

The Last Trumpet, Part 2

Last Things

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Bible Text: Revelation 11:15-19; 1 Corinthians 15
Preached on: Sunday, November 26, 2023

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Our Scripture text is taken from Revelation chapter 11 beginning at verse 15 and you'll find that on page 1,925.

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.' And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped 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. 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.' 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. (Revelation 11:15-19)

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

May we pray.

Lord, help me to tie things together in this section as we close this one section out today. We pray, Lord, that you will give me clarity of mind, conciseness of speech, practicality in terms of how we should live and think and speak, and above all, Lord, we pray for the power and presence of your Holy Spirit, without whom I am at my best but a sounding gong and a

clanging cymbal. Send forth your word today through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Well, this is the second part of last week's sermon, so it might be profitable if you want to read that sermon or listen to that sermon, I have the links. And this is "The Last Trumpet, Part 2," and I think it's important, therefore, that we look at a parallel passage to this, which is 1 Corinthians chapter 15, 1 Corinthians chapter 15, and we will look there on page 1,791, and that's 1 Corinthians 15 and verse 50. He says,

I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:50-53)

Now I want to make a couple of comments on this.

First of all, there are only two people in the history of our planet who never died. It wasn't Jesus. It was Enoch, and it was Elijah: Enoch (Genesis 5:21-24) and Elijah (2 Kings 2:11-12). Everybody else who's ever lived has died, including our Lord, and so we find something here. He's talking about flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable, and then he talks about we'll not all sleep. What is he referring to here?

Now, he's not talking about our soul sleeping. Our souls don't sleep. The moment that we die, we wake up in the presence of the Lord in our souls or in our spirits (2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; Hebrews 12:23; Revelation 6:9). But our bodies sleep, and they sleep in the ground, whether they've been reduced to cremains, or whether their bones are buried as in the Jewish tradition, or whether we bury the body as we tend to do in this country, we're sleeping. Our bodies sleep.

When you sleep, you expect to do something. You expect to wake up the next morning. And so he says we will not all sleep, he says, but we will all be changed (1 Corinthians 15:51). What is he saying? He's saying that there

may be people here on Robeson Road today who will never die. Think about that. Is it possible to be like Enoch, who was translated that he wouldn't see death, or like the prophet Elijah, for whom the Lord came with his body, with his angels and chariots of fire? Yes, he says we'll not all sleep, but we will all be changed. What does he mean by that? He says, "In a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:52).

Now notice verse 53, "For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality" And there's a parallel passage earlier in 2 Corinthians that talks about the resurrection this way, and the bottom line is this, when Paul says, "I'd like to be alive when Jesus comes because I don't want to be found naked" (2 Corinthians 5:2-4).

What does he mean by naked? He means naked is if you die now, today, if you die today, your soul or your spirit, the non-material part of your body, will be naked. It will go to be in the presence of the Lord, and every description we have of heaven at that point, they're the spirits of just people made perfect. They are disembodied spirits and Paul said, "I really don't want that experience. What I'd really rather is." And in my previous congregation I always wore a robe, and that is that particular Lord's Day, I just wore a business suit, and then I said, "If I'm alive when the Lord returns," then, and I put my robe on over my business coat, and I said, "That's what it is to be alive when Christ returns, it is for this mortal body, subject to death, to put on immortality." And so I used my Geneva gown as an illustration of the immortal body that we receive at the return of Christ.

So this mortal, this perishable, must put on the immortal, the imperishable and so that's what's there, and then he says in verse 54,

When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable,
and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written
will come true: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.'
'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your
sting?' (1 Corinthians 15:54-55)

And you see that's from Hosea chapter 13 and verse 14. Now so what are we thinking about here? He calls this the last trumpet. I don't know how to get around this, but it seems to me that it's absolutely clear that the last trumpet

that Paul has in mind is the seventh trumpet that is sounded in the book of Revelation, even though Revelation is written after St. Paul died.

The seventh trumpet is the last trumpet, and you see what we've been talking about is that the book of Revelation is like a symphony. So there are themes throughout the whole Bible, from Genesis 1 all the way through the end of Malachi, those themes are all woven into the book of Revelation. It is God's grand symphony summing up the whole of Scripture, and also sums up with many statements from our Lord himself.

