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Seven Trumpets for Today

When Adam and Eve were created, they were placed in the beautiful Garden of Eden where every need was provided for their happiness. Their spiritual and social needs were met by the companionship of angels and the daily visits with Jesus in the cool of the day. All was peace and happiness until they yielded to the sorcery of the devil through the medium of the serpent and fell from their Edenic existence and their perfect agreement with God and each other. The plan of salvation which God has provided through Jesus provides the way back to our original condition of perfect agreement and companionship with God and with those who belong to the family of God.

The Bible is the handbook and the roadmap for our journey back to Eden, and the Holy Spirit is our Guide. Have you ever wondered why there are so many different concepts of truth, even by those who claim to be students of the Word of God? It is because the Bible was authored by the Holy Spirit, and therefore can only be understood by those who are guided by the Holy Spirit as they study its pages. It is also true that those who have studied the Bible through past ages received only the light from God that He deemed necessary for their time in history. Therefore, those in every generation who study the Bible should study to perceive what God wants to reveal to them which will be relevant for their time in history. Then their preaching will be indicted by the power of the Holy Spirit who will reveal the meaning of the Scriptures to the minds of the hearers who are open to the moving of the Holy Spirit.

However, it is more often the case that when people receive a truth from God, they build a fence around it and are not able to move on to further light as it is revealed for succeeding generations. For example, Lutherans continue the teachings of Luther, Methodists the teachings of John Wesley, Baptists the discoveries of the Anabaptists, and so on. While there is certainly precious truth in the past history of Christianity, and certainly in Protestantism as it came out of the darkness and abuses of Catholicism, yet there is present truth and continuing revelations of light that will guide us all the way to the Promised Land. To be reminded of our own danger, we need only to go back to the history of the Jewish people when it was time for Jesus to come as the long-awaited Messiah. Because His coming was not in the manner that they had anticipated, many of the Jewish leaders and people rejected Him and thus they were led to crucify the Lord of Glory.

Through the centuries, God moved upon the hearts of men who were open to the movings of His Spirit and revealed to them truths that were not only applicable to the people of their time but also for people who would live in succeeding ages, and especially for those would be alive when Jesus comes.

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:19-21, KJV.

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Cor. 10:11, KJV.

"Each of the ancient prophets spoke less for their own time than for ours, so that their prophesying is in force for us.... The Bible has accumulated and bound up together its treasures for this last generation. All the great events and solemn transactions of Old Testament history have been, and are, repeating themselves in the church in these last days." 3SM 338, 339.

"In the great final conflict, Satan will employ the same policy, manifest the same spirit, and work for the same end, as in all preceding ages. That which has been, will be, except that the coming struggle will be marked with a terrible intensity such as the world has never witnessed." GC xi.

"We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Many of the prophecies are about to be fulfilled in quick succession. Every element of power is about to be set to work. Past history will be repeated; old controversies will arouse to new life, and peril will beset God's people on every side. Intensity is taking hold of the human family. It is permeating everything upon the earth...

"Study Revelation in connection with Daniel, for history will be repeated...

"Angels desire to look into the truths that are revealed to the people who with contrite hearts are searching the word of God and praying for greater lengths and breadths and depths and heights of the knowledge which He alone can give.

"As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies relating to the last days especially demand our study. The last book of the New Testament Scriptures is full of truth that we need to understand." TM 116.

Since history is to be repeated, what diligent and prayerful students we should be to discover the gems of light that will shine upon our pathway to guide us through the perilous days ahead and safely to the heavenly kingdom!

The Book of Revelation, given near the end of the Apostle John's life, has been a book of mystery to many scholars through the ages. But since its very name indicates that God wants His people to understand it, and since it is coming from Jesus Christ Himself, it is imperative that we study to know the secrets that are hidden in its pages. One striking point about the book of Revelation, is that everything comes from the heavenly Sanctuary after Jesus went back to Heaven to begin His ministry there and

follows through the complete history of the world until Jesus comes again and sin is eradicated from the universe.

There is much present truth that we could learn from a study of the seven churches and the seven seals that would be applicable to our day and time. But the study of the seven trumpets is the most urgent because they lead up to the grand climax of the sounding of the seventh trumpet which announces the establishment of Jesus' kingdom as King of kings and Lord of lords before the Universe.

