

## Week 25-The Seventh Trumpet

### Revelation 11:15-19

#### I. Introduction

- a. Read
- b. The sounding of the seventh trumpet marks a significant milestone in the book of Revelation.
- c. It sets in motion the final events leading up to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the establishment of His earthly millennial kingdom.
- d. Revelation 10:7 expresses the finality of the seventh trumpet: “In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets.”
  - i. That mystery is the full revelation of the consummation of God’s plan.
  - ii. It was prophesied by the Old Testament preachers, but its fullness was never revealed until the book of Revelation.
- e. That the seven bowl judgments, which represent the final outpouring of God’s wrath, are included within the seventh trumpet is evident from 15:1: “Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished.”
- f. Those “seven plagues” that finish God’s wrath are the seven bowl judgments: “Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, ‘Go and

pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God' ” (16:1).

- g. Since both the seventh trumpet and the seven bowls are said to finish God's wrath, the bowls must be part of the seventh trumpet judgment.
- h. The last three of the seven trumpet judgments are so horrific that they are referred to as woes.
  - i. In 8:13 John “heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, ‘Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!’ ”
  - ii. After the sounding of the fifth trumpet John wrote, “The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things” (9:12).
  - iii. Before the sounding of the seventh trumpet he added, “The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly” (11:14).
- i. The seventh trumpet sets in motion the final consummation of God's redemptive plan for the present universe.
- j. During its tenure will come the final fury of the Day of the Lord judgments (16:1–21), the final harvest of judgment on earth (11:18; 16:19), and the Lamb's defeat of the kings of the earth (17:12–18), culminating in the final, climactic triumph of Christ at Armageddon (19:11–21).

- k. The sounding of the seventh trumpet signals God's answer to the prayer, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).
- l. That answer sweeps through chapters 12–22 as God finishes His mighty work of reclaiming creation from the usurper, Satan.
- m. It should be noted that although the seventh trumpet is the last in the sequence of the seven trumpet judgments, it is not to be equated with the "last trumpet" to which Paul refers in 1 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 imperishable, and we will be changed" (cf. 1 Thess. 4:16).
- n. The seventh trumpet covers an extended period of time, thus distinguishing it from the instantaneous ("in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye") event of the "last trumpet."
- o. Instead of calling for the moment of the Rapture of the church, as the "last trumpet" does, the seventh trumpet calls for prolonged waves of judgment on the ungodly.
  - i. It does not parallel the trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15:52, but does parallel the trumpet of Joel 2:1–2: "Blow a trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming; surely it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness."

- p. The seventh trumpet not only announces consuming judgment on unbelievers, but also the coronation of the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - i. In the Old Testament trumpets were frequently sounded at the coronation of a king.
  - ii. During his attempted coup against his father David, “Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, ‘As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, “Absalom is king in Hebron” ’ ” (2 Sam. 15:10).
  - iii. At the coronation of David’s true successor, Solomon, “Zadok the priest ... took the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Solomon. Then they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ ” (1 Kings 1:39).
- q. The sounding of the seventh trumpet also marks the end of the interlude that follows the sixth trumpet (10:1–11:14).
- r. Each of the three series of judgments (the seals, trumpets, and bowls) contains an interlude between the sixth and seventh events.
- s. Between the sixth and seventh seals came the interlude of chapter 7; between the sixth and seventh bowls will come the brief interlude of 16:15.
- t. These respites serve to comfort and encourage believers amid the terrors of God’s judgments, reassuring them that He has not forgotten them (cf. Mal. 3:16–4:2).

- u. Although the seventh trumpet sounds in 11:15, the judgments associated with it are not described until chapter 15.
  - v. Chapters 12–14 are a digression, taking readers back through the Tribulation to the point of the seventh trumpet by a different path.
  - w. They describe the Tribulation not from God's perspective, but from Satan's.
  - x. Chapters 4–11 focused on Christ's taking back what is rightfully His by means of the seal and trumpet judgments.
  - y. Chapters 12–14 focus on the ultimate human usurper, the final Antichrist, whose career spans the same time period as the seal and trumpet judgments.
  - z. The scene as the seventh trumpet sounds unfolds in four stages: praise for sovereignty, fits of rage, plan for judgment, and promise of communion.
- II. **Praise for Sovereignty.**
- a. Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." 16 And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. (11:15–17)
  - b. Though its effects on earth were delayed (as with the seventh seal; 8:2–5), there was an immediate response

in heaven when **the seventh angel sounded** his trumpet.

