

# The Last Trumpet, Part 1

*Last Things*

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**Bible Text:** Revelation 11:15-19; Joel 1-2  
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Revelation chapter 11, beginning at verse 15, that's on page 1,925.

15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.' 16 And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying: 'We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. 18 The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great—and for destroying those who destroy the earth.' 19 Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and a great hailstorm.

The word of the Lord. ["Praise be to God."]

May we pray.

*Lord, help me to be clear, to be concise, to be compelling, to be practical, and Lord, that no one would misunderstand. Help us, Lord, to be convinced of what your word says and apply it to our hearts through the Holy Spirit. For Jesus' sake, amen.*

Now we are ending a section of this book, and I hold to the belief that the book is parallel, that is, there are parallel sections: letters to the seven churches, the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and then you jump over on the other side of the next section, which has a kind of a Christmas theme. (I've spoken on it before, "How the dragon almost stole Christmas," and then after that you've got seven bowls of wrath and so on.

I believe that we can see the book as progressive parallelism. Progressive parallelism. First of all, it's parallel. Each of these sections ends in some kind of judgment, which we'll see very clearly today and, God willing, next Lord's Day. And also, it's progressive because each of the parallel sections takes us a little further in depth to the restoration of all things at the Second Coming of Christ.

Now, if we look at this section, and I've spoken a few weeks ago on the first part of chapter 11, and why do I jump all around? Because I'm trying to get themes out of it that are helpful. But if you think about the theme from that Oxford professor who said the best way to understand the book of Revelation is like a symphony and it takes us back to themes in the Old Testament.

The unity of John's book, then, is neither chronological nor arithmetical, but artistic, like that of a musical theme with variations, each variation adding something new to the significance of the whole composition. This is the only view which does adequate justice to the double fact that each new series of visions both recapitulates and develops the themes already stated in what has gone before. (G. B. Caird (1966), *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine* (London: Black), p. 106)

And today's theme—I want you to hold your hand there, we'll come back eventually—I want you to go to "Pachelbel's Canon" as it is found in Joel chapter 2.

So in other words, if you compare the book of Revelation to a grand symphony that has themes from all of these other books of the Bible, we begin to see something pretty amazing and I think you'll see a parallel with Joel chapter 2 now, and you're going to find that, Joel chapter 2 where there

is God's mighty army. And in Joel 2, notice what God says on page 1,414. "Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill" (Joel 2:1).

So there's a trumpet and a shout and notice what he says, "Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming" (Joel 2:1). The day of the LORD is coming. Now this is an amazing, an amazing statement because Joel 2 begins with a terrible judgment on Jerusalem and it ends, Joel 2 ends, with the wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost after this terrible judgment (Joel 2:28-32).

Now if you jump over to the other column on page 1,414, down to verse 10.

Before them the earth shakes, the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine. The LORD thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command. The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it? (Joel 2:10-11)

Now, we've had people who put to music some of these words, if you look back across the page, verse 4. Joel 2:4,

They have the appearance of horses; they gallop along like cavalry. With a noise like that of chariots they leap over the mountaintops, like a crackling fire consuming stubble, like a mighty army drawn up for battle. At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale. They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers. They all march in line, not swerving from their course. They do not jostle each other; each marches straight ahead. They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks. They rush upon the city; they run along the wall. They climb into the houses; like thieves they enter through the windows. (Joel 2:4-9)

This is God's mighty army. "His forces are beyond number," (Joel 2:11). He sent these.

Turn the page back to chapter 1. I want you to read about God's mighty army in Joel chapter 1. Who is this mighty army? Who is this mighty army that consumes and destroys and devastates and comes into the windows and

wipes everything out? Look at what he says in Joel chapter 1, and he says here in verse 4.

What the locust swarm has left the great locusts have eaten;  
what the great locusts have left the young locusts have eaten;  
what the young locusts have left other locusts have eaten. Wake  
up, you drunkards, and weep! Wail, all you drinkers of wine;  
wail because of the new wine, for it has been snatched from  
your lips. A nation has invaded my land, powerful and without  
number; it has the teeth of a lion, the fangs of a lioness. It has  
laid waste my vines and ruined my fig trees. It has stripped off  
their bark and thrown it away, leaving their branches white.  
(Joel 2:4-7)

You see what he's saying? What is the prophecy of Joel? It's about a plague of locusts, and God calls this plague of locusts his army.

In other words, we get something out of the book of Joel, and it's this, that whatever happens in this world, we can never divorce it completely from God's action.

You know, the Bible says that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28), and so here even a plague of locusts is described as God's mighty army. And isn't that a striking thing?

"This is my mighty army," says God, "and I'm sending it. Why am I sending it? Because I hate you? No, because I love you, and I'm chastising you. I'm trying to get your attention." And so when disasters come, they should always cause us to stop and think, "Oh wow, what is going on here? Is God trying to speak to me?"

