

# The Trumpeteers Get Ready

*Revelation: How It All Ends*

By William J. Sturm

sermonaudio.com

**Bible Text:** Revelation 8:1-6

**Preached on:** Sunday, March 17, 2013

**Berean Baptist Church**

517 Glensford Drive

Fayetteville, NC 28314

**Website:** [www.bereanbaptistchurch.org](http://www.bereanbaptistchurch.org)

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/bereanbaptistch](http://www.sermonaudio.com/bereanbaptistch)

Revelation 8. This will hopefully now make sense what we're going to read. Some reminders: first of all, from our study on the 144,000 found one chapter previously, we learn there's a great probability, let me say this, follow along, hopefully you're catching what I'm about to say, there is a great probability that seals 2-4 and seal 6 are in an around Jerusalem. You say, "Prove it." No. That is from a previous class. Go listen to it. We also learned in that lesson that the 144,000 are in some way related to Jerusalem. "Prove it." No. We're moving on to new material and so I would encourage you to go and study that and I want to also point out to you that Revelation has a few sets of seven. So far we've seen all these and now we're going to look at this one here today, the seven trumpets.

Let's review in pictorial form, I used a big word, and let's review the seven year period in the future known as the tribulation period. So we are on the seventh seal today. You've seen verse 1. Here is seals 1-5. They start sometime right after the beginning of the tribulation period. The 144,000 are started somewhere near the beginning of the tribulation period, that is, they are sealed somewhere near the beginning of the tribulation period. To reacquaint us with what we learned last week: there are saints arriving in heaven during the great tribulation. The sixth seal takes place after the tribulation. The last 3 ½ years is called "the great tribulation." Where do we get all this information? From previous lessons. So if there is something that is still a little bit muddy from what everything we just said, please send me an email and I'll direct you to the right lesson or hopefully the titles to the lessons are clear enough but maybe not.

Now, the good news is that we have lots of time. You say, "Well, no we don't because you already said someone could die today," and that's true but nothing I'm going to share today is going to, I don't think, be eternally significant if you should happen to leave this world today or if the end starts. Okay? You have time still to read your own Bible and to study these lessons. Good. Now that we've got that out of the way.

Let's talk something else but let's read through the passage first. "And when he had opened the seventh seal," so we have the seven sealed scroll. The deed. The deed to what? Earth, that's right and so Revelation chapters 4-19 is a study of what? Christ retaking the earth. Yes, that's great. Good for you. Man, lots of courageous people and it

makes any teacher feel like, “Man, I might actually be doing this right.” So this is good. So, this is a story about how Christ returns to earth and takes over the earth. We discussed that in a previous lesson as well.

Look at verse 1 again, “And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour,” but the question is: what is silent in heaven according to that verse? What has been going on? We found out in chapter 4 and in chapter 5 that there is lots of praise and lots of worship taking place. Imagine how long that's been going on. Isaiah 6 it was happening. Job 38:7 says that it was happening when God laid the foundations to the globe. So, it has been happening for at least, if we go just by the static interpretation of the genealogies in Genesis, at least 6,000 years, possibly more. 6,000 years at least, praise and worship has been taking place in heaven and here in chapter 8:1, there is nothing going on. Think about that. I don't know what to make of that. I don't know how in the world we could make anything of that but just imagine that what they have seen in heaven, on the earth, was so earth-shattering to use a worn out cliché, that all of a sudden everything in heaven is quiet.

And it was quiet for about half an hour. Now, that's interesting in itself because I don't know, did he have a Timex on his wrist? How did he know that it was a half hour? Well, we do know that in that time there were 12 hour increments, there were 12 one hour increments in daylight and so for him to say, “Well, probably half an hour,” means that it wasn't exactly an hour, it was less than an hour, about the space of half an hour. It even says it's an approximation. Now, what I want to know is: what is causing this silence? Maybe you do too. We've already decided that there has been worship, what is silence the worship? What caused this silence? Let's get into it.

