

Doctrinal Summary of
The Tribulation: The Seven Trumpet Judgments of the Seventh Seal

According to Revelation 8:2 the seventh seal judgment contains seven trumpet judgments within it.

“And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.”

The word “trumpets” is translated from the Koine Greek word *σάλπιγγες* (“sal-pin-ges”) which literally means “wind instruments used for signaling, based on response.” This instrument was often made of bronze, iron, or animal horns pieced together and consisted of a narrow tube which was between two and a half and almost five feet long. On one end of the tube was a narrow opening through which air would be blown to produce sound. On the other end of the tube was a wide bell-shaped opening used to direct and project the sound being made. Due to their long narrow tube, they could only produce a short range of notes and tones that were distinct, making them effective at communicating signals.

The seven trumpets dispersed in Revelation 8:2 to seven heralding angels are signaling devices which communicate seven specific judgments upon the earth or upon man. There are four judgments directly upon the earth and there are three judgments directly upon tribulational unbelievers. Despite God’s mercy by not blowing all the trumpets at once, tribulational unbelievers will remain unrepentant.

The first trumpet signals a combination of hail and fire mixed with blood that is thrown onto the earth resulting in the destruction of one third of the earth, its trees, and its grass (cf. Rev. 8:7).

The second trumpet signals a large mountain like object of fire that is thrown into the sea causing one third of the sea to turn to blood and resulting in the death of one third of the sea’s creatures and the destruction of one third of the ships upon the sea (cf. Rev. 8:8-9).

The third trumpet signals a great star turned meteorite that falls from heaven into one third of the earth’s water sources and results in the water becoming bitter, causing the death of those who drink it (cf. Rev. 8:10-11).

The fourth trumpet signals the forceful striking of the sun, moon, and stars in heaven and it results in one third of each of them being darkened causing the day and the night to be impacted (cf. Rev. 8:12).

The fifth trumpet (also identified as the first “woe”; cf. Rev. 8:13) signals the giving of the keys to the bottomless pit to a “star” who had already fallen from heaven to the earth (cf. Luke 10:18) and is a reference to Satan being given the keys to release those kept in the bottomless pit (cf. Jude 1:6). They will ravage unbelieving man upon the earth for five months during which no death will occur; Satan is their leader (cf. Rev. 9:1-12).

The sixth trumpet judgment (the second “woe” upon the unbelieving inhabitants of the earth) signals the release of four angels who were designed for the very purpose of destroying one third of the tribulational unbelievers (cf. Rev. 9:13-21).

The last trumpet judgment, the seventh (and the third “woe”), signals the King’s arrival upon earth at which point He will establish His kingdom and, in doing so will judge tribulational unbelievers as He begins to reign upon earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (cf. Rev. 11:15-19). One such judgment is the judgment of the nations identified in Matthew 25:31-46.