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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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The Seventh Trumpet

Revelation 11:15-19

In March of 1741, the composer George Frederick Handel locked himself in his study for twenty-four days, laboring to give birth to one of the greatest pieces of music ever written... Handel's *Messiah*. As he was working, his assistant knocked on his chamber door, and hearing no answer, came inside. There he found Handel surrounded with sheets of music, with tears streaming down his face. He said

"Whether I was in the body or out of the body as I wrote it, I know not. God knows. But I think I did see all Heaven opened before me and the Great God Himself."

The *Messiah* was composed around a text by Charles Jennens which traced out key scriptures centered around the life and ministry of our Savior, Jesus Christ. The climax of the *Messiah* and its most famous part is commonly called the "Hallelujah Chorus." And for that, Jennens turned to three passages in the Book of Revelation:

Revelation 19:6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Revelation 19:16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

And... this morning's text:

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

For 276 years, music lovers had thrilled to these three texts in the Hallelujah Chorus... In March of 1743, at the London premiere King George II rose as it was being performed, and from then on tradition has held that everyone stand at that moment in the *Messiah*. The celebration of the final and

eternal reign of Christ on earth is worthy of the greatest celebration that God's people can give.

This morning, we will unfold this final section of Revelation 11, the sounding of the seventh trumpet... and seek to understand why heaven celebrated so loudly and powerfully when the seventh angel sounded his trumpet

Context:

The Apostle John, in exile on the tiny rocky island of Patmos of the coast of modern-day Turkey had a vision of a door standing open in heaven; he was invited by Christ to come up through that doorway into the heavenly realms. He was promised that God would show him the future... what must take place after that.

Once through that doorway he immediately saw the central and most glorious reality in the universe: the throne of Almighty God, with God ruling over all things by his power... he had in his right hand a scroll, sealed with seven seals. Jesus Christ alone was worthy to take the scroll from the hand of God, which he did. And as he began to break open the seven seals, events began to unfold on earth... judgments from a holy God upon a sinful planet. After the first six seals, the seventh seal was broken and there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. After the silence, seven angels with seven trumpets began to sound them. These seven trumpets unleash a series of judgments such as the world has never seen... horrific judgments designed to give sinners on earth one final warning to repent... They are depicted as the direct answer to the prayers for justice and vengeance that God's people have send heavenward for twenty centuries.

The first trumpet resulted in fires raging on the surface of the earth, burning up one third of all the trees as well as all the green grass

The second trumpet resulted in a third of the sea turning into blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea dying, and a third of the ships being destroyed

The third angel sounded his trumpet, poisoning a third of all the fresh water on earth

The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, causing a third of the sun, the moon, and the stars being darkened

The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, unleashing a billowing cloud of demons pouring forth stinging and tormenting people for five months

The sixth angel sounded his trumpet and a massive and terrifying army numbering 200 million poured like a flood over the earth, slaughtering one third of all mankind... ONE THIRD!! Maybe two or three BILLION people dying

And despite all of this horror, the saddest statement of all:

Revelation 9:20 The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent

So... six of the seven angels have sounded their trumpets

And just like happened before with the sixth and seventh seal, there is an INTERLUDE, a break in the action

That interlude contained Revelation 10 – the commissioning of John by a glorious angel to testify to the whole world of what God was showing him

And the sending of the two witnesses who will stand in the fire of persecution and testify to the significance of these outpoured judgments and the only hope of salvation in Christ.

SO... these are the TWO SOURCES of spiritual information the sufferers on planet earth will have about these coming judgments: the writing of John and the testimony of the witnesses.

Once that is done, the seventh angel sounds his trumpet...

Now, just as the seventh seal produced the seven trumpets, so the seventh trumpet will produce the seven bowls... the bowls of wrath will be the final judgments God ever pours out on earth

It's like a TELESCOPING ACTION... or perhaps you could picture those Russian Dolls that nest inside each other... open the largest doll, and another doll emerges... open that doll, and another one emerges

But all that happens immediately when the Seventh Angel sounds his trumpet is a celebration and commentary of the significance of it in heaven

The seven bowls that the seventh trumpet produce do not begin to be poured out until Revelation 16

In the other chapters before the Second Coming in Revelation 19, John reveals the background and the true nature of the spiritual enemies that have fought the people of God in every generation... a revelation of SATAN and the ANTICHRIST and the EVIL WORLD SYSTEM (called "Babylon the Great")... the spiritual enemies of the people of God

All of these things will set the stage for the glorious Second Coming of Christ to reign forever.

