

THE REVELATION TO JOHN

THE THINGS FUTURE, REVELATION 4 - 22

THE SEVEN TRUMPET JUDGMENTS, REVELATION 8:1-11:19

A TWO PART INTERLUDE: REVELATION 10:1-11:14

INTRODUCTION

- Thomas Constable, *John recorded this inserted revelation that deals with the two witnesses in order to inform his readers of the ministries of these important individuals during the Great Tribulation.*
- John Walvoord, *While it is clear that 11:1–14 continues the parenthetical section begun in 10:1, an amazing variation of interpretations of this portion of Scripture have been offered . . . The best guideline to follow in interpreting this section is to take each fact literally.*
- Grant Osborne, *This is a complicated chapter, and one of the most difficult of the book . . . There are three parts to it: the measuring of the altar (11:1–2), centering on divine protection and opposition to the saints; the ministry of the two witnesses (11:3–13), depicting the church’s bold witness to their persecutors; and the seventh trumpet (11:14–19), picturing the arrival of “the kingdom of our Lord” (11:15). Two threads hold all three parts together: God’s presence with his people and the church triumphing over their enemies.*
- William Barclay, *Its importance lies in the fact that it contains a deliberate summary of the rest of the book. The seer has eaten the little scroll and taken into his mind the message of God; and now he sets it down, not yet in detail but in the broad lines of its development.*

THE TEMPLE AND THE TWO WITNESSES: REVELATION 11:1-14

A. The Temple in Jerusalem (1-2)

1. John’s was given an assignment to take measurements (1), ***Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, “Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there,***
 - a. Charles Ryrie, *He is instructed to measure the temple of God, and in order to do this “a measuring rod” is put into his hands. This was apparently a reed, a species of can that grew in the Jordan Valley to a height of fifteen to 20 feet . . . John was told to measure “the temple” (naos, the inner temple, or the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, “the altar” (probably the altar of incense, which was in the holy place), and the worshipers. These worshipers are the faithful, believing Jews of the tribulation days. The temple is the one that will be built in Jerusalem (cf. v. 8) during the Tribulation and in which ancient Jewish rites will be reinstated. It is apparently the same temple in which, at the middle of the tribulation, the man of sin will seat himself, demanding to be worshiped and overthrowing Jewish worship (2 Thess. 2:4).*
 - b. John Walvoord, *John was instructed to measure the temple and the altar but not the outer court, meaning he was to measure the holy place and the holy of holies. While others could come into the outer court, only priests could enter into those two temple rooms . . . The temple here will be constructed so that orthodox Jews can offer sacrifices according to the Mosaic Law in the period in the first half of the seven-year period known as Daniel’s 70th week. At the beginning of the 42-month Great Tribulation, however, the sacrifices will stop and the temple will be desecrated and become a shrine for the world ruler of the Great Tribulation who will put an idol in it and proclaim himself to be God (cf. Dan. 9:27; 12:11; 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 13:14–15) . . . John was also instructed, however, to count the worshipers who came to the temple.*
 - c. Grant Osborne, *This picture alludes to Ezekiel 40:3, 5 where a “man whose appearance was like bronze” measured the temple to show what belonged to God. Similarly, in Zechariah 2:1–5 a man measures Jerusalem to demonstrate God’s protection and preservation of the holy city. John is asked to measure three things—the temple, its altar, and its worshipers.*
 - d. Warren Wiersbe, *The place is Jerusalem and the time is the first half of the Tribulation. Israel is worshiping again at its restored temple, built under the protection of the Antichrist, whose true character has not yet been revealed . . . John’s measurement of the temple is a symbolic action. To measure something means to claim it for yourself. . . . The Lord was saying through John, “I own this city and this temple, and I claim both for Myself!” The Old Testament background is found in Ezekiel 40–41 and Zechariah 2:1–3.*

