

REVELATION—UNVEILING THE END, ACT 2 THE EARTHLY DRAMA

STUDY TEN

The Sounding of the Seventh Trumpet

Revelation 11:15–19

If John were to stand here beside me today, he would describe it for you as finished. The kingdom of God exists in this ever-present “now.” This is terribly important for those of us who live the life of faith. We are to see God’s promises as fulfilled in the present, not simply as something yet future. It ought to be that certain in our minds right now.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

To those living in the ancient world, life would have felt nearly impossible without the existence of one key tool: *the trumpet*.

Before the time of smartphones, television, radio, and the printing press, mass communication posed a great challenge. So ancient cultures met this challenge by producing instruments whose bold call could travel for miles. Different cultures made these trumpets by repurposing large shells, by hollowing out animal horns, or by forging them from crude metals.

Ancient rulers would sound these horns to grab the attention of the people and to signal the arrival of important news—sometimes good, sometimes bad, sometimes neither. A trumpet could proclaim victory in battle, warn of an approaching attack, or announce a new royal decree.

In the book of Revelation, God announces the culmination of human history through the sounding of seven trumpets. As each angel blows his horn, God sends a new judgment against the cosmic powers of evil and death.

This *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study will observe closely the announcement of the seventh trumpet. This horn warns the wicked and unrepentant, but it ultimately plays a song of good news: the kingdom of God has permanently established itself on earth.



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

You don't need to come to God with pompous fanfare when you pray. In fact, Jesus Himself said, "But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you" ([Matthew 6:6](#)).

In this quiet space, offer a sincere and humble prayer to God, knowing that He hears you and will reward you for your faithfulness at the sounding of the final trumpet.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

As each angel sounded his trumpet, a new form of judgment touched down to the earth. The first four brought natural disasters, and the last three brought certain *terrors*—cataclysms more intense and more frightening than anything the world had ever seen ([Revelation 8:13](#)).

The first two terrors unleashed demonic hordes upon the earth to torture and kill those who refused to repent. When all hope seemed banished, the seventh angel sounded his trumpet, which did indeed proclaim terror to Satan and his followers, and voices in heaven sang a song of hope to the people of God. Let's hear what [Revelation 11:15–19](#) has to say.



Observation: The Seventh Trumpet

Begin by reading [Revelation 11:15–19](#) slowly and carefully two or three times. For now, your goal simply is to understand what the passage says.¹ Each time you read through the verses, try to pick out a word, phrase, image, or detail you didn't notice before. Record your observations in the space below.

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According to [Revelation 11:15](#), what happened when the seventh angel blew his trumpet? What did John hear? Summarize this message in your own words.

How did the twenty-four elders react to this message, according to [11:16](#)?

As the elders sang a song of praise to God, they opened with a statement of gratitude. According to [11:17](#), why did these elders give thanks to God?

This passage began with the announcement of a message. Then in [11:18](#), the twenty-four elders explained the implications of this message. What would be the results of the arrival of the kingdom of God? For whom is this good news? For whom is this news bad?

According to [11:19](#), what did John see that concluded this vision of the seventh trumpet?

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This is the moment when Satan is set aside, driven away, locked up and the Lord Jesus Christ sets up His throne, righteous scepter in hand.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: The Kingdom of God

Although the expression “the kingdom of God” is not as common in Revelation as it is in the four gospels, Jesus’ kingdom remains an essential theme in John’s apocalypse. *Revelation 11:15–19* signals the significance of this theme by anticipating the full manifestation of the kingdom of heaven on earth.

To see what the New Testament reveals about this new, otherworldly kingdom, read the following verses: *Matthew 5:3–10*; *Mark 1:14–15*; *Luke 4:16–21*; *Acts 1:6–9*; and *Philippians 3:17–21*. If you want to go deeper, feel free to consult a commentary, like Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s *Insights on Revelation* or *Constable’s Notes* at netbible.org.² You can also check out the article, “*Kingdom of God*,” in *Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*.

Based on your study, what is the kingdom of God? What are its key characteristics? Why is it significant that Jesus sits on the throne of this heavenly kingdom? In what sense is a follower of Jesus Christ a citizen of His kingdom?

Theologians often describe the kingdom of God as an “already-but-not-yet” reality. In what ways has the kingdom of God already arrived? In what ways do we not yet experience it in its fullness?

These loud voices come telling us that the kingdom has already arrived, even though it hasn’t yet come. Because in the mind or the sight of the angelic creatures, it has already transpired. The King is already on His throne. Upon the arrival of Christ, the kingdom of the world which Satan presently rules will become Jesus’ kingdom. And He will reign forever and ever.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Correlation: The Presence of God

At the end of John's vision, he looked up into heaven and saw that the temple of God was open and that "the Ark of his covenant could be seen inside the Temple" (*Revelation 11:19*). This may seem like a throwaway detail, but it complements the message of the previous verses.

The ark of the covenant was arguably the most important possession of the people of Israel because of what it *held* and because of what it *represented*. According to *Exodus 25:21–22*, what did the ark hold and what did it represent?

God commanded the Israelites to keep the ark of the covenant hidden behind a curtain in the innermost room of the tabernacle (and later, the temple) called the "most holy place." Yet once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered this room to bring the sins of Israel before God. According to *Leviticus 16:2, 15–22*, what did the high priest (Aaron, in this case) do to atone for the sins of the people of Israel? What role did the ark of the covenant play in this ritual?

Considering this context, why is it significant that John could see the ark of the covenant in plain sight? What does this vision teach about the kingdom of God?

Previously, God's presence was locked away in the temple. Now, we experience His presence through the Holy Spirit. One day, He will burst wide open the gates of His heavenly temple, and the whole world will experience His presence, His mercy, and His grace.

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Application: Our Returning and Ruling God

The trumpet of *Revelation 11:15–19* announces King Jesus' return to earth. This proclamation is bad news for Satan and his minions, but it offers hope to citizens of the kingdom of God because it signals the decisive defeat of evil and death. As you apply this passage, use these two timeless truths to guide you.

First, *our Savior will return to receive us into His kingdom*. How does knowing that you are a citizen of the kingdom of God affect the way you live your day-to-day life? What does it practically look like to live faithfully as an exile away from your heavenly home?

Second, *our sovereign King reigns and will one day reward us*. Though Jesus is King of the universe, Satan will be the ruler of this world until Jesus returns. How does knowledge of your future reward encourage you as you await Jesus' second coming—even as you endure attacks from the enemy?

If you listen closely, you can hear the angel warming up, getting ready to blow the trumpet that announces the return of Jesus Christ and the glorious arrival of the kingdom of God. The wait may feel heavy on your soul. But take heart! John has assured us that we will one day hear the angel play that long-anticipated song of hope.

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A FINAL PRAYER

As you conclude your study of God’s Word today, offer as a prayer to God the final verse of Horatio Gates Spafford’s classic hymn, “It Is Well with My Soul”:

*O Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
the clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
the trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend,
even so, it is well with my soul.³*

ENDNOTES

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, “[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#).”
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on Revelation*, Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2014).
3. Horatio Gates Spafford, “When Peace, Like a River,” Hymnary.org, [hymnary.org/text/when_peace_like_a_river_attendeth_my_way](https://www.hymnary.org/text/when_peace_like_a_river_attendeth_my_way).

For the 2024 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Brad Smith, writer and content strategist, *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll’s messages. Copyright © 2003, 2024 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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