

The Patterns Of God

Trumpets: The Real War to End all Wars

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For us in the year 2004, the thought of having our lives and direction moved by the sound of trumpets seems hard to imagine. We are in a democratic society where we decide pretty much what we want. We vote; and even if the vote does not go our way, we still do what we want. We are quite a society.

This was not the case with ancient Israel in the wilderness. Their lives—movements, warnings, and actions—revolved around the sound of the trumpet. In Exodus 19, we see where God introduced Israel to the communication, or language, of the trumpet call for His people.

Exodus 19:14-19 So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes. And he said to the people, "Be ready for the third day; do not come near your wives." Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice.

This was Israel's introduction to the trumpet.

Numbers 10:1-10 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for the calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps. When they blow both of

them, all the congregation shall gather before you at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. But if they blow only one, then the leaders, the heads of the divisions of Israel, shall gather to you. When you sound the advance, the camps that lie on the east side shall begin their journey. When you sound the advance the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall begin their journey; they shall sound the call for them to begin their journeys. And when the assembly is to be gathered together, you shall blow, but not sound the advance. The sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets; and they these shall be to you as an ordinance forever throughout your generations. When you go to war in your land against the enemy who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, and you will be remembered before the LORD your God, and you will be saved from your enemies. Also in the day of your gladness and in your appointed feasts, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be a memorial for you before your God: I am the LORD your God."

Though we in the church are not governed by the sound of the trumpet, we all long to hear the seventh trump, the last trump that will herald in the new, wonderful world tomorrow. We will have peace, and generally everybody on the earth will be of like mind. Every Feast of Trumpets, it is our nature to picture the positive aspects of this day: the return of Jesus Christ, and certainly our being changed into spirit and starting a new life. It is important for us to realize and consider, however, that there is a correctional side, a warning side of this day that is not normally discussed. It is very important that we do not let down and that we truly feel the urgency of the times. We must make changes in our lives, in order to avoid going through the tribulation that is definitely on the horizon in front of us.

We live in this society with all of our basic needs covered, a nation of strength and great power that has been touted as the strongest nation ever to exist, with more control over the world than that of which Rome in its best day could ever conceive. In an environment such as this, it really is easy not to feel urgency.

Though we are not called or moved by trumpets today, this day pictures God's actions that take place when the warning trumpets sound. We are fortunate enough to have biblical history to show us the events, or conditions, that existed, that preceded the warning trumpets being blown. We will see that these past circumstances that brought such disaster on ancient Israel are extant in Israel today. We will see the action that God will take because of His people's and the world's disobedience. Something preceded the blowing of trumpets to warn God's people, and it was Israel's coming apart at the seams.

Although we may not actually have the sound of a trumpet, we do have it in a sense. Through comparison of past events to the times in which we live, the message of the trumpet should ring loud and clear in our minds if we will but listen. In other words, these events are preceding disaster; and the sound of the trumpet, if it were blown, would certainly warn that this is going to come to pass. Ezekiel, a book written for the end time, gives us a picture of what is on the horizon for Israel

Ezekiel 7:1-15 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "And you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD to the land of Israel: 'An end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land. Now has the end come upon you, and I will send My anger against you; I will judge you according to your ways, and I will repay you for all your abominations. My eye will not spare you, nor will I have pity; but I will repay your ways, and your abominations will be in your midst; then you shall know that I am the LORD!' Thus says the Lord GOD: 'A disaster, a singular disaster; behold, it has come! An end has come, the end has come; it has dawned for you; behold, it has come! Doom has come to you, you who dwell in the land; the time has come, a day of trouble is near, and not of rejoicing in the mountains. Now upon you I will soon pour out My fury, and spend My anger upon you; I will judge you according to your ways, and will repay you for all your abominations. My eye will not spare, nor will I have pity; I will repay you according to your ways and your abominations will be in your midst. Then you shall know that I am the LORD who strikes. Behold the day! Behold, it has come! Doom has gone out; the rod has blossomed, pride has budded. Violence has risen up into a rod of wickedness; none of them shall

remain, none of their multitude, none of them; nor shall there be wailing for them. The time is come, the day draws near. Let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn, for wrath is on their whole multitude. For the seller shall not return to what has been sold, though he may still be alive; for the vision concerns the whole multitude, and it shall not turn back; no one will strengthen himself who lives in iniquity. They have blown the trumpet and made everyone ready, but no one goes to battle; for My wrath is on all their multitude. The sword is outside, and the pestilence and famine within. Whoever is in the field will die by the sword, and whoever is in the city, famine and pestilence will devour him."