- e. Thomas Constable, *The person giving the reed and the instructions was probably the strong angel just referred to (10:9–11). John received instruction to perform a symbolic act, as many of his prophetic forerunners had done (cf. Isa. 20:2–5; Ezek. 12:1–17; 40; Zech. 2). The act of measuring the temple probably signifies that the temple is God’s possession and that He was assuming possession of it. One carefully measures what is one’s own personal property (cf. 2 Sam. 8:2; Ezek. 40:3–42:20) . . . This is evidently the temple that the Jews will build in Jerusalem either before or during the first half (the first three and a half years) of Daniel’s seventieth week, which is the Tribulation (cf. v. 8; 13:14–15; Dan. 9:26–27; 12:11; Matt. 24:15–16; 2 Thess. 2:4). The altar probably refers to the brazen altar of sacrifice outside the sanctuary, to which non-priests will have access. John was to measure (in the sense of quantifying) the worshipers too. This probably means that God will know them, or perhaps preserve them. These worshipers evidently represent godly Jews who will worship God in this Tribulation temple (cf. Ezek. 14:22; Rom. 11:4–5, 26). Aune believed that they will be the 144,000.*
- f. Mark Hitchcock, *There are three main views regarding the nature of this temple. First, the majority view among scholars is that the temple is symbolic of the church . . . what makes this figurative view unacceptable is that the nature of the temple in this context is Jewish . . . Second, preterists [past event] believe the temple is the second Jewish temple or Herodian temple . . . The major flaw with the preterist view is that Revelation was written in AD 95, which is 25 years too late for this passage to refer to the second Jewish Temple . . . The third view is that the temple in Revelation 11:1-2 is a literal, earthly temple that will stand in Jerusalem in the future, during the end times. This will be the third Jewish temple, which is often called the Tribulation temple . . . in both Daniel and Ezekiel, a temple was mentioned which was not in existence at the time the prophet was writing . . . the mention of “forty-two months” (Revelation 11:2) and “twelve hundred and sixty days (Revelation 11:3 is an unmistakable allusion back to the second half of Daniel’s seventieth week and a literal temple in Daniel 9:27. If John is the New Testament Daniel, why would we be surprised to find John also referring to a future temple that did not exist at the time he received his vision?*
2. An exclusion (2), ***but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.***
- a. Charles Ryrie, *The outer court of the Gentiles is not measured. Instead, John is told to leave it out. The language indicates utter rejection, and the reason is given: the Gentiles will tread underfoot the city of Jerusalem for forty-two months. This will occur during the last part of the Tribulation, when the man of sin overthrows Jewish worship and demands worship of himself (Luke 21:24). Thus the functioning worship of the temple described in 11:1-2 occurs during the first part of the Tribulation, whereas the treading down of the city by Gentiles (11:2) follows during the last forty-two months.*
- b. Robert Thomas, . . . *John’s future prophecies will distinguish between God’s favor toward the sanctuary, the altar, and their worshipers and His disapproval of all that is of Gentile orientation because of their profanation of the holy city for half of the future seventieth week. . . . So the measuring is an object lesson of how entities favored by God will fare during the period of Gentile oppression that lies ahead.*
- c. Thomas Constable, *Leave out (Gr. ekballo, lit. throw out) implies removal from divine favor (cf. Matt. 22:13; 25:30; 3 John 10). The court outside the temple corresponds to the Court of the Gentiles in Israel’s former temple, to which Gentiles had access in the first century, and which lay outside the court into which only Jews could come. The Tribulation temple will evidently have similar courtyards. Not measuring signifies exclusion from God’s favor, whereas measuring signifies enjoying His favor (v. 1) . . . The 42 months are the last half of the Tribulation, since this will be the time when Gentile hostility to the Jews will be most intense (cf. Dan. 9:27).*
- d. Charles Swindoll, . . . *John also was told to leave something out of his measurements—the outer court. The outer court was usually called the “Court of the Gentiles,” the closest a non-Jew could get to the temple without falling under the sentence of death. This tells us two things. First, those worshipers at the temple will be far fewer in number than those left out . . . Second, we see that God has set in advance a limit on the time when the nations will be permitted to “tread under foot the holy city.”*
- e. John Walvoord, *While it is not clear, the evidence surrounding this passage in Revelation seems to refer to the final three and one-half years. This also seems to be confirmed by the fact that in the first half of the last seven years the Jews will actually possess the city of Jerusalem and worship in their temple, whereas here the context indicates that this is the period when Gentiles will tread down the Holy City, implying ill treatment of the Jews and desecration of the temple.*

