

WHO SHALL SOUND THE TRUMPET?

Where is the Church, in its Transition Toward the Great Tribulation?

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Introduction.

This short writing began with the question, “*Where is the Church, in its Transition Toward the Great Tribulation?*” “Transition” refers to my recent book, The Church Visited. That book reported the scriptural details of a plan for the end-times Church, given prophetically to a small home church in Texas in 1997. The meaning of the question, “Who Shall Sound the Trumpet?” shall become clear in this present writing.

The book, The Church Visited, presented God’s plan for the Church of Great Tribulation times. It told us what God is going to do, how the Church will react, and what needs to happen in the Church. But, the book wasn’t prescriptive. It didn’t tell us in detail what to do, right now. The plan is “corporate,” rather than “individual.” It addresses the Church corporately. But, it doesn’t tell us how to proceed, individually. That is what this present writing is about.

God’s plan to move the Church from its present condition to where it needs to be by the time of the Great Tribulation is a plan employing God’s current-day prophets. In the Bible, prophets, who play the role of watchmen of the Church, are characterized as “trumpeters.” That characterization is key to our individual callings and duties in the Transition. And, the fact that the plan revolves around the prophets is not a restriction. That is, it does not restrict who of us may participate.

During this present writing, I worked through these questions, seeking to formulate “The Question” on paper. As things got clearer, I was reminded of a book gathering dust in my bookshelf. Set The Trumpet to Thy Mouth, by David Wilkerson, was published in 1985. Upon rereading, I found that many of the items of Wilkerson’s book paralleled items in the transition plan. His book ended without a Conclusion. And, his introductory premise was nuclear war in America, based on his interpretation of [Rev. 8-11].

The introductory premise of The Church Visited is also the destruction shown in [Rev. 8-11]. My interpretation held to a more natural astronomical origin of that destruction from the skies. The reason for the difference between Wilkerson’s and my interpretations may be the intervening fall of the Soviet Empire. In any event, both books contain similar analyses of Old- and New-Testament scriptures concerning the Great Tribulation and its effects on America, no matter its cause. We both agree that the ultimate cause is God, no matter what agency He uses to effect the event.

One of Wilkerson’s main questions was, “Who Will Listen?” The main question of my present writing is, “Who Shall Speak?” “Will” and “Shall” are not synonyms. The first implies individual choice. The second implies destiny. I am not so interested in who (of the prophets) will choose to speak. My interest is in who, in the event, actually does the speaking. And, there immediately follows a second question. “What shall be spoken?” I believe that it is the message of The Church Visited.

Question: Where is the Great Tribulation Church in its Transition?

The message of The Church Visited is that the Institutional Church has historically birthed the Apostate Church that will be the sole government-authorized church in the Great Tribulation. Many have left the Institutional Church for the Remnant Church, exemplified by many non-denominational churches. But the Remnant Church is also “doing its own thing,” on the path to apostasy and captivity. However, it shall birth God’s answer to the Apostate Church, being the mature, Overcoming Church of the Great Tribulation. The Bible calls it the “remnant of the remnant.” The Old Testament type is those who returned from the captivity of Judah, to rebuild the Temple in 537 BC.

The book also shows that under Great Tribulation, the Remnant Church shall become quiescent, becoming essentially a dormant, underground entity. Only the Overcoming Church shall be vocal and dynamically active during the Great Tribulation. The present question is about the characteristics of those who are the remnant of the remnant, the Overcoming Church of the Great Tribulation.

There is a foundational premise underlying this question. That premise is that the Church is going to be present during the Great Tribulation. Given that premise, then the Church is to be prepared for its role in the Great Tribulation. And, a transition is required from the Church’s present condition to its condition of preparation for the Great Tribulation. If the Church is to be present during the Great Tribulation, then it can not have been raptured before that time. The timing of the Rapture, with respect to the Great Tribulation, is a foundational premise that needs to be scripturally justified before proceeding to determine where the Church presently is in its transition to preparedness. Let’s look at that premise, now.

Foundational Premise: The Timing of the Rapture.

Whether or not the Rapture occurs before the Great Tribulation is easily determined from just two scriptural passages. The first is from Jesus, Himself. The second is from Paul. Thus, there are the necessary two witnesses by which this matter may be determined [Mat. 18:16], [2 Cor. 13:1].

