

Revelation 11: The Two Witnesses and the Seventh Trumpet

Chapter 11 continues to tell of the happenings at the sounding of the sixth trumpet. In chapter 10, the *little book* contained the revelation of God. Now the two witnesses (prophets) become symbolic of the human vessels through whom that revelation came, as expressed by Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:7-10:

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves; 8 (we are) pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; 9 pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed; 10 always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body.

Measuring the Temple of God and the Altar

Revelation 11:1-2

1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and one said, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. 2 And the court which is without the temple leave without, and measure it not; for it hath been given unto the nations: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

John now continues an active role into the vision. In chapter 10, John learned that the revelation of the mystery of God, the word of God, is the weapon used against those who do not repent and the 200 million deadly troops. Chapter 11 elaborates on the concept by identifying those who will wield this weapon of truth. John already knows that he must continue his work of prophesying. The voice that he had heard from heaven tells him to measure the temple and the altar and count the worshippers there. Before we understand the measuring, we must understand the nature of the temple of God.

The Old Testament temple was a shadow of the true temple of God. Jesus, himself, began teaching about a spiritual temple in Matthew 12:4-6:

4 how he entered into the house of God, and ate the showbread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests? 5 Or have ye not read in the law, that on the sabbath day the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless? 6 But I say unto you, that **one greater than the temple is here.**

In John 2:19, Jesus spoke of his body as a temple, “Jesus answered and said unto them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’” At his death, Jesus removed the symbolic meaning from the Jewish temple in Matthew 27:51-53:

51 And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake; and the rocks were rent; 52 and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised; 53 and coming forth out of the tombs after his resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many.

The temple of God replaced the Jewish temple. Matthew used the term *holy city*, repeated in in this chapter and in the Revelation as the church, the New Jerusalem, the bride of Christ. The saints are the temple of God as Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:16-17:

16 Know you not that you are a temple of God, and (that) the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If any man destroys the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are you.

Paul compared this temple of the living God with the temple of idols in 2 Corinthians 6:15-16:

15 And what concord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has a temple of God with idols? For we are a temple of the living God; even as God said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

In Christ, we exist as the temple of God according to Ephesians 2:21-22

21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord; 22 in whom you also are built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

Peter affirms this very teaching in 1 Peter 2:4-8:

4 unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Because it is contained in scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: And he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame." 7 For you therefore that believe is the preciousness: but for such as disbelieve, the stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner; 8 and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence; for they stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

Jesus also taught explicitly in Revelation 3:12

12 He that overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out from here no more: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God, and my own new name.

The temple of God is a spiritual temple, and therefore, what must be measured and counted are the spiritual dimension of the church here on earth and those who have already died for the Lord. That number is readily available:

Revelation 4:9-10: And when the living creatures shall give glory and honor and thanks to him that sits on the throne, to him that lives for ever and ever, 10 the four and twenty elders shall fall down before him that sits on the throne, and shall worship him that lives for ever and ever, and shall cast their crowns before the throne.

Revelation 5:11: And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.

Revelation 7:4: And I heard the number of them that were sealed, a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel.

Revelation 7:9: After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of (all) tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands.

These enumerable hosts of righteousness contrast to the 200 million troops of evil plus the impenitent of chapter 9. These hosts of righteousness are they who wield the spiritual sword, the word of God. The worshippers are a spiritual Israel, as it were, and the temple is a spiritual temple, the church. The word *nations* takes its meaning from the ordinary and general use of the word, not the specific use as in the phrase *Jews and Gentiles*. Vine tells of the first meaning of *ethnos*: "denotes, firstly, 'a multitude or company'; then, 'a multitude of people of the same nature or genus, a nation, people.'" (From Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

The nation or people spoken of here is the nation described at the beginning of the sounding of the sixth trumpet—the troops of the evil and the impenitent of chapter 9. The temple is the church and the court is the world. From the court or the world, they will trample the holy city. Ordinarily we would think Jerusalem. However, all the cities of the Revelation are symbolic. This symbolism continues in Revelation 11:8:

8 And their dead bodies (lie) in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.

In addition, the Revelation itself clearly defines the meaning of the term holy city:

Revelation 21:2: And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven of God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

Revelation 21:10: And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

Revelation 22:19: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book.