Verse 2, “And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.” They were given seven trumpets. This word “trumpet” is the same Greek word that could be equated with the Hebrew “shofar.” So, this is a ram's horn probably. We have seven angels in heaven, each of them is assigned a shofar, a trumpet. That's interesting and it says that they stood before God and to them were given seven trumpets.

Quickly, I just want to point out that we're told that these seven angels are added to a particular list of people. So, let's identify so far in this book of Revelation – we have already identified in the book of Revelation some people who are a part of the crowd around the throne because remember, everything so far, I think, has taken part around the throne since chapter 4. So, what have we seen? Let's just say that the throne is here. What have we seen around the throne since chapter 4? 24 elders. So, we're going to say 24 elders. What else? 4 beasts. What else? Yes, we've seen a rainbow but let's talk about personalities. What else? The Lamb is in the midst of the throne, we're told so you have the Lamb in the midst of the throne and one sitting on the throne. Revelation 7 says and Daniel 7 paints the same picture: you have God on the throne and one known as the Son of man coming before him. So, we have two personalities that are present here.

Who else? (souls). Yes, what seal was that, brother? Which group are you talking about? Are you talking about the multitude which no man could number in Revelation 7 or are you talking about the souls under the altar in Revelation 6? (both) Okay, both. Alright, so we have the souls under the fifth seal, under the altar or near the altar. Remember, I'm not sure that they were all, "Get under there!" I'm not sure they were all under the altar but rather from John's perspective when he looked up at that huge altar looking at the temple in heaven with the throne of God in it like Isaiah saw in Isaiah 6, right, great parallel, that it looked like these people were under the altar.

So, we have the souls under the altar then what else? The multitude which no man can number that is arriving in heaven as they died during the last 3 ½ years of this tribulation period. Unnumbered multitude. Who else? The Holy Spirit, the seven-fold Holy Spirit of God so the Trinity is there, the 4 beasts are around there, the 24 elders are around there, the souls under the altar are there, the multitude which no man can number of every kindred, tribe, people and nation is there. What else? Sure, John is there. You know I'm not sure, do we know where in the room he is sitting? Have we seen any hints. (It says he's talking to one....) Yeah, it does, doesn't it and he's done it twice now. In chapter 5 and in chapter 7, he's talked to one of the 24 elders so we might say in here that John is hanging out somewhere in here which must be overwhelming.

So, 10,000 x 10,000 is 100 million. I didn't just think that up, I actually had to figure that out. I'm not that quick. "Give us the first 17,000 digits of pi." No, go find that lesson too. 100 million angels and thousands of thousands. So, maybe as many as 200-300 million angels so we're going to put + there. Angels around the throne who are worshipping God in 5:12, yes?

I think that might be everyone and now we have an additional group: seven angels with seven trumpets that are before the throne of God. Yes? Seven angels with trumpets before the throne of God. We're getting a more complete picture of what would happen if you died right now, what would you see? Maybe this. Yes?

(...) What verse are you looking at? Alright, look at 6:8, "I looked and beheld a pale horse." Now, let's first of all notice that he does not see that horse, that fourth horse, until the seal is opened so it looks like it's somewhere in the book he is seeing this horse. Not necessarily in real time right there literally in the throne room. That was fun.

Now, let's look at verse 2, "And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar." So, we have this altar somewhere, I don't know, we have the souls under the altar so, look, here we go, just humor me. I don't know where the altar is. I don't know if it's the same altar because how many altars were in the Old Testament temple? Two. One in and one out, right? Here in the temple we have this brazen altar, then you have this thing known as a laver. There are six pieces of furniture, folks. This is not the temple. This is the tabernacle. I couldn't find a picture of the temple with all six pieces. We have the altar where the sacrifices were offered, the laver where the priests would wash their hands. Inside we have the menorah, we have the table of showbread, we have the altar of incense

and inside there we have, what? Come on, what's in the Holiest of Holies? The Ark of the Covenant, right.