And so notice across the page, 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 20. He says: "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep."

Now let's think about it. Was Jesus the first man ever to be raised from the dead? No. Jesus himself raised people from the dead (Matthew 9:23-26; John 11:43-44). Elijah raised people from the dead (1 Kings 17:17-24). Elisha raised people from the dead (2 Kings 4:32-37). And we see in the book of Acts people are raised from the dead (Acts 9:36-41; 20:9-12). Jesus was not the first person to be raised from the dead, but he's the firstfruits (1 Corinthians 15:20). That takes us back to the Old Testament feast, and you have a feast of firstfruits (Leviticus 23:10), and that reminds us that more is to come.

So the Lord Jesus is raised as the New Man, the new humanity, and so in Jesus Christ, all of us in the image of God put on immortality in him potentially, and then absolutely and experientially at his return.

So he goes on and he says in verse 21, "For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man." And he takes us back to the Garden of Eden there, and that is whose sin was the great sin, was it Eve's?

No. Eve was tricked, she was beguiled, she was deceived. But Adam, with malice aforethought, choosing his wife over God, deliberately defied God and took that which was forbidden (Genesis 3:6-7, 13; 1 Timothy 2:14). Lifting his hand to take that fruit is a fist towards heaven. And so death came not through Eve's sin, but through Adam's sin, and he says for since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

Verse 22, “For as in Adam all die.” You were in Adam. What does it mean to be in Adam? It means that when you stand before God, you stand with a representative, and there are only two representatives that you can be in. The one is Adam, and the other one is Christ. And he says, “As in Adam all die.”

And here’s the great question we ask, why do babies die? Why do innocent people die? Why is this? Why is that? Why are there wars? Why is there destruction?

You know, we have some glimpse of destruction in some of modern reporting, because unlike other eras when we did not have movie cameras or television or satellite hookups, we only read about war, and only those who actually were engaged in combat saw it.

But today, because people with phones can record things, we see how horrible war is. Why is all of that? Why do people hate each other? Why is hatred the basic human condition? Why? Why? And the point is that humanity died in Adam, and you and I partake of that death and its consequences.

But then he says, “So in Christ all will be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). And in Christ, you and I stand before God with a different standing. Jesus is my representative. He’s yours. We stand before God, not in old Adam, not subject to all of the horrible things that Adam’s sin unleashed in our world, but we stand before God as part of a new humanity (Romans 5:12-21). And then he says all will be made alive.

Now look at what he says next, verse 23, “But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits.” Christ the firstfruits. So again, Christ is the first man to rise from the dead **as the new humanity, as the pattern that is going to be true for you and for me.**

And then he says, “Then when he comes, those who belong to him” (1 Corinthians 15:23) Notice what he says, when he comes, those who belong to him. This is obviously, we think about various schools of interpretation of last things, this is obviously a future event, and he says when he comes, those who belong to him.

Now notice verse 24, “Then the end will come.” What is the end in view? The end in view there is when we have had what our father Adam failed to

do. Adam was given a commission by God. It was, some people have called it “The Cultural Mandate,” and that was to take God’s perfect creation and order it in a perfect order with man over all else of creation, that is, Adam ruling all of animal life and plant life, taking authority over them and subduing them (Genesis 1:26-28).

But what did Adam do? Adam rebelled against God, and therefore someone seized control (John 12:31; 14:30; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:1–3). Nature does not like a vacuum. Who seized control? Who was the one who said to Jesus when he was tempting him, “Look at all this stuff”? He took Jesus on top of a high mountain, and what he showed Jesus was not just a natural vision of things, but Jesus saw the entire saga of humanity from the Fall in the Garden of Eden to the consummation, and all of the world’s great empires. He saw the glory of Rome, but each of those empires has been replaced by another one. He saw all of them (Matthew 4:8-10; Luke 4:5-8).

