

**ADDENDUM TO EARTHQUAKE RESURRECTION: SUPERNATURAL
CATALYST FOR THE COMING GLOBAL CATASTROPHE**

The Elusive Meaning of the “Last Trumpet” of I Corinthians 15:52

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Exegesis: The process of discovering the original meaning of the biblical text, “bringing it out” (exegeting) by studying the text according to the authorial intent in its historical and grammatical context.

According to the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 15:51-52, there will be a simultaneous resurrection and transformation event that is set in motion by the sounding of a trumpet, which he termed the “last trumpet”, or *eschatei salpiggi* in Greek:

1Co 15:51 Listen, I will tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed —

I Cor 15:52 in a moment, in the blinking of an eye, at the **last trumpet [eschatei salpiggi]**. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.¹

The purpose of this paper is to “bring out”, or exegete, the meaning of the “last trumpet” by examining Paul’s other letters for clues, as well as an important historic event after the exodus from Egypt. By analyzing and making connections between the Hebrew and Greek words

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underlying the English translation of the scriptures, the meaning of this elusive term can be understood.

In the first edition of Earthquake Resurrection, the following was stated regarding the meaning of the phrase, “last trumpet:”

The trumpet Paul may have been referring to was the last trumpet blasts during the Feast of Trumpets, the Jewish feast day called Rosh Hashannah, or the Head of the Year. . . It is the final trumpet blast of Rosh Hashannah, which is a secular holiday still celebrated in Israel today, to which Paul may have been referring.²

By purposely using the word “may” twice, the option was left open for an alternative interpretation to the last trumpet being the last trumpet blown during the Jewish Feast of Trumpets. This is because I was not totally convinced of that interpretation when the book was published. While Jesus Christ may still return on Rosh Hashannah and prophetically fulfill that feast day, I now believe that a conclusive interpretation of the last trumpet is evident, and will be explored in this paper. The following conclusions will be drawn:

1. The I Corinthians 15:52 “last trumpet” and the I Thessalonians 4:16 “trumpet of God” are the same trumpet.
2. The Greek word for trumpet, *salpigx*, is derived from root words that are associated with reverberation and shaking.
3. The “trumpet of God” is not a literal trumpet or ram’s horn blown by God, but rather the voice of God uttering words, according to scripture.
4. When the trumpet voice of God uttering words is sounded, it causes the surrounding landscape to violently shake and tremble.
5. The “last trumpet” of I Corinthians 15:52 is connected to Hebrews 12:26 as the voice of God uttering words that will “once more” shake both the heavens and the earth.
6. The future resurrection of the dead in Christ, and the transformation of all living believers, will be followed by a global catastrophe in the form of the shaking of the earth and the heavens, similar to the description of the events of the sixth seal.

² Lowe, David W. (2005) *Earthquake Resurrection: Supernatural Catalyst for the Coming Global Catastrophe*, pp. 46-47. Lulu Press: Morrisville, NC.

To preface this important study, it will be highly beneficial for the reader to remember Paul's background with respect to Arabia, Mount Sinai, and his reception of revelation directly from Jesus Christ. Beneficial, because it will illuminate exactly what Paul had in mind when he described the resurrection of the dead, the trumpet sound preceding it, and the catching up of living believers in I Corinthians chapter 15 and I Thessalonians chapter 4. Review sections 2.1 and 5.10 from Earthquake Resurrection for this background.

Conclusion 1: The “Last Trumpet” is Equivalent to the Trumpet of God

There are at least four points of congruence between Paul's description of the resurrection of the dead in I Corinthians 15:51-52 and in I Thessalonians 4:16-17 which have led students of Bible prophecy to conclude that Paul was describing the same event.

1. Both passages reveal that the dead in Christ, believers who have died throughout history, will be resurrected.

I Cor 15:52 . . . and **the dead will be raised imperishable**, and we will be changed.

I The 4:16 . . . and **the dead in Christ will rise first**.

