

**01/30/22 “The Seventh Trumpet”
Revelation 11:15-19**

Handel’s Messiah was composed in the year 1741. Handel composed the music in only 24 days. A friend recounted that George Frederic Handel would not open the door and he would not eat while writing Messiah. After three weeks, when they finally opened his door, they found him swimming in a sea of paper, surrounded by notes, tears streaming down his face. Handel said, “Whether I was in the body or out of the body as I wrote Messiah, I know not. God knows. But I think I did see all Heaven opened before me and the Great God Himself.”

The most famous part of Messiah is the Hallelujah Chorus. The Scripture that is quoted in the chorus is Revelation 11:15, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever.”

For 280 years, music lovers have thrilled to hear the truth of Revelation 11:15 set to incredible music. Handel’s music captures so well the truth of the text. The kingdom of the world is small and fading and failing compared to the majestic kingdom of God and of Christ who will reign forever and ever. Hallelujah!

Let’s read about it now in Revelation 11:15-19...

The sounding of the seventh trumpet marks a significant milestone in our study of the book of Revelation. As we finish chapter 11 today, we come to the midpoint of the book of Revelation, chapters 1-11 is the first half and chapters 12-22 are the second half.

But more importantly our text today sets in motion the final events leading up to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the establishment of His earthly millennial kingdom followed by the new heaven and new earth and the eternal kingdom.

With the sounding of the seventh trumpet comes the final completion of the whole redemptive plan of God for the present universe. The seventh trumpet includes the seven bowls of terror dumped out on the world, the final world battle at Armageddon, the return of Jesus Christ in glory and His fierce judgment on the ungodly, the establishment of the millennial kingdom. All of that is going to flow out of this blowing of the seventh trumpet. So, from here on, we move into the final phases of judgment right on through into chapter 20 where the kingdom is established, chapter 21 and chapter 22, the final new heavens and the new earth.

Although the seventh trumpet sounds in 11:15, the judgments associated with it are not described until chapter 15. Chapters 12–14 are a digression, taking readers back through the tribulation to the point of the seventh trumpet by a different path. They describe the tribulation not from God’s perspective, but from Satan’s. Chapters 4–11 focused on Christ’s taking back what is rightfully His by means of the seal and trumpet judgments. 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.

Remember back in Revelation 8:13 we read...

The three final woes constitute fifth trumpet, the sixth trumpet, and the seventh trumpet. In Revelation chapter 9 the fifth trumpet (and the first woe) results in a terrifying plague of “demonic locusts” that arise from the abyss and attack and torture the unsaved for five months.

The sixth trumpet (and the second woe) involves an army of two hundred demonic forces who kill a third of humanity (Revelation 9:15-16).

And the third woe is the seventh trumpet, Revelation 11:15 tells us the seventh trumpet (and the third woe) sounds, and immediately there are loud voices in heaven saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.”

This is now the moment that encompasses the final completion of the whole plan of God for the present universe, this is the culmination of God’s judgment that the prophet Joel declared in Joel chapter 2 in speaking of the Day of the Lord. We are now near the end of the seven-year tribulation and the return of Christ.

In chapter 10, notice verse 7: “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.” The seventh trumpet marks the finishing of the mystery of God.

This trumpet signals the answer to what Christ’s disciples prayed and to believers throughout the centuries praying, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” How many hundreds of millions of times have those words been prayed to God? Here at last, God has answered all those prayers; the time has come. The seventh trumpet brings the consummation of His eternal plan.

So when the seventh trumpet is blown, what happens in the seventh trumpet extends all the way through the rest of the book of Revelation into chapter 20, right up to the establishment of the kingdom. The introduction of the seventh trumpet in our text today sets in motion the reign of Jesus Christ over the whole earth. The scene unfolds in three stages.

The Praise for the Sovereign Ruler	11:15-17
The Plan for the Savior’s Redeemed	11:18
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My prayer is that you will see the mystery of God revealed to us and your heart will be overwhelmed with the glory of God like Handel was when he wrote the Messiah and the Hallelujah chorus.

I. The Praise for the Sovereign Ruler

Look at 11:15-17...

We can see there is unrestrained joy that the power of Satan is to be forever broken, and Christ is to reign supreme. The setting up of Christ’s long-awaited kingdom is the apex of redemptive history.

Notice the use of the singular term “kingdom of the world” instead of the plural “kingdoms.” All of the world’s diverse groups are in reality one kingdom under one king. In Matthew 12:26, Jesus was accused of casting out demons by Satan. And He said, “If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then shall his kingdom stand?” The point is, his kingdom stands because it is an undivided kingdom. We look at the world and we see it divided into all kinds of nations. It is politically, it is socially, it is linguistically, it is in terms of traditions and customs and geography; but it is one kingdom under one king, being ruled by Satan and his demonic hosts.

Jesus affirmed that Satan, though a usurper and not the rightful king, is the present ruler of the world. Three times in John’s gospel Jesus called Satan “the ruler of this world” in John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11.

Notice verse 15 says, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord.” In the Greek this is called the proleptic aorist tense. The tense of the verb translated “has become” describes a future event that is so certain that it can be spoken of as if it had already taken place.

