

Chapter 8

Seventh Seal

⁸ When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

Prelude to the Seven Trumpets

² And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. ³ Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴ And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw *it* to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.

⁶ So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

The 7 Angels that stand around the throne are each given a trumpet.

Trumpets herald something, they are used to announce or present something. Fanfares herald the entrance of a Monarch or important person. They announce arrivals but are also used to give commands and orders. The Last Post and Reville we play on ANZAC day are the tunes to demonstrate to troops that the day has finished or is starting, and there were hundreds of other trumpet instructions used in battle prior to the introduction of radios to the battlefield. As with a fanfare, trumpets can do both things at the same time; the fanfare heralds the arrival of a Monarch or important person and calls the group around to attention that they are about to enter. A trumpet is, therefore, a two-fold symbol, representing the arrival of power and the demonstration of authority.

In context of the story, we recognised the 7th Seal as the 2nd Coming, so John is here being shown events that will precede that. Notice how Verse 1 is treated. It's thrown away, given almost no weight whatsoever. It's there for reference to conclude the 7 Seals.

And notice how the trumpets here are connected with the Seals. John simply says "² And I saw...". He does not introduce this as being after the previous events, he puts them alongside or in connection with the 7th Seal being opened. In English we would call this bad writing, but in Greek that we find this is a perfectly acceptable

connection. John introduces the subject that he will draw out – the 7th Seal – and then gives information around it. The 7 Angels are heralds to Christ's 2nd coming. This means that all these things precede the 7th Seal.

³ Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴ And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.

After the Angels are handed their trumpets, another steps forward with a "golden censer". This was usually a part of the Day of Atonement ceremony, only done once a year, when hot coals were taken from the Altar of Incense and, with 2 handfuls of the incense and it was burned heavily. Doing this, the Most Holy place was 'Censored' so the High Priest could not see – and not be destroyed by – the Shekinah Glory. The smoke of the incense – as here – represented the prayers of the Children of Israel's prayers raising to God where they could be considered and acted upon. This Angel is a powerful character, to be given the privilege of holding onto the Prayers of the Saints.

It is important to note that the incense was carefully constructed and its ingredients carefully chosen, however that is not really relevant to this portion of the book, so we will reserve that for later.

This is also, clearly, temple language. On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would enter the Most Holy Place and place that censor – a simple bowl and not the more elaborate incense burners we're used to seeing – before the Ark of the Covenant along with the shovel used to get the coals from the altar. He would return later to retrieve them. This Angel holds that bowl, but he is only represented as burning incense on the Altar of incense, clearly indicating he is not the High Priest but a priest of the Temple who is preparing for the Day of Atonement. Burning "much incense" also would indicate he is preparing the coals for that Day of Atonement service.

This is also the place in the temple where Those voices that came from "under the altar" in the 5th Seal were heard because. The incense is related to the praying voice. All this is recognised up to this point – incense is burned to encourage prayers to raise to the father and extra incense is put on in anticipation for the Day of Atonement – but the Angel then does something unusual... to say the least.

⁵ Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw *it* to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.

⁶ So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

The angel takes the bowl that the High Priest would put incense and coals in to protect himself from the Shekinah Glory, fills it – which is not his job – and then casts it out of heaven. He did not add more incense to it, he filled it with the fire from the Altar. The Greek Language – although not explicit – would indicate he took all the fire from the Altar and put it in the Censer, leaving nothing remaining.

The effect of this is fourfold.

Firstly, as we can see, noise, thunder, lightning and an earthquake takes place on the Earth. A storm matched with an Earthquake arises on the Earth as a result of the Saint's Prayers being cast down to them. These are the natural reactions of Earth to Heaven, which we have seen several times before.

Second, the tossing of the censer cause those holding the "[seven trumpets](#) (to) [prepare\(d\) themselves to sound](#)". This is the key or the instruction for those Trumpeters to ready themselves to announce whatever it is they are announcing and give the commands their Trumpets are to give. This calls them to attention for their job to be done.