2. Both passages reveal that there will be a trumpet sound that immediately precedes this resurrection of the dead.

I Cor 15:52 . . . at the last **trumpet [salpiggi]**. For **the trumpet will sound [salpisei]**, and the dead will be raised imperishable . . .

I The 4:16 . . . and with **the trumpet of God [en salpiggi theou]**, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

3. Both passages reveal that there will be a separate group of believers who have not died, but are alive and remaining at this future resurrection event.

1Co 15:51 . . . **We will not all sleep**, but we will all be changed —

1Th 4:17 Then **we who are alive, who are left**, will be suddenly caught up . . .

4. Both passages reveal a supernatural act will be performed upon those alive and remaining believers at the time of, or just after, the resurrection of the dead.

1Co 15:51 . . . we will all **be changed** —

1Co 15:52 **in a moment**, in the blinking of an eye, at the last trumpet.

1Th 4:17 Then **we who are alive**, who are left, **will be suddenly caught up together with them in the clouds** to meet the Lord in the air.

It is clear from these points of congruence that the Apostle Paul was referring to the same event within these two passages. Therefore, it can be reasonably concluded that the last trumpet sounding prior to the I Corinthians 15:52 resurrection of the dead is the same as the trumpet of God sounding prior to the I Thessalonians 4:16 resurrection of the dead.

Notice that the Greek noun for trumpet in both passages is *salpiggi*. It will be illuminating to briefly examine the roots of this Greek word, which in its base form is *salpigx*.

Conclusion 2: The Roots of the Greek *Salpigx*, for Trumpet

According to Strong's Concordance, the Greek noun *salpigx* is most likely derived from the Greek *salos*, because of the reverberation and vibration sound made by a trumpet when it is blown. *Salos*, which means the quavering or billowing of the waves on the sea, is used once in the New Testament, and once in the Old Testament Greek Septuagint:

Luk 21:25 “And there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and on the earth nations will be in distress, anxious over the roaring of the sea and **the surging waves [salou]**.

Jon 1:15 So they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea, and **the sea stopped raging [salou]**. [LXX]

A second root word for the Greek *salpigx* is *saino*, which means to be shaken, troubled, or disturbed. *Saino*, too, is used but once in the New Testament:

I The 3:3 so that no one **would be shaken [sainesthai]** by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this.

The Greek *saino* for “would being shaken” above is derived from the Greek verb *saleuo*, which means, according to Strong's Concordance, to be put into a state of waving, rocking, vibratory motion. *Saleuo* is used several times in the New Testament, such as the following:

Luk 21:26 People will be fainting from fear and from the expectation of what is coming on the world, for the powers of the heavens **will be shaken [saleuqhsontai]**.

Saino is also associated with another primary Greek root verb, which is *seio*, meaning to rock or vibrate to and fro, to cause to tremble, or to cause to shake or quake. One of the important uses of this verb in the New Testament includes:

Mat 27:51 Just then the temple curtain was torn in two, from top to bottom. **The earth shook [eseisthe]** and the rocks were split apart.

The primary Greek verb *seio* is the word from which the English “seismograph”, a device that measures earthquakes, is derived. It is also the root of the Greek noun *seismos*, the common word for earthquake or shaking several times in the New Testament, including:

Rev 11:13 Just then **a major earthquake [seismos] took place** and a tenth of the city collapsed; seven thousand people were killed in **the earthquake [seismos]**, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Using these root words, a pattern begins to emerge regarding what the trumpet of God actually is, and what will happen when it is sounded:

- The trumpet of God will be sounded when the Lord descends and the dead in Christ are resurrected.
- The Greek word for trumpet is *salpigx*, which is derived from a verb that is related to the reverberation or vibration sound made when it is blown.
- The Greek *salpigx* has its roots in *salos*, *saino*, *saleuo*, and *seio*, which are all used in the New Testament to describe motion, shaking, quaking, billowing, and reverberation. The Greek word *seismos*, a violent shaking or earthquake, is derived from the primary verb *seio*.