Jesus said that immediately after the Great Tribulation the sun and moon shall be darkened and He shall send His angels with the great sound of a trumpet to gather His elect (the Church) [Mat. 24:28-31]. Paul said that we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, with that happening at the last trumpet [1 Cor. 15:51-52]. So the trumpet at which the Rapture occurs is the “last trumpet.”

The Great Tribulation starts at the first trumpet, in a sequence of seven [Rev. 8:7-11:15]. And, it is at the seventh and last trumpet that the mystery of God is completed [Rev. 10:7]. So, it appears scripturally that the Church is present on Earth during the “Trumpets” period of the Great Tribulation. The Church leaves at the seventh trumpet, which announces the “Wrath of God.” The Church leaves because it is not appointed to wrath [1 Ths. 5:9]. But, it is appointed to tribulation [John 16:33]. In making these connections, I am doing so by matching the Greek words in the various scriptures.

A sequence of seven trumpets seems familiar. There is a sequence of seven trumpets in the Old Testament book of Joshua. There, seven trumpets were used in preparing the Israelite army for its combat to seize the land that God had promised

them. It was a promise of God that had to be fought for. In preparing for combat, there was a “transition” in the ancient Israelite “Church.” Taking the events surrounding Israel’s crossing of the Jordan River as a model for today’s Transition is using what is known as a Biblical “Type.” It is a model derived from Old Testament times, applied to New Testament times. In the book, I related the river crossing type to a seven-fold Church model. Before examining the river crossing in detail, let’s talk about the Church model.

The Church Model: Seven-fold structure and seven- and eight-fold processes.

In The Church Visited I employed a model of the Church that has many uses. The model is distilled from 23 sets of scriptures from both Old Testament and New. That model was essentially structural and had seven elements. By “structural,” I mean that the seven-fold model displays 23 different properties of the Church. These properties are static, in that they don’t change with time.

There is an extension of the seven-fold structural Church characterization that models dynamic processes in the Church. I did not put that in the book, because of space limitations. The first seven “slots” of the eight-fold process model have the same contexts in the same order as in the seven-fold structural model. The eighth slot has the context of “Overcoming.” Therefore, the first seven slots of the seven-fold Church model may be taken as not only modeling structure but also modeling dynamic process. The eight-fold process model thus models the same process as in the seven-fold model, but has one extra step succeeding the seven-fold process model.

The eight-fold contexts of Christian process are in the order of Faith, Truth, Spirit, Power, Ministry, Doctrine, Maturity, and Overcoming. I believe that this is the order in which an individual Christian progresses from his initial “salvation” event to maturity. (Whether an individual Christian “overcomes” before physical death, I will leave for the reader to ponder [Rev. 12:11].) As this sequence of contexts applies to Christian individuals, so, also does it apply to the corporate Church.

In the book, I went to great lengths to differentiate corporate Christianity from individual. God’s current message is to the corporate Church. He has already said all He’s going to say about individual Christianity. As I stated in the book, Jesus’ first ministry was to define individual Christianity and to set up the corporate Church. But, His second ministry, which is from heaven, is a corporate matter. This is not to say that He doesn’t minister from heaven to individuals. He does, as I am an individual example. But, the purpose of His ministry to individual Christians has been corporate since at least the Protestant Reformation. He has been working on His Church, corporately, for a long time. And, the result of His corporate efforts may be seen in history. I believe that we can see the eight-fold process sequence operative in the history of the last five hundred years. Let’s briefly verify that, now.

An Example - Protestant History Since the Reformation

The Reformation was an event in history that marked Jesus’ effort to bring the Church out of what was characterized as another “Babylonian Captivity.” As shown in The Church Visited, the Reformation terminated one cycle of the Church and initiated the present cycle, which I believe to be the last. Jesus was the “First,” to start the Christian Church, and He shall be the “Last,” to restore it [Isa. 44:6], [Rev. 1:11]. The Reformation was just that, re-formation, and not total restoration.

The current historical Church cycle commenced in the 1500s, with the efforts of Luther (in Germany), Calvin (in Switzerland), and the English, to loose the Church from what Luther called its “Babylonian Captivity,” administered from Rome, Italy. The rallying cry of the Reformation was that salvation (justification) is by faith, and not by works. The context of the Reformation was FAITH.

