance of God in judgment or the Day of the Lord (Is. 13:10; Ezek. 32:7-8; Joel 2:10; 3:15).⁵² This seems to confirm the post-probation timing of the trumpets. The “distress” and “perplexity” of these cosmic signs appears to be so intense that men’s hearts will be failing them for fear (Rev. 8:7-12; cf. Luke 21:25-26).⁵³ This distress appears to occur immediately after the “great tribulation” predicted by Jesus (Matt. 24:21, 29; cf. Dan. 12:1).⁵⁴ The cosmic disturbances of the Olivet Discourse are a sign for the elect that their redemption is near (Luke 21:28).⁵⁵ In short, the cosmic disturbances of the fourth trumpet are literal and will occur in connection with the eschatological Day of the Lord.

Analysis of the Introduction to Three Trumpet Woes (Rev. 8:13)

Rev. 8:13 is the introduction to the three woes (fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpets) that are specifically directed against the earth dwellers that do not have the seal of God on their foreheads (Rev. 9:4). The introduction of the three woes has an amazing similarity to the introduction of the Three Angels of Rev. 14.⁵⁶ The two texts are shown below.

Rev. 8:13 And I beheld, and heard an angel⁵⁷ flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

Rev. 14:6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7 Saying with a loud voice...

⁴⁹ Paulien, *Revelation 8:7-12*, 411-412. Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 301. Osborne, *Revelation*, 357. Weinrich, *Ancient Commentary: Revelation*, 129. Wilson, *Warning*, 54.

⁵⁰ Beale, *Revelation*, 481. Paulien, *Revelation 8:7-12*, 407.

⁵¹ Moore, *Trumpets of Revelation*, 45-48, 98-99. Boxall sees a connection between the cosmic signs of the sixth seal and several of the trumpets. See Boxall, *Revelation*, 117, 130. Ford, *Crisis! Vol. 1*, 121.

⁵² Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 301-302. E. Gane, *Trumpet After Trumpet*, 125-126.

⁵³ White, *3SM*, 417. Beale, *Revelation*, 482.

⁵⁴ E. Gane, *Trumpet After Trumpet*, 126-127. Moore connects the great tribulation with the trumpets of Revelation. See *Trumpets of Revelation*, 47-48.

⁵⁵ White, *Ev*, 18. White, *PCP*, 33.

⁵⁶ Liroy, *Christological Focus*, 80.

⁵⁷ Some ancient manuscripts read “eagle” instead of “angel”.

The thematic and linguistic parallels between these two introductory scenes helps to connect the judgments of the three trumpet woes with the judgments of the Three Angels. Both texts describe an angel flying in the midst of heaven addressing the inhabitants of the earth. These angels both announce judgments against the earth dwellers (Rev. 8:13; 14:6-11). Rev. 9:4 identifies the earth dwellers as the ones who have rejected the seal of God in the forehead. Later in the book of Revelation the earth dwellers are the ones that worship the beast and his image (Rev. 13:8, 12, 14; 17:8).⁵⁸ The curse of the Third Angel is directed against those who have accepted the mark of the beast and worship his image (Rev. 14:9, 11; cf. Rev. 16:2). Since the seal of God is a sign of true worship and the mark is a sign of idolatrous worship, both the trumpet woes and the curse of the Third Angel are directed against idol worshipers.⁵⁹ Ellen White understood the trumpet woes to be judgments against those that will refuse the seal of God in the last days. See the following quotation.

"The Bible is disregarded, the wisdom of men exalted, and Satan and the man of sin worshiped by the wisdom of this age, while the angel is flying through the midst of heaven crying "Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth." (Revelation 8:13). I have been shown that the hand of the Lord is stretched out already to punish those who will become monuments of divine displeasure and holy vengeance, for the day of recompense has come when men who exalted the man of sin in the place of Jehovah in worshipping an idol sabbath in the place of the Sabbath of the Lord Jehovah will find it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, for he is a consuming fire."
{1888, 485}

Analysis of the Fifth Trumpet (Rev. 9:1-12)