I. Heaven Celebrates: God's Eternal Kingdom Has Come! (vs. 15-17)

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

A. The Seventh Angel Sounds His Trumpet

1. So much of this awesome book involves WAITING for GOD'S TIMING
2. God has a meticulous timetable for everything he wants done
3. As this vision unfolds, the sequences of the visions corresponds in a complex way to the sequence of judgments that will LATER come on the earth
4. But even there, though all of this was visionary, and nothing was actually HAPPENING on the earth yet, John is following the order of events very closely
5. The numbering gives a sense of God's wise sequence... first this, second that, third the other... etc.
6. So, once the first six angels have sounded their trumpets, then and only then can come the seventh
7. The seventh trumpet is DECISIVE in the coming of the Kingdom of Christ
8. Now that all that judgement has occurred, now at last the seventh angel can sound his trumpet... and with that sounding, it's as though heaven is saying IT IS FINISHED! It's a DONE DEAL!! It's as GOOD AS ACCOMPLISHED

You sports fans... have you ever watched a game in which something so decisive happens on the field that you say to a friend, "This game is OVER!" even though there's still time left on the clock... that's what this is like

B. "Loud Voices"

1. Unlike with the breaking of the seventh seal, which resulted in SILENCE...
2. This results in POWERFULLY LOUD VOICES... angels and elders and the redeemed celebrating with all their might
3. And the sound of their voices is likened often to the sound of a mighty waterfall

4. They are not shy, they do not hold back; they ROAR FORTH

C. What Heaven Celebrates

Revelation 11:15 "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

1. The Kingdom of the World = the force ruling planet earth
2. Notice the SINGULAR... not "the kingdoms" but the "kingdom" of the world
3. There is a UNITY of the human race... all of us descended from one man, Adam
4. God gave to Adam, and through him all humanity the ONE KINGDOM of this world
5. But Satan usurped that kingdom by tempting Adam and causing him to sin
6. Adam effectively surrendered the control of the Kingdom of the World to Satan
7. Thus did Satan tempt Christ:

Luke 4:5-8 The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. ⁷ So if you worship me, it will all be yours." ⁸ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

8. Satan has been ruling over the various large and small kingdoms of the world, pitting the one against the other... causing one human ruler to rise up and conquer others, all for his own evil purposes... but he has always been the power behind the various thrones... we'll learn more about that in Revelation 12 next week, God willing
9. But Christ refused Satan's offer of all the Kingdoms of the world on HIS WICKED TERMS... to bow down and worship him as God
10. Instead, Christ submitted to his Father and allowed his Father to give him the Kingdom of the World in his own time and in his own way

D. The Kingdom Has Become...

1. Notice the verb tense "has become"
2. The use of a decisive PAST TENSE in the prophetic vision is something the prophets have done throughout scripture
3. Though this is speaking of a future event, it speaks as though it were PAST

4. Like this:

Isaiah 53:5-6 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

5. Though it is all future, yet the scripture speaks of it as though it had already happened, heightening the sense of God's absolute sovereignty... nothing can stop this plan!!!

E. The Lord's Prayer Now Fulfilled

Matthew 6:9-10 "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

F. What is the "Kingdom"?

1. It is the place where God openly and obviously rules, with all his enemies clearly in subjection
2. God is sovereign now on earth, the sovereignty is not obvious to all

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.

3. God secretly, powerfully, and effectively rules over every event on earth... but it is not obvious and open
4. His will is not done on earth AS IT IS IN HEAVEN
5. But once the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, it will set quickly in motion the final judgments that will culminate in the destruction of Satan's wicked kingdom and that of the Antichrist

G. God the Father's Pledge to Christ the Son

Psalm 110:1-2 The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." ² The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies.

For twenty centuries, God has been secretly and quietly advancing Christ's Kingdom in the conversion of his elect one at a time throughout the world

But he intends a final, more open display of his Son's supremacy

Philippians 2:9-11 God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

H. The Eternity of God's Kingdom

Revelation 11:15 "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

1. All human kingdoms have been terminated by the DEATH PENALTY all humans are under in Adam
2. Nebuchadnezzar learned the "feet of clay" at the root of all earthly empires was the mortality of the King himself

Genesis 3:19 dust you are and to dust you will return.

3. So Nebuchadnezzar had a dream of a vast statue representing ALL HUMAN KINGDOMS...

Head of Gold

Chest and arms of silver

Body of bronze

Legs of Iron

Feet partly iron, partly clay

4. The Coming Kingdom of Christ struck the statue on its feet of clay

Daniel 2:34-35 While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. ³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

The chaff swept away like it was never there represents the temporal nature of all human kingdoms... relegated ultimately to DUST IN THE WIND

5. The Rock represented the Kingdom of Christ... and unlike all those human Kingdoms, it will last FOREVER

Daniel 2:44 "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever..