B. The Two Witnesses (3-13)

1. The time-frame of the two witnesses (note there are differing opinions) (3), ***And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.***
 - a. Thomas Constable, *Who is speaking in this verse? The speaker seems to be the angel who spoke in verses 1–2 who also speaks here for God (cf. v. 8) . . . The two witnesses will wear sackcloth (or the equivalent), the clothes that in biblical times signified approaching judgment and needed repentance (cf. Isa. 22:12; Jer. 4:8; 6:26; Jon. 3:5, 6, 8; Matt. 11:21).*
 - b. Charles Ryrie, *The time limit of the ministry of the two witnesses is stated explicitly as 1,260 days . . . It seems to me that this refers to the first half, since it is the coming of the Beast (the Antichrist) onto the scene with great power that terminates their witness (v. 7) . . . At the midpoint he will kill the two witnesses who have been ministering during the first part of the Tribulation. If this is so, then, of course they will be witnessing along with the 144,000.*
 - c. Charles Swindoll, *It seems doubtful that their ministry will take place during the last half of the tribulation. That would mean the Antichrist, False Prophet, and all their wicked followers will be celebrating and sending gifts in the very last hours of the tribulation while God pours out His wrath (cf. 11:10 with 16:10–11).*
 - d. Mark Hitchcock, . . . *during which half of the Tribulation will they prophesy? This is one of the most difficult chronological issues in Revelation. There are very good arguments for both sides. Those who place the ministry of the two witnesses in the last half of the Tribulation - myself included - do so for three key reasons . . . First, right after the ministry of the two witnesses is described, the seventh trumpet sounds, which takes the action all the way to the second coming of Christ at the end of the Tribulation. It would be strange for the two witnesses to be put into this context if their ministry occurs during the first half of the Tribulation . . . Second, the end-time temple is described in Revelation 11:1-2, and John said it will be trampled by the nations for 42 months . . . It makes sense for the two time periods mentioned in Revelation 11:2-3 to be same period . . . Third, the overall setting and context of Revelation 11:3-14 fits the second half of the Tribulation better than the first.*
 - e. John Walvoord, *The fact that the witnesses pour out divine judgments upon the earth, and need divine protection lest they be killed, implies that they are in the latter half of the seven years when awful persecution will afflict the people of God. Such protection would not be necessary in the first three-and-a-half years.*
 - f. Warren Wiersbe, *Note that the two witnesses minister during the first half of the Tribulation (Rev. 11:3; 1,260 days). Jerusalem is then overrun by the Gentiles for forty-two months, the last half of the Tribulation.*
2. The ministry of the two witnesses (4-6)
 - a. They will have Godly character (4), ***These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.***
 - 1) Charles Ryrie, *The figure of olive trees comes from Zechariah 4:3, 14 and means that the witnesses are anointed ones. The figure of the two lampstands may also be from the same passage (where there is one lampstand and two pipes into which oil is poured and channeled to the lamps), and it evidently refers to the witnesses' character as bearers of the light of God's truth.*
 - 2) Thomas Constable, *They are dependent on the Spirit and speak for God, who controls the whole earth.*
 - 3) John Walvoord, *The description of the two witnesses as olive trees and lampstands has an Old Testament background (Zech. 4:2–14). The two witnesses in this passage were Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor. Their connection to the lampstands was that they were empowered by the Holy Spirit, symbolized by the olive oil. In a similar way the two witnesses of Revelation 11 will be empowered by the Holy Spirit.*
 - 4) Grant Osborne, *John is saying here that the Spirit as "the eyes of the Lord" stands over the two witnesses and will overcome all opposition on their behalf. The implicit presence of the Holy Spirit here is likely, buttressing the ministry of the two witnesses.*
 - b. They will be powerful (5-6)
 - 1) To protect themselves from their enemies (5), ***And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed.***
 - a) Charles Ryrie, *The conduct of their ministry is spectacular, to say the least. They will have power (1) to kill their enemies with fire . . .*
 - b) Mark Hitchcock, *All we are told about the ministry of the two witnesses is that they will prophesy for three-and-a-half years, during which time they will be divinely shielded from harm . . .*
 - c) Thomas Constable, *These two witnesses will be able to protect themselves by announcing judgment from God on their enemies who try to harm them, like Elijah did (cf. 2 Kings 1:10–14) . . . No one will be able to kill them until God permits this at the very end of their ministry (v. 7).*

