

Honoring I Corinthians 15:51, 52

Considering Interpretive Options

I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 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. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. I Cor. 15:50-52 ; ESV

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. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. I Cor. 15:50-52 ; NKJV ; emphasis ours

In light of Mark 12 which calls us to include using our minds to love God, we'd like to answer a good question which someone has recently raised concerning this I Corinthians 15 text. The question is this:

What do you understand the Lord to mean by the text's adjective, "last" (or "final") trumpet of the passage under consideration – I Corinthians 15:52?

We won't speak to other views which often need to offer an answer which is in tension with the actual data of the text. Instead, we'll share our answer, including the strengths tied to our answer.

For clarification purposes, here's the *question of focus* which we're addressing in this handout:

"What does Endurance Ministries (and specifically, *The Final Trumpet Rapture Gathering* view) understand the Lord to mean by the text's adjective, *last* trumpet of I Corinthians 15:52?"

1. Well – first things first, hermeneutically speaking – it's actually what the text teaches: The event of our changing (at the rapture gathering) will take place at the "last" trump. Because the trump is identified in this way: the **last** trump, we simply take the word at face value. **We believe**, in using common-sense inference (which is one expression of rational/mental love for God, an inferential thought, by the way, which does NOT teach contrary to the actual data of the text), **there are multiple trumps tied to the final one** – the final one highlighted in the 15th chapter of I Corinthians. We believe it's difficult having a "last" or "final" trump without other trumpet blasts preceding it.
2. The **ONLY eschatological series** of trumpet blasts in the whole of explicit Scripture is found in Revelation 8 – 11. This series of trumpets sounding is sometimes called, "The Trumpets of Revelation." The last trumpet blast is highlighted in Revelation 11:15ff. Putting the two passages together, in light of the dynamic of the progressive nature of Bible canon, the 7th (and final/last) trumpet described in Rev. 11 is none other than the last trump of I Cor. 15.
3. What follows the trumpets of Revelation 8 – 11 are the Bowls of God's wrath. In this understanding of the eschatological chronology of the text, we teach the Church is rapture-gathered **prior to** the Bowls of God's wrath – we miss the "hour of trial" about which Revelation 3:10 speaks.
4. Note what the angel says in Revelation 10 concerning the sounding of the 7th (the final/last) trumpet:

The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he

is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets. Revelation 10:5-7 (NKJV)

I Cor. 15:51, 52 also speaks of mystery. It is our conviction that the mystery of I Cor. 15 – that is, our changing at the last trump – is the same mystery spoken of in Revelation 10:7.

The evidence above is sufficient justification in support of the teaching that the phrase “last trump” is indeed the seventh and final trumpet of the Revelation trumpets. The warrants above allow for the view teaching the last trump of I Corinthians 15:52 is the very seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15.

Time will show whether or not this understanding is correct. Until the actual event of the Revelation 11/I Cor. 15 final trumpet rapture gathering, we live by faith in the holy Word of God. So let’s put aside the controversy and simply affirm the actual data of the Word of God. Let’s prepare rightly, based on an explicitly **biblical** understanding of the 2nd Coming, the Day of Christ/the Lord, the tribulation, God’s wrath and our Lord’s millennial rule. Let’s do so by basing our view(s) on actual Bible Truth. Definitions matter!

Having sufficiently articulated our understanding of the “last/final” trump of I Cor. 15, we feel it appropriate to pose this very question to the advocates of the **other** end time views. In other words ...

How do the OTHER Pre-Millennial positions answer the same question and (this, too, is important), once answered, we encourage the reader (of this handout) to personally ask another crucial question: Which one of the multiple competing end-time hypotheses offers the most coherent answer **in light of** the actual biblical data on this topic (of the meaning of the word, “last”) as outlined in I Cor. 15:52 and related passages?

So here’s the question addressed to each Pre-Millennial view we’ve chosen to include in this handout:

What does the Pre-Tribulation Rapture end-time position understand the Lord to mean by the text’s adjective, “last” trumpet of the passage under consideration, namely, I Cor. 15:52?

What does the Pre-Wrath Rapture end-time position understand the Lord to mean by the text’s adjective, “last” trumpet of the passage under consideration, namely, I Cor. 15:52?

What does the Post-Tribulation Rapture end-time position understand the Lord to mean by the text’s adjective, “last” trumpet of the passage under consideration, namely, I Cor. 15:52?

(Please correctly discern: [The Final Trumpet Rapture Gathering](#) position is emphatically NOT a *mid-tribulation* rapture view, for very clear and specific reasons. IF folks label it as such, they simply fail to understand and/or acknowledge the basic Bible essentials of the position.)

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For more information about this end-time view titled ***The Final Trumpet Rapture Gathering***, please visit our web sites. We would encourage you to begin here: www.currentmatters.org.

Please write to Dr. Jon Swanson, our ministry director,
with your questions and/or comments using this email address: email@endmin.org