

Article of the Month  
September, 2019

***The Seven  
Churches, Seals, and Trumpets  
of Revelation***  
(Part 4)

This is the fourth and final article on this subject. Because the information builds as the articles progress, it is helpful to review the previous articles before undertaking the next article in the series.

TRUMPETS  
(Revelation 8:2 - 11:19)

We have seen that the Seven Churches show what God's special message is in feeding each stage of Church history. We have seen the prevailing problems in each period which the true saints must overcome in order to secure their place in the Body of Christ.

The Seven Seals have covered the same periods of time, but with the objective of providing a synopsis of what happened during the period — primarily in regard to spiritual matters. They form a kind of “What just happened?” review.

The Seven Trumpets take one more perspective in looking at these same seven stages in Church history. The same “angels” which served as messengers to the seven Churches are the ones who blow the Seven Trumpets successively. But the Trumpets show how LOUD and WIDESPREAD the messages were — so much so that the surrounding world, while it doesn't BELIEVE the messages, cannot help but hear and be affected by them. By this we can readily see that these “angels” have had to be men of world renown (though not of world acceptance). The very nature of trumpet blasts tells us that the messages from these “angels” didn't go unnoticed — either by the Church or the world.

The focus of these Trumpet messages is to show us what the effects were on the world. Once we understand the messages, we will be able to look back at history and see that the things symbolized did, indeed, happen.

A note for the curious: It will be helpful to note that those seven parts of society which are affected by the Seven Trumpets (earth, sea, springs, etc.) are, in the same order, the parts of society on which the Seven Plagues (Revelation 16) are poured. While we will not go into the Seven Plagues, this sequential similarity tells us that because the world didn't listen to the Trumpet messages, the Lord, during the Harvest of the age, FORCES

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the same lessons on society by using historical events (“Bowls” containing “Plagues”) which make it impossible for the world to any longer ignore the lessons. These plagues have been troubling mankind since the First World War.

**THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS**  
(Revelation 8:2 - 8:13)

It has already been mentioned that the Churches, Seals, and Trumpets are divided into four periods of spiritual decline and three periods of spiritual progress. The Trumpets, more than the other parts of the series, make this extremely clear. Once the first four have been described, Revelation 8:13 makes the delineation by saying, “Woe, woe, woe, to those who dwell on the earth (the comfortable in society), because of the trumpets of the three angels (Wycliffe, Luther, Russell) who are about to sound (after the first four).”

This little statement helps us to understand something about the Trumpets in general. The statement makes it clear that the Trumpets are not aimed primarily at the saints — not blown so much for the Church’s benefit as for the effect on the world. We would not suggest that the saints cannot learn and profit from these Trumpet messages — they DO. We are simply pointing out that these ARE Trumpets BECAUSE they are loud and MEANT to be heard BEYOND the believers. Thus 8:13 stresses that these “woes” are **“to those who dwell on the earth”** — those who do not dwell “in the heavenlies” — who do not lead spiritual lives. The proclamation Trumpets of Wycliffe, Luther, and Russell did, indeed, have marvelous effects on the spirit-begotten saints. But historians are more likely to tell us of the upheavals in society and politics caused by their loud and revolutionary teachings.

TRUMPET #1  
(Revelation 8:7)

The Apostle Paul blows this Trumpet. The early-Christian message (or rather the early-Christian revolution!) had immediate and dramatic results on society (“earth”) — most particularly Jewish society, but also on the Roman Empire.

It is interesting to note that the three languages on the sign over Jesus’ head on the cross were Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. These were the three societies that were affected by this Trumpet. The Hebrew language represents the Jewish society. The Latin represents Pagan Rome. The Greek represents the language of the New Testament — thus representing the new and emerging Christian society. This helps us to decipher the strange meanings implied in some of the “one-third” references we will see. The hard truths (hail) and the righteous destroying-judgements from these truths (fire), took the life (blood) out of much of the error which had, up to that time, dominated. And these (hail, fire, and blood) were “thrown down to the earth.” In other words, the revolutionary concepts of Christianity challenged every social concept in any society it touched. But it seemed to touch one of these three societies the most.