Conclusion 3: The Trumpet of God is the Voice of God Uttering Words

With this word study established in our minds, can the question of what Paul meant by the phrase “trumpet of God” in I Thessalonians 4:17 be answered? Does the idea of God Almighty blowing a literal ram’s horn or golden trumpet come to mind? Given his omnipotence, the image of the Creator of the universe placing a literal trumpet to his mouth in heaven or on earth

seems a bit contrived. Could it be that the trumpet of God is actually his voice rather than a trumpet that he places to his mouth and blows?

Fortunately, there is a wealth of scripture that will shed light on these questions. The first is Exodus chapter 19, in which the scene is set for the giving of the Ten Commandments. This incredible event featured the living God revealing his presence in our three dimensional world, in fact, coming



Mount Sinai in modern-day Saudi Arabia

down on a mountain, in the form of a dense cloud, thunder, lightning, fire, earthquakes, and a long and loud trumpet sound. Mount Sinai in Arabia was the chosen site, when the children of Israel were supernaturally rescued from the Egyptians, and this mountain still features the effects of that visit. The Lord gave Moses specific instructions for this event, including instructions to set up boundaries to keep the people away from the mountain, how the people should prepare themselves for the event, and when he would come down.

When the Lord came down, the people saw the fire, the cloud, and the smoke, and were terrified. But they also *heard* something very important: what in Hebrew is called the “voice of the trumpet”, or *kĕf rōbēj bōʾl*:

Exo 19:16 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and **the voice of the trumpet** [*kĕf rōbēj bōʾl*] exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. (KJV)

A verse later in the narrative provides more detail about the voice, or sound, of the trumpet that was heard:

Exo 19:19 And when the **voice of the trumpet** [*kĕf rōbēj bōʾl*] sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice [*kĕf*] (KJV)

Here it is revealed just what the sound of the trumpet, or *kĕf rōbēj bōʾl* was: God speaking to Moses with a voice. In fact, there are several more corroborating scriptures for this conclusion:

Exo 20:18 And all the people saw the thunders, and the lightnings, and **the noise of the trumpet** [kɛf mbɛjb°l], and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.

Exo 20:19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but **let not God speak with us**, lest we die. (KJV)

Clearly, the people were mortified by the thought of God's voice speaking to them again. They would have rather had Moses to speak with them than God. Later in the Pentateuch, the Mount Sinai encounter was recalled as a historic event. Once again, the Lord's voice was connected to the event:

Deu 4:11 And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness.

Deu 4:12 And **the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire**: ye heard **the voice** [kɛf] **of the words**, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. (KJV)

Deu 5:22 These words **the LORD spake** unto all your assembly in the mount . . . **with a great voice** [kɛf]: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me. (KJV)

There is also solid New Testament corroboration of this conclusion. Two examples of a combination of supernatural verbal communication and trumpets are found in Revelation, when John encountered the Lord on the isle of Patmos:

Rev 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day when I heard behind me **a loud voice like a trumpet** [salpiggos],

Rev 4:1 After these things I looked, and there was a door standing open in heaven! And **the first voice I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet** [salpiggos] said: "Come up here so that I can show you what must happen after these things."

But the major New Testament corroboration of the voice of the trumpet speaking words in Exodus is found in the twelfth chapter of Paul's letter to the Hebrews, where he provides the following description:

Heb 12:18 For you have not come to something that can be touched, to a burning fire and darkness and gloom and a whirlwind

Heb 12:19 and **the blast of a trumpet [salpiggos echoi] and a voice uttering words [phonei rematon]** such that those who heard begged to hear no more.

