

**Text: Rev 11.1-19**

The three-fold outline of Revelation (1.19):

1. The things you have seen (the vision of Christ) Rev 1
2. The things which are (the letters to the churches) Rev 2-3
3. The things which must come after these things (Rev 4-22)
  - a. The overture: the scene in heaven (Rev 4-5)
  - b. The seal judgements begin (Rev 6)
  - c. (Parenthesis): the believers of the Tribulation (Rev 7)
  - d. The seventh seal which reveals the seven trumpets (four in chapter 8)
  - e. The fifth and sixth trumpets (Rev 9)
  - f. (Parenthesis): Voices in heaven (Rev 10)
  - g. (Parenthesis): The Two Witnesses | the seventh trumpet (Rev 11)

We now come to the end of the Trumpet judgements.

Trumpets 1-4: Rev 8

Note: Trumpets 5-7 designated as the Three Woes (see 8.13)

Trumpets 5-6: Rev 9-11.14 (see 11.14)

Chapter 10 and the first part of chapter 11 teach parenthetical information, but they are included in the sixth trumpet revelation.

**I. The Two Witnesses (1-14)**

“This section continues the parenthetical revelation begun in 10:1. It is one of the more difficult chapters to interpret, and students of the book have proposed many different explanations.”<sup>1</sup>

“The best guideline to follow in interpreting this section is to take each fact literally. In line with this principle, a literal temple will be in existence during the Great Tribulation, and the city should be considered the literal city Jerusalem in keeping with its identification in 11:8. The time periods of 42 months (v. 2) and three and one-half days (vv. 9, 11) again should be considered literally. The earthquake will kill literally 7,000 individuals, and the two witnesses should be considered as two individual men.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Rev 10.11.

<sup>2</sup> John F. Walvoord, “Revelation,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983), 955.

## A. The temple in Jerusalem (1-2)

1. Verse 1 begins with 'and' in the Greek, which ties this revelation to that which precedes

2. The measuring rod

a. Probably a light reed

b. John instructed to measure the "temple of God and the altar" — the holy place and the holy of holies

1) Measuring sometimes in the Bible precedes judgement, but in this case seems to single the temple out and separate it from the profane world: suggests God's ownership

2) The temple is the re-built temple, probably will be built by the Jews in first half of Tribulation

c. The worshipers are also measured: evaluation

"God is giving assurance that He will take note of those who faithfully worship Him in the tribulation days."<sup>3</sup>

3. The outer courtyard is to be excluded

a. This corresponds to the court of the Gentiles in the 1<sup>st</sup> c. temple

b. Exclusion seems to suggest "outside of God's favor"

c. Supports the notion that God is particularly focused on the Jews during the tribulation

d. The period of 42 months is the last half of the Tribulation, the period when pressure on the Jews is most intense

1) Note: the 3 ½ year period of the Great Tribulation based on Dan 9.27

2) During the Tribulation, antichrist will break his covenant (treaty) with the Jews and focus his wrath on them

3) This constitutes "the Great Tribulation" (Mt 24.21)

e. Shows that the "times of the Gentiles" (Lk 21.24) will not end until the Tribulation runs its course

<sup>3</sup> Charles C. Ryrie, *Revelation* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968), 71.

## B. The ministry of the two witnesses (3-6)

1. The two witnesses – God’s witnesses, even in a period of persecution (3)
  - a. Two witnesses to establish truth in Jewish courts
  - b. Jesus and early church sent out missionaries (witnesses) in pairs
  - c. They prophesy for 1260 days – 3 ½ yrs, *i.e.* last half of tribulation
  - d. These two clothed in sackcloth [symbolizing “approaching judgment and needed repentance”<sup>4</sup>] (3)
  - e. They are called “the two olive trees and the two lampstands” (4)
2. Identification (3)
  - a. Some say Moses and Elijah
  - b. Others Elijah and Enoch (because Moses already died once)
  - c. Most likely two individuals who are alive at that time, not resurrected OT prophets
3. Their authority (4)
  - a. Compare Zech 4.2-3, 11-14

Zech 4.2-3 He said to me, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold with its bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps on it with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it; <sup>3</sup> also two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left side.”

Zech 4.11-14 Then I said to him, “What are these two olive trees on the right of the lampstand and on its left?” <sup>12</sup> And I answered the second time and said to him, “What are the two olive branches which are beside the two golden pipes, which empty the golden *oil* from themselves?” <sup>13</sup> So he answered me, saying, “Do you not know what these are?” And I said, “No, my lord.” <sup>14</sup> Then he said, “These are the two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth.”

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<sup>4</sup> Constable, *Expository Notes*, Rev 11.3.