- 2) To perform miracles (6), *They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.*
- a) Charles Ryrie, *They will have power . . . (2) to keep it from raining, (3), to turn waters into blood (cf. 8:7-9), and (4) to bring plagues upon the earth (cf. 9:20). The first two are reminiscent of Elijah and the last two of Moses.*
 - b) Mark Hitchcock . . . *and given supernatural power to call down signs, plagues, and judgments on their evil enemies. Their sackcloth attire, which symbolized mourning, indicates that their main ministry is that of judgment.*
 - c) Charles Swindoll, *Most importantly, the miraculous authority given to the two witnesses by God is similar to that of Moses, Elijah, and other Old Testament prophets, demonstrating the crucial nature of their ministry during the future tribulation.*
 - d) Thomas Constable, *God will also empower them to do other miracles similar to what Elijah (cf. 1 Kings 17:1, 7; 18:1; Luke 4:25; James 5:17) and Moses (Exod. 7:17–21; 9:14; 11:10; 1 Sam. 4:8) did . . . Their ministry will also be for the same purpose, namely, to punish His people for their sins and to lead them to repentance. However the two witnesses will be able to exercise their power whenever they wish (“as often as they desire”), not like Moses who could only perform miracles at God’s specific command.*
 - e) John Walvoord, *In the midst of the unbelief, apostasy, and satanic power of the Great Tribulation these two witnesses will be a threat to the entire wicked world for a literal period of 1,260 days.*
 - f) Grant Osborne, *Like the plagues of Exodus, these will demonstrate the powerlessness of the earthly gods/demonic forces, proving once and for all that Yahweh alone controls the natural world.*
- c. Comments on their identity
- 1) Mark Hitchcock, *The identity of these two witnesses is debated. Preterists interpreters spiritualized them . . . Others, however, firmly reject this spiritualizing of the text . . . The Old Testament imagery in Zechariah 4 (two olive trees on either side of a lampstand) clearly refers to two individuals, Zerubbabel (the civil leader) and Joshua (the religious leader) . . . When this same imagery is employed in Revelation 11 in conjunction with the two witnesses, doesn’t it make sense that it would also refer to two individuals? . . . Just as Satan will have his two henchmen on earth during the Tribulation (the beast and the false prophet), so the Lord will have His two representatives on earth (the two witnesses) to counteract the evil of the beast and the false prophet . . . Just as God had two witnesses, Moses and Aaron, who were the human instruments who called down the plagues on Pharaoh and Egypt, so God will use two literal witnesses in the end time to call plagues (the trumpet judgments) down on the beast and his empire . . . While the early church believed the two witnesses would be Enoch and Elijah, others later identified them as Moses and Elijah. Many contemporary dispensationalists, however, reject the idea that the two witnesses will be individuals from the past. They believe the witnesses will be two individuals whom God raises up during the Tribulation . . . Whatever specific view one adopts about the precise identity of the two witnesses, the one consistent thread that appears again and again is that the two witnesses will be two literal individuals who will prophesy during the end times.*
 - b. Thomas Constable, *God did not reveal the identity of His two witnesses. Many commentators believe that they will be Moses and Elijah restored to life, since these men were prophets and performed the kinds of miracles that these witnesses will perform (v. 6). Others believe that they will be resurrected Enoch and Elijah, since God took these men to heaven without dying . . . I agree with those who believe that they will be now unknown individuals who will be living at that time rather than former prophets brought back to earth for this ministry (cf. Matt. 11:14).*
 - c. John Walvoord, *There has been much debate on the identity of these two witnesses. Some have suggested that these represent Israel and the church, or Israel and the Word of God, as the two principal instruments of witness in the world . . . There are great difficulties in all points of view identifying the two witnesses with historical characters . . . The use of the article with the expression “two witnesses” in verse 3 seems to signify that they are specific persons. The actions are those of people; and their resultant death and resurrection, including their bodies lying in the streets of Jerusalem for three and one-half days, can hardly refer to Israel, the church, or the Word of God . . . It seems far preferable to regard these two witnesses as two prophets who will be raised up from among those who turn to Christ in the time following the rapture.*
 - d. William Easton, *Who they may be, can be but conjecture, and is best left in the obscurity in which God has surrounded them.*
 - e. Charles Swindoll, *In the end, we must exercise prudence and admit that we simply don’t know the identity of these two witnesses. To name them goes beyond what is written. We can at least say with confidence that these two figures appear to sum up the kind of miraculous and prophetic ministry that has marked other periods of biblical history.*

