

# *Gabriel and the Trumpet*

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We've all heard songs about Gabriel and his "horn." But if one of your students or church orchestra members were to ask you where in the Bible Gabriel's trumpet is found, would you know the answer?

Actually, the angel Gabriel is mentioned by name only four times in Scripture. In the Old Testament, he speaks twice to Daniel (Dan. 8:16 and 9:21). In the New Testament, he is seen twice in Luke's gospel, chapter one, delivering messages to Zacharias and to Mary. Nowhere in these passages is there any mention of Gabriel being associated with the trumpet, or with music of any kind. So, we must turn elsewhere in the search for the answer to our question.

The trumpet is definitely portrayed in Scripture as being an important part of eschatological events. In I Corinthians 15:52, we are told that "the trumpet shall sound, and dead will be raised incorruptible." And I Thessalonians 4:16 tells us that "the Lord Himself shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." We know from Jude 9 that the "archangel" is Michael, not Gabriel, but here the archangel gives forth a declaration or "voice," not a trumpet call. As for the phrase "the trump of God," the wording of the passage does not necessarily mean that God Himself would be playing the trumpet. Indeed, God often in Scripture assigns this type of task to His heavenly messengers, and the wording of the passage could allow for such an interpretation.

Further enlightenment comes as we turn to Revelation, the great apocalyptic book of the Bible. In Revelation 8, the last of seven seals is broken. Verse 2 says, "And I saw seven angels who stood before God, and to them were given seven trumpets." The angels proceed to sound these trumpets, and each is accompanied by terrible judgments upon the earth. The seventh trumpet heralds the reign of Christ (cf. 11:15). The phrase in verse 2, about the angels "who stood before God," is a clue to our mystery, for in Luke 1:19, Gabriel states that he "stands in the presence of God." This is perhaps the linkage which serves as the basis for the idea that Gabriel will be the one to sound the last trumpet. But again, Scripture is not specific on this point, though we can enjoy viewing it with what a former pastor of mine calls our "sanctified imagination."

Fortunately, the subject of Gabriel's trumpet is not one of crucial importance, doctrinally speaking. But it is important that we know the Word of God and what it says in detail, so that we can accurately relate its truths to those we teach and serve (2 Tim. 2:15).