

“In the first fourteen verses, chapter 11 continues with the interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets, and in the concluding verses, we have the blowing of the seventh trumpet. In this chapter we learn that forty-two months remain of the times of the Gentiles and that there are two witnesses who will prophesy for forty-two months. We also have the second woe and then the blowing of the seventh trumpet.”

“This chapter brings us back to Old Testament ground. The temple, the dealing with time periods, and the distinction which is made between Jews and Gentiles all indicate that we are again under the Old Testament economy. Chronologically, the seventh trumpet brings us to the return of Christ at the end of the great tribulation period.”<sup>1</sup>

- (11.1-2) <sup>1</sup> And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.  
<sup>2</sup> But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty *and* two months.

1. Several things are seen in this passage:

- #1 There will be a reconstructed temple in Jerusalem during the 70th week of Daniel, or the Tribulation.
- #2 The “reed like unto a rod” given to John was used as a measuring rod or rule and may be the cane that grew along the Jordan River Valley and was known as the “giant reed” of Mediterranean lands. It grows in marshland and may reach 15 or 20 feet.<sup>2</sup> Using a measuring rod such as this, God will scrutinize the place of worship and those who worship therein in the future. And since the typical unit of length for a measuring rod was about 10 feet, it would not be possible for the worshipers to measure up to God’s standards. They will fall short of the mark. Romans 3.23: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”
- #3 The location of the Temple is “the holy city.” In God’s Word, the term “the holy city” never refers to any other city besides Jerusalem. Matthew 4.5: “Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple.”

2. As to the time of this passage, I believe that this begins the last three and one-half years of the seven-year-long 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel.

- a. Three and one-half years is equal to forty-two months. According to Daniel’s prophecy of Daniel 9.24-27, a treaty will be made with the antichrist that will protect the Jews:

<sup>24</sup> Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make

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<sup>1</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Revelation Volume II*, (Pasadena, California: Thru The Bible Books, 1979), page 131.

<sup>2</sup> *Fauna And Flora Of The Bible*, (New York: United Bible Societies, Second Edition, 1980), pages 171-174.

reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

<sup>25</sup> Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall* be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

<sup>26</sup> And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

<sup>27</sup> And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

b. This treaty will last the first three and one-half years of the 70<sup>th</sup> week. During that time, Gentiles will not tread foot in the city, or at least honor Jewish insistence on remaining outside areas restricted to Jews only.

c. Therefore, this period, when the Gentiles are treading Jerusalem underfoot, would have to be in the last half of the Tribulation, after Jewish wishes are no longer being honored and Jews are being openly persecuted.

3. What a startling revelation this must have been to John. Remember, the Romans destroyed the Temple in 70 A. D. John's vision on the Isle of Patmos came at least twenty years later. So, two decades after the destruction of Herod's Temple in Jerusalem, he sees in this vision a reconstructed Temple in Jerusalem in the future. Just as startling to him, no doubt, was the command to take the rod and measure the Temple, the altar, and them that worship therein, which makes him now a participant instead of just an observer.

(11.3) And I will give *power* unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

1. During the last half of the Tribulation, God will have two witnesses who will prophesy while clothed in sackcloth. "Two individuals granted special power and authority by God to preach a message of judgment and salvation during the second half of the Tribulation. The OT required two or more witnesses to confirm testimony (cf. Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Matt. 18:16; John 8:17; Heb. 10:28), and these two prophets will be the culmination of God's testimony to Israel: a message of judgment from God and of His gracious offer of the gospel to all who will repent and believe."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See footnote for Revelation 11.3 from John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 2006.

2. “Sackcloth” is significant since, being dark in color, it is usually associated with mourning and sadness. Indeed, these two witnesses will have nothing good to say about the condition of humanity, the reign of the antichrist, or anyone’s prospects of a better life.
3. If you understand that all Jewish months are 30 days in length, you will find that the 1260 days mentioned in this verse are exactly three and one-half years in length. Again, more evidence that we are looking at a passage that deals with the last half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel.
4. But who are these two witnesses referred to? John Walvoord writes:

“In verse 3, two unusual characters are introduced, described as two witnesses who shall prophesy 1,260 days. This is exactly three and one-half years or forty-two months of thirty days each, and is unquestionably related to either the first three and one-half years or the latter three and one-half years of the seven years of Daniel 9:27. Expositors have differed as to which of the two periods is in view here. From the fact, however, that the two witnesses pour out divine judgments upon the earth and need divine protection lest they be killed, it implies that they are in the latter half of the seven years when awful persecution will afflict the people of God, as this protection would not be necessary in the first three and one-half years. The punishments and judgments the witnesses inflict on the world also seem to fit better in the great tribulation period.