The holy city is the bride, the church, in heaven as clearly shown, and on earth—the church now and the church in eternity. That the holy city is the church now is clear; for Hebrews 12 spells out its exact nature. Hebrews 12:22-24 uses the present tense “*you are come*” of the *heavenly Jerusalem, city of the living God, and the church of the firstborn*:

22 but you are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better than (that of) Abel.

Hebrews 12:28-29 affirms the nature of the church, the kingdom, in the present and not in the future, proving in fact they are one and the same:

Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: 29 for our God is a consuming fire.

While the temple encompasses those before the throne of God, the holy city describes the church and the suffering it endures as the troops of evil and the impenitent trample it for 42 months. We must view the indefinite *42 months* in the sense of the sweet and sour nature of the revelation in chapter 10. Those who obey the word by eating the bread of life will suffer intermittently while enjoying the blessings of God in this life and the one that is to come. Jesus used this same analogy in John 6:35-40:

35 Jesus said unto them. “I am the bread of life: he that comes to me shall not hunger, and he that believes on me shall never thirst. 36 But I said unto you, that you have seen me, and yet believe not. 37 All that which the Father gives me shall come unto me; and him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out. 38 For I am come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the will of him that sent me, that of all that which he has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father that every one that beholds the Son, and believes on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

The ongoing struggle of good against evil goes on in the outer court against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. This struggle began with the fall of man and the casting out of the devil. It is in this context that the Lord gave power to his two witnesses in verse 3.

The Two Witnesses

Revelation 11:3-6

3 And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. 4 These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth. 5 And if any man desires to hurt them, fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their enemies; and if any man shall desire to hurt them, in this manner must he be killed. 6 These have the power to shut the heaven that it rain not during the days of their prophecy: and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they shall desire.

The two witnesses' episode is the last part of the sounding of the sixth trumpet, the second woe. In the immediate context, they are empowered by God as witnesses of great abilities to uphold and deliver the revelation against the enemy who are trampling on the holy city. In the broader context, the witnesses have appeared once before in the revelation of Zechariah 4. There they appeared as assurance to Zerubbabel, as lamps with olive trees for oil beside them. When asked what they were, the angel replied in verse 6:

6 Then he answered and spoke unto me, saying, "This is the word of Jehovah unto Zerubbabel, saying, 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says Jehovah of hosts.'"

The two witnesses, as those of old, are not by earthly power or earthly might but by the Spirit of the Lord Almighty. The two witnesses, also like those of old are "the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth."

In summary, the two witnesses serve the Lord of all the earth and serve Him inspired by the spirit of the Lord. After just experiencing the evil troops, 200 million strong and the gentiles trampling the holy city, we now learn that God's weapon is a spiritual one. The weapon of the Almighty is not physical might or military power. Jesus explained the nature and character of the struggle in John 18:36:

36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

In Revelation 5:6, John wrote of the Lamb empowered with complete and full Spirit of God:

6 And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.

Revelation 4:5 places the seven Spirits of God before the throne of God:

5 And out of the throne proceed lightnings and voices and thunders. And (there were) seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

The Lamb of God spoke of his having the seven spirits of God to the church at Sardis in Revelation 3:1:

These things says he that has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know your works, that you have a name that you live, and you are dead.

These selfsame spirits are those before the throne of God in Revelation 5:6. John the Baptist described this power of the Spirit of God in Jesus in John 3:34-35:

34 For he whom God hath sent speaks the words of God: for he gives not the Spirit by measure. 35 The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand.