Thirdly, this removes any protection from the High Priest. This angel has now removed the protective layer that the smoke of the incense would have given for the High Priest to enter the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement. In earthly terms, this would be a death sentence, as there is no Censer to protect him – however meagrely – from the Shekinah Glory. Fortunately, the High Priest being Christ, he needs no incense to shield him from the Father, but nevertheless, this is a disturbing move.

Fourthly, as all the fire has been taken from the altar, there is no longer any ability for prayers to ascend to God. The angel had been "[given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne](#)" but now that he has taken all the fire from that altar and tossed it to Earth, there is no longer any way that it can be burned, and the prayers of the saints cannot ascend to the Throne. In effect, this angel has removed the passage for intercession between Man and Christ. The prayers of the saints can no longer be received in or heard in Heaven.

Interpreting the first 6 Trumpets

This introduction to the Trumpets being ready to sound is clear enough. There is little ambiguity but tying down a date structure is impossible as this can relate to either the Resurrection or the Close of Probation.

- The Resurrection fits nicely as this is when Jesus took his position in Heaven as High Priest. He intercedes on our behalf so prayer incense is not necessary as Jesus can take our prayers direct to God the Father. He also needs no protection from the Shekinah Glory as He is God.
- The Close of Probation also fits as these are the events that precede the 2nd Coming and herald the Judgement of the Earth. The events of the Trumpets are less than joyous so connecting them to Judgment is pretty easy.

What is clear is that the Trumpets are the heralds of Christ's Glory – so they must precede the 7th Seal opening. Considering the Angel has thrown the Censor to the Earth, the timing of these events is most likely attached to the Day of Atonement.

Lets bring in the Wilderness temple here

When we consider the feasts and ceremonies that surrounded the Wilderness and Solomon's temples, we find a fascinating parallel with Leviticus 23; the Blowing of Trumpets.

" ²³ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁴ "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'In the seventh month, on the first *day* of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. ²⁵ You shall do no customary work *on it*; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.' " ²⁶ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²⁷ "Also the tenth *day* of this seventh month *shall be* the Day of Atonement. "

When we consider that the tabernacle services on Earth are a reflection of those in heaven, it is reasonable to conclude that, prior to the Day of Atonement service in Heaven, there should be trumpets blowing to herald it. The services are introduced in this language as a clear reflection of the temple services that, at this time, had been well and truly destroyed by the Romans.

The blowing of the Trumpets heralded the Day of Atonement to get people ready for the intercession and judgement of the people. Let's look into this further.

The Day of Atonement / Yom Kippur

The concept of the Day of Atonement is broad and far beyond the scope of this study but, in a nutshell, this was the day when all of the Israelites were purified for the work of the lord over the next year. Special sacrifices were made and the notion of the messiah being shortly to arrive was remembered to the people. This was the only day when the High Priest was permitted into the Most Holy Place and had to be shielded by 2 blood offerings – a Goat and a Bull – and incense from the altar. During the day the priest washed and changed his clothes 10 times and all the ceremonies were highly precise. The People were all involved too, fasting and praying at particular times. As this ceremony was to purify the people of Israel, any sin that was in the heart of any member of the nation would have seen the death of the High Priest as the sacrifice could not have been accepted by God. This leads to the Trumpets.

Today, Jews still remember the Day of Atonement in the form of the Yom Kippur services which they remember every year.

The Trumpets / Erev Yom Kippur

A few days before the Day of Atonement, trumpets were sounded to announce that it was imminent. The three days that were given were a chance for the Israelites to spend the time they needed to reconcile with their neighbours, repay debts and basically fixing all the problems they had amongst the people. This gave them a chance to get right with God, to fix their trouble and prepare the group to be purified from God.

The concept is that, in effect, before you can ask forgiveness of God, you must ask forgiveness of your neighbour. The Jews today still remember this as 'Erev' Yom Kippur. In the Adventist Church, we have the concept – not a doctrine – of a time of repentance and reconciliation before we celebrate communion together, cumulating in foot washing. This is an idea that has not been very well explained either to me or in the church in general, but the concept is that you should not take communion in a congregation where you hold animosity with someone else, and really should not take part if you hold any animosity with anyone. The regularity of our communion service; every 13th Sabbath, gives notice and time for people to reconcile and reconstruct broken relationships to be ready to then be reconciled with God.