He is saying, "Get serious, Israel!" God goes on to describe the fear that will take place in the land and that the wealth on which men rely will be counted so useless that they will throw it in the streets.

Ezekiel 7:16-18 'Those who survive will escape and be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, each for his iniquity. Every hand will be feeble, and every knee will be as weak as water. They will also be girded with sackcloth; horror will cover them; shame will be on every face, baldness on all their heads.'

This is a time that John Ritenbaugh talked about this morning ["God and Reality"] that is truly coming upon this nation.

Ezekiel 7:19-27 "They will throw their silver into the streets, and their gold will be like refuse; their silver and their gold will not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD; they will not satisfy their souls, nor fill their stomachs, because it is become their stumbling block of iniquity. As for the beauty of his ornaments, He set it in majesty; but they made from it the images of their abominations—their detestable things; therefore I have made it like refuse to them. I will give it as plunder into the hands of strangers, and to the wicked of the earth as spoil; and they shall defile it. I will turn My face from them, and they will defile My secret place; for robbers shall enter it and defile it. Make a chain, for the land is filled with of crimes of blood, and the city is full of

violence. Therefore I will bring the worst of the Gentiles, and they will possess their houses; I will cause the pomp of the strong to cease, and their holy places shall be defiled. Destruction comes; they will seek peace, but there shall be none. Disaster will come upon disaster, and rumor will be upon rumor. Then they will seek a vision from a prophet; but the law will perish from the priest, and counsel from the elders. The king will mourn, the prince will be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the common people will tremble. I will do to them according to their way, and according to what they deserve I will judge them; then they shall know that I am the LORD!"

When trouble comes, what goes through the heart of the people?

Jeremiah 4:19-22 O my soul, my soul! I am pained in my very heart! My heart makes a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because you have heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried, for the whole land is plundered; suddenly are my tents plundered, and my curtains in a moment. How long will I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet? "For My people are foolish, they have not known Me. They are silly children, and they have no understanding. They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge."

Why is God angry?

Jeremiah 6:9-17 Thus says the LORD of hosts: "They shall thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel; as a grape-gatherer, put back your hand into the branches." To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Indeed their ear is uncircumcised and they cannot give heed. Behold, the word of the LORD is a reproach to them; they have no delight in it. Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD. I am weary with holding it in. "I will pour it out on the children outside, and on the assembly of young men together; for even the husband shall be taken with the wife, the aged with him who is full of days. And their houses shall be turned over to others, fields and wives together; for I will stretch out My hand against the

inhabitants of the land," says the LORD. "Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even to the priest, everyone deals falsely. They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; nor did they know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time I punish, them they shall be cast down," says the LORD. Thus says the LORD: "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it, then you shall find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.' Also I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not listen.'"

Mr. Armstrong warned this world for about fifty years. If the pattern of Amos' warning is something to consider in a warning being given to God's people, we might note that the devastation Amos prophesied came to pass approximately forty years after his warning. Certainly, where that forty or fifty years would start in Mr. Armstrong's preaching, I do not know. There is a reason that God is going to bring this upon us.

Amos 3:1-3 Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?

Of all the nations on the earth, Israel had been given the laws of God and direction on how to live to produce the very best of lives and to be the very best example to the world around. We read about that in Deuteronomy 4. As it applies to us, we—the church, the Israel of God—have been given the laws and direction, as well, that we might have a godly life with love and kindness in our families. We must have right attitudes and love toward the world we live in and be a light on a hill to those around us.

Zechariah 7:1-14 Now in the fourth year of King Darius it came to pass that the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, in the fourth day of the ninth month, Chislev, when the people sent Sherezer and

Regem-melech and their men to the house of God, to pray before the LORD, and to ask the priests who were in the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, "Should I weep in the fifth month, and fast as I have done these so many years?" Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, "Speak to all the people of the land, and to the priests: 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months during those seventy years, did you really fast for Me—for Me? When you eat and when you drink, do you not eat and drink for yourselves? Should you not have obeyed the words which the LORD proclaimed through the former prophets when Jerusalem and the cities around her were inhabited and prosperous, and the South and the Lowland were inhabited?'" Then the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Execute true justice, show mercy and compassion everyone to his brother. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. Let none of you plan evil in his heart against his brother.' But they refused to heed, shrugged their shoulders, and stopped their ears so that they could not hear. Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. Thus great wrath from the LORD of hosts. Therefore it happened, just as He proclaimed and they would not hear, so they called out and I would not listen," says the LORD of hosts. "But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations which they had not known. Thus the land became desolate after them, so that no one passed through or returned; for they made the pleasant land desolate."