- c. Expressing exhilaration at what was about to take place, there came “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”
- d. That dramatic proclamation is obviously connected to the effects of the seventh trumpet.
  - i. There is unrestrained joy that the power of Satan is to be forever broken, and Jesus Christ is to reign supreme as King of kings and Lord of lords.
  - ii. With the defeat of the usurper, the question of sovereignty over the world will be forever settled.
  - iii. What Jesus refused to take on Satan’s terms (cf. Luke 4:5–8) He will take on His own terms.
  - iv. Heaven rejoices that the long rebellion of the world against God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ is about to end.
  - v. The setting up of Christ’s long-awaited kingdom is the apex of redemptive history.
- e. The use of the singular term **kingdom of the world** instead of the plural “kingdoms” introduces an important truth.
  - i. All of the world’s diverse national, political, social, cultural, linguistic, and religious groups are in reality one kingdom under one king.
  - ii. That king is known in Scripture by many names and titles, including **the accuser** (Rev. 12:10), **the adversary** (1 Pet. 5:8), Beelzebul (Matt. 12:24),

**Belial** (2 Cor. 6:15), **the dragon** (Rev. 12:3, 7, 9), the “**evil one**” (John 17:15), **the god of this world** (2 Cor. 4:4), **the prince of the power of the air** (Eph. 2:2), **the roaring lion** (1 Pet. 5:8), **the ruler of the demons** (Mark 3:22), **the ruler of this world** (John 12:31), **the serpent of old** (Rev. 12:9; 20:2), **the tempter** (1 Thess. 3:5), **and, most commonly, the devil** (Matt. 4:1) **and Satan** (1 Tim. 5:15).

- f. Though God scattered this kingdom at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1–9), Satan still rules over the pieces of the once united kingdom.
- g. While God ordains human governments for the well-being of man (Rom. 13:1), those same governments refuse to submit to Him or acknowledge His sovereignty (cf. Acts 4:26).
  - i. They are essentially part of Satan’s kingdom.
  - ii. Jesus affirmed that Satan, though a usurper and not the rightful king, is the present ruler of the world.
  - iii. In response to those who blasphemously accused Him of being in league with Satan, Jesus asked rhetorically, “If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?” (Matt. 12:26).
  - iv. Three times in John’s gospel Jesus called Satan “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).
  - v. As he did at Babel, Satan will rule in the future over a united fallen mankind in one visible

kingdom under Antichrist's (the Beast of 13:1–4) leadership.

- h. Satan will not relinquish his kingdom without a struggle.
  - i. In a desperate and doomed effort to maintain control of the world, God will allow him to overrun it with hordes of demons during the fifth and sixth trumpet judgments (9:1–19).
  - ii. But his efforts will not keep the true King from returning and establishing His earthly kingdom (cf. 19:11–21; 20:1–3, 10).
  - iii. Jesus Christ will return to sit on the throne of His father David (2 Sam. 7:12–16) and take over the whole world from the satanically controlled people who now possess it.
  - iv. This is really the theme of Revelation —the triumph of God over Satan as evil is purged from the world and Christ becomes its holy ruler.
- i. The phrase **the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ** emphasizes two realities.
  - i. *Kurios* (**Lord**) usually refers to Jesus throughout the New Testament, while in Revelation it more often refers to God the Father, thus emphasizing their equality of nature.
  - ii. This phrase also describes the kingdom in its broadest sense, looking forward to divine rule over the creation and the new creation.
  - iii. No difference is made between the earthly millennial kingdom and the eternal kingdom.