God loves to speak to us primarily from his word, but he also speaks to us in his providence. He speaks to us in natural phenomena and this particular phenomenon, a plague of locusts, all kinds of locusts, they're described as his army. And notice again as you look at it in chapter 2, he says in verse 10, "Before them the earth shakes," that's Joel 2:10, "the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine. The LORD thunders at the head of his army."

You see, this language is what we might call apocalyptic. What do we mean by saying something is apocalyptic? Well, that's a Greek word, and it literally means to unveil (apokálupsis, ἀποκάλυψις, from ἀπό, ἀπό and kalúptō, καλύπτω). Let's suppose that here in Texarkana we decided to make a statue of David Majors, that some modern artist got this contract, and David is shaking his head, and he decided to make it highly symbolic. And nobody's seen this statue. And it's in—what's the best park here? The one we like to walk in is actually on the Arkansas side where we walk around that little lake at the University of Arkansas, Texarkana. That's a great walking spot if you don't get slipping up on goose things.

So anyhow, let's suppose they decided, even though David's a Texan, to put a statue of David right in the middle of that lake. And nobody's seen it, and it's going to be unveiled. And everybody wants to get a sneak peek, particularly Wanda and their children and grandchildren want to get a sneak peek of this. What is it on the day when they unveil it, they pull off the covering? That's an apocalypse, literally. That is to uncover, to pull back the veil, to pull back the curtains, to show us what's really going on.

And so apocalyptic language in both the Old Testament and New Testament has certain characteristics, and those characteristics often speak of everyday calamities in terms of "The Day of the Lord." You see, this is "The Day of the Lord."

If we look there on page 1,415, the second sentence there, "The day of the Lord is great, it is dreadful. Who can endure it?" (Joel 2:11)

So this is "The Day of the Lord." Has it already been fulfilled? Oh yes, it's already been fulfilled, but it's a type, it's a shadow of a future day of the Lord. And that's what we need to understand.

If we understand the book of Revelation, as taking themes out of the Old Testament like a wonderful symphony and weaving them together in a grand apocalypse, a grand unveiling, and remember, that's actually the title of the last book of the Bible in the Greek New Testament, Apokalypsis (Apokálupsis; Ἀποκάλυψις). It is the unveiling. It's pulling back the curtains. It's letting us know what's really going on.

And we had a friend, you all have met him of course, he came and gave his testimony and has a dog named Tootie. And our friend Baxter came to our

house yesterday with a sticker on the top of his head and it said, "I voted." Anyhow, Baxter's bragging about his dog, and the poll workers actually came out and gave Tootie an "I Voted" sticker. Now, I know it's Louisiana, but we may allow dead people to vote, but we don't allow dogs to vote. So anyhow, pulling back the veil, pulling back the curtain shows what's really going on, and Tootie did not get to go inside the voting booth and watch Baxter vote because the curtain closes, and then when you vote, it opens.

So pulling back the veil shows us what's really going on in the world. In this time before Christ, Joel's prophecy tells the people of Judah, "You all are in big trouble. You're in great difficulty and God has sent this plague of locusts to get your attention."

Now I want you to notice something else. Again, it's called the great day of the Lord. What's the response? The response is found in verse 12. Joel 2:12.

"Even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate," (and here he quotes from the "Apostles' Creed" of the Old Testament, which is found in Exodus 34:6, where God declares his name, "he's gracious, he's compassionate") "slow to anger and abounding in love. He relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing." (Joel 2:12-14)

And then he says again in verse 15, "Blow the trumpet in Zion," and you see we're talking about the last trumpet. We're talking about the seventh trumpet of the book of Revelation, and he tells people to gather together, and he says in verse 17 of Joel 2, "Let the priests, who minister before the LORD, weep between the temple porch and the altar." That's the place where the priests could be, and the people witnessed this. Let them weep. Let them cry out to God.

So in other words, God is giving a call to his people in the Old Testament, in Jerusalem, to repent before he sends this terrible thing and he says in verse 18, "Then the LORD will be jealous for his land and take pity on his people."

And he says in verse 20:

I will drive the northern army far from you, pushing it into a parched and barren land, with its front columns going into the eastern sea and those in the rear into the western sea. And its stench will go up; its smell will rise. (Joel 2:20)

Have you ever smelled a bunch of dead bugs? This is what's going on. It's a bunch of dead bugs, and God rids them of his army. He wipes out his army, his northern army, and he sends them into the seas, and they die. All of these locusts die, and their stench arises.

And so anyhow, we turn over and then he says something in verse 25, page 1,416. "I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten" (Joel 2:25). That's what he's saying. If you repent—he's saying to Judah and Jerusalem—if you'll repent, if you will rend your heart and not your garments, see there was the custom in the Old Testament.