- b. Note: in Zechariah, the two anointed ones are Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor
  - c. The OT types were empowered by the Spirit: the two witnesses of Revelation likewise (antitypes)
4. Their power [used to protect themselves] (5-6)
- a. Able to call down fire from heaven like Elijah (2 Ki 1.10-14)
  - b. Able to stop the rain, turn water to blood, like Elijah and Moses

“This will be the fifth period in history when God will enable a few people to do unusually spectacular signs and wonders. The first four periods were the times of Moses and Joshua, of Elijah and Elisha, of Daniel and his three friends, and the time of Jesus Christ’s earthly ministry and that of His apostles.”<sup>5</sup>

C. The death of the two witnesses (7-10)

- 1. The beast will only be able to kill them when God allows – “when they have finished their testimony” (7)
  - a. The beast out of the sea is the antichrist (13.1)
  - b. The beast out of the land is the false prophet (13.11)
  - c. This is the beast out of the abyss (compare 9.1, 11), this is Satan
- 2. Their mistreatment in death (8)
  - a. Caused by antichrist
  - b. Occurs in Jerusalem
    - 1) Identified ‘mystically,’ *i.e.* symbolically, as Sodom and Egypt
    - 2) Means it is very wicked
    - 3) Marked as place of death of Messiah

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<sup>5</sup> Constable, Rev 11.6.

3. Their display in death: three and a half days, visible to all people (9)

Note: commentators from the seventies often say “probably by television” — now we would think “streamed on the internet”

4. A cause of rejoicing by the people of the earth – the only mention of rejoicing during the Tribulation (10)

D. The resurrection of the two witnesses (11-13)

1. The breath of God resurrects the two witnesses amid their enemies’ celebration (11)

2. The voice of God is heard from heaven, “the cloud” (likely *shekinah*) takes them up in the sight of their enemies (12, for “cloud” see Acts 1.9)

a. Similar to ascension of Elijah (2 Ki 2.11)

b. And to Rapture of the Church (1 Thess 4.17)

3. A great earthquake follows in the city, many are killed, the watchers give glory to God [this does not *necessarily* mean they are converted] (13)

E. The end of the second woe (14)

1. Transition verse

2. Emphasizes end of 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet

3. A note on timing

a. Rev 10.1-11.14 is “parenthetical” — that is it doesn’t strictly fit the chronology of the judgements

b. If the seal judgements (Rev 6) occupy the first half of the tribulation

c. And the trumpet judgements (Rev 8-9) most of the second half

- d. The ministry of the two witnesses occurs in the first half of the tribulation since the coming of the Beast “in power” (v. 7) terminates their witness, so Ryrie,<sup>6</sup> but Walvoord thinks it occurs in the last half of the Tribulation because of the types of judgements the witnesses unleash<sup>7</sup>

Note: the “time marker” of v. 14 brings us back into the chronology just as the seventh trumpet sounds.

- e. The bowl judgements, contained in the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet, will come in rapid succession right at the end of the tribulation

## II. The Seventh Trumpet (15-19)

### A. Voices in heaven (15-16)

1. The sounding of the trumpet introduces a pause in the progression of judgement (see 8.1-5)
2. The voices announce the kingdom of Christ as if it has already occurred (prolepsis) – a device which emphasizes certainty
3. The announcement means the kingdom is about to commence

“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.”<sup>8</sup>

### B. The twenty-four elders worship (17-18)

1. The elders prostrate themselves in worship: “Worship in heaven contrasts with rebellion on earth.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Ryrie, *Revelation*, 72.

<sup>7</sup> John F Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ: A Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), 178.

<sup>8</sup> Walvoord, “Revelation in BKCNT,” 956–57.

<sup>9</sup> Constable, *Expository Notes*, Rev 11.16.

2. The elders worship the God of eternity who has taken events fully in hand, not allowing man's rebellion to continue

### C. The heavenly temple opens (19)

1. As other points of this vision are proleptic (past tense for future event), likely this one is also
2. The vision of the ark of the covenant connects the coming Kingdom with Israel and the OT regime, long interrupted, now to resume

“What John saw, however, was not the earthly ark but its heavenly counterpart (cf. Heb. 9:24). Its appearance in the vision suggests that God would resume dealing with Israel and would soon fulfill His covenant promises to that nation.”<sup>10</sup>

3. Opening of the temple assumes the Kingdom is established
4. Symbolizes free unfettered fellowship with God by OT and NT saints
5. The open temple is not mentioned again until 15.5, just as the last seven judgements are about to be manifested — this makes 12.1-14.20 parenthetical
6. Final manifestations are the phenomena that indicate the presence of the great and glorious God in his temple

“There is no revelation in this pericope (vv. 15–19) of the judgment announced by the blowing of the seventh trumpet. The record of this judgment appears in chapter 16. There we have a prophecy of seven bowl judgments.”<sup>11</sup>

### Conclusion:

The impressive pause of the seventh trumpet builds tension before the swift and final judgements on the earth that will soon follow.

But first we pause – other matters that coincide with the time of the end must be revealed.

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<sup>10</sup> Constable, Rev 11.19.

<sup>11</sup> Constable, Rev 11.19.