God's people heard what God wanted, yet they said, "We will not do it and you cannot make us do it." As a nation, have we shrugged our shoulders away from obeying God's Word? You bet we have. We have legalized sexual sins—it is hard to believe that we would do that—by working to do away with the Bible. Some Israelite countries are legislating that the Bible is a hate book.

Jerry Falwell made the comment shortly after September 11, 2001, on Pat Robertson's talk show, that we may well have been punished because we are not a righteous nation. We have had underhanded business and political

dealings; selfish idols; and various lusts, including the use of narcotics and pornography; and utter rejection of God. He received telephone calls asking, "How dare you say that America is an unrighteous nation?" They would not accept it.

As John mentioned this morning, we are told in Matthew 24, referring to the end time, that "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no nor ever shall be would come upon this earth, and except those days be shortened there should no flesh be saved but for the sake of those chosen, those days shall be shortened." God will bring great correction on all of mankind. It has been said that, after this final conflict, there will be just a tithe of Israel left. I imagine that for the rest of the world it will be just about the same.

Ezekiel 5:1-4 "And you, son of man, take a sharp sword, take it as a barber's razor, and pass it over your head and your beard; then take scales to weigh and divide the hair. You shall burn with fire one-third in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are finished; then you shall take one-third and strike around it with the sword, and one-third you shall scatter in the wind: I will draw out a sword after them. You shall also take a small number of them and bind them in the edge of your garment. Then take some of them again and throw them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire. From there a fire will go out into all the house of Israel."

If it will be worse than any other tribulation in the past, how bad will it be? No one knows when this will take place, but it is on the horizon—not just for Israel but for the whole world. It is described in God's Word that we might be warned.

For most of us in this nation, the true ramifications of war and what is related to it are what we read in the paper or hear on the news. Though it seems terrible to us, it does not begin to describe what war is really like for those that have tanks in the streets, snipers shooting in their windows, or bombings in their malls, as in Israel. We are not having food and water shortages and loved ones being killed and threatened daily. We watch the news in our easy chairs, and then we turn it off and go back to whatever we were doing. When a neighbor loses a son or daughter in battle, we grieve with him; but the loss

is not ours. What is it like for those who are faced with killing day in and day out? We must think of this, that we might know what the tribulation has to exceed.

I would like to give you a few statistics regarding past wars. Starting with Cain and Abel, war has never left mankind's thinking. General Douglas MacArthur, who was a great general, stated before a joint session of Congress, "I have known the crucible of war as few men have. War is not the answer; it does not work. We have to find a better way." As I mentioned, regarding Matthew 24, this world will face tribulation such as it has never seen to put an end to war.

Let us take a look at just some of the cost in human life produced by hatred and by war over the years. Starting with our American Revolution: Three million men fought, and 600,000 died, not counting those wounded or maimed for life. During the Civil War, the best of our young men were killed, and the hatred of the north and south conflict still remains, to a degree, in our nation today.

In World War One (1914-1918), those killed included 1,700,000 Russians, 1,000,000 Germans, 1,385,300 French, 900,000 Britons, 800,000 Austrians, 364,000 Italians, 250,000 Turks, 125,000 from Serbia and Montenegro, 102,000 from Belgium, 100,000 from Romania, 100,000 from Bulgaria, 50,300 from the United States, 7,000 from Greece, and 2,000 from Portugal. All told, 7,485,600 battle deaths occurred. This, of course, does not include the horror of the wounded or the deaths in the civilian population.

In 1937, Japan attacked mainland China, where they ruled for twelve years. It was referred to as "the rape of China" or "the rape of Nanking." In twelve years' time, the Japanese slaughtered thirty million people. I will not even begin to discuss the unbelievable atrocities that were perpetrated on the Chinese population, other than to say that cannibalism took place because the Japanese had the habit of sending out large numbers of troops without supplying them, telling them to live off the land. This meant that they would be eating the people they captured.