So, we have one of these altars because remember, this is a copy of what Moses saw in the mountain. Do you remember? It says there in Exodus and in Hebrews 9 that Moses made the tabernacle based on the pattern that he saw when he looked into heaven. Isaiah looked into heaven and saw a temple. John is now in heaven, sees a temple. So, true or false: the New Jerusalem and heaven are the same? False. How do we know? Two reasons. How do we know? We see the New Jerusalem coming out of heaven, number 1. Number two, we looked at it last week. There is no temple in the New Jerusalem. Well done. Very good. Super.

Look here what we have around the altar in verse 3. Another angel. So we have an eighth angel here around the altar. Now, of course, I understand that it is possible, I can't prove that these eight angels are not already a part of this group but they are certainly singled out, aren't they?

Verse 3, "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer." Any other versions in here? What do you have? What's a censer? A fire box. Some sort of holy way to transport coals from the altar to the altar of incense. Do you all remember who got in trouble for offering strange fire with censers in the Old Testament? Nadab and Abihu. So, Aaron had four sons: Ithamar, Eleazar, Nadab and Abihu and two of them were killed in the book of Leviticus for offering strange fire. We don't know where they got the fire, we don't know if they brought it from a different altar, but apparently they did not do what they were supposed to do and God killed them right in the holy place. So, this is pretty serious stuff.

Look at verse 3, "Having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." So, we have this golden altar, this angel has a censer of fire, maybe this is the altar of incense. I'm guessing that the throne is probably in the Holiest of Holies in heaven and that God himself is sitting on this mercy seat. Instead of the glory abiding on a mercy seat in heaven, it's God himself abiding on the mercy seat. I don't know. I can't wait to figure it out. Are you all with me? If you believed on Christ, you'll know too. If you haven't, you don't have any chance.

Eighth angel and it says that he's offering incense which are the prayers of the saints. We've seen this before. Where have we seen it? (Exodus.) We have, that's true but we're in Revelation, sister. Where in Revelation have we seen this before? We're only in chapter 8, folks, which means that it should be somewhere before that. Verse 8 of chapter 5, "And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and 24 elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense." So, the 24 elders are each holding golden bowls full of incense and what is the incense? The prayers of the saints. Yes.

So, now we have this eighth angel. He has what the 24 elders have which is something to carry the prayers of the saints. Very cool. So, this is the second time we've seen that the prayers of the saints are actually coming up as incense before the Lord. The prayers of all saints. Do you see that in 8:3?

(...with the prayers of all saints which implies that there are two separate things...incense and prayers.) One thing that we know from both situations is that the prayers are related to incense, don't we? There is no question about that and that with the prayers of the saints comes a sweet aroma to the Lord. Furthermore, I might suggest that these particular prayers are those prayers that were offered under the fifth seal.

Look there with me in chapter 6:9, "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." So get this now: are you all with me? Chapter 6:9-11 you have the souls that are martyred under the altar, right? And they're praying for what? Vengeance. And what was told to them? Wait until, what? Until the number is complete. What happens in chapter 7:12-17, what's happening? The numbers are becoming complete, aren't they? You have saints coming out of great tribulation. What happens in the seven trumpets is judgment. I don't know the order, necessarily, not yet but we're getting there and I just think that it would fall into the contextual flow well if we saw that these seven trumpets are an answer to prayer. Why? For one thing, we're talking about prayers before we get to the seven trumpets. Everyone see that?

Look at verse 3 again: "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth." Look what he sees, "and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake." Look at verse 6, "And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound." Then the world reels and rocks like a drunkard. Do you see that?

So, somewhere between the number being fulfilled or being filled in chapter 7 in answer to their cry for justice in chapter 6. Are you all with me? Somewhere in there, we have prayers being brought up before the trumpets are blown. So, it's the prayers of saints. We have two chapters previous, saints praying for justice. They are told justice will come after your brothers join you. Chapter 7, the brothers are joining them, brothers and sisters are joining them. Not to leave the ladies out there. Chapter 8, we have prayers mentioned and before we have the prayers mentioned, what do we have happening in heaven? Silence. Apparently, what was about to happen was so grievous that it made heaven shut up and apparently, it was in answer to the prayers of the martyrs in the fifth seal.