The fifth trumpet (Rev. 9:1-12) describes the attack of a diabolical swarm of locusts that torment men for 5 months.⁶⁰ A fallen star from heaven is given the key to unlock the abyss (Rev. 9:1). The fallen star appears to be a symbol of Satan (Luke 10:18; Rev. 8:10-11; 12:12; cf. Is. 14:12).⁶¹ In Rev. 1:18, Jesus is pictured as holding the keys of Hades and death. Apparently Satan will be given the power to deceive the masses by impersonating the resurrection of the dead. In Rev. 20:1-3 we see the reverse action of Rev. 9:1. An angel descends from heaven with the same key to the abyss and he seals Satan in this bottomless pit for 1000 years. The unsealing or the opening of the abyss is connected with the deceptive power of Satan (Rev. 20:3). Later on in the fifth trumpet, the fallen star is identified as the angel of the abyss and the king of the locusts. This king of the locusts is symbolically identified as *Abaddon* or *Apollyon* (Rev. 9:11). These two names describe Satan as a destroyer. The name of this fallen star reminds us of the name of the fallen star (Wormwood) from the

⁵⁸ In the OT, the prophet Zechariah saw the judgments of God sailing through the heavens as a flying roll of curses (Zech. 5:1-4). White, *Lt326 (December 4, 1905) par. 8*.

⁵⁹ Heil, *Revelation*, 214.

⁶⁰ For a review of the SDA interpretation of the 5th and 6th trumpets see Heiks, *Counterfeit Prophecy*.

⁶¹ Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 306, 308-309, 311-312. E. Gane, *Trumpet After Trumpet*, 137-138. Moore, *Trumpets of Revelation*, 54-61. Wilson, *Warning*, 68-72.

third trumpet (Rev. 8:11). If Satan is the king of the locusts, then the locusts represent his fallen angels. In the scriptures, the abyss is the dwelling place of Satan and his demons (Luke 8:31; Rev. 20:2-3). The description of the locusts (Rev. 9:7-10) is symbolic and has an OT background in the plagues of the Exodus and the army of locusts from the book of Joel. The locusts from the book of Joel are symbolic of the avenging agents of judgment that God uses against those who break his covenant. The locusts from the fifth trumpet are described as having the power of scorpions (Rev. 9:3, 10). The metaphor of a scorpion is used by Jesus to describe the power of demons (Luke 10:19). In the book of Revelation, demons are also pictured as frogs (Rev. 16:13) and unclean birds (Rev. 18:2). The locusts that come out of the abyss do not harm the grass or the trees but only those men who have not the seal of God on their foreheads (Rev. 9:4). This is a reference to the sealing of the Revelation 7 and this lets us know that we are in a post-sealing period.⁶² In other words the sealed people of Rev. 9:4 are the 144,000.⁶³ Rev. 7:14 tells us that the great multitude will come out of great tribulation (cf. Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21). Therefore, the fifth trumpet appears to be connected with the “great tribulation” and the destructive four winds of Rev. 7:1-3. The 144,000 of the fifth trumpet remind us of the end time *maskilim* who will be delivered from an unprecedented time of trouble (Dan. 12:1). *Apollyon* and his demonic army are allowed to torment those men who refuse to receive the seal of God on their foreheads (Rev. 9:5-11).⁶⁴ This torment by the agents of Satan may be symbolic of literal devil possession (Mark 5:2-5; 9:17-18, 21-22; cf. Luke 4:33-35). The fact that the locusts only affect those who are not sealed reminds us of the plagues of Egypt that did not affect the children of Israel (Ex. 8:22-23; 9:4, 6-7, 26; 10:23; 11:7; 12:23). One of the main purposes of the Egyptian plagues was to liberate the Israelites so they would be free to worship God (Ex. 3:12; 4:23, 5:1, 3, 8, 17; 7:16; 8:1, 20, 25-28; 9:1, 13; 10:3, 7-9, 11, 24-26, 31; 12:31). The three trumpet woes and the seven last plagues of Revelation appear to have a similar purpose (cf. Rev. 18:4).⁶⁵ Those who are “tormented” (*basanisthosin*) by the locusts (Rev. 9:5) are apparently the same group who will be “tormented” (*basanisthesetai*) by the wrath of God because they have received the mark of the beast on their hand or their forehead (Rev. 14:10-11). The harlot Babylon will also suffer great torment (*basanision*) under the wrath of God (Rev. 18:7, 10, 15). Furthermore, the three trumpet woes are directed against “those who dwell on the earth” (Rev. 6:10; 8:13; 13:8, 14; 17:2, 8).⁶⁶ The earth dwellers are the ones who wonder after the beast (Rev. 13:8; 17:8) and oppress God’s faithful people (Rev. 6:10; 13:14; cf. Rev. 16:6).⁶⁷ The third bowl plague appears to connect the earth dwellers with the wrath of God (Rev. 16:4-7; cf. Rev. 6:10). In short, the fifth