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Society is represented by the “earth.” One-third (the Jewish third, but not the Pagan Roman , nor the new Christian society) was “burned up.” National Judaism was functionally gone! Israel was no longer a nation, and the Jewish people were dispersed all over the earth (the “Diaspora”) with their temple (or religious) arrangements ceased.

“Trees” represent stalwarts of society. The Jewish religious authority constituted the “trees” of that third of society. The Jewish authorities (Scribes Priests and Pharisees) had NO ANSWERS to what was happening. Their stability, their authority, their being stalwarts, was all “burned up” – vanished along with the Jewish polity.

“Grass,” according to Isaiah, represents humanity. (“All flesh is as the grass.”) “Green grass” represents flesh that has “life” – some sort of justification. The reference here (yet referring to Israel) seems to mean that justification under the Jewish Law vanished when Jesus “nailed the Law to the cross.”

This Trumpet so accurately depicts the accuracy of the history of the secular world of the Ephesus period. The Jewish third of society was no longer a factor. The Pagan Roman influence and the emerging force of Christianity were the two remaining “players on the block” for the time being.

### TRUMPET #2 (Revelation 8:8, 9)

This short little message about the 2nd Trumpet is quite difficult to interpret. However, once we compare it to the 2nd Church, 2nd Seal, and even to the 2nd Plague of Revelation 16, its symbolisms clarify significantly.

The First Trumpet dealt with “the earth.” The Second Trumpet deals with the “sea” – restless (relatively-uncommitted and un-rooted) humanity – not stable nor secure in their lives like those vested in the solid investments of power, possession, and privilege in the “earth.” It is important to know that the spirit-begotten people of the Gospel Age ALWAYS are represented in Revelation as coming from the “sea” class of humanity – NEVER from the “earth.” (This would NOT suggest that persons who were IN the earth, but not ROOTED in it, could not be among the “called.”) The “sea” represents those who do not have deep roots in supporting the society (the “earth”) in which they live. They are, therefore, the ones who are more likely responsive to the Lord’s call to them.

Comparing elements from the Second Church, Seal, Trumpet, and even Plague, we can see the agreements of symbols:

RED & BLOOD

In the 2nd Seal, the horse turns red.  
In the 2nd Plague, the sea becomes blood (red).  
In the 2nd Trumpet, the sea becomes blood (red).

KILL & DEATH

In the 2nd Church, the promise is against death.  
In the 2nd Seal, they kill each other.  
In the 2nd Plague, the sea becomes blood like a dead man.  
In the 2nd Trumpet, those in the sea with life, died.

When we see the similarities of these testimonies, and when we understand the differences between “sea” and “earth” classes, it becomes easier to see the focus of this 2nd Trumpet. The doctrinal corruptions which were beginning in the days of the “angel” to this Church (the Apostle John) — (see I John 2:18), — resulted in terrible unfaithfulness of some professed Christians toward their brethren. They literally abandoned their brethren to the tortures of the Roman Empire. (They “kill” each other.) And they corrupt doctrine. (The horse turns “red.”)

With these things in mind, we can see that, as the 1st Trumpet focused on the “earth,” the 2nd Trumpet focuses on things happening among the “sea” class — not all of whom are Christians, but from whom Christians COME.

The symbolisms of this Trumpet , thus, are these:

(1) Pagan Rome is gradually exterminated by the fact that the sea class of humanity — the ones who had constituted pagan beliefs and supported them — began to be turned toward Christianity (in its true or its apostate identity).

(2) The sea was at this time made up of three parts: pagans, true Christians, and apostate Christians.

- The commerce third (“ships”) of the sea (pagan Rome) was destroyed because there was no longer a demand for pagan items or ideas.
- The apostate-church third of the sea became responsible for the deaths of their fellow-Christians. They thus lost their own spiritual lives. They had “had life.” But they “died” by forfeiture because of unfaithfulness.

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- The true-Church third of the sea “became blood.” They lost their fleshly lives to the tortures. More importantly, they also lost (in the sight of the Apostasy) their credibility. Those who were excommunicating their brethren were telling others, “Don’t listen to those people! Their teachings are bloody! They are heretics!”

THE THIRD TRUMPET  
(Revelation 8:10, 11)

At the very beginning of Pergamos, Christianity has become a state religion — demonstrating how many of the pagan hordes had adopted this new Christianity. It was expedient for the Emperor to acknowledge this new power in his realm.