A quote from one Japanese officer who served in that campaign:

When I first met my men that I had to command, I looked at them and they had 'an evil eye,' but then my commander said, 'Go behead that Chinese prisoner over there.' He made me do it, and I went and I beheaded him, and I came back to my men and all of a sudden their eye did not look so evil.

This was the kind of war that they fought.

Shortly after that, Japan attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor. It was a brutal war, with many atrocities committed by both sides, causing 100,000 American deaths and 2,500,000 Japanese deaths, both soldier and civilian. It has been said that had Japan won the war, our American military leaders would have been tried as war criminals because of what they did. Though the Japanese beheaded some prisoners, perpetrated cannibalism, and grossly mistreated others, the Americans, in their dropping of incendiary bombs on Tokyo and three other cities, destroyed more life by fire bombing than the two atom bombs that were dropped. There was a huge mess. With the first fire bombing, approximately 100,000 were burned to death in one night. Those who survived said that they saw small babies bursting from the heat. This is how terrible it was with the fire bombing.

I quote WorldWarII.com/Russia regarding civilian deaths: "Civilian casualties in the USSR have been placed roughly at 2,500,000 killed. The loss of population (including both military and civilian casualties), caused directly or indirectly by the war, has been stated to be 20,000,000." Does God hate war? You bet He hates war.

Germany: Air force raids against civilian Germany killed approximately 380,000 Germans and seriously injured about 780,000 more. One reason for this was that Germany built their plants right among the housing of the cities. When the Americans made the decision to fire bomb, it caused gigantic firestorms that killed many civilians. None of this lists the deaths in the slave labor camps or in the death camps or the soldiers lost in the fighting. Numerous additional casualties occurred when the Russians tried to take over Germany.

Additional Japanese casualties during World War II numbered about 360,000. They were just "missing," captured by the Russians in Manchuria and Korea. Chinese civilian losses during World War II were several million.

After this came the Korean War, which killed 57,000 soldiers, not to mention the Red Army people killed, the North Koreans, and the Red Chinese killed. I do not have any statistics on those and the civilian population. Then came the Vietnam War with 58,000 Americans lost. How many of the enemy soldiers and civilians were killed was not mentioned.

These figures total roughly sixty-million-plus, and this does not begin to equal what has occurred in past history. Napoleon's war and crusade cost three million Frenchmen their lives. John mentioned that the Catholic representatives during the Inquisition killed an estimated fifty million. Then there were the crusades, where they just slaughtered people. We will get to why in a moment.

Adding these, we could be up to half a billion or more people killed by war. I have no doubt that we have slaughtered much more than that. As one man said, as far as they can tell in history, in the last 6,000 years, only two hundred years were without war somewhere. This shows you the nature of man and Satan's spirit pushing man. We read the above statistics, and we say, "Boy, those are big numbers!" but each one of them was a human being. In Korea, I used to look at the Chinese and think, "They want to be home, raising their families." I wanted to be back here; but in the military, one follows the leaders and does these things.

I do not think that any of us with these statistics can picture the horrors and the atrocities committed by all the armies against the enemy, both civilians and soldiers. Our younger generation does not even have a clue as to what Buchenwald, Auschwitz, and Dachau are.

Are there penalties that come to individuals that participate in killing their fellow man? Yes, there are. I do not think we can conceive what this does to the minds of those who do the killing, raping, torturing, making lamp shades out of human flesh, and medically experimenting on live prisoners—not to mention what it does to those who have been so damaged in the doing of

those things. One does not return to civilian life and ever be the same. We have often thought that in the Great White Throne resurrection it will be easy for the guards at Buchenwald, Auschwitz, and Dachau to repent, but it will be hard for those who have had these things perpetrated against them to repent and to quit hating the enemy. These things last, and they do things to individuals.

There is a *zeitgeist*—"the spirit of the times," or the intellectual and moral tendencies that characterize any age or epoch—that seems to take over those in armed conflict, bringing out a viciousness that cannot be imagined. I really mean that. In war, one has no compassion for one's enemy. I think John Kerry said, "If I were in charge I would fight a sensitive war." One cannot fight a sensitive war.