- iv. At the end of the thousand years, the millennial kingdom will merge with the eternal kingdom, in which Christ **will reign forever and ever**.
- v. Once the reign of Christ begins, it will change form, but never end or be interrupted.
- j. The glorious truth that the Lord Jesus Christ will one day rule the earth permeates the Scriptures.
  - i. In Rev chapter 15 (vv. 2–4)
  - ii. That they sang the “song of Moses” (cf. Ex. 15:1–18) indicates that as far back as the Pentateuch Scripture anticipated the moment when the Lord Jesus Christ would become King of the world.
  - iii. Psalm 2, V 6-9 a messianic passage whose imagery and language permeates this section of Revelation (cf. v. 18; 12:5; 14:1; 16:14; 17:18; 19:15, 19), also predicts the coming earthly reign of Christ:
- k. The prophets also looked forward to that time when the Messiah would establish His earthly reign.
  - i. Of that glorious day Isaiah wrote, Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in

His paths.” For the law will go forth from Zion  
And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (Isa.  
2:2–3)

- l. When the angel Gabriel announced the birth of Jesus to Mary he told her that He would someday be the great King over the earth: “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end” (Luke 1:31–33).
- m. The monumental moment in redemptive history anticipated in the Old Testament prophecies, in the announcement of Christ’s birth, in the preview of Christ’s second coming glory at the Transfiguration, in Christ’s teaching and miracles, in the covenant promises to Israel, in the promise to believers that they will reign with Christ, in the promise to the twelve disciples that they would judge the twelve tribes of Israel, and in the promise of Jesus that He would return in glory will be imminent.
- n. And that will cause all heaven to praise God for the wonder of His sovereign plan that Christ should reign.
- o. Zeroing in on one particular group in heaven offering praise, John notes that **the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces** (cf. 5:8, 14; 7:11; 19:4) **and worshiped God.**

- p. As representatives of the glorified, raptured church, these elders had been eagerly waiting for Christ to take back the earth from the usurper.
- q. Their joyous cry of praise is filled with gratitude: **“We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign”** and reflects their exhilaration that their prayers for the kingdom to come (cf. Matt. 6:10) have been answered.
- r. The elders’ praise focused on three of God’s attributes.
  - i. *Pantokratōr* (**Almighty**) describes God’s sovereign, omnipotent, irresistible power. Nine of its ten New Testament uses are in Revelation (cf. 1:8; 4:8; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6, 15; 21:22).
    - 1. It has the sense of God exercising His all-embracing, all-encompassing will by means of His irresistible power.
  - ii. The phrase **who are and who were** expresses God’s eternity.
    - 1. As the living God (cf. 7:2; Deut. 5:26; Josh. 3:10; 1 Sam. 17:26; 2 Kings 19:4, 16; Pss. 42:2; 84:2; Jer. 10:10; Matt. 16:16; 2 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 12:22), God had no beginning and will have no end.
    - 2. He was in that He has existed from eternity past; He is in that He exists now and for all eternity future.

3. This way of expressing God's eternity was used three times previously in Revelation (1:4, 8; 4:8).
  4. Significantly, those three earlier occurrences add the phrase "who is to come."
  5. Since the present passage views Christ as already having come and established His kingdom, that phrase is not repeated here (cf. 16:5).
  6. Deceptively, the Antichrist is described in similar terms, as Satan attempts to concoct a poor imitation of the eternal King of the universe (17:8).
- iii. The elders also praised God for His sovereignty, **because He had taken His great power and ... begun to reign.**
1. The perfect tense of the verb translated **You have taken** signifies the permanence of God's sovereign rule.
  2. The words of Psalm 24:1, "The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it," are realized as Christ reigns in absolute power and authority over the earth.
- s. All attempts to equate this glorious reign of Christ over the whole earth with any past event or with the church is utterly foreign and contradictory to the clear eschatological teaching of Scripture, including especially this passage.

- t. There is no way this text can be fulfilled except by the universal reign of Jesus Christ over the whole earth—as the prophets had for so long predicted.

