

# Christ's Second Coming

## The Pivot Event in Fulfilling Trumpets

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Back on the Feast of Trumpets in 1995, the late Earl Henn and I were scheduled to give split sermons for the morning service. He spoke first. And the title of his sermon was, "Trumpets Brings Peace!" And I just had to smile. Actually, I was cracking up in my seat as he was going through his sermon. Not because he was particularly funny, but because the sermon that I had prepared was, "Trumpets Means War!" And even though on their face these titles seem to argue against one another, they were really very complementary messages.

Now this illustration that I just made brings out a few important points. First of all, the Day of Trumpets is pivotal in God's plan. We could even call it "The Keystone Holy Day." There are seven holy days. It is the fourth. It is right in the middle.

You could say it is the dividing line between before, and after. There are three holy days that take place before the fulfillment of Trumpets, that particularly have to do with this present time, and then there are three holy days after Trumpets that have to do with the time to come.

Second, Trumpets mean different things depending on where you stand before God. To the saints, it means the beginning of all that we have ever hoped for—all that we've been promised. It means salvation and all the wonderful things that come with it. But, to the enemy of God it means violent and tragic judgment—the end of all human plans that are against God.

Of course, the most important single event on this day's fulfillment is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. That is the great dividing line in all of history. He will come back as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and establish His government on the earth. But, before He does that, He has to fight the enemies and make great judgments.

So, that is what I'm going to be speaking about today, this pivotal event—this seminal event—in the history of the universe: The return of Jesus Christ to reestablish God's rule on the earth.

We're going to begin in Leviticus 23 with the description of this Holy Day from the chapter that has God's Feasts. So, we will begin in verse 23. It is always easy to remember where Trumpets is in this chapter because it is 23: 23.

Leviticus 23:23-25 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: `In the seventh month, [that's this month] on the first *day* of the month, [that's this day] you shall have a sabbath-*rest*, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. [that's what we're doing right now] `You shall do no customary work *on it*; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.'" "

Now I'm sure that we've all gone through these verses many times in the past depending on the

numbers of Day of Trumpets we've kept. We pretty much go here in scripture every time. And I'm sure you've heard that this phrase, "a memorial of blowing of trumpets" is not literally what it says. It's been somewhat interpreted that way. It is really a "remembrance of shouting." Like a bunch of people—a whole multitude—let's say all the children of Israel—all giving one big shout all at once.

But, it has an even more particular definition than that. And that's why the translators decided to change it to "a blowing of trumpets," because when the shofar is blown, it is said to be "shouting." So, they've changed it to mean that it is the shout of the shofar, or the way we'd look at it, the blowing of a trumpet. So, the way it is rendered is perfectly fine. It is just a few phrases down the line from its literal meaning.

If you will go to Psalm 81, we'll see that they were right in their changing the "remembrance of shouting," to "a memorial of blowing of trumpets."

Psalm 81:1 Sing aloud to God our strength; Make a joyful shout to the God of Jacob.

Now here it has a parallel between shouting and singing aloud, which we've done some already today. And it is good that we've done that.

Psalm 81:2-3 Raise a song and strike the timbrel, The pleasant harp with the lute. Blow the trumpet at the time of the New Moon, [and that's today] At the full moon, on our solemn feast day.

So we see this psalm covers some of the other feast days as well. It can be general, but it is specifically pointed toward the feast day on new moon, which is today.

Psalm 81:4 For this *is* a statute for Israel, A law of the God of Jacob.

We just read that law in Leviticus 23 that we should have this holy convocation on the Day of Trumpets.

Now God's festivals look back in memorial of certain events, and they also look forward in anticipation of other events. In this Psalm, we have an Old Testament understanding of the Feast of Trumpets. We haven't gone through the rest of these verses (5 through 16), but a lot of them have to do with the events in Egypt. And the children of Israel being redeemed by God and brought out of Egypt. And, God beseeching them to listen to Him. And the things that had to be done because they do not.

