

not at its heart and the time will be limited. Three and a half years is half a seven.

The church is here to witness to Jesus, the original faithful witness (1:5, 2:13, 3:14.) The church is probably described as two witnesses because two witnesses were needed to confirm evidence (Deuteronomy 17:6) The olive trees and lampstands reference Zechariah 4, where Zechariah and Joshua work together to rebuild the Jerusalem temple. The church's weapon is its word, symbolised as fire. They will in the end be vindicated, after another short time in which they seem to be defeated.

### Seventh trumpet

The seventh trumpet is victory, though once again we get expectation rather than a full account. We are still waiting for the third woe., but verse 15 rings in our ears. The prayer for the kingdom to come is being answered. God is now the one who is and was; there is no longer a need for an 'is to come.'

The words for 'rage' and 'wrath' in verse 18 are forms of the same Greek word. The rage of the nations is destructive; God's rage brings this to an end, and God's servants will be rewarded. There is hope for our earth.

Verse 19 takes us back to 4:5 and especially 8:5. The kingdom comes through Jesus, in answer to the prayers of his people. It will be spectacular. It is not yet time to describe the victory in detail; there is more to say about things beforehand.

*The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

## Revelation 8 to 11: the trumpets

May 14th 2023



### Prayer

After the excitement and anticipation, the breaking of the seventh seal may seem disappointing. We'd been led to expect the victory of the Lamb; instead we get silence in heaven for half an hour.

Let's pause, feel the silence, and wait with bated breath for Jesus, the Lamb, to make his move. We'll have to accept that, like the martyrs, we have to be patient. Don't panic; Revelation 11:15 is coming.

It's time for another seven, this time angels blowing trumpets. Think of a warning blast and you'll get the idea.

The opening of the seals points us to the evil done by human beings, the sufferings of God's people and to the Lamb's eventual victory. The trumpets give us a different point of view: in everything, God is answering prayer. The prayer "your kingdom come," is being answered., as we will see in 11:15. Their impact is spectacular (8:5, 11:19.)

The trumpets sound the warning. Evil, left unchecked, will destroy everything. At the end of chapter 9 there is no sign of repentance, but there is still one trumpet to go.

## Prophecy (chapters 8 and 9)

John told us in chapter one that this book is a prophecy, Please don't think of prophecy as a set of predictions that will definitely be fulfilled. Think of it as a statement of where things are heading, coupled with a call to change so that things might be different. Think of the book of Jonah, if you know that story.

Here we have a series of pictures, the first four described quickly. The effect is overwhelming. It may be more important to feel than to understand.

Trumpets were used to call people, for battle, or to sound a warning. The first six trumpets echo the plagues which led to the Exodus. You may think of other biblical echoes.

The effects of the first four trumpets, and the sixth, are described as 'thirds.' The disasters are massive but not total. We hear an eagle crying out 'Woe! Woe! Woe!' because of the last three trumpets. How bad can it get?

Trumpets five and six seem to relate to warfare. The locust army brings terror and dread, coming from the Abyss, which symbolises the source of evil. (It's been guessed that 200 million at the time was the human population of the earth.) There is an echo of Joel 1 and 2, when Israel was threatened with invasion. The account of the sixth trumpet mentions the Euphrates, which points to the Roman Empire's fear of the Parthian (Turkish) Empire. It was their worst political and military nightmare. See if you can feel the impact of the last two verses of chapter 9. For all the warnings there is no repentance.

But do note 9:9: through everything the people of God will be protected. Despite everything the martyrs will not lose.

## The little scroll (chapter 10)

We now meet another mighty angel (remember 5:2.) The angel isn't Jesus but he represents him. His voice is like a roaring lion. And we now see another scroll, this time a little one.

John tells us about the seven thunders. We may wonder if Revelation will give us a never ending list of sevens that comes to no conclusion, but there is no need to worry. John is told not to tell us what the seven thunders said.

The angel represents the creator, reminding us that God made everything and he has not lost control. John is told to eat the scroll. It was sweet in the mouth but bitter in the stomach; John has to feel every aspect of the things he sees. Perhaps we do too.

Chapter ten reminds us that the message is about every nation (2:26, 5:9, 7:9) and it is about kings (1:5,6,9, 5:10, 6:15) The prayers for the kingdom to come are being answered. The word translated as 'announced' in verse 7 is the word also translated as 'good news' or 'gospel,' which will be fulfilled on the seventh trumpet.

## The two witnesses (chapter 11)

Before the seventh trumpet is blown, it is time to think about the church. First of all the church is the temple, the dwelling place of God (3:12, 7:15.) The church will be attacked but