We, first of all, have to determine where does this rapture happen that we see in Matthew 24 that happens when? It happens after the tribulation of those days. After great tribulation is when we see the sixth seal. So, if we're told that we have a rapture before this point, I'm all for it. Who would be upset about that? I'm good with that. Everyone wants that. I would love to have that but if I'm not given a promise of a rapture and if these trumpets occur somewhere in here, then I have to at least leave the possibility open that God has some believers left on the earth.

If that scares you, let me give you another parallel from the book of Exodus. While the plagues were happening, while God was pouring his wrath down on Pharaoh and his people, where were the Israelites? In Egypt. I have had this, now let's see these four trumpets. Let's compare the sixth seal real quick. Look at chapter 6. Let's compare the sixth seal and the fourth trumpet and I'm going to give you a good guess. Remember, prophecy does not necessarily tell you what will happen. Often it tells you what is happening. Remember, it worked that way at the first coming of Christ and it may happen that way with events surrounding the second coming of Christ. So, a lot of this is translucent, it's not transparent.

So, 6:12, "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal," that happens right over here. Sixth seal, right over here on the dry wall. "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth." Look here: the sun is not shining, the moon looks like blood, the stars are falling from the heavens, it happens after the great tribulation. Now look at the fourth trumpet. We're looking now at chapter 8 and verse 12. We're going to get into the first trumpet next week, folks. The first trumpet next week. "And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars," so I have a good guess here. I think it's a good guess and my guess is that since there is still light that can be reduced by a third here in the fourth trumpet, then at least the first four trumpets occur before the sixth seal. Why? Because it's totally extinguished in the sixth seal. So, that's my best guess until now. If it seems difficult, just try to remember that we have heard a lot this morning that is very, very clear. Even if all the details aren't crystal. I'm sorry to disappoint you if you came in here looking for just amazing, great things but we have learned a few things here that can fix us for a week.

(I just wanted...Exodus talking about when the...also in Goshen the Israelites, they didn't always have...) I'm glad you're pointing that out. I wanted to see if anyone was listening and if anyone would ask the question, "Well, did they experience the plagues?" The answer is: no, they didn't. There are at least four plagues and I'm glad you're pointing it out, there are at least four plagues, at least, where it says, "But in Goshen where the Israelites lived, they did not have fill in the blank." Like, there was light in their dwelling places for example. The ninth plague when there was darkness all over the land of Egypt, not in Goshen where the Israelites were. It was light. None of their cattle were harmed. The only one that I can find of the ten plagues where the Israelites actually had

to do something was the Passover or the tenth plague, the taking of the firstborn. Wild, huh?

Anything else? The great multitude of chapter 7. (...robes...) Blanche is asking in chapter 7:14 if these are those that are left behind? Sister, I don't find anywhere in Scripture in the book of Revelation anyways and that's what this class is about, I don't find anywhere where I can say, "Blanche, here's where the church left." That's my answer there. I'm not sure that they're left behind anymore than you and I are right now. (So who are these?) These are people that were alive and were martyred during this last half of the tribulation period and were Christians. (If they were martyred, why would...) Exactly, that's why I'm not saying they ever should have left. Sister, you've got it and those are the questions that people need to be asking, "Hang on, wait a minute. How in the world could there be so many if they were raptured?" (Unless they were folks that were converted after the rapture.) Yeah, but that begs the question: where is the rapture? So, we have to keep asking and answering these hard questions and getting used to the fact that Revelation is not as dogmatic as the study Bible you might have in your lap.

Let's pray.

*Master, thanks for the opportunity to teach the word of God and learn from it. Thank you for each of these fellow students of the word of God, especially those that asked questions and helped us understand things through further questions and clarification, good comments. Thank you, Lord, for each one in here that we would be good students of the word, that we would love finding more things out about you in the Scripture, understanding that we don't understand everything but we understand enough. Help us to pray for more understanding but help us to remember that we understand quite a bit and we will give an account for it at the day of judgment. So, help us to be chasers of the Lord and lovers of the word of God. In Jesus' name. Amen.*