You know, pageantry is an amazing thing. I remember one of our daughters was studying, taking a course on manipulation, and they were required to watch a film that had been made by a Nazi filmmaker (*Triumph des Willens, Triumph of the Will*, by Leni Riefenstahl (1935)). And what was amazing—I watched the film with her, and so did Sandy, and you saw up in the clouds, and the people’s eyes all look. It’s amazing. You know, if I start staring over here, you’re going to tend to stare over there, and all of a sudden you see an airplane coming down out of the clouds, and every eye is looking at it. And so where those human eyes are directed, the observer on film is directed, and the plane lands, and who should get out but Adolf Hitler. And there is such adoration for Hitler in this.

You know, the Nazis were masters of pageantry. The Nazis knew more about producing a political, religious pageantry than any other group of people in the history of the world up until that time. We’ve now surpassed them. But pageantry, that’s what stirs people. I want you to understand something, Satan offered Jesus to be Hitler. Think about that. Have you ever thought of that? He offered for him to be Tiberius Caesar. He offered for him to be Genghis Khan. He showed him all of the empires of the world and all of their glory. There’s nothing quite like a majestic military parade, and the Nazis mastered it.

And so that’s what Satan is offering Jesus, but Jesus declines it. He said, “All this will be yours if you worship me.”

You know, that's an interesting thing, isn't it? We've inherited that satanic nature, because deep down inside, you want to know why there's trouble in every marriage?

I want to be worshiped. I want to be adored. I want to be number one.

And you see, Satan is offering this to Jesus. How could he offer it? Well, Satan, when he speaks, is speaking half-truths, which means they're half-lies. He said, "I can give it to anybody that I want to give it to. Just give me the mail-in ballots." (No, I'm sorry.)

So the point is this, pageantry, all of this is shown to Jesus, and Satan said, "Just worship me. You don't have to suffer. You don't have to die on a cross. You don't have to suffer at all, just bow down and worship me. It's mine to give." (Luke 4:6) And so he shows him all those things.

But Adam failed. Satan seized our planet and took over, and all you've got to do is read history.

History is the most depressing thing of all. As someone said one time, "History is just one damned thing after another" (This is wrongly attributed to the historian Arnold J. Toynbee.). And it really is, just terrible stuff. I mean, I'm amazed. I'm a lay historian. I read history as a hobby. What a terrible hobby. How depressing. It always ends badly. It's like reading, right now in my reading, I'm in 2 Kings in the Old Testament, and I think, "Oh no, not another failure, Lord!" And it's all brutality and wickedness and evil, and Satan is the master of our planet (2 Corinthians 4:4). Wow. He puts ideas in people's heads, and they carry it out.

But notice what happens. "Then comes the end," he says, "when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority, and power" (1 Corinthians 15:24). You see that? That's an interesting thing. When we think about the doctrine of last things, or what is called eschatology, here's one of the things we have to keep in our model of what happens in the future: Jesus' task is to fulfill the task that was given to Adam, and that is to cause all nations, all people everywhere, to submit to him (Matthew 28:18-19). And he says, then the end will come when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he's destroyed all dominion and authority and power (1 Corinthians 15:24).

Verse 25, “For he,” that is the Lord Jesus Christ, “must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”

And holding your hand there, turn back to the book of Isaiah to chapter 25. Isaiah chapter 25 and verse 8 and listen to this wonderful, amazing prophecy. Isaiah 25 and verse 8 and that’s page 1,095. Now it’s interesting: “On this mountain”—What mountain is he talking about? He’s talking about Mount Zion. He’s talking the mountain of Jerusalem and that’s why in the Old Testament people always go up north when they’re in the south, and always go up north when they’re in the north going to Jerusalem. In other words, when they said he went down here, he went down there, it’s not about direction as it is for us. Jerusalem is the center of things in the Old Testament, so they go up to Jerusalem even if they’re coming out of the north.

And he says:

On this mountain he (that is the Lord Almighty of verse 6) will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken. (Isaiah 25:7-8)

So you see, here’s this prophecy in the Old Testament in Isaiah chapter 25 that on the mountain where Jerusalem is, God Almighty would act decisively and definitively and he would defeat death on that mountain.

How did God defeat death on that mountain?

