



The Apostle Paul uses the phrase “last trump” in connection with the resurrection of all believers and the translation of those who are alive when the trumpet sounds. The last trumpet illustrates that the entire church of all ages is assembled together to receive their glorified bodies and then the reward of the believers’ works.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall 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 incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Paul was well versed in the Torah. He used the scriptures to prove the Jesus was the Christ. You can see his frequent references to the Torah in his letter to the Corinthians. He illustrates the feast as a type and shadow to the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says in Colossians 2:17 that the feasts were “a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.” He refers to Christ as our Passover, our Unleavened Bread, and our Firstfruits. When Paul mentions the last trumpet he is making reference to an Old Testament type and shadow. What was Paul referring to? The context for Paul's "last trumpet" is found in the book of Numbers, specifically chapters 2, 9, 10 and 33. To understand what Paul meant by last trump first read the book of Numbers. It is a story of the congregation in the wilderness and also serves as a beautiful picture of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 10:11, “Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.” That is the church!

The Congregation in the wilderness

Stephen the first martyr mentions God in the midst of the congregation in the wilderness in his preaching to the Jews in Acts 7:38. Numbers 2 records how the 12 tribes of Israel were encamped around the Tent of Meeting. The order given is east first, south second, Levites and the tabernacle third, west fourth, and north last.

Numbers 2:32-34

32 These are the ones who were numbered of the children of Israel by their fathers' houses. All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces were six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty.

33 But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

34 Thus the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses; so they camped by their standards and so they broke camp, each one by his family, according to their fathers' houses.



The cloud by day and fire by night

Numbers 9 records how the 12 tribes (over 600,000 Israelite men) were led through the wilderness. This was God's way to alert the nation that it is time to move. They were supernaturally led and protected by the emblem of God's divine presence.

Numbers 9:15-23

15 Now on the day that the tabernacle was raised up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the Testimony; from evening until morning it was above the tabernacle like the appearance of fire.

16 So it was always: **the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night.**

17 Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, after that the children of Israel would journey; and in the place where **the cloud settled**, there the children of **Israel would pitch their tents.**

18 At the command of the LORD the children of Israel would journey, and at the command of the LORD they would camp; as long as **the cloud stayed above the tabernacle they remained encamped.**

19 Even when the cloud continued long, many days above the tabernacle, the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD and did not journey.

20 So it was, when the cloud was above the tabernacle a few days: according to the command of the LORD they would remain encamped, and according to the command of the LORD they would journey.

21 So it was, when the cloud remained only from evening until morning: **when the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they would journey; whether by day or by night, whenever the cloud was taken up, they would journey.**

22 Whether it was two days, a month, or a year that the cloud remained above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would remain encamped and not journey; but when it was taken up, they would journey.

23 **At the command of the LORD they remained encamped, and at the command of the LORD they journeyed;** they kept the charge of the LORD, at the command of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

Silver Trumpets

In Numbers 10:1-10, the Lord gave Moses instructions concerning the use of the two silver trumpets. One of the purpose of the blowing of the silver trumpets was to announce the time to pack up and begin their journeying through the wilderness. The silver trumpets were tied to the tent of meeting and its movements and the movement each of the camps of the nation. When the cloud moved the Levites were to blow the trumpets camp by camp, like clockwork first east then south then west then north. Numbers 10:5-6 makes mention that the camps on the east side go first and the camps on the



south side go second. The other camps are not mentioned here, but they are mentioned in Numbers, chapter two. Each camp would be instructed to assemble for the journey sequentially. At the last trump the north camp would assemble and the entire nation would be on the move. There had to be order and clear orchestration. This picture is a powerful illustration to us today—the last trump indicated that the entire congregation was now on the move. The cloud would move, the trumpets sounded for each of the camp first east, second south, third west, and last north. Remember God was leading over a million people through the desert wilderness.