So, it begins from this being established in Joseph, in verse 5.

Now when did Joseph live? Several hundred years before they actually left Egypt. And in verse 7, it talks about Meribah, which was after they left Egypt and were wandering in the wilderness. Then it goes on even further than that to talk about situations that could really only have occurred in the Land of Israel—in the Promised Land.

So what we see here is that this day—particularly the Day of Trumpets—is in one sense a memorial of God's deliverance of the children of Israel from the time of Joseph all the way to the time He brought them into the Promised Land.

We could say that when God began working with Joseph, the children of Israel were as good as in the land, because when God begins to do something, He finishes it! Does it not say in Isaiah, that when His word goes forth, it does not return to Him empty? When God has a plan, He's going to accomplish it!

When Joseph's brothers threw him into the pit, and sold him into Egypt, it started a great train of events that ended up with Joseph in Egypt—as the one with the most power under the Pharaoh. Joseph made it possible for Israel to be saved, first from a famine, and then, beyond that, by bringing Israel into the land of Goshen. They would be slaves for a couple hundred years. Then, they were delivered through Moses.

But, that whole chain of events began with God beginning to work with Joseph. Their redemption was as good as accomplished when God began to work.

And so, we have this Day of Trumpets which looks back, in an Old Testament way, to God's redemption of Israel. And in the same way, we could say that the Day of Trumpets looks forward to His entire work—the redemption of spiritual Israel.

But, we have focused (in this church) on the particular day of Christ's return, because that's when it all really happens. That's when it culminates in the return of Christ.

Now we can see this particular point in verses 14 through 16 in the analogy here. Let's read that. This is God speaking.

Psalm 81:14-15 I would soon subdue their enemies, And turn My hand against their adversaries. The haters of the LORD would pretend submission to Him, But their fate would endure forever. He would have fed them also with the finest of wheat; And with honey from the rock I would have satisfied you.

Now it is in that tense [form of speech] because Israel rejected Him. But, if you put it in the understanding of the way it is with the church, it becomes positive. These things will happen. God will subdue the enemies of Him and His church. God will make their fate endure forever. We read in Revelation that the Beast and the False Prophet are thrown into the Lake of Fire. That is a pretty enduring punishment—fate—sentence.

Then it goes on in verse 16 about being fed with the finest of wheat, and being given honey from the Rock. Think about the symbolism there—the feeding, and honey from the Rock. You know who that is? This gives you the feeling of a millennial setting—the prosperity and the feeding that will go on because the knowledge of the Lord will be like the waters that cover the sea.

So you have here (in a way) an analogy [with relation] to the New Testament understanding of the Feast of Trumpets. It all centers around the return of Christ, because as He comes back,

there are things that He has to do immediately to subdue His enemies. Then He can reestablish His government, and give prosperity, and peace, and all those good things that He wishes to do for His people.

Let's go back to Numbers 10 because I don't want to leave out the blowing of trumpets. This is the chapter that tells Israel just how they are to blow the trumpets, and for what reasons. I want you to see all these different reasons that God says to blow these trumpets.

Numbers 10:1-5 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps. When they blow both of them, all the congregation shall gather before you at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. But if they blow *only* one, then the leaders, the heads of the divisions of Israel, shall gather to you. When you sound the advance, the camps that lie on the east side shall then begin their journey.

We will skip down to verse 8:

Numbers 10:8-10 The sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets; and these shall be to you as an ordinance forever throughout your generations. When you go to war in your land against the enemy who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, and you will be remembered before the LORD your God, and you will be saved from your enemies. Also in the day of your gladness, in your appointed feasts, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be a memorial for you before your God: *I am* the LORD your God."

I don't know how many you counted, but there are quite a few, maybe 7 or 8 reasons for blowing the trumpet. Actually, there aren't quite that many here, but there are a couple of others added in other places of the bible, where a trumpet is blown.