⁶² E. Gane, *Trumpet After Trumpet*, 146-147. Moore, *Trumpets of Revelation*, 10, 100. Lambert, *Genuine New Light*, 60. Ladd, *Revelation*, 131-132. Murphy, *Fallen is Babylon*, 242. Streett, *Violence in Revelation*, 119. Heil, *Revelation*, 123-124. R. Thomas, *The Structure of the Apocalypse*, 60.

⁶³ Lackey, *Revelation*, Ch. 8. Istrate, *Sealing the Slaves*, 138-139.

⁶⁴ White, *RH*, September 17, 1901 par. 8 & 9.

⁶⁵ White, *SM*, 406.

⁶⁶ Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 284, 304-305.

⁶⁷ Bandy, *Prophetic Lawsuit in Revelation*, 278-281. Minear, *I Saw a New Earth*, 261-262. De Waal, *Seven Trumpets*, 118.

trumpet plague describes a diabolical attack against the inhabitants of the earth that have refused the seal of the living God.

Analysis of the Sixth Trumpet (Rev. 9:13-21)

The sixth trumpet (Rev. 9:13-21) presents the second woe against the earth dwellers (Rev. 9:20-21). The sixth trumpet appears to be a symbolic description of a literal punishment that will fall upon the unsealed inhabitants of the earth. This “woe” appears to originate from the angel in front of the golden altar (Rev. 9:13; cf. Rev. 8:2-5; 14:18; 16:7).⁶⁸ Apparently, the sixth trumpet is a response to the prayers of the saints (Rev. 8:3-4) and the cry for vengeance of the fifth seal (Rev. 6:9-11).⁶⁹ The altar of Rev. 9:13 is described as, “the golden altar which is before God.” This parallels the description of the altar from Rev. 8:3 (cf. Lev. 16:13), “the golden altar which was before the throne”. The fact that the four horns of the altar are mentioned appears to continue the Day of Atonement theme that is present in Rev. 8:3-4 (cf. Ex. 30:10; Lev. 16:18). In the OT the corners of the altar are connected with the end time vengeance/deliverance of God (Zech. 9:15). In later visions, we will again see judgments against the wicked coming from the altar (Rev. 14:18; 16:7).⁷⁰ The fact that the altar is mentioned in the harvest of the grapes (Rev. 14:18) and the third bowl plague (Rev. 16:7) appears to connect the trumpets with these two scenes of judgment. Rev. 9:14-15 tells us that the four angels bound at the River Euphrates are set loose to slay the third part of men. The sixth bowl plague also mentions the Euphrates River in connection with the fall of Babylon (Rev. 16:12). Rev. 9:16 explains that it is not really the four angels that do the killing but a demonic army of killer horsemen. Apparently these killer horsemen will be set loose at a specific moment in time (which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year)⁷¹ when the four angels no longer restrain the demonic army.⁷² Scholars have noted that these four restraining angels appear to correspond to the four angels of Rev. 7:1-3 that hold back the four winds until the servants of God can be sealed in their foreheads.⁷³ This parallel lets us know that the third of men who are killed by the demonic horsemen are the ones that have rejected the protective seal of God. This confirms what is stated in the fifth trumpet, that the three woes fall on the unsealed (Rev. 9:4). The release of the four winds of Rev. 7:1 appears to be synonymous with the great tribulation of Rev. 7:14,⁷⁴ the standing up of Michael in Dan. 12:1⁷⁵ and the seven last plagues of Rev. 16.⁷⁶ Next John hears the number of

⁶⁸ Moore, *Trumpets of Revelation*, 64-65.

⁶⁹ Beale, *Revelation*, 505-506. Treiye, *Dia de Expiacion*, 510. Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 314, 316-317. Ladd, *Revelation*, 135. Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 163. Murphy, *Fallen is Babylon*, 246. Heil, *Fifth Seal as a Key to Revelation*, 233. Blount, *Revelation*, 181. Stefanovic, *Plain Revelation*, 115.