With the blast of the seventh trumpet it is as though heaven is saying it is finished; it is as good as accomplished, even though there are many chapters left in the book of Revelation. Imagine watching a football game in which something so decisive happens on the field that you realize the game is over; there is no way the other team can recover. That is the feel here: the declaration of the seventh trumpet is so decisive that there is no way the powers of evil will recover.

Heaven rejoices as if the long-anticipated day when Christ will establish His kingdom had already arrived, although some time on earth must elapse before that actually happens.

The phrase “the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ” emphasizes two realities. “Lord” usually refers to Jesus throughout the New Testament, while in Revelation it more often refers to God the Father, emphasizing their equality of nature. This phrase also describes the kingdom in its broadest sense, looking forward to divine rule over the creation and the new creation.

So, the end of Satan’s power has come; the establishment of the sovereign kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ in all the universe. We’ll read more about it. We’ll see it in chapter 12. We’ll see it in 17, 19, chapter 20. And His final dominion will take place in the twentieth chapter when He establishes His millennial kingdom, and binds Satan for the thousand years of the duration of the kingdom, at the end of which He casts him into the bottomless pit to burn forever, and sets up the new heaven and the new earth and the eternal state.

All of God’s people throughout all of history have anticipated this. In fact, let’s look at Revelation 15:2-4...

They were singing a very old song, very old, a song out of the Pentateuch, the original books of the Old Testament, the law; an old, old song; the song of Moses. It goes all the way back to the fifteenth chapter of the book of Exodus. They are singing it at the pouring out of the final bowls of judgment at the end of human history. What does the song say? “Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; for all the nations will come and worship before You, for Your righteous acts have been revealed.” The very song of Moses in Exodus 15, written 1500 years before the birth of Christ anticipated the moment when the Lord Jesus Christ became King of the world.

The book of Daniel was written 530 years before Christ. Please turn to Daniel (in your Old Testament, between Ezekiel and Hosea) Look at Daniel 7:13-14....

So, Daniel sees the image of the great, glorious, final kingdom of Christ.

Daniel 7:18...

Daniel 7:22...

Daniel is given a vision far into the future to see the glorious events described under the seventh trumpet, when the kingdoms of this world become – when the kingdom, I should say, of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

Daniel 7:27, “The sovereignty, the dominion, the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.”

What an incredible promise; and yet this is the repeated promise that the Messiah will rule the whole world, the whole world.

Malachi chapter 4 talks about it. “A day coming like a furnace, and the destruction of the ungodly; and here comes the Son of Righteousness rising with healing in its beams,” of course, establishing a kingdom of righteousness.

Zechariah 14:9, “The Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one.”

Revelation 11:15, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.” This is the final righteous government of Christ.

In John 18:36 Jesus was being tried in the mock trial before Pilate. Jesus answered Pilate and said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.”

The kingdom that Christ came to bring the first time was a spiritual kingdom. But in His second coming His final kingdom will be a sovereign, political, social, worldwide rulership.

Revelation 11:16...

As representatives of the glorified, raptured church, these elders had been eagerly waiting for Christ to take back the earth from Satan. Their joyous cry of praise is filled with gratitude. Verse 17...

The elders’ praise focused on three of God’s attributes. First, “almighty” describes God’s sovereign, omnipotent power. Nine of its ten New Testament uses are in Revelation (1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6, 15; 21:22). It has the sense of God exercising His all-encompassing will by means of His irresistible power.

Second, the phrase “who are and who were” expresses God’s eternity. As the living God, He had no beginning and will have no end.

Back in Revelation 1:8 it says, “The Lord God is the Alpha and Omega, who is and who was and who is to come; who is, who was, who is to come,” present, past, future.

Then in Revelation 4:8, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty who was, who is, who is to come,” present, past, future.

But when you get to Revelation 11:17, the “who is to come” is dropped, because it is time for His arrival. It’s not any longer in the future. He is here. He has arrived.

Third, the elders also praised God for His sovereignty, because He had “taken His great power and ... begun to reign.” The verb translated “have taken” signifies the permanence of God’s sovereign rule. So, point number we see the praise for the sovereign ruler.

II. The Plan for the Savior’s Redeemed

Verse 18...

Notice first that the joy of heaven is not shared by the inhabitants of the earth. The coming of God's kingdom enrages the people of the earth. They have NOT been praying, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The kingdom of God and of Christ is repulsive to them, to every fiber of their being. It is the very thing they do not want. They do not find Jesus' yoke easy and his burden light. They are not excited that a thrice holy God actively reigns over every aspect of His kingdom, not thrilled that God is light and in Him, there is no darkness at all. They are not attracted to the person and work of Jesus Christ. They hate this work of God and are filled with rage.

This rage is clearly depicted in Psalm 2. Revelation 11:15-18 has very similar language to Psalm 2. That which was promised in Psalm 2 written about 1000 years before Christ is now seen as imminent.

Look at Psalm 2 with me. Psalm 2:1-3 says...