Now I don't have time to go into it today, but all these reasons for blowing trumpets have a type of fulfillment in the events that take place when Christ returns. It's not just blowing the trumpet to go to war. It is also the blowing of trumpets to call an assembly. Because, what happens when Christ returns? A trumpet is blown, and the angels are sent out to gather the saints. That's sounds like an assembly to me.

It also directs the movements of the people. God is going to come back and marshal His troops. He is going to direct the movement of His army against the enemies. And then, once the armies are marshaled, He's going to sound the advance. They are actually going to go out and march through their enemies. And, of course, this whole thing is going to war. It will be a day of great gladness, won't it? That's what it says in verse 10—that you will sound the trumpet in the day

of your gladness.

In your appointed feast, it will be the Day of Trumpets! And so, you are supposed to blow the trumpet. And, it says at the beginning of your months. It will be the new moon, evidently. If Christ comes back on the Day of Trumpets, it will be a new moon. And so the blowing of trumpets will have to be done, because God says that this is an ordinance forever for the people of God.

The ones that I didn't mention were the Jubilee, which starts on the Day of Atonement. But certainly, we will have the feeling of jubilee. Also, worship is another time when you are supposed to blow the trumpet. We see a little bit of it here in the burnt and peace offerings. Those are parts of worship.

Also, you blow the trumpet at the coronation of a king. If you look in I Kings 1:34 you will see that there was a trumpet blown at that particular coronation, and evidently, they did that every time since. Certainly, on that day that Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords, it will be a day of coronation.

Can you see all the different ways these regulations—these statutes about blowing trumpets—will all be fulfilled in that one day? Isn't that amazing? God has such foresight!

Let's go now to John 14:1-3. Most of you probably know this by heart. We sing it once in a while in our songs. Jesus says as He's giving His last Passover message:

John 14:1-3 Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.

Now here is a promise from the lips of our Lord that He is coming back. We know that He is gone. And He says that "If I've gone, then, I'm coming back. And while I'm gone I'll be preparing a place for you." A "mansion," as it says in verse 2, is a position—a place for us to abide forever with Him.

Now He specifically mentions two results of His coming back. I've pretty much mentioned them, but I'll mention them again just to lay them out here.

1. He will give us our mansion—our reward—at the time that He returns. It says here, "*If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again.*"
2. He will receive us to Himself.

So, He will gather us together to Himself. That is the second thing He says that He will do when He returns.

Yet, so much more happens than that. I'm going to be spending the rest of this sermon talking about all the more that goes on when Christ returns.

Let's go to the verse that comes first to mind when we talk about the return of Christ. (Well, at

least it does to me.) That is Matthew 24 beginning in verse 29—the Olivet Prophecy—where Jesus brings together the sequence of events. A great many of the signs and things that we're supposed to look for are here because the original question, you will remember, was "Tell us when shall these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming, and the end of the age?" And so, this whole chapter answers these questions.

OK. Just before this (verse 29), He said of His coming that there would be false signs, and false Christ's. He says in verse 27:

Matthew 24:27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is [the dead bodies], there the eagles will be gathered together.

Now I mention this because I want you to see that Christ is not going to come in a hidden secret manner. That's one of the things that the "rapture" says. It is a secret rapture. Christ comes, and nobody else knows. He kind of swoops along the top of the atmosphere and those who are saved all go up to meet Him in the air, and then they go off someplace and have a good time for three and a half years, while the earth basically goes to pieces. That's the idea of the rapture.

But, it doesn't say that here. It says that when He comes, it will be like lightning. When lightning strikes, you notice!

Or, it could be "lightening." If we say, "It is lightening" in the east when the sun rises, you notice that it isn't dark anymore. It is now day. A new day has dawned. So, when Christ comes He's going to come openly. Every eye shall see Him. So, it's not going to be any secret rapture, or secret coming of God, or Son of God.

