



Albrecht Dürer (1471 - 1528), "Seven Angels with Trumpets"

27. Revelation 4-11

*The Heavenly Court, the Seven Seals,
and the Seven Trumpets*

"Worthy Is the Lamb," Handel's *Messiah*



Francisco de Zurbarán, "Agnus Dei"

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,
and hath redeemed us to God by his blood,
to receive power, and riches, and wisdom,
and strength, and honour, and glory, and
blessing.

Blessing and honour, glory and power,
be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne,
and unto the Lamb,
for ever and ever. Amen.

(Revelation 5:12-14)



“Beautiful Zion, Built Above” (hymn no. 44)

“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. . . . Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (Revelation 7:9, 15–17)

1. Beautiful Zion, built above;
Beautiful city that I love;
Beautiful gates of pearly white;
Beautiful temple—God its light;
He who was slain on Calvary
Opens those pearly gates for me.

(Chorus)
Zion, Zion, lovely Zion;
Beautiful Zion;
Zion, city of our God!

2. Beautiful heav’n, where all is light;
Beautiful angels clothed in white;
Beautiful strains that never tire;
Beautiful harps thru all the choir;
There shall I join the chorus sweet,
Worshiping at the Savior’s feet.

3. Beautiful crowns on ev’ry brow;
Beautiful palms the conqu’rors show;
Beautiful robes the ransomed wear;
Beautiful all who enter there;
Thither I press with eager feet;
There shall my rest be long and sweet.

Interpretative Approaches to Revelation

See Steve Clegg, *Revelation: Four Views*

- **Preterist** (“past”): fulfillment is in the past, shortly after the time of writing
 - Many details refer to the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in A.D. 70
 - Rome is the beast, anti-Christ, etc.
 - had precedent in Christ’s “Little Apocalypse” of Mark 13 (the Olivet Discourse and parallels)
 - Neronian date allows prophecy; Domitianic date suggests “after the fact” composition
 - Relevant for its original audience, but not for modern readers
 - **Historicist** (fulfillment “in progress”): revelation surveys the whole history of “the Church”
 - early prophecies, such as the breaking of the seals, represent barbarian invasions of the Roman empire, etc.
 - the anti-Christ is usually identified with the papacy of the Roman Catholic Church
 - Revelation had little relevance for original audience
 - **Futurist**: everything after Rev 3 awaits future fulfillment
 - tends towards literal interpretations of visions
 - little application to original audience but intense relevance for modern audience
 - **Idealist** (Spiritual or Symbolic)
 - sees general themes of the triumph of good over evil, the sovereignty of God, and victory of Christ over Satan played out symbolically rather than in any actual historical events
- See also Bruce M. Metzger, *Breaking the Code: Understanding the Book of Revelation*

LDS Approaches to Revelation

- **The LDS approach is properly eclectic!**
 - Although we largely look at it from a **futurist point of view**, *prophecies often have multiple applications and can be applied to many situations* once the basic message is properly understood
- **D&C 77 relates directly to the interpretation of several passages in Revelation**
 - D&C 77:6-7 on the seven seals suggests a distinctly **preterist** interpretation for the first 5 seals, somewhat of a **historicist** interpretation for the sixth seal, and a **futurist** interpretation for the rest of the sixth and for the seventh
- **Joseph Smith on Revelation**
 - “Revelation is one of the plainest books God ever caused to be written.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 290)
 - On the other hand, concerning preaching on the Book of Revelation Joseph Smith once said: “This is the first time I have ever taken a text in Revelation, and *if the young elders would let such things alone, it would be far better.*” (Joseph Smith [2 April 1843], *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 171)
 - Regarding **symbolism**, Joseph Smith wrote: “Whenever God gives a vision of an image, or beast, or figure of any kind, He always holds himself responsible to give a revelation or interpretation of the meaning thereof, otherwise we are not responsible or accountable for our belief [about] it. Don’t be afraid of being damned for not knowing the meaning of a vision or figure, if God has not given a revelation or interpretation of the subject.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 291)

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First Revelatory Experience (4:1–11:19)

- A typical apocalyptic vision, namely an “**ascent**” into heaven
 - *John will be looking at events on earth—past, present, and future—from a heavenly perspective or vantage point*
- **The Opened Door in Heaven** (4:1a; *inclusio*, a unit beginning and ending with the same word or image)
- **Vision of the Heavenly Court: God and the Lamb** (4:1b–11)
- **The Seven-Sealed Scroll (5:1–11:19)**
 - The Scroll and the Lamb (5:1–14)
 - Opening the First Six Seals (6:1–7:17)
 - Seventh Seal and the Seven Trumpets (8:1–11:18)
 - Seven Angels and the Golden Censer (8:1–6)
 - First through Sixth Trumpets (8:7–9:20)
 - Two Digressions (10:1–11:14)
 - Seventh Trumpet (11:15–18)
- **The Opened Temple in Heaven** (11:19)

