Truth About the Seven Trumpets
By Karen Yang

If the major event of Christ entering the final phase of His ministration in 1844 was misinterpreted as His Second Coming, should we not reconsider the interpretation of the Seven Trumpets also? The question about the accuracy and relevance of the historical interpretation has to be reassessed because the Seven Trumpets message is encompassed within the ministration of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary.

In believing the historical account, we obscure Jesus’ mediatorial work and lose sight of Our Great Redeemer if we think that God is judging the nations that are oppressing His church. Do we know what Christ is doing in the heavenly temple? do we know what our duty is while He is there? The Seven Trumpets message is not about God’s judgment upon pagan Rome, and neither is it about the rise of Islam or the Ottoman Turks. But it is about the warning of the imminent close of probation. If we insist it is past history, we can never prepare for the crisis to come.

Seven Angels: The Connecting Link

As opposed to what some people think, the trumpets are not a recapitulation of the Seven Churches and the Seven Seals. We can see this by evidence that the Seven Trumpets are given to the Seven Angels (Rev. 8:2), who also carry the Seven Plagues. Thus we know these angels are the connecting link between the trumpets and the plagues.

It is easy to assume that the Seven Angels have been blowing the trumpets. Standing before the mighty throne of God, they are given the Seven Trumpets. They intensely observe the ministry of Jesus, but they do not blow the trumpets while they wait for Jesus to cast the fire upon the Earth (Rev. 8:2-5). While the ministration is going on, one of the Seven Angels comes to talk with John and makes known about the abominable harlot (Rev. 17:1,7) and the undefiled bride of the Lamb (Rev. 21:9).

After Jesus casts down the fire, the Seven Angels shift from watching the judgment to preparing to blow and God commands them: “Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth” (Rev. 16:1). This change in their action tells us the judgment phase is finished, probation has closed, and the angels emerge from the temple with the Seven Plagues (Rev. 15:7). Notice, they never blow the trumpets.

It is also easy to assume that the Seven Trumpets are events that unfold sequentially as judgment is passed upon the nations and that the fire is cast down seven times. Where, in the typical sanctuary service, do we find “casting
down fire” happens seven times? The high priest threw down the fire of the golden censer only once, at the end of the Day of Atonement. So let us not be presumptuous but read the Scripture as it is written. This is a seemingly minor detail that makes such a great difference in our understanding.

Let us look at the key word “hereafter” which links the Seven Churches and the Seven Seals. The word “hereafter” indicates that the Seven Churches (internal condition) and the Seven Seals (external condition of the church) are linked to each other. Hereafter means from this point, from now on. So the biblical interpretation is that the word hereafter indicates that both Seven Churches and Seven Seals start at the same time in the church eras.

As I mentioned earlier, the Seven Angels serve as the link between the Seven Trumpets and the Seven Plagues, both of which share striking similarities in their descriptions and are strongly related. The Seven Plagues also are linked with the temple. We know this because the command to the Seven Angels to go pour out the plagues comes out from the temple.

In Revelation, the Seven Angels are mentioned twice with the Seven Trumpets and seven times with the Seven Plagues. In short, it is telling us that the Seven Angels with the Seven Trumpets will bring out the Seven Plagues from the temple. Conclusively, this portrays the Seven Trumpets have the same warning function as the Feast of Trumpets prior to the Day of Atonement in the time of the Israelites.

**Jesus Christ, Our High Priest**

The Seven Trumpets vision begins with the imagery of Christ offering “much incense” with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne (see Lev. 16:12-13, Exod. 30:34-38). With the smoke of the incense representing the saints’ prayers, Jesus ministers with the golden vials full of odours and cleanses the sanctuary by casting down the fire (see Psalm 141:2, Rev. 8:3-4, Rev. 5:8). Although He is ready to end His intercessory work, we have hope while He is ministering and has been since He ascended to heaven. He is still in the process of cleansing and will not be finished until He casts down the fire with the incense and smoke.

Notice, Our High Priest, Jesus, carries the golden censer, located by the golden altar, from the Holy Place into the Most Holy Place. This imagery parallels with Aaron conducting his high priest duties (Lev. 16:12-13). The golden censer, which was kept next to the golden altar when not in use, was taken by the high priest just once a year, on the Day of Atonement, and carried into the inner veil. Moses describes Aaron’s task: “and he shall take a censer (golden censer) full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord … and bring it within the veil” (Lev. 16:12).
In fact, the Book of Hebrews describes this imagery of Our High Priest having the golden censer of the golden altar as an article of the Most Holy Place (Heb. 9:3-4) for it moves with Him into the veil on the Day of Atonement. Paul, to whom the book of Hebrews is attributed, made no mistake in writing about the censer. His audience, the Hebrew people, was familiar with all the details of the arrangement of the earthly sanctuary, and they did not contest that the golden altar belonged in the Most Holy Place.