And then, the part in verse 28, "where the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered," is a way of saying that when Christ comes back, he's going to go straight to war, or straight to where the war is happening. He's the eagle. And He goes to where the dead bodies are going to be. I don't know quite how to explain that. It's a little bit of an enigmatic scripture. But, carrion fowl go to where there is carrion. If you want to make this most general, it is saying that Christ is going to return right to where the action is.

OK. Verse 29:

Matthew 24:29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man [they will see Him] coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

While we're going over this, let's go to Mark 13, and see it from Mark's point of view. It's not very much different. Verse 24:

Mark 13:24 But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

And also a little bit differently:

Luke 21:25 And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

Luke always has a slightly different way of saying these things.

So, these three places are a general overview of that period of time. And it mentions most of the major details of what's going to happen. There are heavenly signs that we've normally linked with the sixth seal in Revelation 6<sup>th</sup> chapter, verses 12 through 17. And, it is immediately after the Tribulation. We have often thought that the 5<sup>th</sup> seal, then, is the Great Tribulation—a time of great martyrdom of the saints. And if you want to look that up in Revelation, it is just before the sixth seal.

There is also a great shaking here. In particular, it talks about a shaking of the heavens. But, we will see, there is also a great shaking of the earth at the same time. It talks here in all three places about the peoples of the earth being in distress, and being against Him. They do negative things when they find out Christ is coming. They mourn. They fight. They are in great distress, and fear because of expectation of what is about to occur.

We also see Jesus coming on a cloud, or in a cloud. It is one of the big signs throughout the bible. It talks about Him repeatedly coming in or on a cloud.

There is the sound of a great trumpet—or in other places, it is a shout—when He sends His angels out (as it says in Matthew 24: 31). And, the gathering of the saints—the elect—from the four winds, is another one of the big details here.

So, we basically have a general overview of everything that is going to happen at this particular time.

Now, where do we go to find a little bit more detail?

Well, Revelation is a good place. So, we will go there. Revelation the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter, right after the Two Witnesses (I had to make my plug there!). Because, in a way, this sermon is just a continuation of that 7 part sermon series that I just completed. At the end of that story, the Two Witnesses are resurrected, and what do they do? They rise to meet Christ in the air. That is what happens at Christ's return.

We're going to look at the 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet here. Remember that I said, in my sermons, that verse 14 is a transition to get the reader back to the time element that had been stopped at the end of chapter 9 for the "digression" through the insets chapter 10 and 11: 1-13. They did not follow the main flow of things, but the inset is necessary information to get you to understand the whole flow of events in Revelation.

Revelation 11:15-19 Then the seventh angel sounded [this is the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet]: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshipped God, saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned. The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead [nations, actually], that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth." Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

Now the 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet is a proclamation. It is also a plague. The lightnings, noises, thunderings, earthquake, and great hail sound like a plague to me. But, there are still seven vials or bowls of God's Wrath yet to come. The 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet announces the Return of Christ, and the reign of God beginning. And, it has always been a curiosity to me that this is so—that this is the way that God set it up—that here, all of this is announced. But, there are still a great many bad things left to happen.

Now what is interesting is that what happens in chapter 12 is another inset. What happens in chapter 13 is another inset. What happens in chapter 14 is another inset. And we don't get back into the flow of things again until chapter 15. And, that opens up what is called here in the New King James—"the Bowl Judgments." We've often called them (because of the King James Version) "*the Vials of God's Wrath*." It says in verse one of chapter 15 that these are the "Seven Last Plagues," which is probably the best way of saying them—"the Seven Last Plagues." It is within them that the Wrath of God is complete.

Now, what has been a curious [question] to me is, "*How long do these Seven Last Plagues take?*" The answer is, we don't know. If you go through chapter 15 and 16 (I won't take the time to do this now), you will not find one time marker. All it says is, "then this happens," "then this happens," "then this happens," "then this happens," etc. seven times, through the seven plagues. It seems to be consecutive—one right after another—sequential.

But, we don't know quite how long they take. Now, probably a good guess would be an entire year.