3. The two witnesses will be martyred (7-10)
 - a. At the end of their witnessing (7), ***And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them,***
 - 1) Warren Wiersbe, *“The beast” (Antichrist) is now in power and wants to take over the temple; but he cannot succeed until the two witnesses are out of the way.*
 - 2) Charles Ryrie, *Their ministry will be terminated only when they have finished their testimony.” They will be invincible until their work is done; only then will God permit them to be killed by the Antichrist . . . Martyrdom of the witnesses will doubtless win him the support of many people.*
 - 3) Kendell Easley, *God always permits his servants to finish the task he has for them.*
 - 4) Thomas Constable, *This is the first of 36 references to the beast in Revelation (cf. Dan. 7:21). He is the Antichrist, as later passages will show. This verse describes him as having his origin in the abyss, which is the abode of Satan and his demons (cf. 9:1–3, 11; Luke 8:31).*
 - 5) John Walvoord, *With the ministry of the two witnesses ended, God permitted the beast that comes up from the Abyss (cf. 9:1–2, 11; 17:8; 20:1, 3) to overcome them. The beast, that is, the Antichrist, is mentioned nine other times in Revelation (13:1; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 17:3, 13; 19:20; 20:10).*
 - 6) Charles Swindoll, *Invulnerable and unstoppable for the duration of their God-empowered ministries, they will be impervious to assault. Yet when God says, “Mission accomplished,” He will lift His hand of protection from them, and their enemies will be permitted to kill them (11:7) . . . In verse 7 we see the first reference to “the beast” in the book of Revelation. More detailed descriptions of this end-time figure, also called the “Antichrist,” will appear in chapters 13 and 17. This coming beast, who will rise to full power at the midpoint of the seven-year tribulation, will be responsible for conquering and killing the two witnesses after their three-and-a-half-year, short-term mission (11:7).*
 - b. Their bodies will lie open in a street (8-10)
 - 1) It takes place in Jerusalem (8), ***and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.***
 - a) Kendell Easley, . . . *that their bodies will lie in the street unburied means extreme revulsion for the message of truth.*
 - b) Charles Ryrie, *Their bodies will be put on public display in the street of Jerusalem, which is identified as the city where the Lord was crucified and is characterized here as Sodom.*
 - c) Thomas Constable, *The “great city” will be similar to Sodom and Egypt in that it will be extremely wicked, morally degraded, antagonistic toward God, and oppressive toward God’s people—because of Antichrist’s influence.*
 - d) John Walvoord, *After the witnesses were killed, their bodies were left unburied in Jerusalem, figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, because of the people’s apostasy and rejection of God.*
 - 2) There will be great disdain for the two witnesses (9), ***For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb,***
 - a) Charles Ryrie, *Their bodies will be denied burial, though the Mosaic Law allowed burial the same day even for the worst of criminals (Deut. 21:22-23). This action reflects the hardened spiritual condition of the people.*
 - b) Thomas Constable, *The beast will add insult to injury by allowing the corpses of the two witnesses to lie in the street unburied. This was the worst indignity that someone could perpetrate on a person in biblical times (cf. Ps. 79:2–3).*
 - c) John Walvoord, *In the effort to capitalize as much as possible on their death, their bodies are exhibited in the streets for three and one-half days contrary to all reasonable laws of humanity.*
 - d) Charles Swindoll, *The populace will leave their bodies in the street of Jerusalem for three and a half days—an utter affront to the Jewish culture, which demands a quick and dignified burial . . .*

- 3) People will rejoice in their deaths (10), **and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.**
 - a) John Walvoord, *Apparently great throngs of people come to witness the bodies of the two witnesses whom they so greatly feared in life . . . For three and one-half days the whole world gloated over their dead bodies. This implies some worldwide display, now made possible by television. Their deaths were considered a great victory for the world ruler and Satan, and were celebrated by people sending each other gifts.*
 - b) Charles Ryrie, *As if they display of their decaying bodies were not enough, the people of the earth will make a holiday of this occasion and send gifts to each other. This is the only mention of rejoicing on the earth during the entire Tribulation, and is over the death of God's true messengers . . . Had they believed their witness and received their message, their deaths would have been received quite differently.*
 - c) Warren Wiersbe, *The earth-dwellers will rejoice at their enemies' removal and will celebrate a "satanic Christmas" by sending gifts to one another.*
 - d) Thomas Constable, *Earth-dwellers will celebrate because they no longer have to listen to messages from God from these witnesses. This will be the world's last great Mardi Gras type of celebration.*

4. The two witnesses will be resurrected (11-13)
 - a. Fear will overwhelm them as they come back to life and ascend into heaven (11-12), **But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them.**
 - 1) Charles Ryrie, *It is not difficult to imagine the scene. A crowd will be standing around or filing past the decaying bodies lying in the street. Undoubtedly, there will be a great deal of radio and television coverage. Suddenly they will stand up; a voice (not the TV announcer's!) will be heard from heaven; the two witnesses, brought back to life, disappear out of sight in a cloud of glory.*
 - 2) Thomas Constable, *The breath of life from God will revive the witnesses' dead bodies (cf. Gen. 6:17; 7:15, 22; 2 Kings 13:20–21; Ezek. 37:5, 10). The witnesses' resurrections will terrify the onlookers because these gawking God-haters will be able to do no more to silence their enemies beyond killing them . . . The witnesses, and probably those beholding them before they ascend, will hear a loud voice from heaven. It probably belongs to Jesus Christ (cf. 4:1). The cloud evidently refers to the shekinah (glory cloud) in which Jesus Christ ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9).*
 - 3) John Walvoord, *The merrymaking of those who rejoice in the death of the two witnesses is cut short after three and one-half days by the witnesses' restoration to life. As they stand on their feet before the startled gaze of those who watch, it is recorded that great fear falls upon those who see them. Their amazement increases as they hear a voice from heaven saying to the witnesses, "Come up hither." As they watch, the two witnesses ascend up into heaven . . . This is a special act of God addressed to those who reject His grace and designed as a final warning of the supreme power of God over man whether in life or in death.*
 - 4) Charles Swindoll, *While the witnesses' enemies will leave their bodies lying in public for all to see, God will step in and raise them to life again after three and a half days (11:11). As their mockers look on in fear, the dead prophets will leap to their feet and ascend to heaven in the sight of all (11:12) . . . God doesn't abandon His vessels like disposable shells. Instead, he will turn tragedy into triumph, whisking His two fearless witnesses into His heavenly presence.*