In the 1600s, there was a major European movement of Puritans, Congregationalists, and Baptists, that sought to purge the Protestant Church of residual Romanism. It caused the creation of a readily available and precise English translation of the (Greek and Hebrew) Bible (King James Version). It focused the Church on the priesthood of every believer and the possibility of actually living the truth of the Bible. It exported Christian truth to the American colonies. The context of this move was TRUTH.

In the 1700s, a movement associated with Edwards, Whitefield, and Wesley, known as the Great Awakening, commenced in Europe and rapidly spread to America. It focused English and American Christians on the necessity of the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit and true conversion for “life in Christ.” It differentiated cold, standard religion and Holy Spirit Christianity. It birthed evangelicalism and Methodism. The context of this move was SPIRIT.

In the 1800s, a movement associated with the name of Finney, known as the Second Great Awakening, commenced in the United States. It focused frontier American Christians on holiness and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in power, signs, and wonders. It produced a uniquely American evangelicalism and culminated with the founding of Pentacostalism in Los Angeles, California. The context of this move was POWER.

In 1960, a movement associated with the name of Bennett, known as the Charismatic Renewal, commenced, also in Los Angeles. It focuses on all the working gifts of [1 Cor. 12] and the fruit of the Spirit [Gal. 5:22], through ministry to Jesus and to believers. It is non-sectarian, penetrating all the denominations, including Roman Catholicism. It does not found denominations, but connects them. The context of this move is MINISTRY.

The current move of God, in my opinion, started in about 1990, and is not yet associated with any particular name. It is bible-based and operates on direct revelation from Jesus, balancing the rhema and logos Words of God. It seeks Early-Church simplicity, effectiveness, and cleansing by spiritual means, rather than physical. It seeks Jesus’ true doctrine, discarding those of man and demons. It is birthing a doctrinally unified remnant of the denominationally fractured Christian Church. The context of this move is DOCTRINE. (I have called this the Sixth Move of God in modern times.)

The Church Visited makes the case that the very end-times Church that operates in the context of MATURITY will be the Overcoming Church. This is a structural conclusion. That is, the Church of the Great Tribulation must needs be the Overcoming Church, and it will be mature. From the process standpoint, when the Church reaches maturity there is then one more procedural step before “Trumpets.” That last procedural step concerns one aspect of Overcoming, being COMMUNICATIONS.

Transition Phases: Individual and Corporate.

As detailed in The Church Visited, there are many scriptural types that model the Church Transition. However, the one that is most detailed is the transition of the ancient Hebrews across the Jordan and into the Promised Land. In that transition there were seven events preparatory to crossing the river. Then, there were eight more events prior to the commencement of warfare at the seventh trumpet sounding. It is these fifteen transitional events, prior to trumpets, that we shall look at, in detail. These events, before and after the actual river crossing, define two transitional phases, being the early and the late, or the first and the last.

The First Phase – Preparing the Individual Warrior. Going on to Maturity.

When the Israelites approached the Jordan River, to cross it, there were seven preparatory steps on the East side of the river. These steps were of God, preparing the people individually.

Step-1: The river is at flood stage. Yet, God calls the people to cross over to the land that He is giving them. To be obedient in the face of apparent obstacles, this step is going to require FAITH [Jos. 1:2].

Step-2: God strengthens the people with His assurance that no one on the other shore will be able to withstand them when they get there. And, that is because He will be with them and not forsake them. And, that's the TRUTH [Jos. 1:5].

Step-3: Next, God urges the people to be strong and very courageous, that they may perform all according to the Covenant that He has established with them. If they don't deviate, they will prosper in the coming combat. He is building them up in SPIRIT [Jos. 1:6-7].

Step-4: God then instructs the people that the Holy Scriptures embodying the Covenant are not passive, but are to be actively used to achieve success. They are to be meditated, in the sense that they are to be spoken, verbally, in the course of action. God's logos becoming rhema is a source of POWER [Jos. 1:8-9].

Step-5: Now the scribes (grammateus – Sept.) are commanded to carry the word to the people, to prepare to cross. And, the scribes give the people the timing of the forthcoming action. The context of this activity of the scribes is Bible-based MINISTRY [Jos. 1:10-11].