From *The Berean* of August 12:

Peace is necessary for the material prosperity of a nation. War may be the ultimate distraction from accomplishing anything positive; it is catastrophically debilitating to every area of life. Not only can it break a nation economically, but also warp its people psychologically and destroy its social structure, infrastructure, and spirit. Should we think that peace is no less necessary to spiritual prosperity? Is it possible to grow into the image of God when distracted by conflict and the anxieties and trouble it produces? Even if the conflict is not directly ours, it adversely affects our ability to live God's way of life.

How many of us watch the news of Iraq and wonder when is it going to end? It goes on and on. Mankind, from the beginning of creation, since Cain and Abel, has fought, plundered, slaughtered, tortured, and enslaved entire populations because of pride, vanity, lust, greed, politics, and national, racial, and religious hatred. That has been the history of mankind.

It is interesting to note that even the winning nation loses. In the story of Winston Churchill, when England won the war, they lost. Their best manpower was gone; the nation was broke; the city was flattened; and it cost them millions and millions of dollars that they did not have to rebuild. They won the war, but they were devastated.

Germany, who lost, was in a desperate condition, not just with the loss of manpower and destroyed cities, but world opinion was against them. Then the Russians came in, trying to carve up the nation.

One would think, upon consideration of past statistics, that mankind would never go to war again. However, history tells us that this is just not the case. Mankind never ever seems to learn the lesson against fighting.

Does God hate war? Without a doubt God hates war, because of what it does to the people that He created. Although God moves one nation to correct another nation, He does so because He observes their treachery and utter hatred toward their fellow man. He corrects them accordingly and in like manner, usually by the means of war at the time He feels is appropriate, with the thought that, in the future, man will look back and learn the lesson.

Amos 1:3 Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they have threshed Gilead with implements of iron."

They decimated them and tortured them, as well. There was utter hatred for them.

Amos 1:6 Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they took captive the whole captivity to deliver them up to Edom."

They enslaved people and carried them away. God said, "I will not forgive that."

Amos 1:9 Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and did not remember the covenant of brotherhood."

They broke the contract. God said, "That won't fly." Think of Psalm 15 and not breaking your word.

Amos 1:13 Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of the people of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they have ripped open the women with child in Gilead, that they might enlarge their border."

We see greed and covetousness.

Amos 2:1 Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime."

This shows that they had perpetual hatred for Edom; it never went away. God does not want this, and He said, "I am going to punish you for this."

Amos 2:4 Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept His commandments. Their lies lead them astray, lies which their fathers followed."

Amos 2:6 Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they sell the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of sandals."

With God seeing the transgressions, punishment will come.

With some of our more recent wars comes the slogan, "This will be the war to end all wars!" Probably the majority of mankind feels, or at least did feel, that destroying the enemy will bring an end to all future wars. We should know by now that this is not the case. Peace is far more than the absence of war. Because mankind will not learn at the conclusion of this age, God is going to bring upon mankind the war to truly end all wars. All of mankind is going to learn the final, utterly terrible lessons of war, and they are never going to want to go to war again.

I would like us all to be reminded of the picture of the trumpet plagues and the final trumpet that this day pictures! We will start in Revelation 6 with the

first six seals. John touched briefly on those in Matthew 24; they parallel these in Revelation 6. These have already started; they have been in existence; and they are going to build and work eventually in unison and lead us to the end time trumpet.

Revelation 6:1-17 Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." And 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. When He had opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword. When He had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine." When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. and the name of him who sat on him was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, and with death, and by the beasts of the earth. When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 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 were to be killed as they were, was completed. I looked when He had opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it

is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who shall be able to stand?"

The first six seals have been opened, and over time, lead us to the trumpets.

Verses 1-2. The white horse represents a false Christ and a false religion. Just prior to all other cataclysms at the time of the end, he will signal the beginning of sorrows. This false Christ will be an instrument of Satan and will dazzle the world with miracles and cause those not truly founded in the truth to follow him.

Verses 3-4. The second seal is opened and the red horse of war comes forth. Peace is taken from the earth by global wars, yet this is not the final war.

Verses 5-6. The third seal is opened. The black horse of famine follows war and stalks the earth with ruined vegetation, contaminated water supplies, etc. We see some of this today in Somalia with over two million plus dead from war and starvation, and soon, unless something can be done, terrible disease epidemics will kill many more.

Verses 7-8. The fourth seal is opened, which of course brings us to the fourth horseman, the pale horse of famine and disease. With AIDS and all of the other diseases today, one would think this has already taken place, but it will get far worse. One thing that happens when war comes is that city sanitation departments—the things that we have that promote health now to keep the bubonic plague and rats in check—go by the wayside and disease spreads rapidly.