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Vision of the Heavenly Court (Revelation 4:1b–11)

“AND I SAW IN THE RIGHT HAND OF HIM THAT SAT ON THE THRONE A BOOK WRITTEN WITHIN AND ON THE BACKSIDE, SEALED WITH SEVEN SEALS. AND I SAW A STRONG ANGEL PROCLAIMING WITH A LOUD VOICE, ‘WHO IS WORTHY TO OPEN THE BOOK, AND TO LOOSE THE SEALS THEREOF? . . . BEHOLD, THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDA, THE ROOT OF DAVID, HATH PREVAILED TO OPEN THE BOOK, AND TO LOOSE THE SEVEN SEALS THEREOF.’” (REVELATION 5:1–5)

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Vision of the Heavenly Court (4:1b–11)

- **The Seer’s Call** (4:1, akin to a call story; cf. Isaiah 6, 1 Nephi 1:5–15)
- **The Heavenly Worship** (4:2–11, apocalyptic vision)
 - The Throne (4:2–3)
 - **The 24 Elders**
 - Old and New Israel?
 - “We are to understand that these elders whom John saw, were elders who had been faithful in the work of the ministry and were dead; who belonged to the seven churches, and were then in the paradise of God.” (D&C 77:5)
 - **7 Spirits (“perfect” or complete number)**
 - **Sea of Glass**
 - “Q. What is the sea of glass spoken of by John, 4th chapter, and 6th verse of the Revelation? A. **It is the earth, in its sanctified, immortal, and eternal state.**” (D&C 77:1)
 - 4 Heavenly Beasts (4:4–8a; cf. Ezek. 1:5–28 and D&C 77:2–4)
 - **Song of the Beasts: Trisagion or “Thrice Holy”**
 - “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” (4:8b; cf. Isaiah 6:2–3)
 - Elders’ Song of Praise (4:9–11)

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The Scroll and the Lamb (5:1-14)

- **The Search (5:1-5)**
 - “And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne **a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals**. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? . . . behold, **the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.**” (5:1-5)
 - **a book written within and on the backside** → **history of the earth!**
 - *The Lamb become a Lion, moving from Savior role to Judge/Punisher*
- **The Lamb Takes the Scroll (5:6-7)**
- **Song of the 4 Beasts and 24 Elders (5:8-10)**
 - “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: **for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood** out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; **And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.**”
 - Not just salvation but exaltation!
- **Song of the Angels (5:11-12)**
 - “**Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.**”
- **Song of all Creatures in Heaven and Earth (5:13-14)**
 - Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, [be] **unto him that sitteth upon the throne**, and **unto the Lamb for ever and ever.**”

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The Seven Seals (6:1-8:17)

- Different Interpretations
 - **Preterist**: Unsealing represents God’s judgment on the Jews and Jerusalem during the Roman-Jewish War (A.D. 66-70)
 - **Historicist**: Unsealing begins with Domitian’s reign (A.D. 81-96) and chronicles the decline of the Roman empire
 - **Futurist**: Unsealing initiates the eschatological end times, in many views beginning with the Rapture of the Church
 - **Idealist** (Spiritualists): The scroll and its unsealing represents God’s judgment and dealing with man in every age
- Latter-day clarification
 - “Q. What are we to understand by the seven seals with which it was sealed? A. We are to understand that the first seal contains the things of the first thousand years, and the second also of the second thousand years, and so on until the seventh.” (D&C 77:7)
 - A distinctly **preterist** interpretation for the first 5 seals, somewhat of a **historicist** interpretation for the sixth seal, and a **futurist** interpretation for the rest of the sixth and for the seventh

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Opening the First Six Seals (6:1–7:17)

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First Group, Seals 1-4

horse imagery borrowed from Zechariah 6:1-5; past



Sharlene Lindskog-Osorio, "The Four Horses of the Apocalypse"

- **First Seal and White Horse (6:1-2, victorious warfare)**
 - Although the first application may have been from the violence that first plagued the earth in the first dispensation, the bow suggests contemporary Parthian warriors, for whom white was a sacred color (Parthia was Rome's formidable enemy across the Euphrates)
- **Second Seal and Red Horse (6:3-4; death war and bloodshed)**
- **Third Seal and Black Horse (6:5-6; famine)**
 - A denarius usually purchased 8-16 times the amount of grain mentioned here – inflation and famine follow war
- **Fourth Seal and Pale (Green) Horse (6:7-8; death by all causes, especially disease and pestilence)**
 - The color of decaying flesh