Step-6: The first reconnaissance party comes back from across the river and verifies that all is as God has said. The inhabitants of the promised land that is to be conquered are in fear of the People of God. The land lies there, just waiting to be taken. The context of this verifying reconnaissance is DOCTRINE [Jos. 2:23-24].

Step-7: Now, the people form up by tribes of warriors, to follow the Ark of the Covenant across the river. At this time they are given specific details about the seven tribes across the river that God will drive out from in front of them. This is it. The warriors are now formed up into a corporate entity, ready to enter into the enemy-possessed country for war. The context of this step is MATURITY [Jos. 3:1-10].

The Second Phase: Preparing the Church as a Corporate Entity.

On the West side of the river, the Israelite war-fighting force did not immediately enter into combat. There were eight steps to prepare them as a unified, corporate Body, capable of carrying the war to the enemy.

Step-1: This is for a people who have sanctified themselves. They are to follow the Ark. The Ark contains logos Word, manna that never sours, and rod of priestly authority. They are not to get ahead of the Ark, born by the priests, but are to use it as an indicator of the route of march. Where it goes left, they go left. Where it goes right, they go right. It's as Peter said, that our entrance shall be fully furnished [2 Pet. 1:3-11]. And, this transitional crossing, this "entering in," is to commence when the priests step into the waters of the swollen river. It is truly a step of FAITH [Jos. 3]

Step-2: They are twelve tribes, peoples of all characters, according to Jacob's character sketches [Gen. 49]. They include leaders, overcomers, the graceful, the blessed, wage-earners, merchants, and militants. There are the independent, reckless, unstable, and judgmental. Finally, there are those fruitful in affliction, representing the end-times fullness of the gentiles. The task at hand is going to take all kinds. And, that's the TRUTH [Jos. 4].

Step-3: They've entered in, now, but they don't yet carry the token of the New Covenant, circumcision [Rom. 2:29]. So, they are circumcised, to establish their calling and make their selection sure [2 Pet. 1:10]. And, they shall be equipped with the eight character elements necessary to a stable and fruitful walk [2 Pet. 1:5-7]. It's all about their hearts. Only now, it is to be a corporate heart [Mark 6:52]. It's a matter of the SPIRIT [Jos. 5:1-7].

Step-4: They have healed from their circumcision and are now "whole," that is, restored. The Lord now removes the reproach from this war-fighting people. They are no longer weak [2 Cor. 11:21]. From now on, it's a matter of POWER [Jos. 5:8-9].

Step-5: Next, the people keep Passover. It is the first feast of the first month, in the new land. And, it marks a change in their eating. They eat the required unleavened cakes in the evening, to mark Passover. But, the following morning (it's the same "day") they eat parched corn taken in the new land. And the manna stops. From now on, they will feed themselves on the fruit of the land they are to seize from its occupants. It's about feeding. And, that implies shepherding. And, that's a matter of MINISTRY [Jos. 5:10-12].

Step-6: At this point, the "captain of the host of the Lord" appears to Joshua. He is a divine Being, who speaks to Joshua in exactly the same way that God spoke to Moses. Joshua addresses Him as Lord. Who is this Lord of hosts? It is God's Redeemer (Deliverer – *rusamenos*), the First and the Last [Isa. 44:6]. And, we know Him as Jesus [Rom. 11:26], [Rev. 1:11]. He appears in the Church to give Joshua detailed instructions on battle DOCTRINE. [Jos. 5:13 – 6:5].

Step-7: The Lord's instructions are briefed to the army by Joshua. And, he passes on a warning to the troops. It's about the "accursed thing" (Gr.- *anathema*). Everything at the first battle target is devoted to the Lord. That means everything is to be destroyed, except the valuable metals, which are to go into the Lord's treasury. For Christians, the "accursed thing" (Gr.- *anathema*) is false preaching [Gal. 1:8-9] and not loving (phileo) the Lord [1 Cor. 16:22] (The two are related). It's about MATURITY [Jos. 6:6-10, 6:17-19].