Arius defends what is left of the doctrine of the true identity of Jesus. This defense by him in front of the Emperor demonstrates that Smyrna had so corrupted doctrine that its “red horse” reputation is hardly exaggerated! Even though the development of the apostate elements of Christianity during Smyrna is obscured by the severe persecutions of the period, Arius’ “sudden” need for the defense of truth shows us what was really going on behind the scenes during the 2nd Trumpet era. In the second-Church period, doctrine had declined from the purity of Apostolic times to the need for the defense of doctrine once Christianity emerged from the persecutions at the opening of Pergamos.

This is the period of the “black horse” in the 3rd Seal. Doctrine now, because of the elevating of the authority of the apostate church, reflects no light.

Arius is the “great star” (the light-bearer) and blower of the 3rd Trumpet. He “burned brightly” — as opposed to the black, no-light horse! Arianism (despite the Emperor’s directions to the contrary) persisted with much power and influence in many parts of the empire. It never did die out; it has since simply become overwhelmed in the doctrinal darkness perpetuated by the trinitarian Roman church and its eventual “daughters.” (Revelation 17:5)

The symbolisms of this Trumpet tell us:

- The “heaven” from which Arius “falls” is the “heaven” (religious world) of the apostate Roman church.
- The “rivers and...the springs of water” represent the sources of water (truth) and the people who support those truths. The “springs” are the emanating sources of those flowing rivers. The three sources which claim to dispense water were:

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- (1) the newly-empowered apostates,
  - (2) Arius and his followers, and
  - (3) the re-emerging old source (Judaism & the Old Testament) because the influences of the Jews (in the Diaspora) was showing up in European centers.
- Arius is called “Wormwood” (bitter) because, in the sight of the apostasy, the truths from Arius were bitter (or undrinkable) BECAUSE the Emperor and bishops had so pronounced them. It is upon the TRUE “third” of the waters that Arius’ teachings fell. The TRUE Church drank them!
  - “Men” (verse 11) represent Christians. Many lost their spiritual lives because they were forbidden to drink, or were afraid of drinking the waters which emanated from Arius, thinking they were bitter. They were not willing to suffer by accepting the message of the Pergamos angel.

### THE FOURTH TRUMPET (Revelation 8:12)

The Fourth Trumpet is blown by Peter Waldo at the opening of the Thyatira period of Church history — “The Dark Ages” — during which, for all practical purposes, Papacy ruled the religious world with an iron fist.

The fraction of “a third” once again becomes important in interpretation. We must explain each of the symbols which have “a third” of them affected.

SUN is a reference to the Gospel light via the New Testament.

MOON is a reference to the Jewish types and shadows and the prophets of the Old Testament — Judaism’s source of light.

STARS represent the Apostles and their teachings — perhaps here with special emphasis on their teachings regarding church organization.

The three entities claiming to use the whole Bible (O.T. & N.T.) were the Western Church of Rome, the Eastern Church of Rome (“Eastern Orthodox”) since 1054, and Waldo with his followers. It is Waldo’s “third” which is smitten. The apostates strike hard against Waldensian teachings and his vernacular translation of Scripture. The smiting is done in order to make Waldo’s truths to APPEAR to be darkness. “DAY” represents truths about the Kingdom. The apostasy was claiming that Catholicism was THEN reigning — no need to await a future kingdom (or “day”)! “NIGHT” represents the truths about the current nighttime of sin. Because Rome CLAIMED to be the

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Kingdom, she needed to suppress truths showing that it was still night and that the day was future. Rome did not want the Waldo “third” to shine, but to be obscured.

**THE LAST THREE TRUMPETS**

(Revelation 9:1 - 11:19)

As with the Churches and Seals, there is a noticeable shift in emphasis once the first four Trumpets have been discussed. Because history changes in favor toward the spiritual interests of the True Church at this point, the descriptions become longer — both as an encouragement for the true saints, and also because so much begins to happen.

Revelation 8:13, which appears at the end of the description of the Fourth Trumpet, assures us that the next three trumpeters will each bring some sort of “woe” to the “Christians” (“tares”) who “dwell on the earth” — who have fleshly interests dominating their lives rather than spiritual interests.