You remember that when Jesus said when the high priest put him under an oath and said, "Swear to me now," and Jesus quotes out of the book of Daniel, "You'll see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the majesty on high" (Daniel 7:13), what did the high priest do? He ripped his cloak (Matthew 26:65). This is a sign of mourning. This is a sign of wailing and repentance before God. But we can do it with hypocrisy. And notice what he says again, "If they will weep, if they will rend their hearts," that's previous on the other page, "and not their garments," God will do what? Verse 25, Joel 2:25, "I'll repay you for the years the locusts have eaten."

This is God's army, "the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm—my great army that I sent among you" (Joel 2:25).

You see, can it be any clearer than that? This was a "Day of the Lord." for Judah and Jerusalem. It was a "Day of the Lord." It was God's mighty army, the locusts, and now he's delivered them from the locusts, and he's going to restore them and then he says something else.

Now in verse 28, I want you to look at Joel 2:28. "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people." After what? After the locust plague. After God restores Jerusalem and Judah, he's going to do something.

Now, I've got to ask a question: Has Joel 2, up to that point, been fulfilled? And the answer to that is "Yes," and what follows it is, verse 28.

“I will pour out my Spirit on all people.” And notice here that the sexism of the Old Testament begins to disappear in the New Testament. You see it pretty clearly, I think, that when the Holy Spirit comes with power, it’s no longer just the men—although there were women leaders in the Old Testament, like the prophetess Huldah, for whom one of the main gates was named in the restored city of Jerusalem when they rebuilt it following the Babylonian captivity. She was a prophetess (2 Kings 22:14-20; 2 Chronicles 34:22-28). Deborah was a prophetess (Judges 4-5).

But by and large, by and large, women did not play a dominant role as official spokespersons for God. But notice here what happens in the new covenant. He says,

I’ll pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons, and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. (And then he says) I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls. (Joel 2:28-32)

Let that sink in. And you say, “Well, what about the sun being turned to darkness, the moon to blood?”

Well, that happened with this locust plague, but it also happened following the day of Pentecost, and we know that for a fact, and if you read the transcript of the sermon that I preached about three weeks ago where I quote extensively from the one eyewitness that we have of all the events that happened from the beginning of the Civil War between the Jews and the Roman Empire in AD 66, and going on to Masada and the mass suicide of the zealots on Masada, the eyewitness Josephus records all these wonderful, amazing signs and wonders like an army leaving the city of Jerusalem. It’s recorded there in this eyewitness account written by Flavius Josephus who was the commander of the Jewish armies of the Galilee and who finally



surrendered to the Romans because he realized, “This is a war we cannot win.”

(The sermon, “A Fallen Star,” preached on October 29, 2023 <<https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=102923172124960>> quotes Flavius Josephus (1970), *The Wars of the Jews, Complete Works*, trans. William Whiston (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications). For example in Book 6, Chapter 5, pp. 582-83:

289 (6.5.3) Thus there was a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet, that continued a whole year. 297 (6.5.3) a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared; I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, 298 (6.5.3) and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, before sunset, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen 299 (6.5.3) running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities.)

And so all of that background with the miracles and signs and wonders, and again, Pentecost, which we know has already taken place and still takes place whenever the gospel comes to people. Pentecost comes where missions go into all the world, and God does signs and wonders still today, and we read of them on the mission field, especially in the lower half of the world, the Southern Hemisphere. And so, God’s still extending the rule of his Christ in signs and wonders and extending the New Testament.

Now, if we go back to Revelation chapter 11, we notice some things here. Look at Revelation chapter 11, verse 15, page 1,925. Again, “Pachelbel’s Canon,” a theme out of the Old Testament, this time out of the book of Joel. This theme out of Joel is here in Revelation chapter 11 and verse 15. “The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices,” and so on.

Now, I want you to notice something else here that’s very significant, and this is a two-part sermon, so I will continue it, God willing, next Lord’s Day. We want to notice one thing here in this section if we turn over to verse 16, where we have the 24 elders who are seated on their thrones before God, and they symbolically represent the leadership of both the Old Testament and the New Testament. They fall on their faces, and they worship God saying, “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was,

because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign”  
(Revelation 11:16-17).

Think about it for a moment. Does God have great power now? “Yes.”

Has God always had great power? “Yes.”

Has God always taken his great power and reigned? “No. He has not.”

There’s war that goes on between Christ and Satan, between good and evil throughout all ages, and what happens is this, in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and ascension to the right hand of the Father, obtaining the Holy Spirit for the people of God and sending him on the day of Pentecost, there’s a great turning point. God takes his great power.