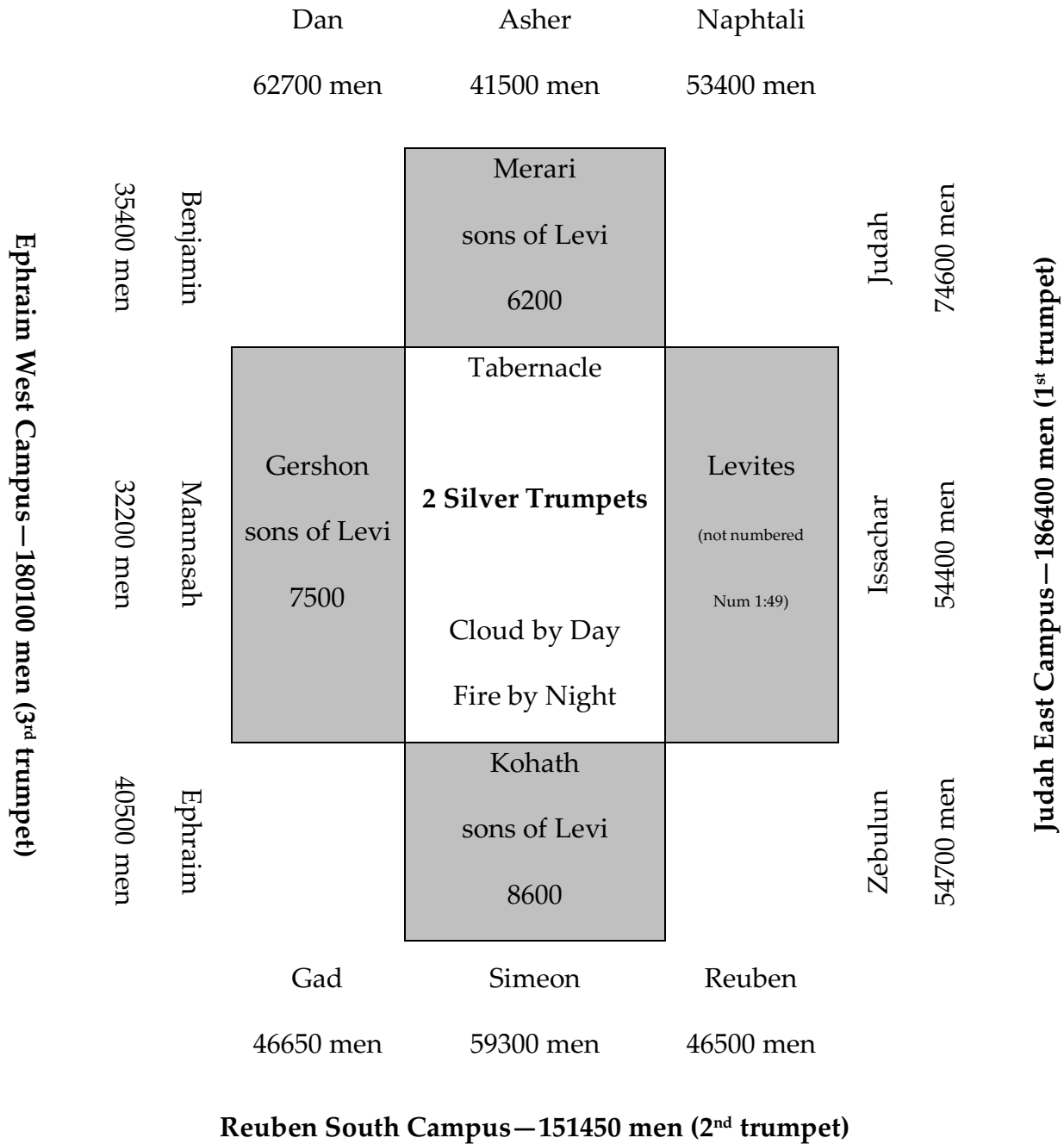
Numbers 10:1-7, 11, 12, 28 AMP

AND THE Lord said to Moses, Make **two trumpets of silver**; of hammered or turned work you shall make them, that you may use them **to call the congregation and for breaking camp**. When they **both are blown, all the congregation shall assemble** before you at the door of the Tent of Meeting. And if one blast on a single trumpet is blown, then the princes or leaders, heads of the tribes of Israel, shall gather themselves to you. When you **blow an alarm, the camps on the east side [of the tabernacle] shall set out. When you blow an alarm the second time, then the camps on the south side shall set out.** (*i.e. the trump is blown for each camp until they are all assembled for their journey, the last trump would indicate the whole congregation is now assembled for their journey*) An alarm shall be blown whenever they are to set out on their journeys. When the congregation is to be assembled, you shall blow [the trumpets in short, sharp tones], but not the blast of an alarm. On the twentieth day of the second month in the second year [since leaving Egypt], the cloud [of the Lord's presence] was taken up from over the tabernacle of the Testimony, And the Israelites took their journey by stages out of the Wilderness of Sinai, and the [guiding] cloud rested in the Wilderness of Paran. This was the Israelites' order of march by their hosts when they set out.



The encampment of Israel around the tent of meeting

Dan North Campus—157600 men (last trumpet)





Numbers 33 records the journey of the camp of Israel over their 40 years in the wilderness. Some 30 times they packed up and moved from the time they received the ten commandments to the time they crossed over the Jordan into the land of Caanan. So the last trumpet had been sounded 30 times in that forty year span and when it did the entire congregation of Israel was on the move again. The word departed, removed, or journey(ed) used in Numbers 33 is the Hebrew word NASA.