In addition to the Lamb who had seven eyes and the seven spirits of God, and the seven lights on the lampstands in Zechariah, which were two anointed ones in Zechariah 4:10, 13, 14:

10 For who hath despised the day of small things? For these seven shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel; (these are) **the eyes of Jehovah**, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

13 And he answered me and said, "Know you not what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord."

14 Then said he, "These are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

The eyes of the LORD, which range throughout the earth. In these two contexts, we know that the witnesses have the sevenfold spirit of God; they speak the word of God; and they range throughout the world. The power of the witnesses is the power of the word of God—the revelation of His mystery. As the apostle Paul said in Romans 1:16-17:

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Thus, the witnesses as candlesticks are a symbol of God's power in the word of their prophecy. We shall assert that one witness personifies the prophecy of the Old Testament and that the other personifies the prophecy of the New Testament. Indeed, chapter 11 verse 10 calls them prophets.

The witnesses are prophets in the sense of forth telling and not foretelling. God's power in the word comes to bear through the prophets in the figure of the candlesticks and the two witnesses, defining the nature of the battle. In the parable of the sower, the devil comes and takes away the word of God from peoples' hearts, so they may not believe and be saved." Luke 6:12. In John 13:2, the devil had entered the heart of Judas and prompted him to betray the Lord. The opposing force is the word of God in Hebrews 4:12:

12 For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The servants of God take up this sword to fight the troops of evil and the nations who trample on the holy city the church in Ephesians 6:17: "17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

The word of God revealed in the prophets is exactly the subject of John's testimony. John wrote in Revelation 1:1-2:

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto his servants, (even) the things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified (it) by his angel unto his servant John; 2 who bore witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, (even) of all things that he saw.

Later in Revelation 19:13-14, John named the Lamb:

13 And he (is) arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white (and) pure.

This same Word was from the beginning as taught in John 1:1-2:

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Three divine characters align themselves against the forces of evil in the Revelation: the Almighty God, the Lamb of God, and now, the sevenfold Spirit of God. These three, with the enumerable, true worshippers, are set against the heavenly hosts of wickedness.

The two witnesses, prophets, in a figure of speech called synecdoche (See notes on Revelation 2:1), stand for all prophets of all time in two classes—the Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles and prophets. The grouping of the prophets in this order agrees with Hebrews 1:1-3:

1 God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, 2 has at the end of these days spoken unto us in (his) Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; 3 who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power.

Chapter 11, verse 6, calls the witnesses “two men.” The Spirit of God works in revealing the word of God through the prophets. 2 Peter 1:19-21 explains the process of all prophetic discourse. Note the use of *lamp* as compared to *lampstand* and *candlestick* used in the various version of the Revelation:

9 And we have the word of prophecy (made) more sure; whereunto you do well that you take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. 21 For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.

Paul summarized this in the expression, *inspired* [Lit. God breathed] in 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

16 Every scripture inspired of God (is) also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. 17 That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.

The two witnesses are great warriors of righteousness across time from the fall of man to the final revelation to consummate at the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Revelation 10:5-7). Even Abel in the very beginning was a prophet (Luke 11:49-51).

The 1,260 days is 42 months and the same as the 42 months (1,260 days) of verse 2. However, verse 2 speaks to the trampling of the holy city, the church. This verse speaks to the time the prophetic word of God protects God’s children—a time soon to come with no delay. The prophets work—oral and written—parallels the assault of evil on the followers of God and will be over when the Lord returns, at the same time that all persecution ends. Notice that God protects the Woman and her child from the dragon, sporadically, for this same 42 month (see Revelation 12:6).

Fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. The Spirit of God empowers the witnesses with the sharp and two-edged sword and with awesome miracles to use against the powers of the prince of the air. As the troops of evil could destroy by fire of trial and persecution, the ultimate power of destruction by fire belongs to the Lord in 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10:

5 (which is) a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God; to the end that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer: 6 if so be that it is righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you, 7 and to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, 8 rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that

obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: 9 who shall suffer punishment, (even) eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might, 10 when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at in all them that believed (because our testimony unto you was believed) in that day.

The Almighty God spoke directly in these very terms in Jeremiah 5:14:

14 Wherefore thus says Jehovah, the God of hosts, "Because you speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them."

