

The Trumpet Will Sound

The Bible says in the 19th Chapter of Exodus that the children of Israel set out from Rephidim and came to the wilderness of Sinai where they made their camp before the mountain of God.

Moses went up from the camp to the mountain and God spoke to him.

Exodus 19:9 The LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever.” Then Moses told the words of the people to the LORD. 10 The LORD also said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments; 11 and let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.”¹

God told Moses to warn the people not to go up on the mountain, not even to touch the border of it lest they die. Then He said,

19:13 ... ‘When the ram’s horn sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain.’”

So Moses went down from the mountain and consecrated the people, and they washed their garments. Exodus continues,

¹ New American Standard Bible: 1995 update. (1995). (Ex 19:9–11). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation. All scriptural quotations in this article are taken from the NASB95.

19:16 So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

Thus it was that the people of Israel were brought before their God. J. C. Connel writing in the New Bible Commentary said of this appearance of Israel before God,

The infinite holiness of God was to be further impressed upon the people by two things. First, their own sanctification: the external ordinances of washing themselves and their clothes, and the abstinence from sexual intercourse, symbolized the inner holiness without which no man can see God. Secondly, there was the fence which was to keep them, even sanctified as they were, from touching the mountain while it served as the 'holy of holies', the seat of God's immediate presence. Yet all that they could bear to see was the thick cloud which shrouded God's unapproachable glory.

They were not to touch any man who violated the command and transgressed the bounds of the mountain. By laying hands on him they would themselves have to touch the mountain. Therefore, he was to be slain from a distance with stones or arrows.

The trumpet was the signal for Moses and Aaron to come to the mountain. A call on the trumpet is the normal prelude to a special, particularly a royal, proclamation. This peculiarly terrible blast of the trumpets, accompanied as it was by phenomena of supernatural awfulness, heralded a divine manifestation

equaled in its cataclysmic effect only by the appearing of the Lord in the last day.²

Many nations have used trumpets on special occasions such as at royal weddings. Royalty, nobles and lords have employed trumpeters to announce their arrival by playing a fanfare on special occasions.³ This was the case in 1638, on the occasion of the French queen mother Marie de Medici's triumphal entry into Amsterdam in which two mounted trumpeters led the procession.⁴

Will Durant wrote in his book, *Caesar and Christ*, that among the spectacles of ancient Rome was the “triumph,” a celebratory parade in honor of a conquering hero. He wrote that “...the procession formed outside the city, at whose borders the general and his troops were required to lay down their arms; thence it entered through a triumphal arch. Trumpeters led the march; after them came towers or floats... and pictures showing the exploits of the victors.”⁵

Trumpeters led the arrivals of heroes and royalty, but all this pales before the awesome arrival of God. The Second Coming of Christ will be a stunning and marvelous spectacle attended by a dreadful and awful blast of the trumpet of God.

Alfred Edersheim wrote in his book about the Temple, its ministry and services,

In the law of God only these two things are enjoined in the observance of the ‘New Moon’—the ‘blowing of trumpets’ and special festive sacrifices.⁵ Of old the

² F. Davidson, Prof., *The New Bible Commentary*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1963, p. 119.

³ <https://www.medieval-life-and-times.info/medieval-music/trumpet.htm>

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_entry.

⁵ Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1944. P. 82.

‘blowing of trumpets’ had been the signal for Israel’s host on their march through the wilderness, as it afterwards summoned them to warfare, and proclaimed or marked days of public rejoicing, and feasts, as well as the ‘beginnings of their months.’ The object of it is expressly stated to have been ‘for a memorial,’ that they might ‘be remembered before Jehovah,’ it being specially added: ‘I am Jehovah your God.’ It was, so to speak, the host of God assembled, waiting for their Leader; the people of God united to proclaim their King. At the blast of the priests’ trumpets they ranged themselves, as it were, under His banner and before His throne, and this symbolical confession and proclamation of Him as ‘Jehovah their God,’ brought them before Him to be ‘remembered’ and ‘saved.’ And so every season of ‘blowing the trumpets,’ whether at New Moons, at the Feast of Trumpets or New Year’s Day, at other festivals, in the Sabbatical and Year of Jubilee, or in the time of war, was a public acknowledgment of Jehovah as King. Accordingly we find the same symbols adopted in the figurative language of the New Testament. As of old the sound of the trumpet summoned the congregation before the Lord at the door of the Tabernacle, so ‘His elect’ shall be summoned by the sound of the trumpet in the day of Christ’s coming, and not only the living, but those also who had ‘slept’—‘the dead in Christ.’ Similarly, the heavenly hosts are marshalled to the war of successive judgments, till, as ‘the seventh angel sounded,’ Christ is proclaimed King Universal: ‘the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.’⁶

Matthew wrote that Jesus said in his discourse about the impending destruction of Jerusalem along with the razing of the

⁶ Edersheim, A. (1959). *The Temple, its ministry and services as they were at the time of Jesus Christ*. (pp. 290–291). London: James Clarke & Co. See also Rev. 11:15.

magnificent Temple of Herod that "...not one stone here will be left upon another which will not be torn down." But that was not all He said. He also provided his disciples with insight concerning his Second Coming,

Matthew 24:30 "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. 31 "And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

A great trumpet will accompany the work of the angels at the Second Coming of Christ. Moreover, John the Apostle wrote,

Revelation 1:7 Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

Henry H. Halley wrote in his *Bible Handbook*,

His coming will be heralded with "a great sound of a trumpet," as of old the nation was gathered together.⁷ The fact that Paul repeated this expression, "the trumpet shall sound," in connection with the resurrection, and in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, says, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, indicates that it may be more than a mere figure of speech. An actual, sudden, grand historical event, in which He assembles to himself his own from among the living and the dead on a vast and mighty scale."⁸

⁷ Exodus 19:13, 16, 19.