Casting the Censor to Earth

The Trumpets referenced here in Revelation can really only be a reflection of this time preceding the Day of Atonement giving God's people – and thanks to Jesus sacrifice and the Gospel going to the Gentiles, all people – a chance to be reconciled both to each other and to God before the Judgements of heaven are poured out. The opening of the 7th Seal is not just the return to heaven and all eternal life, it is the final inheritance of all on earth – eternal life or death.

In remembering what we have seen, things here make a lot more sense.

³ Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴ And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.

The Angel takes 'much' incense and offers it up. He encourages prayers, intercessions, all good things that God wants to see. He encouraged people to repent of their sins, pray to God, reconcile themselves with their failings. But this is temporary. This is only for a period of time.

⁵ Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw *it* to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.

As said before, there is a point when the Angel takes the fire from the altar – according to the way the Greek presents it, all of the fire – and casts it down to earth. There is a time when the possibility for intercession ends, in the same way that, when the Day of Atonement starts, there is a moment when reconciliation can not take place. If the priest steps into the Most Holy Place and two Israelites had not reconciled a difference, the time is passed. The priest would be struck down, there is no longer any chance for him.

Presumably, the High Priest's office was a short one during the time when Israel was apostatized and it's probably better that the Ark of the Covenant went missing after shortly before Solomon's Temple was destroyed as the High priest would not be in fear of being destroyed no matter how bad Israel got, but I digress...

⁶ So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

Because of what these 7 angels witnessed, the preparations for the Day of Atonement, they prepared to announce or herald it and instruct the people that it was time to get good with God. The Angel that threw the censor demonstrated that, when the Day of Atonement starts, the offer of reconciliation ends, and these guys

are seeing that their job is to prepare the people for it. The Trumpets are the announcement that the time is nigh to get yourself into a good place with God!

Think about it in this way, the daily sacrifice also pointed to Jesus and his coming. It permitted the penitent member of Israel to become partly reconciled with God. That didn't stop the need for the Day of Atonement, it was in fact for the sinner to look toward the Day of Atonement with anticipation for when they, and all of Israel, would be again cleansed.

So what are the Trumpets??

The trumpets herald that the Day of Atonement. They are the time when the saved of God – not just the Christian Church, but all the saved of God – are given a chance to be in a place to be sealed. They are, in a form, the judgement of God on his own people and an encouragement for all outside people to join with God.

To be clear, we have seen 2 forms of the Christian Church up to this point. The letters to the 7 Churches, Jesus gives explicit messages to the different groups and time periods that the church will inhabit as to how they should respond. These could be called 'prophecies' for the people to watch and understand where they are. Then, the 4 Horsemen, are presented as a simply factual evolution of the Christian Church from holy and pure through to persecuting and dark. Here, the Trumpets, are presented as warnings and reproaches for God's people to be aware of their actions and activities.

Jesus spent 2 Chapters telling his Churches what their problems were. Revelation 3: 19 "[As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.](#)" Like any good parent, Jesus has to bring his children back into line, and we have seen him do that for most of this book so far. Because we are talking about very large groups of people, we must look at how God works to chasten and rebuke – even punish – his people. He does this, primarily, in 2 ways. God removes his protection and;

- Allows us to become self-destructive in the hope we will wake up to ourselves
- Allows other nations to punish our transgression

God himself **rarely** does the punishing, although it is not unheard of. The Israelite nations have copious examples of this cycle that we can recount. For example, it is widely known that Baal worship became commonplace in the Northern Kingdoms. During that time, Elijah was raised up by God to encourage repentance as we find in 1 Kings 18. God demonstrated his power, consuming the rocks and wet wood of the altar made to him while Baal could do nothing. The realisation of the people that Baal was evil did not last long and within 100 years, God, through Isaiah, was calling "[...Assyria, the rod of My anger And the staff in whose hand is My indignation.](#)" God

did not support Assyria, as that verse opens with the line "**Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger And the staff in whose hand is My indignation.**" (Isaiah 10:5) but God permitted the Assyrians to punish the Israelites with the hope that they would come to their senses.