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. Arno C. Gaebelein regards the two witnesses as representative of witness in the great tribulation: “Perhaps the leaders would be two at instruments, manifesting the spirit of Moses and Elijah, endowed with supernatural power, but a larger number of witnesses is unquestionably in view here.” Gaebelein implies that the two witnesses are individuals but representative of a larger witness. Others like J. B. Smith are quite sure that they are Moses and Elijah, because of the similarity of judgment inflicted to those pronounced by Elijah and Moses, namely fire from heaven, turning water into blood, and smiting the earth with plagues. Support for the identification of Elijah as one of the two witnesses is found in the prediction that Elijah will come “before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord” (Mal. 4:5). This seems to be at least partially fulfilled by the coming of John the Baptist according to the discussion of Christ with His disciples (Matt. 17:10-13; Mark 9:11-13; cf. Luke 1:17). Evidence for both Moses and Elijah is found in the fact that they are related to the second coming and the transfiguration (Matt. 17:3). The dispute of Michael with the devil over the body of Moses (Jude 9) is mentioned preceding a prophecy of the second coming, but no specific connection is made between the two. All the evidence for the identification, however, is circumstantial and not clear. 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. There are also difficulties, however, in defining them as any two characters such as Elijah and Moses or, as some would have it, Enoch and Elijah. Govett identifies the two witnesses as Enoch and Elijah and cites in support early tradition and apocryphal writing. The fact that Enoch and Elijah did not die but were translated has been seized upon by some as a violation of the general rule of Hebrews 9:27, "It is appointed unto men once to die." But this argument is nullified by the fact that the entire living church at the time of the rapture will go to heaven without dying. If Moses is included as one of the two witnesses, there is an added difficulty in that he once died. Could he die a second time? 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. Ainslie identifies the two witnesses as "two strange men" whose identity cannot now be determined who will literally have prophetic ministry for twelve hundred sixty days and then be slain. Many other conservative expositors agree with Easton who takes these two witnesses "to be two men, not two companies of men, nor yet a mere symbol of 'adequate testimonies.'" He finds this confirmed in verse 10 in the expression "these two prophets." He adds, "Who they may be, can be but conjecture, and is best left in the obscurity in which God has surrounded them."<sup>4</sup>

(11.4) These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

1. The two olive trees and the two candle sticks are symbolic terms God explains in Zechariah 4.1-14:

- 1 And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep,
- 2 And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which *are* upon the top thereof:
- 3 And two olive trees by it, one upon the right *side* of the bowl, and the other upon the left *side* thereof.
- 4 So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What *are* these, my lord?
- 5 Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.
- 6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This *is* the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.
- 7 Who *art* thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel *thou shalt become* a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone *thereof with* shoutings, *crying*, Grace, grace unto it.
- 8 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

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<sup>4</sup> John Walvoord, *The Revelation Of Jesus Christ*, (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966), pages 178-179.

- <sup>9</sup> The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you.
- <sup>10</sup> For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel *with* those seven; they *are* the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.
- <sup>11</sup> Then answered I, and said unto him, What *are* these two olive trees upon the right *side* of the candlestick and upon the left *side* thereof?
- <sup>12</sup> And I answered again, and said unto him, What *be* these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden *oil* out of themselves?
- <sup>13</sup> And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these *be*? And I said, No, my lord.
- <sup>14</sup> Then said he, These *are* the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

2. Throughout Zechariah chapter 4, an angel talks with the prophet Zechariah about two olive trees and a candle stick. In verse 13, Zechariah indicates that he does not know what these items are, and the angel's answer is given in verse 14: "Then said he, These *are* the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." These two are Zerubbabel and Joshua, the man who was the high priest in Israel at that time.
3. Thus, the two witnesses in Revelation chapter 11, who will preach during the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation, will be two anointed servants of God. They will be genuine prophets who will stand up for God and stand by God in the manner that Zerubbabel and Joshua, the high priest, did.
4. What does the Bible say about God's anointed ones and prophets? "Touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm."<sup>5</sup> Let us recognize this speaks primarily to the patriarchs and secondarily to Israel's three anointed offices. But reasonable applications to servants of God are suitable.