If this is the Day of the Lord, and a day is as a year, then this would be one whole year of the seven last plagues. But, it doesn't say that specifically here. So, I guess you could say they could happen in one day. Probably not. But, how long do they take? I don't know. All of these things take place in preparation for the return of Christ.

In a way, it is like old-time warfare where they soften up the enemy before the invasion. They would set up their cannon and bombard the enemy from a distance before they sent in their ground troops to fight the war. In a way, that is what the Seven Last Plagues are. They are the softening up of the inhabitants of the earth through terrible things—sores, water to blood, scorching heat, darkness, and pain; the Euphrates being dried up to make way for the Kings of the East. And then, the seventh one is a huge earthquake.

Let's go to that one. This is the seventh vial (or seventh bowl), or seventh last plague.

Revelation 16:17-18 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.

This is a Richter Scale breaker of an earthquake! The whole earth shakes. Not just one little plate—one little section of the earth. This is the whole thing as if God just reaches down and puts one hand on one side of the Equator, and his other hand on the other side of the Equator, and He just shakes it for all it's worth.

Nothing like this has ever occurred on the earth.

Revelation 16:19-21 Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God [like God needed to be reminded of Babylon, and all their evil. Strange how things are stated sometimes], to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. Then every island fled away [that's how big this shaking is!], and the mountains were not found [this is an earthquake that can topple mountains, and move islands! We've not seen anything like that!]. And great hail from heaven fell upon men, *each hailstone* about the weight of a talent [and that's big!]. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

They don't blaspheme Him because of the Great Earthquake; it is because of the hundred-pound hailstones that fall on their heads. I guess that is the last thing they do. Blaspheme God and then they are flat as a pancake. I don't mean to be funny, but it is the impression I get.

Now, it is very interesting that this is very much like the seventh Trumpet. The same thing happens. There is an announcement. And here, it is done. There, at the end of chapter 11, it was "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord." But, here there is another great announcement, and the same sort of things happen—earthquake, and hail, and I'm sure there will be noises, and lightnings, and those sorts of things as well. So, we started with that sort of thing, and we end with that sort of thing. We just can't understand the immensity of destruction and ruin. It just boggles our minds at the Power of God unleashed on the earth to announce the coming of His Son. And, to soften up the earth before the final attack.

Let's go to chapter 19, because 17 and 18 are also inset chapters. One discusses the woman riding the Beast, and the Beast himself, and the other talks about Babylon and its fall. Now, we get back into the flow with Revelation 19, verse 1:

Revelation 19:1-8 After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power *belong* to the Lord our God! For true and righteous *are* His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants *shed* by her." Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!" And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

So, this follows immediately after what we read in chapter 16. You have the announcement that "It is done!" We have the "Great Earthquake," and hail, and mountains falling and islands fleeing. And then, we have these new announcements with these voices of the great multitude saying these things.

Now, it is very interesting here to see what is announced. Obviously, it is announcing Jesus Christ. But, it is interesting what He is announced *as*.

First of all, if we go back to the first part of the chapter, He's announced first as Righteous Judge, an Avenger of His servants, because that's what He is coming back first to do. That must

happen first before anything else good happens.

He is announced as God and King, a bit later on in verses 5 and 6, "Praise our God," "The Lord God Omnipotent" reigns. He is announced as coming back to rule.

So, it starts out with God being the Judge of the Enemies, and Avenger of His Servants. Then, He is announced as God, and King, taking up His rule over the earth, and its people.

Then, in verse 7, He is announced as Husband of the church, and the Lamb of God—the One who has saved them by His own blood. So, He is also Redeemer and Husband.

Then, in verse 11, the story flow returns to His immediate work as Judge and Warrior King. Let's go read that in Revelation 19: 11

Revelation 19:11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

Now, that's interesting. Once again He's shown—illustrated—by this description and announced. And what is He announced as? The Righteous Judge who goes to make war.