It is fully understandable that the Trumpets be the heralds of Judgement as the people of God will understand what they are. Recognition of the Trumpets instructs the people to look at themselves while the judging tone burns in the ears from outside. Judgement always starts with God's people, as we've seen in the 6th Seal. The winds of Strife are reserved until God's people are sealed. In order for them to be sealed, the trumpets give people a chance to get on God's side so that they can be a part of the Sealed ones.

God has the right to choose, through whatever criteria he might deem correct, who is on his side, and the Trumpets give the chance for the people to make that choice. In this way, we see that God's people are judged first.

This is not unusual; God has always started judgment with his people. Peter wrote (1 Peter 4:17) "**For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?**" This was a connection to Ezekiel 9 when God removed his Shekinah Glory from the tabernacle and commanded death on all those who did not repent and weep for God's abandonment of Israel and even instructed that when the deaths start, the slaughter should "**begin at My sanctuary.**" (vs 6) God must first sift the sheep from the goats, ignoring the goats for the time being but scrutinizing the sheep thoroughly so that no blemish or disease is included in their number.

So, lets establish where we are

The Trumpets herald the day of Atonement and all the ceremonies that go along with that, while they also act as a form of shaking and sifting of the followers of Christ. They are warnings given to God's people and involve judgements of God's people. They are there to separate God's people from others so they can be sealed.

The Trumpets, therefore, should focus themselves on God's people and how they will be shaken in order to prepare them for the close of Probation.

To this end, we can state that they cannot start at the Close of Probation, but rather must end at it. We can go so far as to say that the 7th Trumpet also hails the opening of the 6th Seal but that will be further examined as we go.

The other, logical, point for them to start is, therefore, the Cross. But we are limited in how we can make this connection. Indeed, the remainder of this chapter and the 3 following it all must be examined together to gain some understanding of the connections between the Trumpets because the Trumpets are concluded at the end of Chapter 11. We could make the reasonable deduction that, as the First Seal/Horseman and first Church started at the Cross also that this is a logical way to start, but there is enough ambiguity in the connection to the 6th and 7th Seals to cause us to leave that aside.

If we look at the trumpets, we find nothing in them that tells us when they fit into any historic record in themselves; no major events or disasters, but their language does give us some information to draw on.

Sheep from Goats

Another important thing is that, as we are dividing the sheep; from the goats, deaths referenced here should, generally, refer to the second death. Those who are killed should refer to those who are not entitled to or reject access to eternal life. At first glance, this seems cold-blooded but we have to consider the reasoning and rationale behind it.

One Third

We must establish the concept when looking at these – and will become important later too – that when 'One Third' of something is mentioned, it may not directly relate as one part in three of the thing, but rather enough of an impact for it to be devastating and yet not destroy or exterminate it. Much discussion has been made on this and it does not have as clear textual support, but we will see how the principal plays out as we review the text.

First Trumpet: Vegetation Struck

⁷ The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

We can refer back to Daniel to establish that trees refer to important and/or God-Fearing people e.g. Nebuchadnezzar, and green grass or fertile land, as we saw in Daniel 11, generally refers specifically to Jerusalem and/or Israel. The fertile land is prepared for the arrival of Jesus, or should have been.

By the time John was writing this book, the Jewish Nation and Judaism itself had been practically exterminated. There were supposedly only 10 Rabbi's that survived the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70. It fits the narrative that the first group to be 'shaken' or encouraged to realise they needed to make a change would be the Jewish nation that the Christian Nation came from.

In terms of the sheep from goats, the Jerusalem revolt and destruction had 2 major effects. Firstly, the Christians ceased to be a sect of Judaism, as we have already reviewed. Instead, Christianity was treated; both by the Romans and in their own eyes, as a completely separate religion, as it is indeed today. Secondly, those few survivors of the Jewish revolt were galvanised into securing their beliefs separate from the Christian nation. For the last 1950 years, Jews have rejected the divinity and messiahship of Christ, and while I would not judge any individual, this doctrine is demonstrably against their own teaching of Daniel – as we have examined – and against their Mosaic/Isaiah prophecies that they so cherish. We can conclude that, anyone who is given the opportunity to follow Christ and decides not, from that time till now, clearly would be included in the grass burned up.