"If any man desires to hurt them in this manner must he be killed" shows that just as the troops of evil have the power of sin to kill, the prophets have the power of the Spirit of God by whose judgment, the word of God, will judge and cast those opposed into the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death (See Revelation 20:14; 21:8). God gave the witnesses other powers:

Elijah used the power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain. I Kings 17:1; 18:1-45.

Moses used the power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague. Exodus 7:20.

The Beast Overpowers and Kills the Witnesses

Revelation 11:7-14

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss shall make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies (lie) in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 And from among the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations do (men) look upon their dead bodies three days and a half, and suffer not their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. 10 And they that dwell on the earth rejoice over them, and make merry; and they shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth. 11 And after the three days and a half the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them that beheld them. 12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, "Come up here. And they went up into heaven in the cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

13 And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell; and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand persons: and the rest were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second Woe is past: behold, the third Woe cometh quickly.

At the point when the witnesses standing for all the apostles and prophets finish their testimony, the beast attacks. Notice the witnesses have finished their testimony. This is our first introduction to what Paul called "world-rulers of this darkness (Ephesians 6:12)."

Chapter 13 fully describes the beast. For now, we know that the beast is from the Abyss and that it has the might to overpower the witnesses and to kill them. The beast affected the earthly lives of all the prophets:

48 So you testify that you approve of what your forefathers did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs. 49 Because of this, God in his wisdom said, "I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute." 50 Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all. Luke 11:48-51

Jesus placed the time of the end of the prophets to a time within the generation to which he was speaking. Speaking retrospectively and prospectively of the plight of the prophets, Jesus included all

the prophets and apostles in this group of those killed. Implicit in the language of John and the language of Jesus is the fact that the prophets were killed and their prophecy ended. Paul agreed saying, “But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.” 1 Corinthians 13:8.

Their bodies lie in the streets of the great city, contrasted to the holy city of 11:2. The scripture teaches plainly that the great city is a figure. The great city is Sodom and Egypt, but is also where they crucified the Lord, that is, secular Jerusalem. The phrase great city appears 13 times in the Bible—five times in the Old Testament and the other eight in Revelation. In the Old Testament, it refers to sinful Nineveh four out of five times. In the Revelation, it symbolically includes Babylon throughout chapter 18, where her fall receives detailed consideration. In Revelation 17:18, the great city is the woman who sits on the beast and the great city rules over the kings of the world. In Revelation 16:18-19, the great city splits into three parts because of God’s wrath poured out on the earth. The great city, that secular city, contrasts to the holy city, the spiritual city, the New Jerusalem. It is the great city which looked upon the dead bodies of the witnesses in Revelation 11:9-11:

9 And from among the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations do (men) look upon their dead bodies three days and a half, and suffer not their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. 10 And they that dwell on the earth rejoice over them, and make merry; and they shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth. 11 And after the three days and a half the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them that beheld them.

The three and a half days is equivalent to the approximate time Jesus spent on the cross and in the grave. Having been crucified at the third hour of the day, he died about the ninth hour. Luke recorded the time of Jesus death and the prophetic nature of Jesus in Luke 24:19-21:

19 And he said unto them, “What things?” And they said unto him, “The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: 20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. 21 But we hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel. Yea and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass.”

This being the case, then Christ stands symbolically for the Old Testament and the New Testament prophets. From the cross, he looked back to the revelation from of old. Just as he had said on the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:17: “Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.” At the point of his death, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom (Mark 15:38).

As the death of Jesus ended the era of the prophetic Old Testament, so his life began the era of the prophetic New Testament. He had told his apostles in John 15:26-27:

26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, (even) the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall bear witness of me: 27 and you also bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

Their mission, as Christ’s mission, ended in persecution and, for most, martyrdom. History documents the tragic end of almost all the apostles. Two vivid examples are Paul and James. In Acts 12:2-3, James, the brother of John, was put to death with the sword, and Peter was seized. Paul understood how much he was to suffer from the beginning as recorded in Acts 9:15-16:

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go your way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel; 16 for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake.

