

Sermon 13 - The Countdown to the End: Timeline of the Seven Seals, Seven Trumpets, and Seven Plagues

Pastor Ed Anderson

Scripture Reading: Revelation 22:12 – *“Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”*

Opening Hymn: “Watch, Ye Saints” (#598, SDA Hymnal)

Closing Hymn: “Jesus is Coming Again” (#213, SDA Hymnal)

In the year **79 AD**, the Roman city of **Pompeii** was one of the **wealthiest and most extravagant cities in the empire**. It was a **center of trade, entertainment, and luxury**, much like the major cities of today. The people **felt secure in their prosperity**—believing nothing could disturb their way of life.

Then, one morning, **strange signs began to appear**.

- **Tremors shook the ground.**
- **Animals became restless.**
- **A dark plume of smoke started rising from Mount Vesuvius.**

The warnings were clear: **Something was coming.**

But the people of Pompeii ignored the signs.

- **Some mocked the idea that anything would happen.**
- **Others were too busy with their daily pleasures to pay attention.**
- **Only a few heeded the warnings and fled before it was too late.**

Then, **without warning, at noon on August 24, Mount Vesuvius erupted with a force 100,000 times more powerful than an atomic bomb!**

- **A massive cloud of ash shot 20 miles into the sky.**
- **Toxic gas and molten rock buried the entire city.**
- **Thousands perished instantly, caught off guard by the disaster they thought would never come.**

A Prophetic Parallel: The Countdown to the End

What happened in Pompeii is happening to our world today.

1. The signs are all around us—yet many ignore them.
2. The final events are unfolding—yet people continue as if life will go on forever.
3. God has given us a prophetic countdown—the Seals, Trumpets, and Plagues—but are we listening?

Luke 21:34-35 – “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth.”

The clock is ticking. The warnings are clear.

Are we like the people of Pompeii, ignoring the countdown?

Today and next week, we will explore the three major prophetic sequences in Revelation:

The Seven Seals – The History of Judgment and How God’s People Are Tested.

The Seven Trumpets – Warnings to a Rebellious World to Repent Before It’s Too Late.

The Seven Plagues – The Final Judgments That Fall on Those Who Reject Christ.

The question is: WHERE ARE WE IN THIS COUNTDOWN?

In the Bible, the **Seven Seals**, **Seven Trumpets**, and **Seven Plagues** represent three distinct but interconnected prophetic sequences that unfold from Christ’s ascension to the Second Coming and beyond.

Here's the **general timeline and relationship** between them:

The Seven Seals (Revelation 6-8:1) → The Progressive History of God's People

Time Period: From the Early Church (1st Century) to the Second Coming

- The **Seven Seals** symbolize the **historical unfolding** of God's church and its **struggles through time**, leading up to the final events.
- They depict **persecution, apostasy, judgment, and the sealing of the saints**.
- The **Sixth Seal** (Revelation 6:12-17) describes **cosmic signs** leading up to Christ's return.

Seals Summary:

1. They show how history unfolds from Christ's ascension to the time of judgment.
 2. They highlight the ongoing battle between truth and apostasy.
 3. The Seventh Seal introduces the silence in heaven—pointing to the final judgment.
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The Seven Trumpets (Revelation 8-11) → Judgments and Warnings to the World

Time Period: From the Fall of Rome (~5th Century) to the Final Crisis BEFORE the Second Coming

- The **Trumpets** represent **divine judgments** falling on the world, particularly in relation to **those who oppose God's truth**.
- Adventist interpretation often sees them as **historical events**, including the **fall of Rome**, the rise of Islam, the Protestant Reformation, and growing world crises.
- The **Seventh Trumpet** (Revelation 11:15-19) marks the **final proclamation of Christ's Kingdom**, leading to the close of probation.

Trumpets Summary:

1. They warn the world of judgment and call for repentance.
2. They historically align with key world events, leading to the final crisis.
3. The Seventh Trumpet signals the time for Christ to reclaim His kingdom.

The Seven Last Plagues (Revelation 16) → The Final Wrath of God

Time Period: AFTER Probation Closes (Immediately Before the Second Coming)

- The **Plagues** are different from the Trumpets because they **do not come as warnings**—they come as **final judgments** upon those who rejected God.
- They **only fall on the wicked** who received the mark of the beast (Revelation 16:2).
- These plagues mirror the **plagues of Egypt**, showing that **God is delivering His people** just as He did in the Exodus.
- The **Seventh Plague** brings the **final earthquake** and the **fall of Babylon**, ushering in Christ's return (Revelation 16:17-21).

Plagues Summary:

1. They happen **AFTER** the close of probation—no more repentance is possible.
 2. They only affect the wicked who rejected God's final call.
 3. They lead directly to the Second Coming of Jesus.
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The Timeline: How They Fit Together

□ The Seven Seals → (From the 1st Century to the Final Judgment)

- Reveals the spiritual history of the church and God's people leading to the last days.
- Ends with the close of probation (the sealing of God's people).

▢ The Seven Trumpets → (Judgments and Warnings Before Probation Closes)

- Begins during the fall of Rome and continues through history.
- Acts as **warnings** to call the world to repentance before the final crisis.
- The **Seventh Trumpet** introduces Christ's reign and the final judgment.

☒ The Seven Plagues → (Final Wrath of God After Probation Closes)

- Begins **AFTER** probation closes—no one can repent at this stage.
- Only falls on the wicked who rejected God's mercy.
- Leads directly to the Second Coming of Jesus.

Final Overview: The Big Picture

Seals (History of God's People)	Trumpets (Warnings to the World)	Plagues (Final Wrath)
 From Christ's Ascension (1st Century) to the Judgment	 From the Fall of Rome to the Close of Probation	 AFTER Probation Closes → Before the Second Coming
Focuses on the Church and the Saved	Focuses on the World and Judgment Warnings	Focuses on the Wicked and Final Justice
Sealing and Testing of God's People	Partial Judgments to Warn the Wicked	Complete Wrath of God on Those Who Rejected Him
Ends with Silence in Heaven (Judgment Begins)	Ends with Christ's Kingdom Declared	Ends with Babylon Destroyed & Christ's Second Coming

Conclusion: Why This Matters

1. We are now living in the final moments of the Seals and Trumpets—very soon, probation will close, and the Plagues will fall!
2. The world is being warned, but will we listen before it's too late?
3. We must be sealed in Christ now before the final judgments begin.

Revelation 22:12 – *“Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”*

Final Appeal: Are You Ready?

Imagine **standing on the deck of the Titanic**. The ship is sinking, and the **lifeboats are filling up**. Some are **ignoring the alarms**, while others **rush for safety**.

Today, we have a choice:

❑ **Be sealed by God**—or receive the mark of the beast.

❑ **Hear the warnings of the Trumpets**—or be swept away by the final judgments.

📖 **Prepare now**—or face the full wrath of the Plagues.

📖 **Revelation 16:15** – *“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments.”*

The time is now. The countdown is almost over.

The countdown is almost over—are you ready?