On this mountain he’ll destroy the shroud that enfolds all people, the sheet that covers the nations. He will swallow up death forever. (Isaiah 25:7-8)

Do you know how he did it? God died. God died on that mountain. Now God did not die in his divine nature. God died in his human nature. Had God died in his divine nature, the universe would have ceased to exist, but Almighty God came in the person of his Son, submitted himself to the law,

submitted himself to judgment, was punished in our place, died, buried, rose again the third day, and he'll come again.

And so what he's saying here is this, that on that mountain, God would destroy—How does he describe death here? He describes it as a shroud that enfolds people, all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations. And so this victory of Christ occurs in Jerusalem as it was foretold some over 700 years before Christ. Wow.

So turning back again and 1 Corinthians 15, page 1,790, he says the last enemy destroyed is death. When is death destroyed?

Well, I am not a big football fan. I'm not a big basketball fan. My kids know that. They pull for this team and that team, and I stay out of it. I've got Tulane people and LSU people and Clemson people, Auburn people. But I tell you what I enjoy, I enjoy boxing. Most people don't like boxing. I like boxing. And if you've ever watched a match . . .

I remember hiring pay-per-view and inviting a bunch of guy friends over to watch Evander Holyfield fighting against Mike Tyson. I'll never forget it. And I actually got an autograph of Evander Holyfield one day. He was in the Atlanta Airport, and I always observe things as I'm walking, and I said in my mind, "That's Evander Holyfield." Now he had a hat pulled down. What was he covering up? He was covering up his ear because in the middle of that fight, Mike Tyson reached over and bit the tip of Evander Holyfield's ear off. And you thought, oh wow, I remember jumping up. Terrible! You know, I get emotional watching a fight like that. And you think at a point that that's it. Evander Holyfield's ear is bitten off, and Mike Tyson's going to win, and you think, "Oh wow!" But then at the end, there's a knockout.

And this is the thing you learn about boxing, the knockout blow may be given in the third round and the person may, because of smelling salts and other things, come back and get through round four, but in round five, he's going to go down.

And this is the deal, at the cross, at the empty tomb, Satan gets the knockout blow, but he staggers, and the final definitive thing happens when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to earth. And he says in verse 26, 1 Corinthians 15:26, the last enemy to be destroyed is death, for he has put everything under his feet.

Now notice this, now when it says that everything has been put under him, it's clear that this does not include God himself who put everything under Christ. Verse 28, "When he has done this"—Now this is an amazing thing.

When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15:28).

What is he saying? He's saying that the Lord Jesus Christ, who if we compare Scripture with Scripture, is the eternal Son of God—There never was a time that he was not. He has always existed, and that he came into this world, in coming into this world, he didn't take away his deity or divinity, he added to his deity or divinity a true humanity, just like your humanity and my humanity, except for two things.

He did not have a sinful nature, and I guarantee you, with tons of grandkids running around and all the other things this past week, 14 grandkids, grandkids-in-law, five children, five children-in-law—times just a little bit of tension, and that just reminds me I have a sinful nature. Jesus did not have a sinful nature.

And Jesus never sinned. I can't say that. I can't say that. So I remember last night, this guy's weaving next to Sandy, and I look, and he's watching a movie while he's driving a car on I-49, watching a movie. I said something I shouldn't have said. The Lord Jesus never did that.

So Jesus did not have a sinful nature, and he never sinned. I can't say that. But notice what happens here.

Jesus, who is fully God, truly God, 100% God, is also fully, truly human, 100% human. Two natures, one person. How can you get 100% plus 100% and only get 100%? I don't know because that mystery is resolved in the bigness of God.

But notice what happens. Jesus came into this world as the second Adam. He came to undo what Adam failed to do, and which Adam did sinfully as well. And so what does he do? When the Lord Jesus Christ has conquered all the nations of the world, when the Lord Jesus Christ has subdued the entire

creation to himself, what does he do? Does he do what Satan tempted him to do?

“Now come on, give me the glory.”