Here Paul explains that the blast of the trumpet was associated with the voice that was uttering words, meaning God's voice speaking was the trumpet blast heard in Mount Sinai. Take note of the key Greek words used in this passage to describe the sound of the trumpet and the voice uttering words: *echos* for "blast," *phone* for "voice," and *rhema* for "words." Not only is the Greek noun *salpigx* used here in Hebrews 12 to describe the sound on Mount Sinai, used in I Corinthians 15:52 in the phrase "last trumpet", and used in I Thessalonians 4:16 in the phrase "trumpet of God," but it is also used in the Septuagint Greek translation of the Old Testament of Exodus chapter 19:

Exo 19:19 And the sounds of the trumpet [**salpiggos echoi**] were waxing very much louder. Moses spoke, and God answered him with a voice [**phonei**]. (LXX)

Deu 4:12 And the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire **a voice of words [phonei rematon]**, which ye heard: and ye saw no likeness, only ye heard a voice. (LXX)

In the Septuagint Greek, there is solid support for Paul's Hebrews chapter 12 description of the trumpet blast yielding a voice uttering words, a voice which the people begged to stop. Why stop? Because of the content of the dialogue? No, the scripture reveals that the reason the people begged not to hear the voice of the trumpet was because it was extremely loud, but more importantly, because it shook the surrounding landscape.

Conclusion 4: The Trumpet Voice of God Causes the Earth to Violently Shake

The next step in confirming that the "last trumpet" of I Corinthians 15:52 is the trumpet voice of God is to explore what happened to the surrounding earth when it happened. Returning

to Exodus chapter 19, another important verse in the Mount Sinai narrative described the scene when the Lord descended and began to speak with Moses:

Exo 19:18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and **the whole mount quaked [charad] greatly [meod]**.

Exo 19:19 And when the **voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder**, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. (KJV)

Here it is revealed that when the entire Sinai mountain region was shaking in a violent manner as the Lord descended on it, the voice of the trumpet was sounding long. Admittedly, it is not clear from this verse whether the quaking of the mountain range was because of the descent of the Lord in fire, or the voice of the trumpet sounding when God answered Moses, or both. However, additional scriptural evidence will prove exactly what caused the earth to shake on that day.

First, though, the adjective “greatly” in the phrase “the whole mount quaked greatly” must be explored in order to understand the magnitude of the shaking. The Hebrew adjective is *meod*, meaning “with vehemence.” The entire Mount Sinai region quaked vehemently at this event. This adjective is used in describing some other important events in the Old Testament:

Gen 7:19 And **the waters prevailed exceedingly [meod]** upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered.

Gen 18:20 And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because **their sin is very [meod] grievous**; (KJV)

Clearly, this was a violent, vehement shaking of the earth on Mount Sinai when compared to the usage in those passages above. Consider the Psalmist’s description of the Mount Sinai scene:

Psa 68:7 O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah:

Psa 68:8 **The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved** at the presence of God, the God of Israel. (KJV)

The exodus from Egypt is described in Psalm 68 as the “march through the wilderness,” when the people of God were led to Mount Sinai. The earth was described as experiencing a shaking, and the mountains were moved in the presence of God.

But it is time to move to the key passage that will reveal what actually caused the earth to shake. That passage is Hebrews chapter 12:

Heb 12:26(a) **Then his voice shook the earth . . .**

What is the “then” to which Paul is referring in this passage? It is without question the scene at Mount Sinai, which he described in verses 18-21:

Heb 12:18 For you have not come to something that can be touched, to a burning fire and darkness and gloom and a whirlwind

Heb 12:19 and the **blast of a trumpet and a voice uttering words such that those who heard begged to hear no more.**

Heb 12:20 For they could not bear what was commanded: “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned.”

Heb 12:21 In fact, the scene was so terrifying that Moses said, “I shudder with fear.”

This is a key point. According to Paul, the supernatural catalyst for the shaking of the earth at Mount Sinai was the voice of the Lord. Then, at Mount Sinai, his voice shook the earth; it could not be any more clearly stated than that. As previously established, the voice of the Lord sounded like a trumpet reverberating when blown, yet he was uttering words, speaking to Moses. This much is now clear:

- The “last trumpet” is equivalent to the trumpet of God.
- This trumpet of God will be sounded just before the resurrection of the dead in Christ
- The trumpet of God is his voice uttering words
- When his trumpet voice is sounded, it shakes the earth

Now, the study will tie together what has been explored thus far by exploring the final clause of Hebrews 12:26, which holds the key to understanding the meaning of the “last trumpet.”