"The seventh angel sounded his trumpet and there were loud voices in Heaven which said: 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever.' And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshipped God, saying: 'We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great -- and for destroying those who destroy the earth.' Then God's temple in Heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant." Rev. 11:15-19.

Traditionally, Seventh-day Adventists date the beginning of the 7th trumpet, or third woe, as 1844. [See 7BC 804, 806; 1957 Ed.] This is understandable, because the time for judging the righteous dead began when Jesus entered the Second Apartment of the Sanctuary in 1844. However, I believe this to be a composite prophecy, for certainly not everything in this passage was completely fulfilled in 1844. For example, the kingdoms of this world had not yet become the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ; nor had the wrath of God which is the seven last plagues begun at that time, nor the destruction of those who destroy the earth.

Here are some supportive statements for my premise from the Bible Commentary referred to above:

"Wrath. The wrath of God is summed up in the seven last plagues (ch. 15:1). The work of opposition against Christ is brought to a halt by these plagues.

"Time.... This is a time of judgment, both of reward and of destruction....

"The mention of both reward and destruction indicates that John is speaking of the final judgment, which takes place after the millennium (ch. 20:12-15)."

Another interesting comment supporting the dual application is found on page 820:

"The United States today continues to maintain the principles of freedom guaranteed in the Constitution. The manner in which a change in policy will be brought about is outlined in the present prophecy [Revelation 13:11]. The change comes in connection with the final crisis immediately preceding the time when 'the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ' (Revelation 11:15)."

One more support for a dual application of Revelation 11:15-19 is found in Daniel 12:13:

"As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."

I believe this to be referring to the same event that John is speaking about in Revelation 11:18, when the prophets, along with all the righteous dead, are raised to receive their immortal inheritance at the Second Coming of Jesus. Paul speaks of this event in 1 Corinthians 15:51-54:

"Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed -- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.... then the saying that is written will come true: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.'"

Therefore, I believe it is fair to say that while Jesus began to receive His kingdom when He entered into His work in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly Sanctuary in 1844, the prophecy of the seventh trumpet will not be completed until the end of the world when He comes back to earth again to receive His bride and His kingdom.

Having established that the last trumpet is the Second Coming of Christ, I want to explore another Scripture referring to the seventh trumpet. This is found in Revelation 10:5-7: "Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to Heaven. And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth, and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, 'There will be no more delay! But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.'"

In this quotation, I am purposefully using the New International Version of the Bible rather than the King James Version, because I want to emphasize the phrase, "There will be no more delay!", as translated in the NIV. When our forefathers first read this text, they correctly interpreted it as meaning there would be no more time prophecies extending beyond 1844.

"Seventh-day Adventist have generally.... understood the 'time' to be prophetic time, and its end to signify the close of the longest time prophecy, that of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14. After this there is to be no further message bearing on a definite time." 7BC 798.

However, it is also possible to translate this passage as it is in the NIV. Please note the Greek wording:

"Gr. *chronos ouketi estai*, 'time no more shall be'.... Many expositors have understood it to mark the end of time, as such, and the beginning of eternity. Others have taken the word 'time' in the sense of the time that elapses before the final events of history, and so have translated, 'there shall be no more delay.'" Ibid.

The Strong's Concordance also gives this wording as a possible translation:

Chronos; of uncert. der.; a space of time (in gen., and thus properly distinguished from 2540, which designates a fixed or special occasion; and from 165, which denotes a particular period) or interval; by extens. an individ. opportunity; by implication delay: -- season, space, time (s), (a) while.

I believe that God guided our ancestors in their understanding of this text, and backed up by Ellen White, it has stood as a bulwark of truth preventing a continual reinterpretation of the time prophecies. Interestingly, some of our early pioneers did quote this text as, "There will be no more delay", possibly hoping that Jesus would still come in their day. But it was not to be, for there is yet another part of Revelation 10:6, 7, which must be fulfilled before Jesus comes. It is the completion of the work of the Gospel -- the finishing of the mystery of God. Both the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen White make clear that the ultimate goal for the people of God is their perfection as they are cleansed of all sin, and therefore become clean vessels through whom Jesus lives out His perfect life by the power and indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

"I Paul am made a minister,... according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to the saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Col. 1:23-28, KJV.