(11.5) And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

1. During the Church Age, God's people are not to seek revenge against those who try to harm us. We should answer those who oppose and contend with us but not seek vengeance. During this age, God says that vengeance is His, Romans 12.19. Those who oppose God's men, or any Christian during the Age of Grace, may not always get their just desserts in this present life. Then again, they may. But you can be sure that judgment will fall very hard on him when he stands before Christ in judgment. Why is this? Because God has revealed that He does not use His servants during our era to mete out judgment and justice but as tools to minister grace to those who hear us.

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<sup>5</sup> 1 Chronicles 16.22; Psalm 105.15

2. However, there is clear evidence in this verse that the Tribulation period is not the same kind of Age of Grace that we currently enjoy. In the next era, judgment will be swift and harsh. It says, “and if any man will hurt them.” The word “will,” which appears twice in this verse, translates the Greek verb θέλω, and refers to just thinking about something, wanting something to be so, or wishing something were true.<sup>6</sup> In other words, if someone so much as thinks about harming these two men of God, he will be killed immediately, on the spot, in dramatic fashion.
3. An enemy would not have to touch them. Just having a heart’s desire to make them be quiet or run them out of town, fire will come out of their mouths and destroy anyone with evil thoughts and intentions toward them. Amazing. I say this because the phrase “and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed,” means that “it is binding,” “it is necessary.”<sup>7</sup>
4. It is this power the two witnesses will exhibit which causes me to conclude that the ministry of these two prophets occurs in the last half of the tribulation. This is because the treaty entered into by the antichrist during the first half of the tribulation period will guarantee the freedom to prophecy without opposition or restraint of any kind. It will only be in the last half of this seven year period that this kind of power to destroy their enemies will ever need to be exercised by these two unknown men of God.

(11.6) These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

1. Though this passage does not name the two witnesses, and I believe the two witnesses will be two men unknown to us, we can see why some conclude from this verse that one must be the prophet Elijah. They so conclude because the prophet Malachi predicted Elijah’s part as a forerunner who tells of the coming of the Lord Jesus just before His Second Coming. Malachi 4.4-5:
  - <sup>4</sup> Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, *with* the statutes and judgments.
  - <sup>5</sup> Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.”
2. I also previously mentioned that there are a variety of opinions regarding the identity of the other prophet. Some think that it might be Moses. This is because the power demonstrated here is similar to the signs wrought by Moses in the book of Exodus, turning the water into blood, etc.
3. Others insist that this prophet is Enoch for two reasons: First, because, like Elijah, Enoch was translated and has not yet experienced physical death but will die during

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<sup>6</sup> Bauer, Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), pages 447-448.

<sup>7</sup> Fritz Rienecker & Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1980), page 836.

this future time when, as one of the two witnesses, he is finally slain. Second, according to Jude 14-15, Enoch already had a ministry of proclaiming the coming of the Lord, and it is thought that his ministry in Revelation chapter 11 will continue what he began before the Flood and before he was translated.

4. Good folk hold to both persuasions as to the identities of the witnesses. However, I remain convinced that the two witnesses are too shrouded in mystery for their identities to be known to us.

(11.7) And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

1. Notice. They are no longer immortal when they have finished their job for God. But nothing can harm or injure them until they have finished their task.
2. The same truth applies to you and me, so long as we are not disobedient or foolish. Until we have finished our service to God, we are invincible. The only things that can happen to us are things God allows. And then, when our tasks and duties are completed, we will either die natural deaths or God will allow us to suffer martyrdom for His name's sake.
3. No wonder the Lord Jesus Christ said, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."<sup>8</sup> All things being equal, and setting aside those premature deaths of the saints that result from God's chastisement that leads to an early homegoing, you will die when God decides it is time for you to die. Should this produce some Muslem type of fatalism? No. The Christian reaction to such doctrine should be boldness to serve the Lord, whatever the circumstances.