Conclusion 5: The “Last Trumpet” is the “Once More” of Hebrews 12:26(b)

After Paul explained that the trumpet voice of God shook the earth at Mount Sinai, he made an incredible announcement about the next time—the last time—that God’s voice would shake the earth, but also heavens:

Heb 12:26 **Then his voice shook the earth**, but now he has promised, “I will **once more** shake not only the earth but heaven too.”

What can be concluded from this verse, just from an initial reading?

1. God’s voice shook the earth at Mount Sinai, and it has been shown that his voice was the sound of a trumpet.
2. Once again, God’s trumpet voice will shake the earth, as well as the heavens.
3. This will be the last time God’s trumpet voice shakes the earth.

Yes, one last time: the “last trumpet.” It is not readily apparent from simply reading Hebrews 12:26, but Paul was quoting a very important prophecy written by the Old Testament prophet Haggai when stating that God promised “I will once more shake not only the earth but heaven too.” The Haggai prophecy, interestingly, makes reference to the exodus from Egypt:

Hag 2:5 ‘Do not fear, because I made a promise to **your ancestors when they left Egypt**, and my spirit even now testifies to you.’

Hag 2:6 Moreover, the LORD who rules over all says: ‘In just a little while **I will once again shake the sky and the earth, the sea and the dry ground.**

This prophecy confirms the conclusions drawn about the passage from Hebrews above: that God at Mount Sinai shook the earth with his voice, and that it will once more shake the earth and the heavens. This verse is saying, therefore, that the first time God’s voice shook the earth was at Mount Sinai, but in the future, it would in similar fashion, one last time, shake not only the earth, but also the heavens.

What does the phrase “once more” mean logically? Two very important things: (1) that something took place in the past, at least once, and (2) that it is going to take place exactly one more time. To be both the last time that God’s voice shakes the earth *and* the trumpet of God,

the last trumpet must logically be the Hebrews 12:26 “once more” which will shake the earth and the heavens. “Once more” means the last time something will happen.

This also clears up the confusion about the meaning of the last trumpet many have expressed in trying to equate it with the seventh trumpet blown by an angel in Revelation chapter 11. This seventh trumpet is not the trumpet of God, but rather the trumpet of an angel. In addition, the seven trumpet judgments were a revelation given to John, not Paul, many years after Paul wrote to the Corinthian church. The Corinthian readers would have no knowledge of a seventh trumpet since it was not revealed to John until many years after the Corinthian letter was written.

Given Paul’s background in the Old Testament stories and Jewish customs³, he clearly understood what happened on Mount Sinai, that God’s voice was the trumpet sound that shook the earth at that time, and what Haggai was referring to when the Lord said he would once more shake the earth. It is apparent that this information was common knowledge at that time, or that Paul intimated this knowledge to the Corinthians when he visited them, and explained the connections of the trumpet voice of God and what was going to happen in the future, the last trumpet, so that an explanation in I Corinthians 15:52 was not necessary for the readers. Fortunately, all the pieces to the mystery are available for us in scripture, to exegete exactly what Paul meant. In using the term “last trumpet,” he was guiding future readers to use the information in Exodus, Haggai, and his first letter to the Thessalonians to discern that it will be God’s trumpet voice sounding at the resurrection, shaking the earth and the heavens.

Conclusion 6: The Future Resurrection of the Dead and a Global Catastrophe

Within the chronology of Revelation, a global shaking of both the earth and the heavens, which precedes both the day of God’s wrath and the appearance of a massive group of resurrected persons before God’s throne, is the opening of the sixth seal:

³ Gal 1:14 I was **advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries** in my nation, and was extremely zealous for **the traditions of my ancestors**.

Act 5:34 But a Pharisee whose name was **Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was respected by all the people**, stood up in the council and ordered the men to be put outside for a short time.