⁷⁰ Musvosvi, *Vengeance in the Apocalypse*, 187-189.

⁷¹ Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 317.

⁷² Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 317.

⁷³ Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 317.

⁷⁴ Neall, *Sealed Saints*, 252.

⁷⁵ Neall, *Sealed Saints*, 252. Thiele, *Outline Studies in Revelation*, 141. White, *7BC*, 967. White, *5T*, 152.

⁷⁶ White, *Broadside 2, January 31, 1849 par. 2*.

the demonic army of horsemen (Rev. 9:16). This army is set contrast with the army of the 144,000 (I heard the number; Rev. 7:4). The horses have “the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone” (Rev. 9:17-18). The fire, smoke, and brimstone of the sixth trumpet appear to foreshadow the fire, smoke and brimstone found in the curse of the Third Angel (Rev. 14:10-11)⁷⁷ and the fire and smoke connected with the fall of Babylon (Rev. 18: 8-9, 18; cf. Rev. 17:16). The elements of fire and brimstone are also used in the judgment of Satan and his forces in the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 15; 21:8).⁷⁸ In Rev. 9:20 the trumpets are described as plagues (*plegais*). This same Greek word is used to describe the bowl judgments on the marked (Rev. 15:1, 6, 8; 16:9, 21; 21:9) and the desolating plagues that fall on Babylon and her inhabitants (Rev. 18:4, 8). The fact that the punishment of the unsealed is similar to the punishment of the marked is not a coincidence. The author of Revelation is trying to compare and contrast the unsealed with the marked, thereby letting the hearer know that the two groups have committed the same sin. To reject the seal of God is the same as accepting the mark of the beast. Furthermore, through the use of the word *plegais*, the author of Revelation is trying to make us understand that the inhabitants of Babylon that receive the plagues are the same as the unsealed and the marked.

The Characteristics of the Unsealed in Rev. 9:20-21

Next, the sixth trumpet describes the characteristics of the unsealed. The description of the wicked unsealed in Rev. 9:20-21 alludes to the story of the fall of Belshazzar and Babylon in Daniel 5. Just as Belshazzar and his Babylonian guests became drunk with wine and defiled the sacred vessels of God and praised the false gods of wood, stone, silver and gold, so the inhabitants of the earth will become drunk with the wine of the harlot Babylon and will corrupt themselves with her idolatry (Dan. 5:1-4; Rev. 14:8; 17:2; 18:2; 19:2). Like Belshazzar, the unsealed have been weighed in the balances and found wanting (Dan. 5:27; cf. Rev. 14:8; 18:2).⁷⁹ This emphasizes the defiance and rebellion of the unrepentant unsealed. They have refused the seal of God that is a sign of true worship. A similar list of idolatrous people appears in the exclusion lists of the last chapters of the Apocalypse (Rev. 21:8, 27; 22:15). The sin of the wicked that appear in the exclusion lists at the end of the Apocalypse is that they have defiled themselves with the idolatrous worship of the beast and the abominable wine of the harlot (Rev. 21:8, 27; 22:15 cf. Rev. 13:8; 17:8; 20:15; 22:14). Furthermore, the unsealed of Rev. 9:20-21 refuse to repent of their idolatry. This parallels the marked of the fourth, fifth, and seventh bowl plagues that also refuse to repent of their idolatry (Rev. 16:9, 11, 21).⁸⁰ The unrepentant wicked of the sixth trumpet remind us of the wicked that do wickedly from Dan. 12:10 (cf. Rev. 22:11). Once again, the trumpet woes focus on the unsealed, while the seven last plagues are directed against the worshipers of the

⁷⁷ Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 315.

⁷⁸ Heil, *Revelation*, 301.

⁷⁹ White, *EW*, 36.

⁸⁰ Heil, *Revelation*, 219-220.

beast that have the mark of the beast (Rev. 16:2, 10). In contrast to the idolatrous unsealed and marked, Revelation presents the pure and holy worshippers of the Lamb that refuse to defile themselves with the worship of the beast or the wine of the harlot woman (Rev. 7:14; 14:1-5, 12; 15:2-4; 19:7-9; 20:4; cf. Rev. 3:12; 18:4; 22:4). In summary, the sixth trumpet vividly portrays in symbolic language the literal punishment of the unsealed inhabitants of the earth.