 - b. There will be a great earthquake (13), **And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.**
 - 1) Warren Wiersbe, *A great earthquake occurred when the sixth seal was opened (Rev. 6:12), and there will be a greater one when the seventh vial is poured out (Rev. 16:18–20).*
 - 2) Charles Ryrie, *The media will scarcely have time to report their story or the commentators write their column on what happened before there will be another great event to cover: an earthquake centered in Jerusalem that destroys a tenth part of the city and kills 7,000 people. The "rest" (v.13) does not necessarily indicate a spiritually saved group but simply those living in Jerusalem who were not killed in the earthquake. They become terrified and give glory to God. Some may be converted because of this experience, but others will simply recognize divine power without personal repentance.*

- 3) Thomas Constable, *Those not killed in the earthquake will give glory to God. This does not necessarily mean that they will become believers, though some have concluded that they will. But at least they will acknowledge God's hand in these events. Perhaps they will only give glory to God in the way that the demons did who gave glory to Jesus when He confronted them during His earthly ministry.*
- 4) John Walvoord, *The reference to "the God of heaven" is one of two in the New Testament (cf. Rev. 16:11). It is a familiar phrase in the Old Testament where it is used to distinguish the true God from pagan deities. Here the significance is that they recognize the true God to the extent indicated as in contrast to their worship of the beast.*
- 5) Charles Swindoll, *We can't be sure how many of those terrified people who suddenly give "glory to the God of heaven" will be exercising genuine, saving faith. Throughout history, untold numbers of people have acknowledged the power and wrath of God without actually confessing Him as their personal Lord and Savior.*

C. The announcement of the end of the second woe (14), ***The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come.***

1. John Walvoord, *With this event, the second woe is brought to its completion and is evidently regarded as the final phase of the sixth trumpet. The third woe contained in the seventh trumpet is announced as coming quickly. The end of the age is rapidly approaching.*
2. Thomas Constable, *This verse is transitional (cf. 9:12). It refers to the end of the second woe (the sixth trumpet, 9:21), and it ties this judgment in with the third woe (the seventh trumpet). It clarifies that God interjected the revelations of the mighty angel and the little scroll (10:1–11) and the two witnesses (11:1–13) into the chronological sequence of trumpet judgments. God did this in order to give supplementary, encouraging information. The final woe will follow quickly (Gr. tachy, soon, cf. 2:16; 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20) on the heels of the second woe.*
3. Charles Swindoll, *The great Jerusalem earthquake following the ascension of the two witnesses will mark the end of an era. Revelation 11:14 tells us that the second woe (announced earlier in 8:13) has come to pass. The window of repentance for all humanity is closing quickly; the time for the final judgments is swiftly approaching.*
4. Grant Osborne, *The statement that "the second woe has passed" seems incongruous, as so much has occurred since the second woe (Rev 9:12–21). Yet the second interlude (10:1–11:13) is part of the sixth trumpet/second woe, since it noted the suffering of the people of God during the period of the first two woes. The third woe could only commence when the second woe was finalized by the addition of 10:1–11:13.*

INTRODUCTION

- The sounding of the seventh trumpet announces the establishment of the millennial kingdom. The seventh trumpet introduces and includes the seven bowl judgments which are introduced in chapter 15.
- Charles Ryrie, *The parenthetical portion between the sixth and seventh trumpets has now concluded (10:1-11:14).*
- Warren Wiersbe, *We have been waiting since Revelation 8:13 for this third "woe" to arrive and now it is here.*
- Thomas Constable, *The scene that John saw next was in heaven. The seventh trumpet judgment did not begin immediately (cf. 8:1–5). John received information preparatory to it (11:15–15:8).*
- Charles Swindoll, *With the sounding of the seventh and final trumpet, God prepares John for the seven dreadful bowls of wrath that will usher in Christ's glorious reign.*