The men of the all the earth celebrated and gloated because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth. What appears to be a point of victory suddenly changes: “A breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them that beheld them.” The metaphor of Jesus, who stands for all prophets and apostles, past and present, continues as God raised them from the dead and took them up in a cloud. As the prophets were ending their time on earth, literally dying out, as it were, they become forever alive in the written word. Jesus had foretold this in Matthew 24:34-35:

34 Truly I say unto you, “This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished. 35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”

Peter quoted the prophet Isaiah in 1 Peter 1:25: “25 But the word of the Lord abides for ever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you.

The metaphor extends to include the ascension of Christ as it relates to all the prophets, for these two prophets went up to heaven in a cloud. In Acts 1:9 tells us of Jesus: “9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.”

The revelation by the prophets is complete, and it was of this very moment that John spoke in Revelation 10:6-7:

6 and swore by him that lives for ever and ever, who created the heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things that are therein, that there shall be delay no longer: 7 but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is **finished the mystery of God** [Emphasis added], according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets.

Heaven’s response to this event was immediately and momentous, but not so momentous as to be taken for the final demonstration of God’s wrath, which is reserved for the last “Woe!”

Revelation 11:13 announces this event:

13 And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell; and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand persons: and the rest were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Summary of the Sounding of the Sixth Trumpet and the Second Woe

The events of the second woe may be summarized: the release of the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates (Revelation 9:13-16); the army of death, injury, and plagues; failure to repent (Revelation 9:20-21); the angel and the little scroll (Revelation 10); measuring the temple of God and the altar (Revelation 11:1-2); the two witnesses (Revelation 11:3-14); and the beast overpowers and kills the witnesses, who are raised from the dead (Revelation 11:7-14).

14 The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.

The Seventh Angel Sounded His Trumpet

Revelation 11:15-19

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, “The kingdom of the world is become (the kingdom) of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever.” 16 And the four and twenty elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, 17 saying:

“We give you thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who was; because you have taken your great power, and did reign. 18 And the nations were enraged, and your wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and (the time) to give their reward to your servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth.

19 And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.

At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the revelation opens with a loud celebration and worship in heaven. In contrast, the sounding of the sixth trumpet opened to a scene of horror as the devil’s destructive troops—200 million strong—stormed through the world. The sixth sounding had concluded with God’s temple, the holy city and the witnesses enduring in their battle. Now, victory is in air. The kingdom of the world now is the Kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, according to the loud voices in heaven. The temple in heaven and the prophets receive special attention in the worship.

That the kingdom of the world has ended and become the kingdom of the heaven is a central principal of the revelation. John has taught on two occasions that the saints are reigning (present tense) with Christ. In Revelation 1:5-6, we studied:

5 and from Jesus Christ, (who is) the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loves us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; 6 and he made us (to be) a kingdom, (to be) priests unto his God and Father; to him (be) the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Again, in Revelation 5:9-10, John wrote what the four living creatures and 24 elders sang in their new song,

9 And they sing a new song, saying, “Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou was slain, and didst purchase unto God with your blood (men) of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, 10 and made them (to be) unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon earth.

When did they become a kingdom? This question is important since many think it will occur at some future date and last for a literal thousand years. As we have studied, the use of the perfect tense verb, *has made*, is an action in the past preceding the time of the main verb. At John’s writing, the Lord had made the saints a kingdom. This is in agreement with the teaching of Jesus, who pinpointed the time of the coming of the kingdom in Mark 9:1:

And he said unto them, “Truly I say unto you, There are some here of them that stand (by), who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power.”

In Luke 22:29-30, Jesus used the present tense verb to describe the receiving of the kingdom:

29 and I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me, 30 that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and you shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Paul also uses the present perfect tense verb (time before the present time of Paul’s writing in Colossians 1:12-14:

12 giving thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; 13 who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love; 14 in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins.