"In Christ dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily. This is why, although He was tempted in all points like as we are, He stood before the world, from His first entrance into it, untainted by corruption, though surrounded by it. Are we not also to become partakers of that fullness, and is it not thus, and thus only, that we can overcome as He overcame? We lose much by not dwelling constantly upon the character of Christ." 7BC 907.

It seems clear that the plan of salvation is not finished until the characters of God's people are cleansed from all sin and reflect the character of Jesus fully. When Jesus is finished with His work in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly Sanctuary, He will throw down the sensor and proclaim the words, "It is finished!" These are the same words He spoke on the cross when He had successfully paid the price of redemption for every person. Now His righteous character, which He lived for us while on earth, is to be imparted and imputed to us while His ministry in the heavenly Sanctuary is still open.

This same message was clearly presented to our church by A. T. Jones from 1888 through the 1890's:

"The finishing of the mystery of God is the ending of the work of the gospel. And the ending of the work of the gospel is, first, the taking away of all vestige of sin and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness -- Christ fully formed -- within each believer....

"Everyone whose heart is inclined to truth and right desires that this thing shall be done. Only the priesthood and ministry of Christ can do it. Now is the time of the complete and effectual doing of it for everyone. Then let us believe in Him who is doing this, and trust Him in the doing of it, that He does it completely and forevermore.

"This is the time, and this is the work of which it is written, that 'there should be delay no longer.' And why should there be a delay any longer? When the priesthood of our Great High Priest is efficient, and when His sacrifice and ministry are all sufficient in that which is promised and in that for which every believer hopes, then why should there be a delay any longer in the finishing of transgression, the making of an end to sin, the making of reconciliation for iniquity and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness to each believing soul? Then let us trust Him to do that which He has given Himself to do and which He alone can possibly do. Let us trust Him in this and receive in its fullness all that belongs to every soul who believes in and implicitly trusts the Apostle and Great High Priest of our profession -- Christ Jesus.

"We have seen that the little horn -- the man of sin, the mystery of iniquity -- has put his own earthly, human, and sinful priesthood, ministry, and sanctuary in the place of the heavenly and holy priesthood, ministry, and Sanctuary. In this priesthood and service of the mystery of iniquity, the sinner confesses his sins to the priest and goes on sinning. Indeed, in that priesthood and ministry there is no power to do anything else than to go on sinning, even after they have confessed their sins. But, sad as the question may be, is it not too true that those who are not of the mystery of iniquity but who really believe in Jesus and in His priesthood and ministry -- is it not too true that even these also confess their sins and then go on sinning?

"But is this fair to our Great High Priest, to His sacrifice, and His blessed ministry?... Everyone who believes in Jesus Christ, in the sacrifice which He has made, in the priesthood and ministry which He exercises in the true Sanctuary must not only confess his sins, but he must then forever implicitly trust that true High Priest in His ministry in the Sanctuary to finish transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness in his heart and life.

"Everlasting righteousness, remember. Not a righteousness for today and sin tomorrow and righteousness again and sin again. That is not everlasting righteousness. Everlasting righteousness is righteousness that is brought in and stays everlastingly in the life of him who has believed and confessed and who still further believes and receives this everlasting righteousness in the place of all sin and all sinning. This alone is everlasting righteousness; this alone is eternal redemption from sin. And this unspeakable blessing is the gracious gift of God by the heavenly ministry which He has established in our behalf in the priesthood and ministry of Christ in the heavenly Sanctuary....

"The time of the coming of the Lord and the restitution of all things is indeed at the very doors. And when Jesus comes, it is to take His people unto Himself. It is to present to

Himself His glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that is holy and without blemish. It is to see Himself perfectly reflected in all His saints.