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET: REVELATION 11:15-19

A. The announcement of the Kingdom (15), ***Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."***

1. This trumpet concerns the judgment of the world by God not the Rapture (the translation of the church to heaven, (1 Thess. 4:16; cf. 1 Cor. 15:52).
2. John Walvoord, *In contrast to previous instances where a single voice makes the announcement, here there is a great symphony of voices chanting the triumph of Christ. . . . The fact that this will be fulfilled at the Second Coming makes it clear that the period of the seventh trumpet chronologically reaches to Christ's return. Therefore the seventh trumpet introduces and includes the seven bowl judgments of the wrath of God revealed in chapter 16. . . . Never again will the earth be under the control and over-lordship of man.*
3. Thomas Constable, *When the seventh angel sounded loud voices in heaven announced that the long-expected reign of Jesus Christ over the world would begin soon (20:1–10; cf. Ps. 2:2; Isa. 9:6–7; Ezek. 21:26–27; Dan. 2:35, 44; 4:3; 6:26; 7:14, 26–27; Zech. 14:9) . . . His reign will begin after the seventh trumpet judgment has run its course.*

4. Robert Thomas, *The whole theme of Revelation is the purging of evil from the world so that it can become the domain of the King of kings* (cf. 19:16). *Only a physical kingdom on earth will satisfy this.*
5. Charles Swindoll, *In his musical masterpiece Messiah, Handel incorporated this refrain [Rev. 11:15, 17-18] into his famous "Hallelujah Chorus."* *The words emphasize the great change of power from wicked humanity under the spiritual bondage of Satan (the kingdom of the world) to Christ and the saints under the sovereign headship of God the Father (the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ).*
6. Grant Osborne, *The hymn celebrates the reversal of the tragic situation during the age of sin, the reign of "the kingdom of the world" . . . It is the kingdom of the Godhead, and the evil powers, both human and angelic, have been defeated once for all by "the Lord and his Messiah."* *The heavenly kingdom has replaced the earthly as the one true reality, and the wondrous thing is that now this is the only reality.*
7. Warren Wiersbe, *Of course, Christ does not claim His royal rights until He returns; but the victory has already been won. Satan offered Him the world's kingdoms, but He refused the offer (Matt. 4:8-9). Instead, He died on the cross, arose, and returned victoriously to heaven; and there the Father gave Him His inheritance (Ps. 2:4-9).*

B. The response of the Twenty-Four Elders (16-18)

1. They worship God and acknowledge His reign (16-17), ***And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.***
 - a. The twenty-four elders are first mentioned in Revelation 4:4 and most likely represent the completed body of Christ, those from Pentecost to the Rapture of the church.
 - b. John Walvoord, *The twenty-four elders, who here fall down to worship God, have previously appeared seven times in the book of Revelation in a similar context. Here they give thanks to God as the eternal One "which art, and wast, and art to come," because He has manifested His power and assumed authority over the earth. The event for which they give thanks is of course the fulfillment of Psalm 2:9, where Christ the Anointed of God reigns supreme over the earth . . . Their song of praise indicates that the time had come for God to judge the nations, to judge the dead, and to reward God's servants . . . their hymn of praise anticipates the second coming of Christ and the establishment of His rule on earth.*
 - c. Kendall Easley, *We have previously heard this twenty-four-voice choir honoring God for his great act of creation (4:11). They also honored the Lamb for his great act of redemption (5:9-10). Now they solemnly offer praise for the great act of final judgment that God and the Lamb are about to complete.*
 - d. Charles Swindoll, *No matter what the world looks like today, no matter how out of control things appear, in the end, God wins! Never forget that essential truth. With the twenty-four elders (11:16), we, too, can fall on our faces and worship God in light of this great promise.*
2. They note events of God's reign (18), ***The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth."***
 - a. Charles Ryrie, *This verse seems to be a continuation of the words of the elders. In Christ's accomplishment of taking the reins of government, nations will be angry, the wicked dead will be punished, and the righteous will be rewarded.*
 - b. John Walvoord, *The wrath of men is impotent; the wrath of God is omnipotent. The wrath of men is wicked; the wrath of God is holy. That which was anticipated in Revelation 6:16-17 as well as in Psalm 2:4 is here being fulfilled . . . the verse teaches that in general it is a time of divine wrath, a time of resurrection of the dead and their reward, and a time of special dealing with those living on the earth. All of these aspects of the second coming of Christ are borne out in later prophecies in the book of Revelation.*
 - c. Thomas Constable, *The elders continue to anticipate the beginning of Messiah's rule on earth by foreseeing the coming raging response of unbelieving Gentiles (cf. 16:14, 16, 19; 20:8-9; Ps. 2:1, 5, 12) followed by the outpouring of God's holy wrath (cf. Matt. 3:7; Luke 3:7; Rom. 2:5, 8; 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9). They also anticipate the judgment of the dead and the rewarding of believers . . . John would soon learn of the destruction of some of these destroyers, namely: Babylon, the beast, the false prophet, and Satan.*
 - d. Warren Wiersbe, *God is long-suffering toward lost sinners and often postpones judgment, but there will be a final judgment of sinners and none will escape. This judgment is described in Revelation 20:11-15 . . . There will also be a judgment of God's children, known as "the Judgment Seat of Christ" (Rom. 14:10-13; 1 Cor. 3:9-15; 2 Cor. 5:9-11). God will reward His faithful servants (Matt. 25:21) and the sufferings they experienced on earth will be forgotten in the glory of His presence. Though God's children will not be judged for their sins (that judgment took place on the cross), they will be judged for their works and rewarded generously by the Master . . . The Judgment Seat of Christ will take place in heaven after Christ has called His people home. When He returns to earth to establish His kingdom, the saints will be ready to reign with Him, with every blemish of the church removed (Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 19:7-8).*