**THE FIFTH TRUMPET**

(Revelation 9:1-12)

The trumpeter himself becomes very prominent in the description of this era (Sardis). It is John Wycliffe. Other than Arius, he is among the most hated by Rome of all the men who “dare” to countermand what Rome approves. His message is so strong, so effective, so welcome, that it is promoted far beyond his England base of operations. All the way east into Bohemia his teachings are received with welcome arms.

In 9:1 we see that this “star” in the Lord’s right hand falls from the approved Papal heavens. “Earth” receives him! The English population and monarchy (all of English “society”) were enthralled with Wycliffe’s teachings. Even though the King joined the bandwagon, it was perhaps with more of a political and pecuniary eye than a religious one! The King wanted SO MUCH to escape the authority and the monetary demands of the Pope.

In verse 1, we also see that Wycliffe gets the “key of the bottomless pit.” The “bottomless pit” throughout Revelation represents a condition of powerlessness or suppression. What had been “powerless,” of course, was the Bible! Wycliffe let it out of the pit! Among other things, he translated all of it into English so that the people of the realm could read it for themselves, exposing the long-held errors. Then he also explained its meanings in such forceful ways as to show the depths of error being preached by Papacy’s priests. The people loved it — and loved him.

The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th verses show us the results. “Smoke” represents confusion. Confusion (particularly among the Romanists) came out of the doctrinal fires — judgements as to what was or what was not true. The smoke was “like” that from a great

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furnace. The purpose of this furnace was REFINING. Papal errors were being measured against Biblical truths and were being found to be dross.

This first “woe” (from 8:13) is actually a plague against the Papacy. Compare Exodus 10:23 where the Egyptians (= Papacy) were in darkness while the Israelites (= the true saints) were in light. The “sun” (the Gospel) and the “air” (matters of the spirit) were darkened for the Papal adherents.

The locusts (see Exodus 10:12-15) are creatures which eat leaves. Leaves in prophecy represent professions. The erroneous professions were falling when faced with Scripture. But these locusts were RESTRICTED. They could only “devour” (prey on) men who don’t have the “seal” (the Holy Spirit). These locusts came out of the smoke. They are Wycliffe’s followers. They have the power of scorpions (STINGING — but not killing).

These insects are instructed not to hurt the grass. Sardis saints were told to aim their sting at apostates. The grass, on the other hand, represented the common people of England — people whose faith was real, even though limited. Trees were the stalwarts of faith. The warning was clear: Don’t aim truths at each other. Aim them only at apostates — imposters, part of the “man of sin.”

Verse 5 tells us the length of Sardis. It lasted 150 years — the period from Wycliffe’s excommunication (1371) until Luther’s excommunication in 1521. During this time it was not possible to effectively squash (“kill”) Romanism. But it WAS possible to torment (“sting”) it with Biblical truths. (I Kings 12:14 likens the sting of the scorpion to that of a whip!) Catholicism FELT the sting, and it reacted violently against the Wycliffe “heresies.”

Verse 6 shows that Wycliffe’s ministry could not result in a full-fledged movement which would free those who were captive in the Roman church. Men sought to “die” — to die as Catholics by becoming Protestants. But they couldn’t yet find the mechanism that would let them do so.

Verses 7-11 tell us the characteristics or qualities of Wycliffe’s followers. They are, indeed, admirable. Unfortunately, history informs us that Roman persecutions dissuaded their efforts, and, as we saw in the 5th Church, the Lord found their works “incomplete.”

For a while at least, these disciples were out for a fight! They were horses (doctrines) prepared for battle. Their heads (ideas) had Divine approval. And they had the “faces of men” — a description right out of Revelation 4:7. This description represents that they battled in LOVE — God’s third attribute. Hair represents spiritual strength (as with Samson). Their hair was like women’s hair — as opposed to the “MAN of Sin” who had no spiritual strength. (The disciples were the prospective “virgin bride of Christ.”) But there was NO feminine gentleness in their presentations! They had “bite” — teeth: rending spiritual criticisms backed by the Lion of the Tribe of Judah!

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“Iron” is strength (Daniel 2:40). Breastplates are DEFENSIVE. These “breastplates” represent their RIGHTEOUSNESS (Ephesians 6:14). They also have “wings” — the TWO wings (Old and New Testaments) of Scripture. What is most notable about these “wings” during Sardis is that they had “sound.” The sound was doctrine (horses) finally being heard and doing battle with error.