Verses 9-11. The fifth seal is opened, and persecution begins to come upon those who stand fast for God. It appears we are in the time of the fifth seal now, as we all marvel today that the Bible is being called a "hate" book and that, in some nations, penalties can come from speaking against what God labels as sin.

In verses 12-17, the sixth seal is opened and a great earthquake occurs; the sun and moon become as black as sackcloth; the stars of heaven fall to the earth; the sky splits apart; landmarks are moved; and men hide themselves.

Now we are told that seven trumpets will be sounded, including the seventh and last trumpet.

Revelation 8:1 When He had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

Here we see the opening of the seventh seal. The silence pictured as being half an hour long signifies some very serious events are about to take place. One can almost picture all of the hosts of heaven looking down on the earth and knowing that the final events that God will bring upon mankind are about to start.

Revelation 8:3-7 Then another angel having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. 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.

It sounds like great hail and lightning accompanied by what appeared to be a rainstorm of fire and blood driving home the point that momentous events were about to take place. By this, a third part of the trees and all of the grass were destroyed.

Revelation 8:8-9 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. And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

Perhaps a burning meteor crashes in the sea, causing great shock, temperature change, and a huge tidal wave. A third part of the sea becomes blood, killing a third part of all the creatures to which God had given life and destroying a third part of the ships.

The commentators attribute these next two miracles to men because of the symbols used in the Bible. The mountain, of course, is a king or a prince. The first trump shows that this action is taken directly by God. The enormity of the events that follow and the fact that they parallel some of the miracles done to the Egyptians indicate that the following events are supernatural and that they are done by God. I do not know specifically what they are.

Revelation 8:10 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.

The third angel sounds and a great star falls from heaven, and causes the streams, rivers, and fountains of the waters to become poisoned.

Revelation 8:12 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.

This was reflected in the lack of light in day and night.

Revelation 8:13 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 trumpets of the three angels, which are yet to sound!"

The fact that it is repeated three times indicates increasing intensity. This is no small thing.

Revelation 9:1-6 Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit, and there smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. They were commanded not harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. In those days men will seek death and they will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

It seems that these are vast hordes of military troops with their war machines, which today are awesome, possibly not initially recognized, but now seen, in a sense, as coming out of the smoke. Evidently their commanders instruct them not to destroy plant life that could provide food. The purpose is to bring all under their authority, with God seeing to it that they leave those alone who have the seal of God on their foreheads. They torment mankind for five months, and the torment will be so bad that men will seek death and not find it. These had a king over them who was the angel of the bottomless pit, his name being Abaddon, or Apollyon, meaning "the destroyer."

In verse 6, it would seem that all immediate resistance had been put down, and now the sixth trumpet was about to sound. This trumpet brings so much devastation, it is as if God were saying, "Ever since I created you, you have sought to kill and promote war after war. You want war? I'm going to give

you war with more horror than you ever imagined. This indeed will be a war you won't forget, and it will be the war to end all wars."

Revelation 9:13-15 Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound in the great river Euphrates." So the four angels, who had been prepared for an hour and a day and a month and a year, were released to kill a third of mankind.

The sixth angel sounds; the four angels who were prepared for the hour, day, month, and a year to slay the third part of men are released; and the instrument with which they would do so is a two hundred million man army. I cannot even imagine a two hundred million man army. It appears that this army would be spread worldwide to bring the world under their government.

Revelation 9:18 By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths.

Roughly two billion people are killed, one third each by fire, smoke, and brimstone. The slaughter will be immense. It is to be hoped, in retrospect, that mankind will remember to what their desire to disobey God and to wage war has brought them. It is going to be no small thing.

Revelation 9:20-21 And the rest of the mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. They did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immortality, or of their thefts.

You can see that even with all of this mankind does not repent.

Revelation 10 and 11 and all that takes place in those chapters seem, at least to me, to comprise the second woe. If you look at the end of Revelation 11: 14, you will see that "The second woe is past. Behold the third woe is

coming quickly"; and the seventh angel sounds; and the seven last plagues that comprise the third woe are poured forth on mankind.

Revelation 16:1-9 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth." So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth; and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature died in the sea. Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are righteous, O Lord, the One who is and who was and who is to be, because You have judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink, for it is their due." And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments." Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.