(11.8-10) <sup>8</sup> And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

<sup>9</sup> And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

<sup>10</sup> And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

1. These prophets will be martyred in a city that can only be Jerusalem. We know that since that is where our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. But after they are killed, the carcasses of the witnesses are left in the street for the whole world to watch and see.
2. So, how will the world react? They will celebrate their deaths. They will be glad that those two fundamentalists who preached against the sins this old world enjoyed committing are now passed on. They will give out presents to each other.
3. What does this scene remind you of? It reminds me of the reactions of the Palestinians when they saw the attacks on the World Trade Center towers on September 11, 2001.

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew 10.28

Do you remember what they did? They danced in the streets and partied over Americans' destruction and deaths.<sup>9</sup> But that was just the Palestinians rejoicing over the deaths of Americans and the blow against our country. When these witnesses are slain, everyone will rejoice, and the entire lost world will celebrate the deaths of God's men, including you, if you are lost.

4. What ghouls men are who try to silence the truthful preaching of God's Word. What wickedness there is in their old sin-stained hearts. What Satanic activity is seen in opposition to the ministry of these two anointed men of God.
  5. Before we move on, please notice our familiar phrase. At the beginning and the end of verse 10, John sees "them that dwell on the earth." This is his characteristic phrase that he frequently uses to describe lost men and women.
- (11.11-14) <sup>11</sup> And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.
- <sup>12</sup> And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.
- <sup>13</sup> And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.
- <sup>14</sup> The second woe is past; *and*, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.
1. When they see this, think of what will be running through the minds of modernists and secularists, who do not believe in the resurrection.
  2. These two witnesses will be raised from the dead and will ascend into heaven in the same manner as the Lord Jesus was, except for one thing. When this happens, the entire world will see it happen, courtesy of CNN or Fox News.
  3. Witnesses to the end, these two unnamed men give testimony of God's greatness even by the way they are leaving the scene of the crime against God that was committed by killing them.
  4. When this earthquake hits, 7000 men die. Notice that the earthquake occurs within the hour the witnesses are raised. God wants everyone to know there is a connection between the resurrection of those two men and the subsequent earthquake. Denying God's two witnesses a proper burial at the time of their deaths, the wicked men of Jerusalem will be buried alive by God as an act of retribution.
  5. When this happens, those who are left alive will give glory to the God of heaven. Does this mean they are saved? Does this mean they are repentant? "No," to both questions. When will people realize that giving glory to the God of heaven is not sufficient evidence that a person is saved?

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<sup>9</sup> <https://youtu.be/J8XQ1BTIPhk> and [https://youtu.be/P1TrejE\\_NY](https://youtu.be/P1TrejE_NY)



6. These men will be compelled by circumstances to glorify the God of heaven. They will not do so by choice. Why are they not saved by this external act of contrition? Philipians 2.10-11. These two verses describe a person's spiritual expression of salvation in Christ. You do not do these things to be saved, but these are the things that happen when a sinner comes to Jesus by faith. Ask yourself, then, whether or not this is what happens in Revelation 11.13:

<sup>10</sup> That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;

<sup>11</sup> And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

7. I was unfamiliar with this passage when I turned to Christ, but I was doing what verses 10 and 11 say to do ... and you did this when you were saved, as well, if you are a saved person. But those who will live through the earthquake will give glory to God without submitting to His Son. The result? They remain lost.
8. "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."<sup>10</sup>