"And before He comes thus, His people must be in that condition. Before He comes, we must have been brought to that state of perfection in the complete image of Jesus. Eph. 4:7, 8, 11-13. And this state of perfection, this developing in each believer the complete image of Jesus -- this is the finishing of the mystery of God, which is Christ in you the hope of glory. This consummation is accomplished in **the cleansing of the Sanctuary**, which is the finishing of the mystery of God, which is the final finishing of transgression, the making of a complete end of sins, the making of reconciliation for iniquity, the bringing in of everlasting righteousness, the sealing up of the vision and prophecy and the anointing of the Most Holy." The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection, part 5. "The Time of Finishing the Mystery of God." By A. T. Jones.

I have included these excerpts from this article by A. T. Jones to emphasize that by the late 1800's, our pioneers were hearing a message which if it had been heeded, the work would have been finished in their generation, and there would be no need for a repeat of the trumpets before the coming of Jesus. (Notice his translation of Revelation 10:6 as being, "no more delay". But this bold message was rejected by the conference president and others, and the light that God was sending to the church at that time had to wait for a future generation who would understand it, heed its message of cleansing, and preach it to the world.

At this point I want to ask the question, why would God need to repeat the messages that are contained in the seven trumpets for the final generation? There is a principle in Luke 11 that gives us an insight into the character of God which answers this question. Jesus had been invited to the home of a Pharisee, who noted that Jesus did not wash his hands before the meal and commented to Jesus about it. In response, Jesus spoke six woes upon the Pharisees and the experts in the law. After the fifth woe, He made this significant prophecy:

"Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your forefathers who killed them. So, you testify that you approve of what your forefathers did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs. Because of this, God in his wisdom said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.' Therefore, this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all." Luke 11:47-51.

Jesus is here speaking to the very generation who would live to see the culmination of the probationary time given to the Jewish people. In my studies, I have found that throughout the Scriptures, whenever woes are pronounced, it is always to those who

will live to see the woes fulfilled. God in His mercy does not bring punishment upon a generation that has not heard the message of warning, nor the truth that is applicable for their time in history. By these warnings, they either respond and escape the coming judgment, or reject the light and reap the doom that was predicted.

Please notice that the last three trumpets are called "woes." This means that the messages found in the last three trumpets will be fulfilled in the generation who will live to see the finishing of the work of the gospel, the close of probation and the final events of earth's history, including the Second Coming of Christ.

I believe that while Jesus said clearly that we will not know the day nor the hour of His coming [Matthew 24:36, 42], He does want us to know when it is in our lifetime, and that we are in the final generation.

"Now learn this lesson from the fig tree. As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." Matt. 24:32-35.

Jesus said there will be wars and rumors of wars, but they are not the conclusive sign that we are at the very end of time [Matt. 24:6-8]. How, then, can we know when we have come to that final generation? I suggest that we go back to Revelation and look more carefully at the last three trumpets, or woes, which are found in verse 13: "As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in mid-air call out in a loud voice: 'Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!'"

As I mentioned before, woes in the Bible are spoken to the generation that will experience the tribulations that are predicted in the woes. If the message of righteousness by faith had been accepted when it was first preached by A. T. Jones, E. J. Waggoner, and Ellen White, that generation would have lived to see Jesus come. But because the light which Jesus was sending to them from the Most Holy Place of the heavenly Sanctuary was rejected, we have had to spend many more years in the wilderness, as Ellen White predicted. It is now time for our generation to move forward to the Promised Land. The signs are all around us that Jesus' coming is now "even at the door." This is why we need to understand the meaning of the seven trumpets for our generation, for they contain the countdown of events that bring us up to the coming of Jesus.

We have already considered the meaning of the seventh trumpet as being the Second Coming of Jesus, and that just prior to His coming there will be a people who will experience full cleansing from sin as they cooperate with Jesus in His work in the Most Holy Place, which will produce a people who will be without spot or wrinkle or any such

thing, and will stand before the Universe as the finished product of the whole plan of salvation. These are the 144,000, who are described in Revelation 14:1-5, as having the name of Jesus and His Father's name written on their foreheads. In other words, they have the character of God written upon the frontal lobes, or decision-making area of their minds, and they are in complete agreement with God in every facet of their lives. They are the first generation of God's people who reach this perfected state, and they can rightly be called, 'blameless'. Thus, they are the same group who experience the mystery of God - Christ in you the hope of glory - which John prophesied that would be fulfilled just prior to the coming of Jesus.

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