

The **Seven Trumpets** in the Revelation details the sequence of events causing [the break-up of the Pagan Roman Empire into 10 kingdoms](#); events which led to the establishment of its successor kingdom, the Papacy; and the conflicts that would arise from another global scourge through the *End of Time*. In this lesson, we will understand the events that brought the sounding of the Seven Trumpets, and review details of the first four of the seven trumpets, occurring between the years A.D.395-476 (Revelation 8:6-13).

Roman Emperor Constantine I sought to unify a culturally divided empire through his "conversion" to the Christian faith in A.D.312. Rome, which historically granted freedom of religion to its subjects, was predominantly pagan and freely adopted and extolled the worship of new gods, housing them within the *Pantheon*, the "House of the gods". Christianity, which denounced idolatry and licentious pagan worship practices however, was viewed with contempt, becoming the subject of persecution- in part for its resemblances to its predecessor, Judaism. Emperor Nero in A.D.64 began mass persecution of Christians, ascribing blame to them for social instabilities and the fires that pillaged the city in that same year. With the Judeo-Roman conflict, resulting in the utter destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70 by Titus, Christians again fell under scrutiny and persecution as those who kept the Sabbath of the Jews. Christian abuse continued sporadically through the early Fourth Century until its cessation with Emperor Constantine's conversion. [The emperor's conversion drew a flood of new](#)

[converts](#), uncommitted to the tenets of the faith, but eager to adopt the popular fad. Power hungry Bishops in Rome, seeking favor with the emperor and the masses, were willing to compromise the faith, introducing holy-days and worship practices coincident with traditional pagan rites. One such compromise, as an omen of death to the Empire, was codified in the [Edict of Constantine on March 7, A.D.321](#), which read: "*On the venerable day of the sun, let the magistrates and the people residing in the cities rest, and let all the workshops be closed*". The introduction of a Sunday Law, in accord with pagan sun-god worship on Sunday, yet in opposition to the Christian and Jewish traditions of the 7<sup>th</sup>-day Sabbath rest, filled the cup of national rebellion, leading to national ruin. The relocation of the Roman capital to Constantinople in A.D.330 effectively divided the empire in two, Eastern and Western Empires. With Constantine's death, the Empire was divided into three provinces, Roman, Greek, and Oriental, among his three sons. The dividing and weakening of the empire left it vulnerable to the arrival of the *Seven Trumpets*, affirming the doom pronounced by God. The trumpets of God within the Revelation, signaling the rise and fall of nations, were His judgments enacted by **hirelings**, barbarian tribes of Europe and Asia Minor, upon the Roman Empire and the wayward church to which it was aligned.

As iniquity abounded within the Church of Rome and its *intelligences* flourished with the Roman State, the inconceivable became commonplace as *Roman Christians*, newly converted from paganism, resumed the former

persecutions by pagans, of faithful Christians who strived to uphold truths found in the Bible, the word of God. By A.D.393, under Emperor Theodosius I, the Roman Church had become decidedly Catholic, embracing the works of the false prophetess *Jezebel*, spoken in the Revelation 2:20.

#### **First Trumpet: (A.D.395-410) Alaric I and the Visigoths**

The sounding of the first trumpet brought "*hail and fire, mingled with blood upon the earth*" (Revelation 8:7). Describing the destruction of the Northern Kingdom of Ancient Israel by the Assyrians, the Bible utilized the symbol of a tempest of hail (Isaiah 28:2). In turn, the Assyrians themselves would be punished by another conquering army, Babylon, typified by a devouring fire, a tempest, and hailstones (Isaiah 30:30, 31). The First Trumpet, therefore, speaks of a *destroying army* that ravaged the earth by fire, consuming a third part of the trees and grass and shedding much blood. No more accurate description could be given of Alaric, the King of the Visigoths, who by A.D.410 sacked the city of Rome, catalyzing the fall of the Empire. Alaric and the Goths, unlike most kings who reserved their military offensives for warmer climates of spring, were unscathed by the harsh winters. They descended upon the Roman Empire from the regions now occupying the nation of Romania. His merciless attacks upon most of the 17 verdant provinces of Gaul, as well as Greece, left them as scorched ruins. That his wars scorched a third part of the earth, possibly gives references to his attacks upon one-third of the Empire's territories, formerly divided among Constantine's three

sons. His misfortunes during his four-year offensive upon Italy, and two unsuccessful attacks upon Rome were reversed on August 24, 410, when allies within the city opened the gates and he and His Visigoth armies plundered the city. Alaric's successful assault upon Rome opened the way for other marauding forces to attack.