Finally, the Hebrew writer, in Hebrews 12:28-29, used the present progressive tense verb (an action continuing in the present):

28 Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: 29 for our God is a consuming fire.

The preceding episode, represented in the sounding of the sixth trumpet, described the temple of God, the holy city, and the prophets of God as they overcame the army of the devil. After that victory, we come to the celebratory statement here in Revelation 11:15:

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, The kingdom of the world is become (the kingdom) of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever.

See Strong's. *Lord* is used of God Almighty in verse 17) and of his Christ (anointed, i.e. the Messiah in Hebrew, used of Jesus. See Strong's). The length of the reign is *for ever and ever* or literally, into the ages of the ages. There was no failure or defeat in God's sending his son; and therefore no need for a future earthy struggle. The victory was certain and final in Jesus. Isaiah said and Jesus quoted in Matthew 12:20-21.

20 A bruised reed shall he not break,
And smoking flax shall he not quench,
Until he send forth judgment unto **victory**.

21 And in his name shall the Gentiles hope.

Paul agreed in 1 Corinthians 15:56-57:

56 The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law:

57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the **victory** through our Lord Jesus Christ.

John, in 1 John 5:4-5, taught:

4 For whatsoever is begotten of God overcomes the world: and this is the **victory** that has overcome the world, (even) our faith. 5 And who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

The twenty-four elders, on their thrones before God, fell on their faces worshipping God. Their worship concludes the rescue of a world destroyed by sin and man lost in sin, represented in the sounding of the trumpets. At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, their worship summarizes this victory in Revelation 11:17-19

We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty. God is all might and all powerful.

Who is and who was. God is everlasting

Because you have taken your great power. God has all power.

And did reign. With victory of the Christ and his prophets.

The nations were angry. They thought the holy city was trampled over and the prophets dead.

Your wrath has come. This the third woe; the first woe was one of sin and death with the reign of the Destroyer; the second woe was one of savage troops which could not overcome the temple of God, the holy city, or the prophets, the word of God.

The time for the dead to be judged. The last enemy to conquer is death

And (the time) to give their reward to your servants the prophets. The valiant Old and New Testament prophets receive their reward.

And to the saints, and to them that fear your name. Those set apart and fear God's name.

The small and the great. There will be no distinction.

And to destroy them that destroy the earth. The end of evil is done.

19 And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Paul describes his last great judgment in 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10:

6 if so be that it is righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you, 7 and to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, 8 rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: 9 who shall suffer punishment, (even) eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might, 10 when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at in all them that believed (because our testimony unto you was believed) in that day.

Then God's temple in heaven opened. This is the same temple discussed in 11:1; however, we have added to the scene the ark of his (God's) covenant. The covenant, Old and New Testament, was complete with the work of Christ and the prophets. Paul wrote about its completeness in 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

16 Every scripture inspired of God (is) also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. 17 That the man of God may be **complete, furnished completely** unto every good work.

Jude wrote about its completion in Jude 3:

3 Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for **the faith which was once for all delivered** [Emphasis added] unto the saints.

The covenant complete is the new covenant. Hebrews 9:15 teaches:

15 And for this cause he is the mediator of a **new covenant**, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

The covenant is more excellent and better in every way; the Hebrew writer said in Hebrews 8:6-7:

6 But now has he obtained a **ministry the more excellent**, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath **been enacted upon better promises**. 7 For if that first (covenant) had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second.

Forecasting the judgment of all things, *there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.* In summary, the scene is set for the final judgment. The Lamb has instructed the churches, the Lamb has opened the seven seals, and the angels have sounded the seven trumpets. What follows will be the final episodes in the judgment forecast at the time of the fall of man and the curses upon mankind and the devil and the forces of evil.

The first will be the judgments outstanding between the woman and the dragon, the devil. Next will be the judgments against the beast and false prophet, followed closely by the disposition of Babylon and the prostitute. The serpent and his followers will receive their judgment, and last of all, the Lord will cast judgment on Death and Hades. Those whose names are in the Book of Life, the church, enter into the joy of the Lord.