Step-8: This process has an eighth step, that is associated with step-7. Joshua had instructed the people to not cry out nor let their voice be heard until they were so commanded. And, that command would not be given until the seventh day of blowing of the priests' trumpets, the day of overcoming. On that day, the trumpets would sound seven times. And the people would then shout (Gk.- *boao*). It shall be a shout of victory, when the walls of the enemy city shall fall down. It shall be the sound of those no longer mute, when the stones have screamed [Luke 19:40]. It shall be the sound [Gk.- *boao*] of those no longer barren, whose seed shall inherit the gentiles, who shall not remember their reproach when God for a small moment departed. It is the day when the Lord of hosts and Redeemer shall call His wife [Isa. 54:1-10]. It's about COMMUNICATION [Jos. 6:10-16].

The Eighth Preparatory Process: Transitional Communications.

The unified army is instructed to maintain "radio silence" during the period in which they repeatedly surround the enemy city. They are to repeatedly encompass the city and march silently around it. The only noise to be heard is to be the sounding of the priests' trumpets, on each march. The armed warriors are to precede the priests and the priests are to precede the Ark of the Lord. And, armed warriors are to follow the Ark, also. The army is to follow this procedure, six days. On the seventh day, the army is to repeat this procedure seven times. Only at the seventh sounding of the trumpets are they to open their mouths, giving the victory shout.

In the New Testament, reference to a person as "trumpeter" is symbolic of a prophet [1 Cor. 14:1-8]. The same is true in the Old Testament, where a prophet is set as a watchman over a sinning Church [Jer. 6:10-17]. In Christianity, all are spiritual priests [1 Pet. 2:9]. So, a Christian "trumpeter" may be taken in a spiritual sense to be a New Testament prophet, "sounding off" about an apostate Church.

In The Church Visited, the case was made that, as Asaph said, "*The enemy is in the sanctuary*" [Psa. 74:3]. Surrounding this enemy six times, with priests blowing trumpets each time, may be interpreted as prophets giving warning six times, while the Church sizes up the enemy and remains mute. In the seventh day, the enemy is encompassed seven times, with the trumpets sounding seven times. And at the seventh sounding that day, the command was given, and the heretofore mute Church gave the victory shout and took the city.

It may be that the seven days are seven prophets or seven prophetic phases, just before the final combat. It may be that the seventh day is the day of the seven trumpets of [Rev. 8-11]. And, it may be that the Church gives the victory shout only at the sounding of the seventh trumpet in that seventh day. For it is at the sounding of the final trumpet that the mystery of God is completed [Rev. 10:7].

If this final scenario is correct, then it shall be only the prophets making any sound before the final combat, with the bulk of the army remaining silent until the seventh trumpet.

The Bottom-Line Question:

So, now, I come to the question that has prompted me to write this. That question is whether it is only the prophets that shall be heard during the transition of the Church to prepare it for the Great Tribulation. Shall the bulk of the Church be mute during this transition?

This question does not restrict us to today's common views of prophets. Some churches, as we know, think that there are no modern prophets, and ignore what they say to the Church. Some think that prophetic messages are mainly for individuals, and are not corporate in nature. Some think that today's prophets are restricted to utterances that are positive. But, is there a scriptural view of the New Testament prophet that transcends these restrictions. Is there a view of prophecy that admits the participation of many in the transition, preparing the Church for victorious combat?

I hold that anyone can prophesy, under the direction of the Holy Spirit. An example is Amos, who was not a "professional." His prophecies were of but a few days duration, but are some of the most important end-times prophecies in the Bible. It is from Amos that we have, "*Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets*" [Amos 3:7].

The seven-fold Church model supports my view that anyone can prophesy under Holy Spirit direction. It suggests that a Christian's calling for work in the Church corresponds with his charismatic gifting, as listed in [Rom. 12:6-8]. That is, the Church task that best suits the Christian is one that best matches his Romans-12 gifting. In a separate writing, Froukje Eibrinks Jansen and I have given a detailed characterization of the seven prophetic ministries that match the seven Romans-12 gifts. This characterization includes both Old Testament and New Testament examples of prophets, by name. That writing accompanies this present one, on this website.

If only the prophets will be heard during the Transition, but if anyone can prophesy, then perhaps preparatory participation is a lot more open than might be thought. It is to explore this conjecture about communication during the Transition that has prompted me to write this. It has been on my mind since 1991. Now, with the publication of [The Church Visited](#), perhaps this can be evaluated, in the end-times context of the corporate Church. That is my hope.

The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets [1 Cor. 14:32].