Revelation 19:12-21 His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns [an intimation of rulership]. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood [the Redeemer, again], and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen [verse 8 tells you these are the saints], white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God [that's a reference back to the end of chapter 14]. And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God [Matthew 24: 28 where, "the carcass is the eagles will be gathered." Here are the carcasses.], that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all *people*, free and slave, both small and great." And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which

proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Great carnage! When Christ returns it's going seem like a disaster. Not only with the great announcements, and the plagues, and the shakings, and the hail, but then when He comes, He comes with a sword, and "goes to town" as it were. This is a judgment that has been long in coming. Remember, it says, "and Babylon was remembered before God?" God finally says, *'Ok. It's time!*"

Let's go back to Isaiah, and see some Old Testament prophecies of this very same thing. Starting in Isaiah 63. It is good to see this perspective as well.

Isaiah 63:1-6 Who *is* this [like one] who comes from Edom, With dyed garments from Bozrah, This *One who is* glorious in His apparel, Traveling in the greatness of His strength?—"I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save." [That tells you the answer. Who is this? The answer is from God Himself. "I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save;" our Redeemer.] Why *is* Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? [Remember He was treading the winepress of the Wrath of God.] I have trodden the winepress alone, And from the peoples no one *was* with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, And trampled them in My fury; Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, And I have stained all My robes. For the day of vengeance *is* in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come. I looked, but *there was* no one to help, And I wondered That *there was* no one to uphold; Therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me; And My own fury, it sustained Me. I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, Made them drunk in My fury, And brought down their strength to the earth."

Now, go to chapter 66. He has just been talking about the church being born in one day (verses 7-11).

Isaiah 66: 14 When you see *this*, your heart shall rejoice, And your bones shall flourish like grass; The hand of the LORD shall be known to His servants, And *His* indignation to His enemies.

What it is saying here is that God's hand is going to be known, or understood as being seen to come back to destroy. But also, there is a sense that God is coming back to save. Both sides.

Isaiah 66:15 For behold, the LORD will come with fire And with His chariots, like a whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword The LORD will

judge all flesh; And the slain of the LORD shall be many.

There is another classic biblical understatement! It will be millions, not just many. This is millions.

OK. On to Joel the second chapter. Here we get back to the trumpets.

Joel 2:1-2 Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the LORD is coming, For it is at hand: A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, Like the morning *clouds* spread over the mountains. A people *come*, great and strong, The like of whom has never been; Nor will there ever be any *such* after them, Even for many successive generations.

Joel 2:10-11 The earth quakes before them, The heavens tremble; The sun and moon grow dark, And the stars diminish their brightness. The LORD gives voice before His army, For His camp is very great; For strong *is the One* who executes His word. For the day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible; Who can endure it?

That's quite a question!

Joel 3:9-17 Proclaim this among the nations: "Prepare for war! [Sounds like what Amos says, "Prepare to meet your God!"] Wake up the mighty men, Let all the men of war draw near, Let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, `I *am* strong.'" Assemble and come, all you nations, And gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O LORD. "Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle [another reference to Revelation 14], for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; For the winepress is full, The vats overflow--For their wickedness *is* great." Multitudes, multitudes [more accurate than in Isaiah] in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD *is* near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will grow dark, And the stars will diminish their brightness. The LORD also will roar from Zion [remember it's not only a trumpet, but also shouting, the Great Lion of Judah roaring!], And utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake [there's the earthquake]; But the LORD will be a shelter for His people [we always have that other side—war against His enemies, but peace, shelter, and salvation for His people], And the strength of the children of Israel. "So you shall know that I *am* the LORD your God, Dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be

holy, And no aliens shall ever pass through her again."

Because, He will be there. And He won't allow it anymore.

Zechariah 14:1-5 Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, And your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the BRD will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, *Making* a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee [that remnant left in Jerusalem] *through* My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee As you fled from the earthquake In the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my God will come, *And* all the saints with You.