### III. Fits of Rage.

- a. **The Nations raged (11:18a)**
- b. The seventh trumpet vision reveals that, no longer afraid (cf. 6:15–17), **the impenitent nations were defiant and enraged** at the prospect of Christ's kingdom being established over the whole earth.
- c. The verb translated **were enraged** suggests a deep-seated, ongoing hostility.
  - i. This was not just a momentary emotional fit of temper but a settled burning resentment against God.
  - ii. Eventually, they will assemble armies to fight God (16:14, 16; 20:8–9).
  - iii. With no desire to repent of sin, angry resentment and hostility against heaven (16:11) will drive the nations to gather for their destruction at Armageddon (cf. Ps. 2:1, 5, 12; Acts 4:24–29).
  - iv. The divine judgments people will experience during the Tribulation should cause them to turn from their sins and submit to God.
  - v. Tragically, however, even under such frightening judgment and warnings of eternal hell, most of them will refuse to repent and will instead harden their hearts (cf. Rom. 2:1–10, which teaches that men refuse to repent in spite of God's goodness).

- vi. They will be like Pharaoh, who kept hardening his heart (Ex. 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 34; 1 Sam. 6:6) until the point when God judicially fixed his heart in that hardened condition (Ex. 10:1; 11:10).
- d. The unbelieving world will apparently reach that point at the final outpouring of God's wrath during the events of the seventh trumpet (cf. 16:9, 11).
  - i. Their rage and hostility toward God will reach a fever pitch, and they will gather to fight against Him at the battle on the plain of Megiddo: "Spirits of demons, performing signs, [will] go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. ... And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon" (16:14, 16).
  - ii. They will by then be beyond the day of grace; there will be no salvation at Armageddon.
  - iii. The world's desperate, last-ditch effort to keep Christ from establishing His kingdom will, of course, fail, and they will be utterly destroyed: 19:19-21
- e. Those unbelieving rejecters will have wasted their opportunity to repent at what they acknowledged as God's judgments (cf. 6:15–17).
  - i. Instead, they will plunge into the depths of hostility and rejection and be punished in eternal hell.

#### IV. Plan for Judgment.

- a. but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.” 11:18
- b. The coming of God’s **wrath**, like the coming of Christ’s kingdom (v. 15), is so certain that it can be spoken of as if it had already happened.
- c. Those who think that a loving God will not pour out His wrath on them cling to a false and dangerous hope.
- d. That God will one day judge unbelievers is a constant theme of Scripture.
- e. The sounding of the seventh trumpet marks the fulfillment of the great judgment event that the prophets foresaw and saints of all ages have longed for (cf. Ps. 3:7; 7:6; 35:1–8; 44:26; 68:1–2).
  - i. It will be the time when God pours out His wrath on His enemies.
- f. Not only will the seventh trumpet signal the outpouring of God’s wrath on earth, it will also indicate that **the time has come for the dead to be judged.**
  - i. **Time** translates *kairos*, which refers to a season, era, occasion, or event.
  - ii. The establishing of Christ’s kingdom will be a fitting time for the dead to be judged.
  - iii. The Great White Throne judgment (20:11–15) is not in view in this passage, as some argue, since

that judgment explicitly involves only unbelievers.

- iv. It is best to see the reference to judgment here as a general reference to all future judgments.
- v. The elders in their song make no attempt to separate the different phases of judgment as they are separated in the closing chapters of Revelation.
- vi. They simply sing of future judgments as though they were one event, in the same way that other Scriptures do not distinguish future judgments from each other (cf. John 5:25, 28–29; Acts 17:31; 24:21).
- g. The judgment will first of all be **the time for God to reward His servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear his name, both small and great.**
  - i. Though the power to serve God in a way worthy of reward is a gift of God's grace, still all through the New Testament believers are encouraged to work in view of those promised rewards.
  - ii. In 22:12 Jesus declared, "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."
  - iii. To the Corinthians Paul wrote, "Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor" (1 Cor. 3:8; cf. Matt. 5:12; 10:41–42; Mark 9:41; Col. 3:24; 2 John 8).



