

Session 7: The Trumpets

What We Found

Before a single trumpet sounds, the prayers of all the saints rise as incense from the golden altar, and the censer's fire falls to earth: what rises is prayer; what falls is answer. The martyrs' how long? is being taken up, and nobody prays into the void. The trumpets themselves replay the plagues of Egypt (blood, hail and fire, locusts, darkness): readable as God doing Exodus again, dismantling idols to free people. Most strike in measured thirds (the fifth is time-limited instead): warnings, not annihilation, and their evident aim is repentance, and the lament of 9:20–21 (they did not repent) implies as much. At the section's center, the Church's vocation at the section's center is testimony, not force of arms: John eats the scroll like Ezekiel (sweet in the mouth, bitter in the stomach), and the two witnesses (Moses's and Elijah's powers, Zechariah's olive trees; their identity an honest open question) testify, die, and rise: a shape long read as their Lord's story stamped onto his witnesses, and onto his Church. The three-and-a-half figure (1,260 days, forty-two months) draws on Daniel and is traditionally heard as a broken seven: persecution real, painful, and bounded. And the seventh trumpet announces what every Our Father asks: the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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St. Thomas Aquinas · *Summa Theologiae* (summary)

We do not pray to change God's plan, but because God has arranged that some things be granted through our prayers: prayer is a true cause within providence. Revelation 8:3–5 is that doctrine in one picture.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH

St. Cyprian of Carthage · *To Demetrianus* (summary)

Amid plague and disaster, St. Cyprian answered the pagan world, in substance: these scourges are not your gods' anger but the true God's summons to turn to him while there is time; Christians suffer the same evils, but not with the same despair.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH

St. Hippolytus of Rome · *On Christ and the Antichrist* (summary)

St. Hippolytus records the ancient expectation, in substance, that Elijah will return as a witness before the end. His reading stands beside the equally venerable one that hears in the two witnesses the Church's own prophetic testimony; the Church has defined neither.

Live It This Week

- Pray Psalm 141:2 each evening this week (let my prayer be counted as incense), and mean one specific intercession by it each night.
- If a trumpet has been sounding in your own conscience, answer it: get to confession before our next session if you can.
- Memorize the memory verse.

Memory Verse

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. (Revelation 11:15, RSV2CE)

Before Next Session

Read Revelation 11:19–12:17, and bring your sealed My Guess sheet from Session 1.

Catechism references from this session: CCC 334–335; 1037; 2635–2636; 2816–2818.