Tails represent the last part of something. While Wycliffe’s disciples gave in when persecutions arrived in England, peripheral movements (“tails”) sprang up in Europe as far as Bohemia. These “tails” carried on the message to the end of the 150 years — until Luther came along and successfully went from “stinging” to “killing.” (These “tails” are the people mentioned in 3:4.)

The 11th verse is a great tribute to Wycliffe. The “angel” who began the trumpeting is credited with being “king” over Sardis — the one who was enthroned as the powerful “spiritual ruler” of the era. This verse gives him a nickname — and it does so in TWO languages (Hebrew & Greek). This is likely in order to show that his tools were his translation of both Old and New Testaments — a phenomenal undertaking for the time, and very much a witness of his scholarly talents used for the Lord. “Abaddon” and “Apollyon” both mean DESTROYER. He, more than nearly anyone else in prior history, opened the pit and let out the tool which would be most effective in destroying Papacy’s lies.

### THE SIXTH TRUMPET (Revelation 9:13 - 11:14)

In 9:12 we read that one “woe” is now past, and two more woes are coming. Perhaps no “woe” is so great in its harm to the Roman church and the political alliances it had forged as is “woe” number two (which is Trumpet number six).

What an incredibly complex time! What a compendium of historical and spiritual change that it should take two entire chapters just to give us a brief summary! Such is what happened when Martin Luther blew the Sixth Trumpet. Giving all the detailed meanings in these chapters is too great a task for this relatively short Article of the Month. We will only give a generalized overview. Here are a few of the highlights:

(1) The Euphrates (9:4) is the river which supported the literal city of Babylon. Here, in prophecy, it represents the people (waters) which had supported antitypical Babylon — the Roman church-state system. Rome had had such complete domination of all human activities, that when the Reformation came, those “four angels” (politics, religion, economics, and society) were finally “released” from the “captivity” of Roman church dictates. They were now able to function freely among the people without having Rome tell them how they should function.

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These four “angels” were, in God’s plan, “prepared” (9:15) for a certain specific time. That time prophetically was the French Revolution which is heavily documented in Scripture. It is “THE **HOUR**” mentioned in 11:13. It is the 1260th “**DAY**” shown in 11:3 and 12:14, 15. It is the 42nd “**MONTH**” shown in 11:2. And it is the 3-1/2th (*pardon!*) “**YEAR**” of 11:6 and of Daniel 12:7 and Revelation 10:6. But even though they were being “prepared” for that date (1799 — the Revolution’s close), Luther’s message **RELEASED** them in the 1500’s from their bondage to Rome to help them “prepare” for what was coming.

The Christian world (“mankind”) was now being divided into three parts — the civil power, the Roman church, and the new Protestantism. Where did the new Protestantism come from? It came from people who were “killed” as Catholics and became “alive” as Protestants. (Compare Revelation 13:3.)

This vast new number of Protestant Christians formed a vast new force (“the number of the armies”). When the Seventh Trumpet begins (1874), the total number of Protestants alive, plus those who had lived since Luther, is (as far as can be calculated) just about 200,000,000 (9:16).

Verses 17-19 describe (in symbols) the spiritual natures and powers which this new Protestant Christianity exercised. Verses 20 and 21 refer to the non-converted Roman Catholic supporters that were not “killed” by Protestantism.

(2) The entire 10th chapter of Revelation is God’s own interpretation of Daniel 12. To summarize the 10th chapter in a nutshell:

The “little book” is the Book of Daniel — which God had promised to unseal “in the Time of the End” — a reference to 1799 as the French Revolution ends. John (representing the true saints) hears (verse 14) all of the controversies (“Seven Thunders”) which arose as the freedoms of all sorts coming out of the Revolution began the world’s upheavals which have continued into our day. John (representing the true saints) is naturally curious about everything. But he is instructed **NOT** to try to investigate the earth’s woes and controversies. The true Church needs to be concentrating on spiritual things — not on the politics and social ills in which it lives.

Revelation 10:6 points to the fact that the 1260 years, (the “Time, Times, and Half a Time”) of Daniel 12, have ended at 1799. There will no longer be a time for waiting for Daniel to begin being unsealed. **NEVERTHELESS**, it points out (10:7) that Daniel will be unsealed **SLOWLY** beginning in 1799 — and will not be totally made clear until Laodicea (The Seventh Trumpet).