Do you remember the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 28 where he said, “All power, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me”?  
(Matthew 28:18)

In other words, there’s a point in redemptive history where God takes his great power and begins to reign, and that’s in the coming of Christ. That’s after his resurrection. “All power, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me, therefore go” (Matthew 28:18-19), and he gives them the Holy Spirit to empower them as they go. And so he says that.

Now notice something else. Verse 18:

The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead (now notice the next sentence or the next clause), and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name. (Guess what? You may not be a prophet, nobody may yet know that you’re a saint, even though you really are, if you love Jesus, and those that reverence your name, if you reverence the God’s name, if you reverence his name, if you love God and you honor him, there’s coming a day when you are going to be rewarded. Notice again that clause where he says) and for rewarding your servants, prophets, and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great. (Revelation 11:18)

Now notice the last clause, “and for destroying those who destroy the earth” (Revelation 11:18). Now this is not an ecological message, but it is a message about people, who by their sin, caused the earth to be destroyed. Remember it was the sin of our first parents that brought God’s judgment on our planet and that resulted in all these kinds of things (Genesis 3:17-24). So it’s a judgment on people who refuse to repent, and we see that there.

Notice it’s one and the same event. It’s the Second Coming of Christ. Now, do I know all about the Second Coming of Christ? “No.”

But as we see these parallel sections of the book of Revelation, and as we see them progressing a little further, a little deeper into these things, we get a clearer revelation. In other words, this trumpet, the seventh trumpet, is the last trumpet, and this last trumpet ushers in the return of Christ for and with his people with a result of rewards coming to those who love him and punishment going to those who refuse to repent. That’s very significant.

And notice again what they say in verse 15,

The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.” (Revelation 11:15)

Isn’t that the consummation of all things? Isn’t that what happens when the Lord Jesus ascends to the right hand of the Father? And as he returns to this earth, isn’t that what we will say then? When the Lord Jesus Christ returns, there will be a trumpet sound. It’s the seventh trumpet. It’s the last trumpet, we’ll look at that more next week. It’s the last trumpet. And when that trumpet sounds, that’s when the world is consummated. That’s when the glory that Christ entered into in his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension is going to be manifest. It’s manifest now by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit but it’s not yet fully manifest on this earth, and as I say, we’ll continue this next week.

But I want to have a word to anyone who’s listening via the internet.

Listen. Jesus is coming again. The church has confessed that for two millennia. “Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again.” All true Christian teaching centers on those three truths: “Christ has died, Christ

has risen, Christ will come again.” And so the question is this, were Christ to come again today, and if your doctrine of last things (That’s called eschatology) prevents you from saying Christ could come today, then you’ve got something messed up in your Bible doctrine because there are mysteries here.

Christ can come today. And yet there are other mysteries. Before Christ returns, there will be a great turning of the Jewish people to Christ and of the Gentiles, and there will also be great turning away from God, apostasy, and persecution. Mysterious things.

How do they fit in? I don’t know. I haven’t yet looked at the box top of that jigsaw puzzle.

And the Old Testament saints did not have the box top for all the prophecies of the Old Testament: A Suffering Servant and a Reigning King. But when it happened, they saw the box top.

The point I’m making is this, where will you stand on that last day? Where will you be on that day when the Lord Jesus Christ returns again? Because that’s the consummation of history. That’s the completion of history. And from that point on then, we have a New Heavens and a New Earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:13). Where will you be?

Let me ask you this question, were you to die today, do you know where you would go?

I can tell you that I know where I would go because I’m declared righteous by God by means of faith alone. I put my trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. And everyone who has put his or her trust in the Lord Jesus Christ is declared righteous by God. I’ll never be condemned. I can’t come into condemnation. There’s no way I can go to hell because God has already acquitted me and put to my account the very righteousness of Christ, and that’s received by faith alone (Romans 3:21-26; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Now faith is never alone (Ephesians 2:8-10). Real faith is accompanied by other things, a changed life. It’s like the Sunday school’s ditty that says, “If you’re saved and you know it, then your life will surely show it.”

So, do you have evidence in yourself that you truly are trusting in Christ? How do you view things in life, your family, your wealth, your position,

what people think of you? The question then takes you back to this: Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ?

I commend the Lord Jesus Christ to you. He is a wonderful Savior, and he will never turn anyone away. “All that the Father gives me shall come to me, and him who comes to me I will never cast away” (John 6:37).

May we pray.

*Lord, take this part of this message today and encourage us to be encouraged that no matter what happens in life, Lord, whether it's a locust plague or what, these are all signposts that point us to the ultimate day of the Lord when you return. Lord, that accidents and car wrecks and sicknesses and all these things are ways that you remind us that you're there, and these things happen not because you hate us, but because you love us and you want us to turn from everything and embrace you as you're offered in the gospel. In Jesus' name, amen.*

Our last hymn is number 790. A thanksgiving hymn, “We gather together.”