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Fifth Seal and the Martyred Saints (6:9–11; current)



Lamb-Jan Eyck, "Adoration of The Lamb"

- “And they cried with a loud voice, saying, **‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’** Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, **until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.**” (6:10–11 NKJV)

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Sixth Seal and Events to Come (6:12–7:17; future)

- **Destructions and Great Signs in Heaven Terrify the Great (6:12–17)**
- **Sealing of the 144,000 from Israel (7:1–8)**
 - Number and Tribes Symbolic
 - Dan is missing! Not mentioned perhaps because of a tradition that the Antichrist would arise from this tribe (based upon Gen 49:17)
 - $12 \times 12 \times 1,000 = 144,000$ (Old Israel x New Israel x “a big number” = *all of God’s people*)
 - Seals marked that which was the king’s property . . .
 - **General Application:** “The servants of God are sealed in their foreheads, which **signifies sealing the blessing upon their heads, meaning the everlasting covenant**, thereby making their calling and election sure.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 321.)
 - **Specific Application:** “Those who are sealed are **high priests**, ordained unto the holy order of God, to administer the everlasting gospel...to bring as many as will come to the church of the Firstborn.” (D&C 77:11) > not just high priests, **but ones that are kings and priests . . .**
- **Hosts of the Saved from Every Nation (7:9–17)**
 - Clothed in white and carrying palm branches, indicating that they are victorious
 - “. . . These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple . . . **the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.**” (7:14–17)

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The Seventh Seal and the Seven Trumpets

AND THE SEVENTH ANGEL SOUNDED; AND THERE WERE GREAT VOICES IN HEAVEN, SAYING, 'THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD ARE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD, AND OF HIS CHRIST; AND HE SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER.' AND THE FOUR AND TWENTY ELDERS, WHICH SAT BEFORE GOD ON THEIR SEATS, FELL UPON THEIR FACES, AND WORSHIPPED GOD, SAYING, 'WE GIVE THEE THANKS, O LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, WHICH ART, AND WAST AND ART TO COME; BECAUSE THOU HAST TAKEN TO THEE THY GREAT POWER, AND HAST REIGNED.'" (11:15-17)

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Seven Angels and the Golden Censer (8:1-6)



From the Bamberg Apocalypse (11th century illuminated manuscript)

- Seven traditional archangels "in the presence of God" with LDS identifications: **Michael** (Adam); **Raphael** (Enoch?), **Gabriel** (Noah), Uriel, Raguel, Sariel, and Remiel (see Tob. 12:15; Grk Enoch 20)
- **Plagues based loosely on the Ten Plagues of Egypt (Exodus 7-12)**
 - **Treatment of Christians under the Romans in all ages by their opponents compared to the enslavement of the Hebrews by the Egyptians**
 - First Trumpet (8:7)
 - Seventh Egyptian Plague—hail, Ex. 9:22-26
 - Second Trumpet (8:8-9)
 - First Egyptian Plague—water to blood, Ex. 7:20-21
 - Third Trumpet (8:10-11)
 - **unique—wormwood poisons water**
 - Fourth Trumpet (8:12-13)
 - Ninth Egyptian Plague—darkness, Ex. 10:21-22
 - Fifth Trumpet (9:1-12)
 - Eight Egyptian Plague Plus—locusts, Ex. 10:4-20
 - Sixth Trumpet (9:13-20)
 - **unique—destruction by (modern) warfare**; much is made of this in **futurist** schools, the bizarre imagery of destruction seen as the results of tanks, aircraft, nuclear and biological weapons, etc.

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Interpretations of the Seven Trumpets



- **Preterist:** Trumpets represent the disasters that befell the Jews during the Roman-Jewish War (A.D. 66–70); *the Sixth Trumpet refers to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem*
- **Historicist:** Trumpets symbolize various invasions of the Roman Empire during its decline; *the sixth trumpet represents the final fall of Rome during the Turkish sack of Constantinople in A.D. 1453*
 - Euphrates had been the eastern border of the Roman Empire
- **Futurist:** Literally or symbolically, *the trumpets represent the calamities during the Tribulation Period upon the unrighteous in the end times*
- **Idealist** (Spiritualists): Calamities reminiscent of the plagues of Egypt have afflicted and will continue to afflict man throughout history, representing *God's displeasure with sin*
- **Latter-day Saint**
 - "... in the beginning of the seventh thousand years will the Lord God sanctify the earth, and complete the salvation of man, and judge all things, and shall redeem all things, except that which he hath not put into his power, when he shall have sealed all things, unto the end of all things; *and the sounding of the trumpets of the seven angels are the preparing and finishing of his work, in the beginning of the seventh thousand years—the preparing of the way before the time of his coming.*" (D&C 77:12)
 - *Primary purpose of trumpets is to call to repentance, not to destroy! Disasters fall on good and evil alike, unlike the seven bowls of 15:1–16:21*