In modern terms, they just "gave God the finger" and say, "I won't come under Your authority or jurisdiction!" They were filled with hatred. You begin to see why it is going to take so much to bring mankind to where he should be.

Revelation 16:10-16 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds. Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of demons, performing

signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

"Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he that watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

And they gathered them together at a place called in the Hebrew, Armageddon.

Zephaniah 3:8 "Therefore wait for Me," says the Lord, "until the day that I rise up for plunder; My determination is to gather the nations to My assembly of kingdoms, to pour on them My indignation, all My fierce anger; all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy."

Joel 2:1-11 Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the LORD is coming, for it is at hand: a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will be any such after them, even for many successive generations. A fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns; the land is like the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; surely nothing shall escape them. Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; and like swift steeds, so they run. With a noise like chariots over the mountaintops they leap, like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, like a strong people set in battle array. Before them the people writhe in pain; all faces are drained of color. They run like mighty men, they climb the walls like men of war; every one marches in formation, and they do not break ranks. They do not push one another; every one marches in his own column. Though they lunge between the weapons, they are not cut down. They run to and fro in the city, they run on the wall; they climb into the houses, they enter at the windows like a thief. The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble; the sun and the moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness. The LORD gives voice before His army, for His camp is very great; for strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can endure it?

Joel 3:1-3 "For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land. They have cast lots for My people, have given a boy as payment for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink."

Joel 3:9-14 Proclaim this among the nations: "Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men! Let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, 'I am strong.'" Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O LORD. "Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow—for their wickedness is great!" Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision!

How great will this battle be?

Revelation 14:17-20 Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.

That is approximately 180 miles: A furlong is one eighth of a mile. So that we might picture it more generally, if a car traveled sixty miles an hour, it

would take three hours to travel that distance. How much blood would it require to be up to a horse's bridle? Based generally on a two hundred million man army, it would seem to be roughly twenty four billion pints of blood, or three billion gallons. I have no idea.

How will God deal with this army?

Revelation 19:11-21 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called, The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself shall rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great." And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

For all of you who saw *Indiana Jones*—I hate to even bring this up—this is what is happening here. How will He accomplish this?

Zechariah 14:12-15 And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, and their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths. It shall come to pass in that day that a great panic from the LORD will be among them. Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor, and raise his hand against his neighbor's hand; Judah also will fight at Jerusalem, and the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be gathered together: gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance. Such also shall be the plague on the horse and the mule, on the camel, and the donkey, and on all the cattle that will be in those camps. So shall this plague be.

All are going to die, and this is how God is going to do it.

Revelation 16:17-21 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air; and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceeding great.

The last punishment, the punishment that will be the conclusion of the seventh trump, the last part of the last trump is poured out with the falling of the great plague of hail, hail weighing from 75 to 130 pounds. God has the full attention of this world about this time. There has been much slaughter, with all of its false religions, beliefs, hatreds, and prejudices; and now every people, race, and nation is listening to God. He has got their attention because everything else has been taken away. At His command, the people of God start to return to their land.

Ezekiel 36:1-12 "Also, you son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel and say, 'You mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because the enemy has said against you, "Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession,"— therefore prophesy and say, "Thus says the Lord GOD : "Because they have made you desolate and swallowed you up on every side, that you might be a possession unto the residue of the heathen, and you are taken up on the lips of talkers and are an infamy of the people"—therefore, you mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD. Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains and to the hills, to the rivers and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and derision to the residue of the heathen that are round about— therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely in the fire of My jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen and against all Edom, who have appointed My land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out as a prey." Prophesy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains and to the hills, to the rivers and to the valleys, "Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I have spoken in My jealousy and in My fury, because you have borne the shame of the heathen." Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "I have lifted up Mine hand. Surely the heathen who are about you, they shall bear their shame. But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people of Israel, for they are at hand to come. For behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and you shall be tilled and sown. And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it; and the cities shall be inhabited and the wastes shall be built. And I will multiply upon you man and beast, and they shall increase and bring fruit. And I will settle you according to your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings; and you shall know that I am the LORD. Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, even My people Israel; and they shall possess you and you shall be their inheritance, and you shall no more henceforth bereave them of men"

Ezekiel 36:32-38 "Not for your sake do I do this," says the Lord GOD, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your

own ways, O house of Israel!" Thus says the Lord GOD: "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. So they shall say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden, and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.' Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken it, and I will do it." Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will also let the house of Israel inquire of Me to do this for them: I will increase their men like a flock. Like a flock offered as holy sacrifices, like the flock of Jerusalem on its feast days, so shall the ruined cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they shall know that I am the LORD."""