- iv. The reward promised believers is that they will inherit the kingdom, in both its millennial (Matt. 25:34–40; Mark 10:29–31) and eternal (Rev. 21:7) phases.
- v. Believers are also promised crowns, including the crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8), the crown of life (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10), and the crown of glory (1 Pet. 5:4).
- h. The phrase **servants and the prophets** encompasses all who have proclaimed God’s truth throughout redemptive history, from Moses to the two witnesses (11:3–13).
- i. Scripture frequently designates prophets as the Lord’s **servants** (e.g., 2 Kings 9:7; Ezra 9:11; Jer. 7:25; Ezek. 38:17; Dan. 9:6; Amos 3:7; Zech. 1:6).
  - i. The time has come for them to receive “a prophet’s reward” (Matt. 10:41).
  - ii. All those faithful men who stood for God in dark days and against opposition will then find their work revealed and rewarded.
- j. Another group to be rewarded is **the saints**, further defined as **those who fear Your name** (cf. Pss. 34:9; 85:9; 103:11; 115:13; 147:11; Eccl. 8:12; Luke 1:50).
- k. **Saints** is a common biblical description for the redeemed in both the Old and New Testaments.
  - i. All of God’s saints, from **the small** to **the great** will receive rewards.
- l. The judgment will also **destroy those who destroy the earth.**

- i. That is not a reference to those who pollute the environment, but to those who pollute the earth with their sin.
    - ii. That includes all unbelievers, especially in the context of Revelation the false economic and religious system called Babylon (cf. 19:2), Antichrist and his followers, and Satan himself, the ultimate destroyer.
    - iii. The apostle Paul wrote that the “mystery of lawlessness” (2 Thess. 2:7) is already at work in the church age, but during the Tribulation period it will reach its pinnacle of destructive activity, shredding the very fabric of society in every evil way.
  - m. Given stewardship and dominion over the earth (cf. Gen. 1:28), man instead fell into sin and throughout his history has continually corrupted the earth (cf. Rom. 8:19–21).
  - n. When that corrupting reaches its apex, God will destroy the earth and create a new one (21:1; Isa. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:12–13).
- V. **Promise of Communion.**
- a. Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. V 19
  - b. Bound up in the seventh trumpet is the promise to believers of unbroken fellowship with God forever.

- i. That fellowship is symbolized by the imagery of verse 19.
- c. The opening of **the temple of God which is in heaven** (the place where His presence dwells; cf. chaps. 4, 5) revealed **the ark of His covenant**.
- d. The ark symbolizes that the **covenant** God has promised to men is now available in its fullness.
- e. In the midst of the fury of His judgment on unbelievers, God, as it were, throws open the Holy of Holies (where the ark was located; Ex. 26:33–34; 2 Chron. 5:7) and draws believers into His presence.
- f. That would have been unthinkable in the Old Testament temple, when only the high priest entered the Holy of Holies once a year (Heb. 9:7).
- g. The **ark** symbolizes God's communion with the redeemed because it was there that blood sacrifices were offered to atone for men's sins (Lev. 16:2–16; Heb. 9:3–7).
  - i. Also, it was from above the ark that God spoke to Moses (Num. 7:89).
  - ii. The ark of the covenant is called in Scripture the ark of testimony (Ex. 25:22), the ark of God (1 Sam. 3:3), and the ark of God's strength (Ps. 132:8).
  - iii. Inside it was "a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant" (Heb. 9:4).
  - iv. All that symbolized that God would supply His people, was sovereign over His people, gave His

law to His people, and entered into an eternal saving covenant with His people.

- h. But along with the ark in the heavenly temple **there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.**
- i. Similar events are associated with God's majestic, glorious heavenly throne in 4:5. In 8:5 and 16:17–18 they are associated with judgment.
- j. Heaven is the source of vengeance on unbelievers, as well as covenant blessings for the redeemed.
- k. The message of the seventh trumpet is that Jesus Christ is the sovereign King of kings and Lord of lords.
- l. He will one day take the rule of the earth away from the usurper, Satan, and from earth's petty human rulers.
- m. History is moving inevitably toward its culmination in Christ's earthly reign.
- n. When He returns, He will bring covenant blessings to the redeemed, but eternal judgment to those who reject Him.
- o. In the light of that sobering truth, Peter exclaims, "What sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness" (2 Pet. 3:11)!<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., *Revelation 1–11*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 307–321.