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The Mighty Angel and the Little Scroll (10:1–11, first digression)

- **This vision is the first of two digressions interrupting the narrative between the sixth and seventh trumpets**
- **The Mighty Angel (Michael? Christ himself?)**
 - "And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth . . . and lifted up his hand to heaven, *And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer*" (10:1–6; cf. D&C 84:100, 88:110)
- **The Little Scroll and the Mission of John (10:8–11)**
 - "What are we to understand by the little book which was eaten by John, as mentioned in the 10th chapter of Revelation? We are to understand that *it was a mission, and an ordinance, for him to gather the tribes of Israel*; behold, this is Elias, who, as it is written, must come and restore all things." (D&C 77:14)
 - Symbolism of eating the book comes from Ezekiel's commission in Ezek. 2:8–3:3, although *the bitterness in the belly is an addition*
 - Sweet to receive God's word, but *the message of judgment and wrath filled John with sorrow*
 - Could John's *long* mission, although sweet in result, have been difficult or bitter to experience?

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The Two Witnesses and the 1,260 Days (11:1–18, second digression)

- “And I will give power unto **my two witnesses**, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.” (11:2)
 - 1,260 days = 42 months or 3 ½ years, stereotypical time of eschatological distress (see Daniel 7:25, 12:6; more next slide)
 - From this is derived the so-called 7 year “Tribulation Period”
- These are **the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth**. And if any man will hurt them, **fire proceedeth out of their mouth**, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have **power to shut heaven**, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy; and **have power over waters to turn them to blood**, and to **smite the earth with all plagues**, as often as they will.” (11:3–6)
 - **Two olive trees**, the anointed prince Zerubbabel and priest Joshua from Zechariah 4:3-14
 - **Fire destroying enemies** and **shutting up the heavens** is reminiscent of **Elijah** (1 Kings 17:1-7; 2 Kings 1:9-12)
 - **Power to turn water to blood** and **to smite the earth with plagues** recalls the power of **Moses** (Ex. 7-12, etc.)
 - “They are **two prophets that are to be raised up to the Jewish nation in the last days**, at the time of the restoration, and to prophesy to the Jews after they are gathered and have built the city of Jerusalem in the land of their fathers.” (D&C 77:15)

Interpretations of the 1,260 Days

- **Preterist**: The 1,260 days represents the period of *the Jewish War, Nero’s persecution, or both*
- **Historicist**: The 1,260 days are actually 1,260 years, representing *the period when papal Rome held sway over Christianity*; the measuring of the temple refers to God’s identifying the true remnant of the Church, and *the two witnesses represent those who resisted the papal church at the time of the Reformation*
- **Futurist**: Usually seen as *a literal three and one-half years in the “Tribulation Period”*; the two witnesses that function as *Moses and Elijah figures*
 - **Rapture** - a fairly new term for the expectation that faithful Christians will be taken off the earth to live with Jesus, while all other people are not; based on an interpretation of 1Thess 4:15-17 and the witnesses’ rapture in 11:12
 - **Tribulation** - in fundamentalist expectations, a 7-year period of great suffering and turmoil before the Second Coming of Christ; but exactly when the rapture is to occur in relation to the tribulation is disputed among such believers:
 - *Pre-Tribulation Rapture* - non-believers have to endure the 7-year tribulation, but believers are raptured first;
 - *Mid-Tribulation Rapture* - believers must endure 3½ years of tribulation before they are raptured;
 - *Post-Tribulation Rapture* - believers must endure the entire 7-year tribulation before they are raptured.
- **Idealist** (Spiritualists): The 1,260 days represent *the entire “Church Age,”* and *the witnesses are the church.*

Seventh Trumpet (11:15–18; Kingdom of the Lord begins on Earth)



From Bamberg Apocalypse

- And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, **The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.** And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, 'We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, **<and art to come>**; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.'" (11:15–17)
 - The Textus Receptus, basis of the KJV, "restored" **and art to come** by analogy to the formula elsewhere . . . The best mss. do not have it
 - **Christ is no longer "the coming one" because his mission is accomplished?**
 - ". . . behold, one like **the Son of Man** came with the clouds of heaven, and came **to the Ancient of Days**, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Daniel 7:13–14)