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naw-sah'

A primitive root; properly to *pull* up, especially the tent pins, that is, *start* on a journey: - cause to blow, bring, get, (make to) go (away, forth, forward, onward, out), (take) journey, march, remove, set aside (forward), X still, be on his (go their) way.

Just as the last trumpet call in the wilderness meant that the entire congregation was on the move, so the last trump at the time of the rapture will indicate that the entire church of the redeemed is called up, first the dead then the living and assembled to meet the Lord in the air, then together we will be transported to heaven to face the judgment seat of Christ.

The last trump will sound when the body of Christ is complete. When the church is complete God will turn His attention to the restoration of the Nation of Israel. Romans 11:11-12 reveals that the Nation of Israel though fallen would one day be restored. "I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. 12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!" Paul said in Romans 11:25, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

Other interpretations of the Last Trump

Some associate the last trump with the Feast of Trumpets, also known as Yom Teruah, or Rosh Hashannah. The fall feasts of the Lord should have the same exact fulfillment as the spring feasts. Some translate a year for a day to make that work but that is taking a scripture that is applied to Ezekiel prophecy and applying it out of context. The spring feasts reveal Israel's Messiah coming for the purpose of suffering and each feast was fulfilled to the day. The fall feasts reveal Israel's Messiah coming in His glory and pictures the regathering of Israel for its entrance into the millennium.



Some associate the last trump with the seventh trumpet of the book of Revelations. Again the rule of context applies. Paul's letter to the Corinthians was written years before the book of Revelation. It does not make sense to tie the two together.

When Paul was used the phrase "last trump" it had to have been something the Corinthian church would have understood. There are two options I see here: (1) It could possibly be a reference Israel's 40 years in the wilderness because that was on Paul's mind in 1 Corinthians 10 when he wrote the letter. (2) It could also be a reference to the Roman military which also was on Paul's mind in 1 Corinthians 10. Either way both emphasize the nature of our spiritual journey in Christ.

Regarding the second possibility, here is a good explanation from **Dr. Renald Showers**,

Then, why is the trump of the Rapture called "the last trump"? Well, it's not indicating the absolute last trump; it's got another significance to it and there are several possibilities with regard to this. For one thing, it's interesting that Paul refers to the last trump in 1 Corinthians 15 and in the immediately preceding chapter, 1 Corinthians 14, he refers to the blowing of a trumpet and there he's referring to a military trumpet. In light of that, it would appear that he has military trumpets in mind when he's writing 1 Corinthians 15. So it could very well be that when he refers to the last trump which will be blown at the Rapture, he has a military trumpet in mind. What's the significance of that?

When you study the Roman army and some of the Greek armies and even the Jewish army back in Bible times, when they went into war, they had a "last trump" that would be blown that would tell the fighting men, "Your time of fighting is over. It is time for you to go home and rest." A "last trump" ended their time in the warfare.

By analogy, the Scriptures teach that Christians today are involved in a spiritual war while they live out their lives in this present age in this present world. When the Rapture takes place and the trumpet is blown at that time, that will be a signal to them that their part in the warfare is over; their fighting in this present age is done in this spiritual war. It is time for them to go home to be with the Lord and rest together with Him in Heaven.

In addition, when you read about the use of trumpets in the military of the ancient world, particularly with the Romans, they had a first trump that signaled when a man was to start his watch on guard duty, but then they had a "last trump" which signaled that his time on guard duty was over and again it was time for him to go home. In other words, before that last trump he's on watch; he's watching, watching, watching to be on guard. But when the last trump is sounded, that tells him his watching is done, he can go home.

Scriptures also teach that while Christians are living in the world in this present age, we are to continually be watching, watching, watching and the idea again could be that when the Rapture



takes place and that trumpet is sounded, it's a signal to them, "this is the last trump signaling that your tour of duty on the watch is completed and now it's time for you to go home."

So the expression "the last trump" there in 1 Corinthians 15 in conjunction with the Rapture does not mean the absolute last trump in a sequence but it's tied in apparently with military terminology back in Paul's day. And the fact that Paul, when he mentions the last trump, doesn't explain to the Corinthians what he meant by that indicates that they understood what he meant by "the last trump." And they were very familiar, being part of the Roman empire, with that terminology of "the last trump" signals used for Roman soldiers, whether their fighting is done or their tour of duty on the watch is over for that day. So that would have a tremendous significance to them in light of those military uses of the day.