Analysis of the Seventh Trumpet (Rev. 11:14-19)

The third woe or seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:14-19) is detached from the first two trumpet woes by an extensive interlude (Rev. 10:1-11:13). Nevertheless, it continues the theme of judgment upon the unsealed (Rev. 9:4). The third trumpet woe describes the moment when Christ will receive His kingdom (Rev. 11:15-17) and begin to carry out the executive phase of the judgment (Rev. 11:18-19). These passages allude to the coronation of one like the Son of Man in Dan. 7:13-14, 22, 27 (cf. Dan. 2:44-45) and the Standing up of Michael as Liberator/Judge of His people (Dan. 12:1-3).⁸¹ Matt. 24:30-31 describes the coming of the Son of Man in similar terms (cf. Matt 13:41-43). The “great voices“ from heaven of Rev. 11:15 point forward to the “great voice“ of Rev. 16:17 that proclaims, “it is done“. The heavenly hymn of the 24 elders (Rev. 11:16-18) reminds us of the hymns from the throne scene of Rev. 4-5.⁸² The wrath (*orge*) of God against the wicked in Rev. 11:18 anticipates the indignation (*orge*) of God against the worshipers of the beast and against the Great City Babylon (Rev. 14:10; 16:19; 19:15; cf. Dan. 8:18; 11:36, 45; 12:1).⁸³ The wrath of God also points back to the day of wrath (*orges*) in the sixth seal (Rev. 6:17).⁸⁴ The time of the dead that “they should be judged (*krithenai*)” makes a verbal link to other key judgment scenes (Rev. 6:10; 16:5, 8; 18:20; 19:2; cf. Rev. 19:11). These include the fifth seal,⁸⁵ the seven last plagues, and the judgment of the great whore. The reward of the righteous “that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great” (Rev. 11:18) anticipates the blessing of the Third Angel mentioned in Rev. 14:13 (cf. Dan. 12:2, 12). Rev. 11:19 describes the eschatological opening of the most holy place and the revealing of the ark of the covenant (cf. Rev. 3:7-8). This verse uses the language of the Sinai theophany and the OT day of the Lord to describe this event (cf. Rev. 4:5; 8:5; 15:5-8; 16:18, 21). The opening of the most holy place is repeated again in several key judgment scenes (Rev. 14:15, 17-18:

⁸¹ White, *YRP*, 160. White, *EW*, 36. Beale, *Revelation*, 611, 615. La Rondelle, *End Time Prophecies*, 235. Hamilton, *With the Clouds*, 209. Greidanus, *Preaching Christ From Daniel*, 228. U. Smith, *Daniel and Revelation*, 302-303. Buchanan, *Revelation*, 300-301. Moore, *Trumpets of Revelation*, 91-93. Hayden, *Vision By the Tigris*, 209-210. Kistemaker, *Revelation*, 342-343. Blount, *Revelation*, 220. K. Matthews, *Revelation Vol. 1*, 583. McCready-Price, *The Greatest Prophet*, 143. Hieke, *Daniel 7 in Revelation*, 60.

⁸² Heil, *Revelation*, 154.

⁸³ Beale, *Revelation*, 616. La Rondelle, *End Time Prophecies*, 234-235. De Waal, *Seven Trumpets*, 73-74.

⁸⁴ Heil, *Revelation*, 155.

⁸⁵ Heil, *Fifth Seal as a Key to Revelation*, 235.

15:5-6; 19:11).⁸⁶ This includes the scene of the two harvests, the seven last plagues, and the Rider on the white horse of Rev. 19. The storm elements of Rev. 11:19 recall the throne scene (Rev. 4:5) and the judgment scene of the angel at the heavenly altar (Rev. 8:5).⁸⁷ The purpose of Rev. 11:19 is to inform the reader that the judgments of God are based upon the terms of the covenant law.⁸⁸ In the OT the law of the covenant was deposited in the ark of the covenant and it was kept in the most holy place of the temple (1 Kings 8:6, 9, 21; 2 Chron. 5:10; 6:11; Heb. 9:4). The opening of the temple and the appearance of the ark remind the reader that the loyal will be rewarded and the disloyal will be punished.⁸⁹ In the OT, the end time judgments of God are connected with changing or breaking the covenant law (Ps. 119:126; Is. 24:4-5; Dan. 7:11, 25-26).⁹⁰ In the book of Revelation, the remnant/saints are described as commandment keepers (Rev. 12:17; 14:12; cf. Rev. 22:14). The opening of the most holy place alludes to the antitypical Day of Atonement or the hour of His judgment (Dan. 8:14; Rev. 14:7).⁹¹ In short, the seventh trumpet describes the judgments that will take place at the Second Coming of Christ.