6. Human kingdoms are clearly dust in the wind...

Just as Isaiah said of the princes of the earth:

Isaiah 40:22-24 He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. ²³ He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. ²⁴ No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

Just as the inscription on the tomb of Cyrus the Great... on a forlorn, windswept plain in central Turkey, near Pasargadae...

"Mortal! I am Cyrus, son of Cambyses who founded the Persians their empire and was King of Asia. Grudge me not this small monument."

In 1820, Adoniram Judson sailed up the Irrawaddy River to appeal to the despotic ruler of Burma, King Bagyidaw, to give Christianity religious freedom. As they sailed up the river, they passed a dozen or more former capitals of past rulers of Burma, now overgrown with jungles... many Kings liked to start their reigns by building their own capital city, leaving the old ones to crumble and be consumed by the tropical jungle; so this king was build a new city called Ava where he would place his golden throne

These overgrown former capitals should have been warnings to all such apparently important rulers that their own kingdoms are likewise destined to become chaff in the wind!

BUT the kingdom of God and of Christ will last FOREVER and EVER

This final conquest will only be achieved by the immeasurable greatness of God's sovereign power:

So, the twenty-four elders JOIN THE PRAISE:

Revelation 11:16-17 And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying: "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.

They prostrated themselves before God in JOYFUL worship, thanking God for the OPEN DISPLAY of his sovereign power, which is essential to seizing back the Kingdom of the World from Satan and from the wicked human rulers

They CELEBRATE the awesome power it takes for God to finally establish Christ's reign on earth

Truly God raises up monstrously powerful adversaries and then defeats them in a vast display of his power:

Romans 9:17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."

God had to "TAKE HIS GREAT POWER" and USE IT in order for Christ to begin to reign. Satan and Antichrist and human opposition will not hand it to him

Now realize, God is OMNIPOTENT... no matter how much of his great power he exerts, it does not tax him, or weaken him, or push him to any limit

Just as **the sun would not be in any way taxed to light a single stick on fire, or a tree, or an entire forest, or indeed, the entire world of trees... none of that would deplete or tax the sun's heat in the tiniest amount**, so the great power that God uses to win this final battle will not deplete God at all

BUT from our perspective, the display of God's power needed to finalize the conquest of his enemies in heaven and on earth is the greatest in human history.

And the elders FELL DOWN ON THEIR FACES, worshiping God for doing it... they GIVE THANKS to God for it, for it is what they have yearned for with all their hearts!!!!

BUT the joy of heaven is NOT SHARED by the inhabitants of the earth!

II. Earth Enraged: God's Eternal Kingdom Has Come! (vs. 18)

Revelation 11:18 The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great-- and for destroying those who destroy the earth."

A. The Coming of the Kingdom of God ENRAGES the People of the Earth

1. They have not been praying “Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done on earth as it is heaven...”
 2. Actually, the Kingdom of God and of Christ is repulsive to the unconverted people of the world... they HATE it with every fiber of their being
 3. They do not find Jesus’ yoke easy and his burden light
 4. They do not think it wonderful that a thrice-holy God controls even the sparrows falling to the ground... that he numbers the hairs on their heads
 5. They don’t love the fact that “God is light and in him, there is no darkness at all”
 6. They are not attracted to the person of God or of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. This RAGE is Clearly Described in Psalm 2... and it has characterized TWENTY CENTURIES of Human Opposition to Christ and to His Kingdom

Psalm 2:1-3 Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? ² The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. ³ "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters."

The “kings of the earth” who were enemies of Christ throughout history have taken their power and authority at every stage of history and have FOUGHT AGAINST the Lord and his Christ

This is God’s reaction in Psalm 2:

Psalm 2:4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.

And this is God’s decree and his action after that LAUGHTER:

Psalm 2:5-9 Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, ⁶ "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill." ⁷ I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. ⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. ⁹ You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."

- C. This RAGE-FILLED Opposition to Christ and His Kingdom will reach its final act in these last chapters of Revelation
1. We will see it in the coming of the Antichrist and his blasphemous reign
 2. We will see it in his persecution of Christians and his defiance of God and of Christ

3. We will see it in the way the world will gather one last time to fight against the people of God on earth in Revelation 17
4. Their RAGE is a tragic replica of the rage of their father, the devil

Rev 12:12 He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.

III. Judgment Day: Eternal Rewards and Endless Wrath (vs. 18)

Revelation 11:18 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."

A. Judgment Day Imminent

1. As with all aspects of this praise when the seventh trumpet is sounded, the elders are ANTICIPATING what has been long foretold but is now IMMINENT
2. Judgment Day is the time in which all matters will be settled
3. Many verses in scripture speak of this day of accounting before the Holy Judge of all the Earth

Hebrews 4:13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Matthew 12:36 I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken

- B. God Has Been Waiting Patiently for this Day to Come... While Predicting Again and Again that it would surely Come

C. Judgement Day to be Depicted Clearly Later

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books

D. Rewards for the Servants of God

Romans 2:6-7 God "will give to each person according to what he has done." ⁷ To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.