(11.15) And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

1. "This is the *de jure* announcement of what in a short time will be made *de facto*. It is only a sovereign God who can speak like this: for He 'callesth those things which be not as though they were' (Rom. 4:17). And it is an impressive exhibition of divine grace and sovereignty that the announcement is made at the precise moment when the beast reaches the height of his power on earth, with all opposition crushed (Rev. 12:7; 13:4-8). What an encouragement for the redeemed to know that there are no dark hours to God. Even when all seems to be lost, for those who have eyes to see, the Lord still sits upon His throne high and lifted up in the heavens; and the unfailing character of His Universal Kingdom guarantees that the Mediatorial Kingdom of His Son shall be established on earth, in spite of all satanic opposition."<sup>11</sup>
2. "When the seventh trumpet sounds, John hears great voices in heaven announcing that the kingdoms have become the kingdom of Christ and that henceforth He shall reign forever and ever. 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."<sup>12</sup>
3. Lest you think that the sounding of the seventh trumpet is a single short blast, Revelation 10.7 reads, "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall

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<sup>10</sup> Walvoord, page 183.

<sup>11</sup> Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God*, (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959), pages 473-474.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 183-184.

begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.” Revelation 10.7 suggests the trumpet blast of Revelation 11.15 affects events in human history that span 1003 and one-half years! This covers the last half of the Tribulation and the entire millennial reign of Christ!

4. When the trumpet begins to blast, the Bible says there were great voices in heaven shouting. The fact of their shouting reminds me of Israel’s defeat of Jericho. Consider Joshua 6.12-16, where I believe a similar will happen here when God conquers the kingdoms and the dominions of this world:

- <sup>12</sup> And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.
- <sup>13</sup> And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the reward came after the ark of the LORD, *the priests* going on, and blowing with the trumpets.
- <sup>14</sup> And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.
- <sup>15</sup> And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times.
- <sup>16</sup> And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city.

5. Various passages of Scripture present the world order that we live under as in possession of and under the domination of Satan. His reign over this world began at Adam’s Fall and will continue until the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus. This is why Satan is identified in one passage as “the god of this world” and in another passage as “the prince of the power of the air.”<sup>13</sup>

6. The sounding of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet indicates the fall of the world order and is, at the same time, the trumpet blast announcing the royal entry of the King into His domain. A domain over which He will reign forever and ever.

7. Psalm 2:

- <sup>1</sup> Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?
- <sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*,
- <sup>3</sup> Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.
- <sup>4</sup> He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.
- <sup>5</sup> Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

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<sup>13</sup> 2 Corinthians 4.4; Ephesians 2.2

- <sup>6</sup> Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.
- <sup>7</sup> I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee.
- <sup>8</sup> Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession.
- <sup>9</sup> Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.
- <sup>10</sup> Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.
- <sup>11</sup> Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.
- <sup>12</sup> Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him.

8. There is no contest between the forces of good and the forces of evil. There is no contest between God and the devil. While it is true that you and I are engaged in a struggle against our sinful nature and the forces of darkness, it is no struggle with God, just as it was no struggle for the Lord Jesus Christ. God is in complete control!
9. Remember when the devil tempted the Lord Jesus Christ after being baptized by John the Baptist? Remember that Satan offered to give Him all the kingdoms of this world, Matthew 4.8-9. Imagine offering the Lord Jesus Christ what He, Himself, had created!<sup>14</sup> Further, Satan was offering the Lord Jesus Christ what God the Father would present to Him in due time anyway. Did not Satan know this already? Probably. But sin makes you stupid.

(11.16) And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

1. The last mention of these twenty-four elders not being seated on their thrones (the Greek word translated “seats” is θρόνους, from which the English word throne is derived) is in Revelation 5.14. In that verse, they fall and worship the Lord Jesus Christ. Since then, they have been sitting by as the seven seals are broken and as the first six trumpets were sounded ... I think watching the glorious and terrible proceedings unfolding in this final act of the great Drama of Redemption.
2. But with the sounding of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet, and its signal of King Jesus bringing this earth back under His dominion after so many thousands of years, these elders cannot contain themselves. They do not just fall in worship of Him. They fall on their faces and worship God.
3. Recalling that these twenty-four elders represent the Church Age believers who will be raptured before the seven years of Tribulation, before the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel begins, this is a picture of the unrestrained worship and adoration of God by Christians, as they are overcome with the majesty and wisdom of God’s plan unfolding.