Act 22:3 “I [Paul] am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, **educated with strictness under Gamaliel according to the law of our ancestors**, and was zealous for God just as all of you are today.

Rev 6:12 Then I looked when the Lamb opened the sixth seal, and **a huge earthquake [megas seismos]** took place; **the sun** became as black as sackcloth made of hair, and **the full moon** became blood red;

Rev 6:13 and **the stars in the sky** fell to the earth like a fig tree dropping its unripe figs when shaken by a fierce wind.

Rev 6:14 **The sky** was split apart like a scroll being rolled up, and every **mountain and island** was moved from its place.

In this passage, there is clearly a shaking of both the earth (a huge earthquake; mountains; islands) and the heavens (the sun; the moon; the stars in the sky; the sky itself), so the fulfillment of Haggai's prophecy of the Lord shaking both the heaven and earth, repeated by Paul in Hebrews 12:26, is a perfect fit within the events of the sixth seal.

But there is more corroboration within the description of the events at the opening of the sixth seal, and its aftermath, that makes the case even stronger that the shaking of the earth and the heavens that takes place is a result of the trumpet of God, the last trumpet, at the resurrection of the dead. The following six points provide that corroboration, and all are discussed at length in Earthquake Resurrection:

1. In Joel 2:31, the prophet stated that before the day of the Lord, the day of God's wrath, comes, the sun would be turned to darkness and the moon to the color of blood. This is fulfilled within the events of the sixth seal, with the sun turning to black and the moon blood-red. The only other reference to the moon turning blood-red is the present passage in Revelation chapter 6. The prophecy of Joel is fulfilled, therefore, at the opening of the sixth seal, which according to Joel must take place before the day of the Lord's wrath.
2. In Revelation 6:17, those who survive the events of the sixth seal will declare that the day of God's wrath had come after the events of the sixth seal had just begun. Within the chronological flow of Revelation, this restricts the beginning of God's wrath to the events of the sixth seal, not the first seal, and the beginning of Daniel's 70th week after the sixth seal.
3. After the events of the sixth seal, there is a massive group of living persons standing before the throne. The appearance of a group such as this before the throne in heaven fits perfectly with the interpretation that the resurrection of the dead in Christ had just occurred.

4. Jesus himself declared in Luke chapter 17 that his coming would be similar to two destructive events: the flood of Noah and the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah. In each case, he emphasized the massive destruction of the events, and that it would be just like this when he returned. Furthermore, he stated in Luke chapter 21 that the time of his coming would come upon the world suddenly, like a trap.
5. Paul also declared that “sudden destruction” would usher in the day of the Lord in I Thessalonians 5:3. He used the same Greek word for “sudden”, *aiphnidios*, that Jesus used in Luke chapter 21 to describe the sudden trap.
6. The pattern of earthquakes coinciding with the resurrection of the dead to immortality fits within the description of the sixth seal catastrophe, especially a global resurrection. This pattern is evident with all three resurrections to immortal bodies described in the New Testament: Jesus Christ, the “many saints” of Matthew chapter 27, and the two witnesses of Revelation chapter 11.

Summary and Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to explore the meaning of the elusive phrase Paul used as a clue for his readers to know when the resurrection of the dead in Christ would take place: the last trumpet. While the full meaning of the phrase is not evident within the immediate scripture, it can be understood by connecting scriptures throughout the Bible, primarily the post-exodus Mount Sinai experience, Haggai’s prophecy, and Paul’s recounting of the event in Hebrews. The power unleashed at the future resurrection of the dead in Christ will be a result of not only the power with which God raises the dead, but also a result of his powerful trumpet voice shaking the earth and the heavens at the opening of the sixth seal: what Paul called the last trumpet.

*Be sure to visit www.earthquakeresurrection.com to order a copy of *Earthquake Resurrection: Supernatural Catalyst for the Coming Global Catastrophe*, read reviews, listen to interviews, read excerpts, and much more.*