⁸ Henry H. Halley, *Halley's Bible Handbook*, (p. 447), Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House. 1965,

It is told that Queen Victoria, deeply touched by a sermon of F. W. Farrar on the Lord's Second Coming, said to him: "Dean Farrar, I should like to be living when Jesus comes, so that I could lay the crown of England at his feet."⁹

Despite the queen's desire to be alive when the Lord returns she died on the 22nd of January 1901. As it was with Queen Victoria so it is with a multitude of others—they must "sleep" until the Lord returns.¹⁰ But these will be awakened to the sound of the trumpet and the voice of the Son of Man,¹¹

Paul, in that first letter to Thessalonica, wrote,

1 Thessalonians 4:15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

And John wrote in his gospel,

John 5:28 "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, 29 and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.

There is the story of the king of Hungary who became sad, and pensive. His brother, who was a happy courtier wanted to know the reason for the king's sadness.

⁹ Ibid., Henry H. Halley, p. 447.

¹⁰ "Sleep" in this context means "die."

¹¹ John 5:27,28.

“Brother,” said the king, “I have been a great sinner against God, and I do not know how to die. How shall I appear before Him in judgment?”

His brother, wanting to make light of the king’s concern, said, “These are but melancholy thoughts. Don’t worry.”

The king made no reply.

At that time it was the custom of the country, that, if the executioner came and sounded a trumpet before any man’s door, he was to be led out to execution.

So it happened that in the dead of night the king sent the executioner to sound the trumpet before his brother’s door. When the brother heard the sound of the trumpet and saw the messenger of death, he ran at once to meet with the king. Once there, he sought earnestly to know in what he had offended.

“Alas, brother!” the king answered, “You have never offended me. So is the sight of my executioner so dreadful; and shall not I, who have greatly offended God, fear to be brought before the judgment seat of Christ?”¹²

The Apostle Paul wrote in his second letter to Corinth,

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

That day of reckoning is approaching. All will face a day in which they will be judged in accordance with what they have done. Pleas of “someone made me do that,” or “I thought I was doing right,” will not suffice to gain acquittal. It will be based upon “what he has done.”

But the trump has not yet sounded, and the season of repentance remains. It behooves, therefore, all who are engaged

¹² Elon Foster, *6000 Sermon Illustrations*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1996. p. 396.

in evil and rebellious deeds to abandon their course of life that leads to a sad resurrection, and to dedicate what remains to serving the Judge of all.

For the faithful the reward is great. It will be an awakening to a glorious beginning, a life without pain and suffering, a life without fear of death.

Paul wrote in his first letter to Corinth,

1 Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; 57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sir Winston Churchill died on 24 January 1965, at the age of 90. His was the first state funeral for a non-royal family member since Lord Carson in 1935, and as of 2022 it remains the most recent state funeral in the United Kingdom. The official funeral lasted for four days.

By decree of Queen Elizabeth II, they allowed his body to lie in state at Westminster Hall for three days from the 26th January. On the 30th of January, the order of funeral was held at St Paul's Cathedral. From there they transported the body by water along the River Thames to Waterloo station, accompanied by military salutations. In the afternoon they buried him at St

Martin's Churchyard at Bladon, the resting place of his ancestors and his brother.¹³

“At Churchill’s direction, at the close of the funeral service, a bugler positioned high up in the dome of St. Paul’s sounded ‘Taps.’ The ‘day is done, gone is the sun’...but then immediately after that, another bugler farther off sounded ‘Reveille:’ ‘It’s time to get up in the morning!’ This was Winston Churchill’s testimony that at the end of our lives, the last note will not be ‘Taps,’ but ‘Reveille!’”¹⁴

Considering Churchill’s example let us remember that though we may “sleep” there will come a day when we hear the trumpet that will awaken us out of sleep. On that day we will stand before our Maker and receive back from Him according to how we have lived in the flesh.

Where we are when Taps overtakes us tells much about how we have lived. How we rise when Reveille awakens us tells how we shall live.

Archaeologists tell us that when the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius destroyed Pompeii there were many persons buried in the ruins who were afterwards found in different positions and locations. Some of these were citizens caught in their last act of life. There were Pompeiians found in deep vaults, as if they had gone there for security. There were some found in lofty chambers where they hoped to rise above the ashes. Some were found at their duty stations. One of these was a Roman sentinel.

Where did they find the Roman sentinel?

They found him standing at the gate of the city where he had been placed by the captain; this soldier stood with his hands still grasping his sword. There, while the earth shook beneath

¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_and_state_funeral_of_Winston_Churchill

¹⁴ <https://urbanfaith.com/2012/10/a-bugler-played-taps-and-reveille-at-churchills-funeral.html/>.

him; there, while the floods of ashes and cinders overwhelmed him, he had stood at his post; and there, after a thousand years, they found him.¹⁵

So, like the sentinel at the gates of ancient Pompeii, let Christians stand by their duty at the post to which their Captain places them. And when the trumpet sounds they will have nothing of which to be ashamed.

¹⁵ Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (p. 1587). Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.