The wars between men and nations that have plagued mankind for six thousand years, killing countless billions, are finished. Yet, if we understand Ezekiel 38 correctly, we understand that whatever nations would comprise Mongol nations will come down against the unwalled city, but God will take care of that. As for the rest of the world, they will never resort to war again. With all of man's past violent history, it is very hard to believe that.

Isaiah 2:1-4 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

It will be a time of unprecedented peace, a time of national repentance, and a time of learning. This, then, is what the final trump ushers in as it pertains to the subject of war. It does not mean that there will not be differences,

correction, and that type of thing in the World Tomorrow. There is a responsibility that comes to us for understanding what the seventh trumpet brings, what we must fulfill, knowing that all of these events are on the horizon. We know that this is coming because we have been called by God to achieve and to overcome.

Joel 2:12-17 "Now, therefore," says the LORD, "turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm. Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him—a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and nursing babes; let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, and the bride from her dressing room. Let the priests, who minister to the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar; let them say, "Spare Your people, O LORD, and do not give Your heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule over them. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

Zephaniah 2:1-3 basically says, "Get your life in order. If you do, God may spare you when the time comes."

Revelation 16:15 "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

Today, in many of the world's religions, people feel that they understand prophecy and what God wants from them personally, and they await a rapture. Some feel that all one has to be is a "good person," while *they* define what is good. Some feel "once saved, always saved." Some feel that they are predestined to be saved and that nothing can hurt them, that they can have any kind of life that they want.

For us, it is different. We know that we are required to do much more than just go through the motions. Just looking good or sounding righteous is not

enough. We live in a world that does not believe in God's law; in fact, it hates God's law. Many consider God's law as being harsh and repressive. For us, it is seen as being truly wonderful and how we must live in obedience, faithfulness, honesty, and great love for God and for our fellow man, not just outside our homes but in our homes. Amos 5 bears this out.

Amos 5:4-6 For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel: "Seek Me and live; but do not seek Bethel, nor enter Gilgal, nor pass over to Beer-sheba; for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nothing. Seek the LORD and live, lest He break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour it, with no one to quench it in Bethel."

Amos 5:13-15 Therefore the prudent keep silent at that time, for it is an evil time. Seek good and not evil, that you may live; and so the LORD God of hosts will be with you, as you have spoken. Hate evil, love good; establish justice in the gate. It may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

They are to truly seek God with a right heart that perhaps the Lord may be gracious. Amos is speaking to individuals who have eyes to see and ears to hear. Thus, the message is for us individually, today.

This day we keep indeed signifies wonderful things. It is the time in Daniel 2: 44-45 when the stone cut without hands will crush all of man's kingdoms. It is the time when the scourge of war, inserted by Satan into man's thinking, that has permeated mankind since Cain and Abel, will be at last forever abolished, with all the nations beating their war implements into farming implements. It is a time when Israel will be recovered from their captivity. It is a time when the deepest of repentance (Zechariah 12) will take place in Israel, and it will be the starting point to rebuild the earth as it should be rebuilt.

I Corinthians 15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

I Thessalonians 4:16-18 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall ever be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

In conclusion, I would like us to turn to a psalm that pretty much sums up this.

Psalms 76:1-12 (NEB) In Judah God is known, His name is great in Israel; His tent is pitched in Salem, in Zion His battle headquarters are set up. He has broken the flashing arrows, shield, and sword and weapons of war. You are terrible O Lord, and mighty: men that lust for plunder stand aghast, the boldest swoon away. And the strongest cannot lift a hand. At your rebuke, O God of Jacob, rider and horse fall senseless. Terrible are you, O Lord, who can stand in your presence when you are angry? You did give sentence out of heaven; the earth was afraid and kept silence. O God, at your rising in judgment to deliver all humble men on earth, for all her fury Edom shall confess to You, and the remnant left in Hamath shall dance in worship. Make vows to the Lord your God, and pay them duly; let the peoples all around Him bring their tribute; for He breaks princes, He is the terror of the kings on earth.

He restores peace, and He starts the world where it should be started: with people. We can rejoice in that.