Revelation 11:19 and the Seven Last Plagues

At the end of the seventh trumpet the most holy place of the heavenly temple is opened (Rev. 11:19). A similar event (Rev. 15:5) occurs in the introduction to the seven last plagues (Rev. 15:1, 5-8). For this reason some expositors of the Apocalypse believe the bowl plagues are an amplification of the seventh trumpet.⁹² The opening of the most holy place of the heavenly temple in these two passages appears to serve as the linguistic markers for an *inclusio* that surrounds the central section of the book of Revelation (Rev. 12:1-14:20).⁹³ The first half of the book of Revelation emphasizes the trumpets as the punishment of the unsealed and the second half of the book of Revelation emphasizes the bowls as the punishment of the marked. The structural feature of telescoping the seven bowl plagues out of the seventh trumpet is not unique. We saw the same structural feature in the seals where the seven trumpets came out of the seventh seal (Rev. 8:1-6). See the section on the introduction to the trumpets for more details. As was mentioned before, the

⁸⁶ Valentine, *Temple Motif in Revelation*, 229.

⁸⁷ Heil, *Revelation*, 156.

⁸⁸ Gallusz, *Throne Motif in Revelation*, 258-259. See *SDA BC7* on v. 19, 806. Veloso, *Doctrine of the Sanctuary in Revelation*, 405-406. Ladd, *Revelation*, 207. Neall, *Character in the Apocalypse*, 207-208. Graves, *Seven Messages and Vassal Treaties*, 201-202. Valentine, *Temple Motif in Revelation*, 269.

⁸⁹ Gallusz, *Throne Motif in Revelation*, 259-261.

⁹⁰ White, *GC*, 657. White, *PK*, 537.

⁹¹ Paulsen, *Sanctuary and Judgment*, 292-293. Treiyer, *Dia de Expiacion*, 452. Hardinge, *Jesus in the Sanctuary*, 198. Gallusz, *Throne Motif in Revelation*, 254. U. Smith, *Daniel and Revelation*, 546-547. White, *GC*, 433-434. Davidson, *Sanctuary Typology*, 113-114, 124. Bacchiocchi, *Fall Festivals*, 196-197. J. Ford sees a connection between the trumpets and the OT Day of Atonement. See, *Hymns in the Apocalypse*, 222.

⁹² Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 482. La Rondelle, *Trumpets in Their Context*, 87-89.

⁹³ Ben-Daniel, *The Apocalypse in the Light of the Temple*, 219.

opening of the most holy place of the heavenly temple alludes to the antitypical Day of Atonement.⁹⁴

Conclusion

This brings us to the conclusion of our study. It appears the seven trumpets of Revelation are eschatological judgments of God that are real events but are described in symbolic language. According to the literary structure of the Apocalypse, the trumpets are parallel with the bowl plagues and thus they share much in common in their OT background, content, theme and purpose. The trumpets appear to be sequential with the bowls plagues, with the latter being described as the seven last plagues. We examined several background motifs to the seven trumpets from both the OT and the NT. Then we systematically analyzed the introduction to the seven trumpets and each trumpet individually. We found that these seven judgments are directed against the unsealed inhabitants of the earth. We also noted a detailed description of the characteristics of the unsealed in the sixth trumpet. We found that the characteristics of the unsealed and the characteristics of the marked that we find in the second half of Revelation are very similar. Indeed, we concluded that the two groups appear to be one. Furthermore, in our analysis of the seven trumpets we attempted to identify and analyze the intratextual connections that exist between the seven trumpets and the rest of the book of Revelation. It is the hope of the author that this paper will serve as a springboard for further study in this vital area of apocalyptic prophecy. Thank you for taking the time to read this paper.

Blessings and Maranatha!
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Forest Ranch, California

⁹⁴ Treiyer, *Dia de Expiacion*, 452-454. Liu, *Image of the Beast*, 169. Valentine, *Temple Motif in Revelation*, 233.

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