Zechariah 14:10-11 All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place from Benjamin's Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and *from* the Tower of Hananeel to the king's winepresses. *The people* shall dwell in it [this is a bit later]; And no longer shall there be utter destruction, But Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

Now, what he's saying here without saying it is that when Christ comes back there will be utter destruction, and it will have to be rebuilt. "But, Jerusalem will be safely inhabited."

Zechariah 14:12 And this [he goes back to when Jesus returns] shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, Their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, And their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.

If you remember the movie "The Raiders of the Lost Ark," that's probably the best cinematic version of something like this that I've ever seen. There at the end when the power of the ark is opened and displayed.

Zechariah 14:13-15 It shall come to pass in that day *That* a great panic from the LORD will be among them. Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor, And raise his hand against his neighbor's hand; Judah

also will fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations Shall be gathered together: Gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance. Such also shall be the plague On the horse *and* the mule, On the camel and the donkey, And on all the cattle that will be in those camps. So *shall* this plague *be*.

Jesus Christ will not discriminate. That sword that goes out of His mouth will strike down man and beast. People have thought that this sounds like a nuclear explosion, or a neutron bomb or something like that, but I don't know. God can do whatever He wants. He's going to come back in great fury, and He's just going to kill, because, that is His judgment—death on the people and anything that supported them down to the animals.

It also says, those that aren't killed by this will kill each other: "Every man's hand against his neighbor."

So, we will be there, God willing, and participate in this. By that time, we will have the stomach for it. Probably not until then! It is just amazing to contemplate.

Let's go on to Malachi. I want us to get a little bit happier now.

Malachi 4:1-3 For behold, the day is coming, Burning like an oven, And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble [remember one of the seven last plagues was a great heat and scorching]. And the day which is coming shall burn them up," Says the LORD of hosts, "That will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves. You shall trample the wicked, For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet On the day that I *dothis*," Says the LORD of hosts.

This is another indication that we will be part of that army. We will trample them under our feet. But before that, with the coming of, or the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, we will be healed. Now that is the healing that we're all looking forward to. The complete healing—the changing of our bodies to be like Christ's own body, as it says in I John 2: 2, "For when we see Him, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

From that time on, we won't need to worry about food, sickness, any type of disease, any type of afflictions, maiming or whatnot. We will have energy. I'll be able to get up before noon! (Just kidding.) I—we—won't have to sleep. We will be glorious, and ready to rule.

There's more of this in Daniel the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter. I'm going to skip through this chapter a little bit. I'm trying to turn this a little more to the positive. We've seen all the war, death, and destruction. Now, we're going to move on.

Daniel 7:11-14 I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain,

and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. [Now here's where I was heading to] I was watching in the night visions, And behold, *One* like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! [Here you see it in the Old Testament] He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom *the one* Which shall not be destroyed.

Daniel 7:21-22 I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, [This is the interpretation of the vision above] until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made *in favor* of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

Daniel 7:26-27 But the court shall be seated [a scene of judgment], And they shall take away his dominion [the beast's dominion], To consume and destroy *it* forever. Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'

That's much more positive! Not only is the Great Judgment made on the Beast, and all those who follow him, and have his mark, but also there will be another judgment where we will be judged according to our works, finally. And, we will see the effects of that judgment in our change. It says here that the court's judgment is favorable upon the saints. They will be given the Kingdom, dominion, and greatness. This Kingdom is one that is over the whole earth. Really, it is over the whole universe. That is, all that God controls. And, it lasts forever.

So, these things—these early things—the war, and judgment, and all that—have to happen, because the saints don't want, and Christ himself certainly doesn't want a Kingdom full of rebellion—full of sin. He has to clean up the mess, and then He and the saints can establish this Kingdom in righteousness—starting fresh, beginning to rebuild, and making it truly wonderful, and lasting.

Go forward a few chapters to Daniel the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter.

Daniel 12:1-3 At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands *watch* over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation [the Great Tribulation], *Even* to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame *and* everlasting contempt. Those who

are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those  
who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.