Second Trumpet: The Seas Struck

⁸ Then the second angel sounded: And *something* like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. ⁹ And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

Similar to the first trumpet, the Sea refers to broader peoples and populations and Sea creatures would be the things that move amongst those people, big and small, important and not. Furthermore, ships would refer to free movement amongst the populations of the earth; possibly, as we have moved away from the Jewish context, the Christian evangelists.

The Second trumpet causes some difficulty, as we cannot pin it down to a time. The church was certainly persecuted and tore itself apart from the inside – as we have seen in previous chapters – but we would have difficulty due to the unspecific nature of this prophetic language.

Let us keep reading and see if we can come back later and fill in this gap.

Third Trumpet: The Waters Struck

¹⁰ Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹ The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.

This is an interesting one because it would appear, at first glance, to refer to a meteoroid or other impact on the earth. But that is to forget the Greek, philosophical language being used here. Two phrases are important; “*like a torch*” and “*springs of water*”. This language is highly philosophical and a Greek reading this would connect it immediately to the philosophers and scholars contained in the wider world. Teachers are the ‘bearers of light’ and ‘fountains of knowledge’ that it is hoped will be spread to a wider world.

When a Greek read that “*a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, (landing) on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water*”, they would see an evil spirit coming down from Heaven with his own views and ideas, coming to corrupt the teachers and intellectual leaders of Earth. They would view immediately recognise

that some evil has landed and is spreading false teaching and lies to the world. Naturally, the most recognisable star that fell from Heaven was Lucifer becoming Satan.

The name of the star is called 'wormwood', a reference to the bitter herb, also known as absinthium. In large enough quantities, the herb is toxic but is also used as a herbal remedy for stomach and digestive upsets. It is where Absinthe gets its name from and the bitter aftertaste.

Rather universally, the sea is not good for drinking due to it being salty. Rivers and lakes are the only place where drinking water can be found, and if this star has poisoned them with wormwood, it is natural that a lot of people will die from overdosing on it. If you have no choice but to drink water from streams and rivers; streams and rivers poisoned by wormwood, there is a reasonable chance that some people will drink too deeply and be poisoned.

Putting this back into the context, we have already heavily debated the influence of satanic forces on the Christian Church influencing teachers and philosophers early in its history to bring false doctrines and evil thoughts into the Church, corrupting the masses.

The reproof here has also been heavily discussed in our earlier studies. We have reviewed ad nauseum how the Roman Church debated the Sabbath and other concepts that the leaders of the church chose to lead the people astray. The reproof or shaking during this Trumpet is the false doctrines and false teaching that anyone who saw a Jew and said "we won't worship on their Sabbath" knowingly put their partitioners at risk.

One question that comes into play here is how many people will be rejected from Heaven on account of the unholy doctrines that their leaders taught. That is a question we will have to leave open as Jesus alone is the one to judge. Jesus alone is the one permitted to make the call about who is on his side and who is not. I will not here engage in a discussion of the difference between what the Holy Spirit is responsible for vs what a Church Leader is responsible for and where the idea of choice comes into that mixture.

Fourth Trumpet: The Heavens Struck

¹² Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.

¹³ And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

The 4th Trumpet attacks the Sun, Moon and Stars; sources of Light so that, both during day and night, darkness reigns. This fourth trumpet is coupled with the 'first woe' the first declaration of sympathy from Heaven coming on these people. We can see a pattern when we connect this to the 3rd Trumpet as we evaluated 'light' being spiritual, intellectual, or philosophical illumination. Again, we have already discussed that this is the pattern the Christian Church followed after the introduction of false and complex doctrines that were not holy.

Although we have discussed the oppression and attacks on those who wanted to reform the Church, early in Church History the bible itself was not permitted to be studied by those outside of the priesthood. To be clear, literacy was sorely lacking during the majority of Church History, but it was certainly not restricted only to the Priesthood. Bankers, most Nobles, literary artists, scribes and lawyers all were able to read and write. During the late Roman Empire (~500AD) the literacy rates are estimated as high as 25%, although this dropped sharply for the next 700 years to around 5%. But, with the introduction of Paper during the 1200s, this again shot up back to late Roman numbers, something the church saw as a threat.