The contents of verses 10:8-11 deal with what is generally known as “The Miller Movement” or “The Second Advent Movement” of the mid-1800’s. Miller (and others) and followers predicted Christ’s second advent in the 1840’s. Their predictions were wrong both in chronology and in manner. The hungry saints of the period (as they searched diligently in the prophecies of Daniel) gained a “stomach ache” (spiritually)

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from the disappointments of their erroneous expectations. They are told that it will not be until the Seventh Church that they will be able to get a more secure message to present. (This Second-Advent Movement is foretold by Jesus in his parable of the Wise & Foolish Virgins in Matthew 25.)

(3) Chapter 11 of Revelation is about the fate of the Bible itself as related to the time of the French Revolution. Subsequent to the Revolution, the Bible was spread rapidly over the entire world and translated into numerous languages. It became “a measuring rod” of information about Biblical prophetic time and about Christian doctrine and behavior (11:1). The saints are instructed to use it to RE-ASSESS Christianity (“The Temple of God”) and the standards of true sacrifice (“the altar and those who worship in it”). They are, however, NOT to measure the “court.” This is because the court (of the Jewish Tabernacle) represents NOMINAL CHRISTIANITY (the non-spirit-begotten) which have for 1260 years (as “tares”) trampled the true faith.

The “two witnesses” (11:3) are the Old and New Testaments which were kept hidden by the Roman church for 1260 years. A symbolic description of them follows in verses 4-6. The 7th verse begins to show how the Scriptures are eventually “rescued” by the results of the French Revolution. The French Republic (the “beast” of 11:7) “killed” Scripture by actually outlawing it for 3-1/2 years. But the people eventually would not put up with this (verses 8-12). Once the Scriptures “stood on their feet” (11:11), there was no stopping their spread throughout the entire earth.

Verse 13 pinpoints the “great earthquake” we call the French Revolution. As we have seen, the “Second-Advent Movement” followed the Revolution. After the disappointments of the “Miller Movement,” the story of the Sixth Trumpet is effectively finished. Revelation 11:14 lets us know that only one more “woe” remains. It will effectively challenge all of the errors of nominal Christianity — a “woe” which will cause much discomfort, consternation, confusion, and tribulation for those who have settled comfortably into Protestantism or who have remained in Catholicism.

### THE SEVENTH TRUMPET (Revelation 11:15-19)

The primary message of this Trumpet is that there has become a secret but powerful transfer of sovereignty. Jesus’ “like-a-thief” second advent began. The world, without yet knowing it, has a new ruler on the scene. The 7th Millennium (the antitypical “Sabbath” of earth’s history) has chronologically arrived. And, as Jesus had said, HE is “Lord of the Sabbath.”

This astounding intelligence is NOT arrived at by natural eyesight. It is found and confirmed ONLY because the “twenty-four elders” (the Old Testament prophecies) give the testimony of its truth. Rather than Jesus’ reign beginning with peace and tranquility, it begins (11:18) with angry nations. But it progresses towards the rewards for all and the destruction of the powers that have destroyed society. It is the POWERS

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that have destroyed society, NOT the individuals who were the cogs in that machinery. THEY (the individual people) will be converted by the “resurrection by judgment” — a re-standing with God via the perfect instructional judgments of the Millennial Age.

In 11:19 we see that this Seventh Trumpet begins by an “opening” (understanding) in “heaven” (in the religious world) of the whole New Covenant doctrine (The Ark of the Covenant). The period then progresses through the troubles (lightning, thunder, earthquake, and hailstorm) which we who now live see progressing in the society around us.

The description of the Seventh Trumpet ends here. But other parts of Revelation (Chapters 14-19) all describe the minute details of the period — including the “Seven Last Plagues” which are historical events since World War I which help to weaken and bring to an end the old world in preparation for the answer to the prayer: “Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done IN EARTH as it is in heaven.”

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Of necessity we have gone over the Churches, Seals, and Trumpets only in a perfunctory manner. But we hope all can rejoice in the prophetic insights of Scripture, in the marvels of past history, and in the knowledge of where we now stand and WHY we stand there.

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