Hebrews 6:10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.

E. Destroying those who Destroy the Earth

1. This shows the anger God has toward the wicked of the earth whose sins have resulted in the destruction of the magnificent and beautiful planet God made
 - a. God took special delight in the perfect world he made

Genesis 1:31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

- b. So God boasted to Job over all the different species of animals he crafted... the ostrich, the Leviathan, the lion, the eagle, the mountain goats, the rock badgers, the stork...
2. The phrase “those who destroy the earth” refers in general to the effects of Adam’s sin on the earth... how it is cursed universally and in general because of human sin

Romans 8:20-21 the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God

3. It also refers in our age to those whose greed and self-focus has resulted in the ravaging of nature, the destruction of the ecology... strip mining, deforestation, industrial waste and pollution of the air and water and earth
4. God is going to DESTROY these sinners... both body and soul... in hell

IV. Heaven’s Temple Unveiled (vs. 19)

Revelation 11:19 Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant.

- A. The Final Revelation of this Chapter is Remarkable... the Language of the Old Covenant is Employed to Show the Heavenly Realities Behind Moses’ Sacrificial System
- B. Moses’ Tabernacle and Solomon’s Temple were both Earthly Copies of a Heavenly Reality

Hebrews 8:5 They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

- C. This is Actually Where the TRUE ARK of the Covenant Is
 1. Steven Spielberg’s Movie, “Raiders of the Lost Ark” had the Ark of the Covenant dug up in an Egyptian archaeological dig called Tannis... then transported to some unnamed warehouse in America, where it sits in obscurity

2. But actually, the Ark of the Covenant was just an earthly type and shadow of a heavenly reality
 - a. The Ark was where God appeared to the High Priests... in a glory cloud above the mercy seat
 - b. The Ark was the place where the blood of the sacrifice was poured on the Day of Atonement
 - c. Inside the Ark were placed the Ten Commandments... the Laws of Moses; also Aaron's staff that budded, and a jar of manna
3. The Ark symbolizes the COMMUNION God desires with his people based on the atoning work through the blood... that is perfected only by the blood of Christ

D. Symbols of God's Awesome Powerful Presence... Especially in Judgment

Revelation 11:19 Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

V. Applications

- A. The Clear Lesson of the Seventh Trumpet: Christ's Kingdom is Coming... and with it Judgement Day
 1. The best thing that sinners can do in light of this is to flee to Christ in repentance and faith
 2. The gospel was given as GOOD NEWS that sinners on earth can be rescued from the coming wrath
 3. God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, was slain on the cross, his blood poured out on the true mercy seat in heaven, that all who trust in Jesus might receive forgiveness of sins
- B. YEARN for the Coming Kingdom!
 1. One of the most profound differences between Christians and non-Christians is the delight we have in the coming Kingdom of Christ, and in His awesome and powerful reign
 2. Non-Christians are ENRAGED at this Kingdom... and the coming King; and those with any power at all will continue to gnash their teeth at him and use their power to resist his Kingdom
 3. But Christians pray like this:

Matthew 6:9-10 Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

4. And live like this:

Matthew 6:31-33 do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

2 Peter 3:12 you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.

5. We “look forward to” and speed the coming Kingdom by doing the work of the Great Commission... spreading the Good News of the Kingdom everywhere

- a. Recommit yourself to spreading the good news with a lost person this week
- b. Strike up a conversation at work with a coworker, or at school with a roommate or a classmate; or at a playgroup with other mothers of preschoolers, or at a senior adult event at a nursing home

6. And in your daily life, build your delight in the coming Kingdom of Christ

- a. Feed that delight...
- b. Set your hope fully on the perfect world that is coming!
- c. Delight in the order and holiness of Christ’s Kingdom

C. Understand How Guaranteed All of this Is

1. Remember how the loud voices and the elders in heaven praised the establishment of Christ’s open reign on earth as a DONE DEAL even before it was finished by using the PAST TENSE

Revelation 11:15 "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

2. We know that, by the time the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, the end will be imminent
3. However, it is as certain NOW as it will be THEN

D. Delight in the ETERNAL NATURE of Christ’s Coming Kingdom

1. All the Kingdoms of this world are temporary... dust in the wind
2. They appear mighty and powerful, but they last just a short time

3. YOUTUBE video of the last twenty centuries in five minutes—the spread of the gospel and the rise and fall of the empires
4. This world and all its glory is PASSING AWAY!! But Christ's Kingdom will last forever and ever!!

In the words of the Hallelujah Chorus:

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

The kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever...

King of kings and Lord of lords...

Forever and ever

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!