The kings of the earth, who have always been enemies of Christ, have taken their power and authority at every stage of history and fought against the Lord and against His Christ. They do not consider His yoke easy; they want to throw it off. Psalm 2:4 gives God's reaction...

If all of the demons—every one—were together against God, if every created being took their stand against Him, He would still laugh. He is omnipotent.

This is God's decree and action after that laughter. Psalm 2:5-9...

Then the psalmist gives some advice in verses 10-12...

The flavor of Psalm 2 finds its way into the remainder of this part of the book of Revelation. You will find reference to Psalm 2 in Revelation chapter 12, chapter 14, chapter 16, 17, and even in chapter 19. Psalm 2 will have its final fulfillment at the battle of Armageddon when the King triumphs over all wicked hosts who have gathered against Him to fight.

Not only will the seventh trumpet signal the outpouring of God's wrath on earth, Revelation 11:18 says it will also indicate that "the time has come for the dead to be judged." "Time" translates a Greek word that refers to a season, era, occasion, or event. The establishing of Christ's kingdom will be a fitting time for the dead to be judged. The great white throne judgment (20:11–15) is not in view in this passage, since that judgment explicitly involves only unbelievers.

Notice verse 18 says the judgment will be the time for God to reward His "bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear His name, the small and the great." Though the power to serve God in a way worthy of reward is a gift of God's grace, still believers are encouraged to work in view of those promised rewards.

In Revelation 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." 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 Corinthians 3:8. The reward promised believers is that they will inherit the kingdom, in both its millennial (Matthew 25:34–40; Mark 10:29–31) and eternal (Revelation 21:7) phases. Believers are also promised crowns, including the crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8), the crown of life (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10), and the crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4).

The phrase “Your bond-servants the prophets” encompasses all who have proclaimed God’s truth throughout redemptive history, from Moses to the two witnesses we saw last week in Revelation 11:3–13. All the faithful ones who stood for God in dark days and against opposition will then find their work revealed and rewarded.

Another group to be rewarded is the saints, further defined as those “who fear Your name” (cf. Psalm 34:9; Luke 1:50). “Saints” is a common biblical description for the redeemed in both the Old and New Testaments (5:8; 8:3–4; Psalm 16:3; Daniel 7:18; Matthew 27:52; Acts 9:13; 26:10; Romans 1:7; 8:27). All of God’s saints, “the small and the great,” will receive rewards.

The judgment will also “destroy those who destroy the earth.” That is not a reference to those who somehow miss their car smog checks and pollute the environment, but to those who pollute the earth with their sin. That includes all unbelievers, especially in the context of Revelation of the false economic and religious system called Babylon in Revelation 18:2 where people worship the Antichrist and Satan himself. The apostle Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 that the “mystery of lawlessness” 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.

Given stewardship and dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:28), humans instead fell into sin and throughout their history have continually corrupted the earth (Romans 8:19–21). When that corrupting reaches its apex, God will destroy the earth and create a new one (21:1).

III. The Promise of His Special Presence

Verse 19...

Bound up in the seventh trumpet is the promise to believers of unbroken fellowship with God forever. That fellowship is symbolized by the imagery of verse 19. The opening of “the temple of God which is in heaven” (the place where His presence dwells from chapters 4, 5) revealed the ark of His covenant. The ark symbolizes that the covenant God has promised to men is now available in its fullness. In the midst of the fury of His judgment on unbelievers, God throws open the Holy of Holies (where the ark was located; Exodus 26:33–34; 2 Chronicles 5:7) and draws believers into His presence. That would have been unthinkable in the Old Testament temple, when only the high priest entered the Holy of Holies once a year (Hebrews 9:7).

The ark symbolizes God’s communion with the redeemed because it was there that blood sacrifices were offered to atone for men’s sins (Leviticus 16:2–16; Hebrews 9:3–7). Also, it was from above the ark that God spoke to Moses (Numbers 7:89). The ark of the covenant is called in Scripture the ark of testimony (Exodus 25:22), the ark of God (1 Samuel 3:3), and the ark of God’s strength (Psalm 132:8). Inside it was “a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron’s rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant” (Hebrews 9:4). 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.

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.” 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. Heaven is the source of vengeance on unbelievers, as well as covenant blessings for the redeemed.

The message of the seventh trumpet is that Jesus Christ is the sovereign King. He will one day take the rule of the earth away from Satan and human rulers. When He returns, He will bring covenant blessings to the redeemed, but eternal judgment to those who reject Him.

I want to share one closing thought with you. One of the big differences between Christians and non-Christians is we are looking forward to and cannot wait for this Kingdom to come. Non-Christians are enraged at the coming Kingdom. We need to pray, as never before: Oh God, may your name be held in honor, may it be hallowed all over the world, and may your kingdom come, and may your will at last be done on earth in the same way that it is being done right now in heaven.

And then we need to embrace, believe and practice what Jesus says in Matthew 6:31-33, “So do not worry, saying ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” What does it mean to seek first His kingdom? It means to pray for it to come, to evangelize and embrace missions to talk to lost people about this, and to look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.

Let’s pray...