What we have here is the resurrection of the dead saints, and the changing of those who are alive into immortal and incorruptible Gods under Christ.

Let's go to I Corinthians 15 and verse 50. This will be a Kingdom ruled not by flesh and blood, but by something greater!

I Corinthians 15:50-53 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet [and that's very true—the *last* trumpet]. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

Won't that be great? We won't have to fear death. We won't have to worry about the specter of death—the end of life—which Hebrews says, has the whole world in its grasp—everybody has this fear of death. It really messes up one's plans, doesn't it? You can't do anything.

I was reading yesterday in Mark Twain's "Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court" that the best government is a benevolent dictatorship. But, the problem with that is that the benevolent dictator dies. He has to give it to somebody who is not benevolent like he is, who will probably be a crumb. Solomon said that himself. That as much as he tried to do to make the nation of Israel—his kingdom—great and wonderful, he was going to have to give it to his son, and he could see that his son was not up to his level. (A little tongue-in-cheek because Solomon didn't turn out very good himself.) That's just the vanity—the conceit—of those that feel they would make great benevolent dictators.

But, this is the same sort of thing. We could do nothing in ruling this earth of any lasting value unless we were immortal—unless we could enforce and perpetuate those institutions that will make for benevolence on every level, and prosperity, and all the blessings that will accrue to mankind during the Millennium.

One man living 70 years can only make something like that happen for a very short period of time. But, a God, immortal, and incorruptible, can make those things last forever. And, that's when they're really the highest quality, and perfect. When those institutions can go on for generation after generation, only getting better with time. Not like the second law of thermo-dynamics among human and physical things, wearing down over time.

So, this is a necessary step in the plan of God so that all of His Helpers—lesser Kings and Lords

under Him—can do the same as He does, and live forever, and rule forever, and make it all work forever.

OK. On to I Thessalonians 4. We'll see another instance of Paul prophesying of this same occurrence—the change of God's people.

I Thessalonians 4:13-18 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord [direct from God], that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. [And He mentions this in Hebrews 11, last verse also] For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

So, Christ will descend amid shouting, and a voice of an Archangel, and a trumpet blast. And as He comes, those who died in Christ will rise from their graves, and be changed instantly into immortal, incorruptible spirit Beings with bodies just like His. They will shine like the Son. Then, those saints who are still alive—many we hope in the place of safety, waiting for this wonderful event to take place—will also be changed, and together we will all meet Christ in the air as He returns. This is not a rapture. This is a resurrection—the First Resurrection—the better Resurrection.

Isaiah 61:1-2 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,...

Now, that is what Jesus said there in the book of Luke when He announced His ministry. Now, what follows is what is to come at His second coming. Continue in verse 2:

Isaiah 61:2 And the day of vengeance of our God; ...

See? He is proclaiming the first time "The acceptable Year of the Lord," then He says, "The Day of Vengeance of our God." That's where we were in the judgment and all the gore, and all that.

Isaiah 61:2-3 To comfort all who mourn [now that's a little better], To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The

oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified."

So, not only is the Day of Trumpets, or the fulfillment of the Day of Trumpets a day of vengeance, it is also a time of comfort, consolation, beauty, joy, and praise. It just depends upon which side of all this you are on. And we know which side we want to be on. That's why we need to work so that we are there. This will be the time of our ultimate salvation, and glorification.

What a full and glorious day it will be.

Let's close in Isaiah 40. Here in a nutshell is the meaning of the Day of Trumpets.

Isaiah 40:9-11, 31 O Zion, You who bring good tidings, Get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, You who bring good tidings, Lift up your voice with strength, Lift *it* up, be not afraid; Say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong *hand*, And His arm shall rule for Him; Behold, His reward *is* with Him, And His work before Him. He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry *them* in His bosom, *And* gently lead those who are with young...But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew *their* strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

So, let us do here as it says in verse 31. Wait patiently for the Lord's coming, to judge, reward, and rule this earth.

Have a wonderful Feast Day everyone!