- C. The temple of God in heaven (19), *Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.*
1. The temple in heaven opens.
 - a. Charles Ryrie, *That there is a temple of God in heaven is not surprising, since the tabernacle was constructed after a pattern of things in the heavens (Heb. 9:23). But the worship of God on the earth in the Tribulation temple has been defiled by the Beast.*
 - b. John Walvoord, *Though the earthly temple may have been desecrated by the beast, its counterpart in heaven reflects the righteousness and majesty of God.*
 - c. Thomas Constable, *The opening of the heavenly temple probably pictures the immediate fellowship with God that believers will enjoy following these judgments.*
 - d. Charles Swindoll, *The temple in heaven indicates unbroken fellowship with God—its doors remain open to all.*
 2. A glimpse of the ark of the covenant.
 - a. William Barclay, *The ark of the covenant was in the Holy of Holies, the inside of which no ordinary person had ever seen, and into which even the high priest went only on the Day of Atonement. This must mean that now the glory of God is going to be fully displayed.*
 - b. Kendell Easley, *Although nothing was more sacred to ancient Israel than its ark, the ark had been forever lost when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem in the sixth century B.C. Thus, when John saw the heavenly counterpart, the ark of his covenant, he was beholding what no human had seen—even in an earthly form—for centuries (Heb. 8:5; 9:23–24).*
 - c. Thomas Constable, *As elsewhere, God revealed presence (cf. 4:5; 16:18; Exod. 19:16–19) and wrathful judgment (cf. 8:5; 10:3; 16:18) as a storm with flashes of lightning and sounds and claps of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm. This was a theophany: a visible manifestation of God to humankind.*
 - d. Warren Wiersbe, *God's glory rested on the ark, and God's Law was within the ark, beautifully illustrating that the two must never be separated. He is the holy God and must deal righteously with sin. But He is also the faithful God who keeps His promises to His people . . . This vision of the ark would greatly encourage God's suffering people to whom John sent this book. "God will fulfill His promises!" John was saying to them. "He will reveal His glory! Trust Him!"*
 - e. Charles Swindoll, *Within this temple John saw the ark of the covenant, a symbol of God's holiness as the basis for His just wrath . . . Because of His mercy and grace, God grants complete access to His throne to those who believe. Yet on the basis of His unalterable standards of law and justice, He exercises wrath and judgment against unbelievers. This judgment is symbolized by the flashes of lightning, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and the hailstorm mentioned in 11:19 . . . When God reveals His righteousness, He unleashes His wrath against those who have broken His covenant. But to those of us who know Him through His Son, Jesus Christ, and have taken refuge in mercy and grace through Christ's blood, we enjoy unhindered access to the throne of God.*

SUMMARY

- Warren Wiersbe, *The stage is now set for the dramatic appearance of "the beast," Satan's masterpiece, the false Christ who will control the world.*
- Grant Osborne, *Two aspects—prophetic proclamation and victory over their enemies, followed by death and resurrection—sum up the history of redemption . . . All of this comes to final fruition in the seventh trumpet. This world and the sinful humanity that inhabits it are coming to an end when the eternal kingdom arrives. Evil will be destroyed forever, and the reign of the triune Godhead will inaugurate our eternal glory when we begin our reign with him.*
- William Barclay, *This is a picture of the coming of the full glory of God, a terrifying threat to his enemies but an uplifting promise to the people of his covenant.*
- John Walvoord, *The dramatic introduction of the events relating to the seventh trumpet concluded here and will be resumed in chapter 16.*