You know what? He gives it to the Father. It’s an amazing picture, isn’t it? Philippians 2 shows us what this is:

The mind of Christ, who being in the very form of God, did not count equality with God something to be reached out for and grasped, but he made himself of no account. (Philippians 2:5-7)

The greatest picture of his making himself of no account is what he did. Having conquered the world, having conquered the world, having conquered creation, he bows his knees to the Father, and he says, “The glory is yours alone. *Non nobis, domine. Non nobis, domine.*” (I forgot the Latin.) “Not to us Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory” (Psalm 115:1).

Jesus is the perfect man. He’s the perfect Adam, who having subdued the entire world, the entire creation, innumerable galaxies, gives it all to the Father, and that’s the picture, isn’t it? And so the last trumpet is the seventh trumpet, and how well this fits.

Though there’s a foreshadowing, and we won’t go there in the interest of time, there’s a foreshadowing of this in the very mysterious middle section of the Olivet Discourse, that’s Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, where this is described as the Lord Jesus sending out his angels to gather his elect from the four winds. And so we’re not going to go there now, but I will only say this, that in Matthew 24 there’s a fusion of two things, the worldwide preaching of the gospel that is commenced with the death, burial, ascension of Christ and his sending the Holy Spirit, commenced then, climaxes in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, and then continues on throughout the ages to the nations are gathered to the foot of the cross, and that’s the sounding of the trumpet as well.

Why are these things put together in the middle section of Matthew 24, Luke chapter 21, and Mark 13? Why are they done that way, as in Matthew 24:29-31? Because it’s a theological truth. Christ sending out his angels to gather his elect from the four winds, is part and parcel of his return at the last day to raise us from the dead and in the mind of God, they’re one in the same

event, though separated by how many thousands of years? I don't know, because a thousand years in God's sight, as Moses said, is like yesterday (Psalm 90:4), and Peter said a thousand years is as a day, and a day is a thousand years (2 Peter 3:8).

Their fusion in this way is a theological expression of truth: though separated in time, these two are inseparable in the sense that the first is the inevitable forerunner and prefiguration of the second. The destruction of Jerusalem marks the end of the Old Covenant—Christ has thus manifestly returned to inaugurate his kingly rule. Such a decisive intervention in the history of salvation will not occur again until the end of time when God will judge the whole human race, now chosen in Christ, with the same judgement he pronounced (in 70 A.D.) upon the first chosen people. For this reason the destruction of Jerusalem is here described in terms of the 'day of Yahweh' foretold by the prophets, cf. Am 5:18+; 8:9+. No other intervention of God in history so involves the whole cosmos or prophesies its end as this one does, and the actual end of the world will be no more than the climax of all this. (*The Jerusalem Bible*, Alexander Jones, ed. (1985), (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Limited) p. 53)

So we conclude this particular vision. The vision ends with this because we begin the new section—the new set of visions is in Revelation 12, which is a perfect time to celebrate Advent, because that is another vision. So today we finish this vision that we've been on for some weeks, and may we pray.

But before we do, I want to address those who may be watching. This may be confusing for you. If you contact me (bob@rbvincent.com), I'll make sure that you get a copy of what I have said, so you can check out for yourself what I'm trying to say.

The bottom line is this: We live in a world that is not the same that God created. It's the world he created, but it's the world that he created subject to the destruction and desolation of our ultimate ancestors.

So when you look at the world and you say, "How could a good God allow this kind of suffering?" The answer is that the world came under the control

of a very wicked and evil power, and that wicked and evil power turns people against each other, sows hatred in the hearts of others.

The people that hate the Nazis become Nazis themselves. It's an amazing truth. The person you hate, you're going to become like. Wow!

Why is there evil in the world? Because our ancestors failed God, and we've inherited the consequences of their failure. But "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son so that whosoever believes in him would not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

And you can have that everlasting life today, this very day, the 26th day of November in the year of our Lord, 2023.

Would you turn to him and ask him to take away your hurt, your pain, your heartache, your agony, the injustices of the world? Because he has never refused anyone who's called on his name.

May we pray.

Lord, take these words and use them to touch the hearts of people here and who are listening, that we may know you and know your love and know your power and be set free from the chains that bind us naturally. For Jesus' sake, amen.