Rather than opening up and permitting the laity access to the scriptures, the Roman Church issued edicts and instructions that the Bible should not be read by anyone not a priest.

- **Decree of the Council of Toulouse (1229 C.E.):** "We prohibit also that the laity should be permitted to have the books of the Old or New Testament; but we most strictly forbid their having any translation of these books."
- **Ruling of the Council of Tarragona of 1234 C.E.:** "No one may possess the books of the Old and New Testaments in the Romance language, and if anyone possesses them he must turn them over to the local bishop within eight days after promulgation of this decree, so that they may be burned..."
- **Fate of William Tyndale in 1536 C.E.:** William Tyndale was burned at the stake for translating the Bible into English.

The spiritual repression was wholesale and access to the documents that could have supported the Church's positions was restricted on the penalty of the destruction of their eternal soul. The period, as we have discussed, of the Church of Thyatira was the most repressive and unenlightened period in the history of the world. Its no wonder the Angel looks at this and simply says "[Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth](#)".

First Woe

John makes a rather interesting observation. Looking around he "[13 ... heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, 'Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!'](#)" When we remind ourselves that John is in vision and there are no accidents here, but this certainly looks like something that could have been incidental. It's not, but it's designed to look that way. This angel is simply moving through heaven, sees what is happening, and says something like "Man, I feel sorry for those guys, and they've got three more trumpets to come! Things can only get worse!"

These 'woes' are the reflections of Heaven's, or more specifically, God's supporters' views on what is happening. Nothing is known of this angel which is what makes his comment so powerful and so impactful. He could be one of the angels that was holding back the winds of strife before, or one of the angels that sealed God's people or just a messenger angel or one who waters the Garden of Eden. Nobody knows, but he is one who can – and does – see everything.

The woes are the knee-jerk judgements from the Heavenly hosts of pure pity that demonstrate all of Heaven feels the same pain we do. They empathise with us, and feel pity for us, but cannot sympathise with our experiences.

Interesting to note, three woes are promised in Revelation, but only 2 are mentioned. The second comes at the end of Chapter 11 which we will relate to the time when the Bible was outlawed by Revolutionary France – more on that later. The third is mentioned as coming, but is not actually revealed... something we'll have to ask Jesus about.

Returning to the 2nd Trumpet

If we now return to the 2nd Trumpet, a realisation comes as we review the first, third and fourth Trumpet. They focus on the spiritual experiences of God's people.

- The Jews were given the opportunity to follow the Messiah they had long awaited
- The Christian Church, when safe, was quickly spiritually corrupted by Satanic forces through corrupted doctrines
- These corrupted doctrines caused a bitter darkness to fall over the Church and there was no opportunity for discussion, debate or any other spiritual light to come from study of the word of God. Partly through ignorance and partly through fear.

The Second Trumpet must fit in after the Jewish destruction but before the Christian Church was ascendent. Lets review the text;

⁸ Then the second angel sounded: And *something* like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. ⁹ And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

The "*great mountain*" is not set on fire by this trumpet, the mountain was already burning before the Trumpet blew. This relates to Jerusalem and the Holy Mountain where the Temple was. The people of the world had tolerated Israelite rebellions right up to the point when Jesus walked the earth. When the Messiah came, as is extensively written in Paul's writings, the Gospel went to the Jews first and then to the gentiles.

If we can remind ourselves of the first Seal opened in chapter 6. "*2 I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.*" The innocent and good Christian Church was given the opportunity, after the Jewish destruction and in the light of the Jerusalem destruction, to evangelise to the Gentiles broadly. The 'sea', as established in Daniel and expanded on earlier, are broad groups of people that live in and around Europe, the Middle East and Africa. We can say that this relates to both the Jewish and Gentile populations of that swathe of the world. This trumpet is, therefore, the spiritual call to convert those populations to Christianity and to follow God's word – something all accounts, as we have seen, they attempted to do with zeal and fervour.

The Gentiles responded with persecution. They did not, wholesale, accept the Christian Message until they, themselves, were persecuted as we have discussed with Constantine's conquest.

The spiritual message here is for the people to evangelise, the judgement is their persecution of the Christians.