#### **Second Trumpet: (428-477AD) Genseric I and the Vandals**

The sounding of the second trumpet depicts a great burning mountain with fire that was cast into the sea, killing a third part of the sea creatures and destroying the ships (Revelation 8:8, 9). Describing punishments to be levied upon the ancient Kingdom of Babylon, the destroying mountain, the prophet Jeremiah wrote, "*Behold, I [am] against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain*" Jeremiah 51:25. Similar to the fate of Babylon, Genseric would break the wealth and naval strength of the Roman Empire. Genseric was the king over the Germanic Arian Vandals, who primarily waged naval assaults against the Roman Empire from A.D.428-477. He subdued the Roman territories in northern Africa and captured Carthage, the richest of the Western Roman provinces, providing large amounts of food to Rome. Carthage also happened to house Rome's navy, then decimated by Genseric. The Vandals launched annual invasions against the Roman territories, presently known as Italy, France, Spain and Greece. Without raising his sail in

# The Seven Trumpets

## Supplemental Study 13 [Based on Revelation 8:2, 6-12]



Lesson 48

scourge of the Goths to the North, the Vandals subduing the southern portion of the empire and making its flotillas as burning mountains in the sea; and the Huns as those who turned the rivers and fountains to wormwood. Though his dominion had been vastly reduced from what it once was, the Roman Emperors or Caesars, continued to be revered by the world like the "sun", among other kings who were mere "stars". However, in A.D.476, the "sun" was decisively struck for the first and final time as the Western Roman Empire met extinction. At the behest of the Heruli Chieftain, Odoacer, who felt the Roman monarch was an unnecessary expense, Emperor Romulus Augustulus petitioned the Roman Senate with his resignation to the post. The Senate, identified as the "moon" in the Biblical narrative (Revelation 8:12), in their last act of obedience to the Roman King, effected their independence by drafting an epistle to Eastern Emperor Zeno, renouncing their right to choose their own master. Yielding its allegiance, and the Roman peoples' desire to be ruled with the Eastern Roman Empire under a single emperor, the Senate transferred power from Rome to Constantinople. The transfer of power opened the door for yet another barbarian annexation; Theodoric, the Ostrogoth laid claims on the abandoned Italian frontier. On March 5, A.D.493 the "Royalty" of Theodoric was claimed by the Goths, with the reluctant, and ambiguous consent of the emperor of the east. Thus, the fall of Ancient Rome gave way to a new era, the **Middle Ages**, in Western Europe.

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The boast of Attila was "the grass never grew where his horse had trod" signifying the utter destruction he left in his wake. Assumed to be of Asian [Mongolian] origin, Attila's appearance and his ability to command large armies exceeding 700,000 men made him the terror over the territories of both Eastern and Western Roman Empires.

Maintaining an alliance with Genseric, the Vandal, who had successfully subdued much of the Western Roman Empire to the south, Attila was persuaded to attack Constantinople and the Eastern Empire. He commenced his attacks in A.D.441 and vanquished the Eastern territories in three successive waves; the first wave stretched from Hellespont to Thermopylae, including the suburbs of Constantinople; the second wave was against Thrace in A.D.443; and the third wave was against Macedonia in A.D.447. Confident from his successes against the Eastern Empire, Attila amassed an innumerable army of Germanic Goths to attack Gaul to the west. He was, however, checked by a combined army of Romans and Visigoths near Orleans. Undeterred by the loss in Gaul, Attila crossed the Alps and marched into Italy. His conquests, extending through modern Lombardy, were halted only by terms of an agreement established between the Western Roman Emperor, Valentinian III, the Senate, and the people of Rome. The term of the agreement was that Attila marry Valentinian's sister, Honoria and that Attila would receive half of the Western territories as dowry.

### Fourth Trumpet: Roman Emperor and Senate

The Roman Emperor remained a revered figure despite the

any particular direction, Genseric in pious arrogance claimed, 'Leave the determination to the winds, they will transport us to the guilty coast whose inhabitants have provoked the divine justice.' In A.D.455, Genseric successfully marched upon Rome, pillaging the city despite the petitions of Bishop Leo I of the Roman Church, as well as a treaty of peace established in A.D.442 with the recently murdered king, Valentinian III. Genseric continued to rule the Western Roman Empire from the Strait of Gibraltar to Tripolitania until his death in A.D.477.

### Third Trumpet: (A.D.441-453) Attila and the Huns

"And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter" Rev 8:10, 11. The arrival of the third trumpet brought a power in appearance as one from out of this world, bringing punishment of burnings upon the fountains of waters so that they became bitter as wormwood, causing death. Wormwood is mentioned in the Bible as a bitter substance, associated with chastisement for rebellion (Lamentations 3:18, 19). The *Artemisia absinthium* plant (the Greek designation *absinthion* means "undrinkable"), which is believed to be that wormwood, is toxic in large amounts, causing kidney failure and epileptic like responses. Wormwood is an expression befitting the places visited by *Attila and the Huns*.