**Casting of the Fire**

Logically, the Seven Trumpets warning should precede the casting of fire. If the blast comes after, then what is the benefit since probation is already over and there is no chance to repent? Thus the trumpet blast should happen before the fire is cast down. So this is our quandary if we are convinced that the Seven Angels blow the trumpets.

Each trumpet in Rev. 8 and 9 portrays the devastation of the “hurt,” which is also mentioned in Rev. 7:1-3. Simultaneously at the casting of fire, the four angels release their hold and the Earth and the sea will experience the hurt. We know that the number seven indicates spiritual perfection; the sevenfold trumpet sound is the perfect warning for the close of probation. The message is clear to see when we view the trumpets as one unit depicting this momentous event.

Jesus, the Angel, took the censer, filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it into the Earth. Voices, thunder, lightning and earthquake accompany the end of probation (Rev. 8:5). The same imagery is described in Rev. 11:19, which is the seventh trumpet: the temple was opened and the same activity of voices and lightning and so on is disclosed. So we see that the introductory backdrop and the seventh trumpet both depict the close of probation.

**Collapsing Spiritual Babylon**

God promised that He will do nothing unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets (Amos 3:7). Not only does He give the blueprint on how to collapse spiritual Babylon by the Seven Trumpets, but He calls the wicked out from the doomed great city of Babylon; these crucial messages are embedded in the Seven Trumpets. In the broad structure of Revelation, the Seven Trumpets point to the collapse of spiritual Babylon. In the interlude of the Seven Trumpets, the Sabbath truth and sanctuary truth are upheld as the trumpet's blast, and both are part of God’s arsenal to agitate spiritual Babylon.

**Overview of Revelation:**

- **Rev. 1** Prologue ➞ **Rev. 22** Epilogue
- **Rev. 2-3** Seven Churches ➞ **Rev. 21** New Jerusalem
- **Rev. 4-5** Investigative Judgment ➞ **Rev. 20** Millennium Judgment
We are facing spiritual Babylon, and God has not left us without weapons to fight the enemy. The Seven Trumpets message is our template and defense.

So how can we make certain sound, if we miss the message of the Seven Trumpets? 1 Cor. 14:8 reminds us: “For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle?” Jesus’ ministration and the close of probation serve as the pattern to proper understanding. This is why the Seven Trumpets need to be reassessed.

In obedience to God, Gideon and his army used trumpets to fight the Midianites. Jericho’s victory was won by the trumpet sound. Apostle Paul assures us, “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us” (Romans 15:4). God’s way is vast different than man’s way (Isa. 55:8-9). God has given us the Seven Trumpets message of Revelation to collapse spiritual Babylon.

So how will spiritual Babylon fall? Unless we blow the trumpet, those who need to come out from the doomed city will never hear the true message. There will be a great joining with God’s remnant people and the repentant will be led out of Babylon (see Isa. 60:4-6). Thus God’s band grows big and powerful: “One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the LORD your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you” (Josh. 23:10). Emboldened, God’s remnant people will take up a stone — His law — and cast it into the sea of people, and “thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all” (Rev. 18:21).

**Significance of the Seven Trumpets**

The Seven Trumpets are not intended to chronicle man’s history, neither are they a recapitulation of the period of the Christian era. Rather they are for the last days of the sevenfold warning of the imminent close of probation.

The introduction of the Seven Trumpets is for repentance and renewal of our relationship with God in view of the final judgment before the great crisis. It is dangerous to stand without an Intercessor if our sins are not blotted out. This is what the introductory scene conveys.

The Seven Trumpets correlate with the backdrop of Jesus’ ministry. In the Old Testament, the high priest applied the blood on the horns of the golden altar on the Day of Atonement (see Exod. 30:10, Lev. 16:18). So when we see the four horns of the golden altar in Rev. 9:13, we know it is the ministry of Jesus on the Anti-Typical Day of Atonement. The voice coming from the four horns indicates that the atonement is made and accepted by God.
Scripture is clear that the introduction of the Seven Trumpets is about Jesus’ final ministry in the heavenly sanctuary since He ascended to heaven. Our duty is to sound the Seven Trumpets before the close of probation. We need to call all the inhabitants of the Earth to Christ.

We must recognize the importance of following Jesus. And this means that we follow Him by faith into the Most Holy Place, where Our True Sacrifice is being offered to God. Our duty is to obey God’s law and keep our raiment white, and while He is ministering for us, allow Jesus to cleanse our sins so we may receive the benefits from His final work. This is essential for our salvation. This is what the Seven Trumpets portray.