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<sup>14</sup> Colossians 1.16

(11.17) Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

1. This praise the elders sing out is a praise to God for again exerting His rightful place over His created universe. They thank Him for fulfilling His proper role as the Almighty God of all creation.
2. This is seen in the Greek word translated “almighty.” The word παντοκράτωρ is compounded from two words. Πάντως means “all.”<sup>15</sup> Κράτος refers to dictatorial authority.<sup>16</sup> This means that the twenty-four elders see their God to be the absolute dictator of all things. For that, they give praise and thanks.
3. Someone has to be in charge. Right? Are you not glad that the One in charge is God, our wise and majestic sovereign, and not some mere creature?
4. One point to make before moving on. The description of God as “which art, and wast, and art to come” is so much as saying that God is and was and is to come. Correct? But remember that in Revelation 1.8, the Lord Jesus Christ described Himself as the one “which is, and which was, and which is to come.” Thus, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Lord God Almighty are eternally self-existent, from eternity past to eternity future—another example of the Word of God showing Jesus to be eternal God.

(11.18) And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.

1. Whether this verse is something the elders said, as part of their praise, or it is seen by John and recorded ... I do not know for sure. But whatever the source of the remark, it is a fulfillment of prophecy.
2. Look again at Psalm 2.1-3:
  - <sup>1</sup> Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?
  - <sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*,
  - <sup>3</sup> Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.
3. Verse 17 refers to the Second Coming of Christ, and has to do, in part, with the reactions of humanity when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to reign in righteousness. Notice that as the Lord Jesus Christ begins to exert control over that which rightfully belongs to Him, the nations of the earth respond with anger. In verse 13, when the two witnesses were raised from the dead and called to heaven, and when the earthquake struck, they were “affrighted.” Their fear turns to anger when King Jesus asserts His sovereign rule over them, so hostile they are toward Him.

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<sup>15</sup> Bauer, pages 755-756.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., page 565.

4. Does this surprise you? Let your mind reflect on Cain, King Saul, Jezebel and King Ahab, King Manasseh of Judah, and Nero, the emperor of Rome. The reaction was anger whenever God or God's men asserted God's sovereign right to govern men's lives. Cain became angry at God. King Saul hated God's man, David. Ahab and Jezebel hated Elijah, the prophet. Manasseh of Judah murdered the great prophet, Isaiah. Nero beheaded the apostle of Jesus Christ named Paul.
5. Religion is okay with almost anyone. Pansy preachers are tolerably easy to swallow because the slippery invertebrates go down quite easily. But there will be great resistance when a man of God stands up and demands submission and allegiance to God. Why? A sinful man does not want to submit to a holy God. If someone must talk about submission, they insist it be done delicately and nicely.
6. To such people, we ought to respond, "How do you think the Lord Jesus will communicate His desire for submission when He comes again? Will He be sweet and nice? How are His men to communicate His will that men submit to Him? How did John the Baptist do it? How did Peter do it? How did Paul do it?"
7. Do not overlook that this verse touches on the future reward of the saved and the future damnation of the lost. Notice the descriptions of the two groups:
  - a. "that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great." Remember that a saint is described as holy, a term that applies to anyone and everyone who knows Jesus Christ as his savior. It is not a term that is reserved for some particular group of Christians who are morally superior to the rest of us. The point is that those believers who live during the Tribulation period will be rewarded by the Lord Jesus Christ when He comes again.
  - b. "and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." The word "destroy" found twice in this phrase translates the same Greek word in both instances. The aorist active infinitive form of the word διαφθείρω is διαφθεῖραι and indicates the utter destruction of something.<sup>17</sup> The root word, φθείρω, is found in First Corinthians 3.17: "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are."
8. "Two points in verse 18 need to be clarified. The Lord has begun His final work of judgment, prior to the setting up of His thousand years' reign; but the completion of this judgment—which they can see—will take place when the dead are judged before the Great White Throne (Rev. 20.11-15) bringing complete destruction upon the destroyers of the earth. Some say that the word translated "destroy" (v. 18) means that God will annihilate men. How absurd! The second use of the word "destroy" in this

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<sup>17</sup> Rienecker, page 838.

verse (it is the same Greek word), does not mean annihilation. Men are not annihilating the earth in their sin, neither will God annihilate men.”<sup>18</sup>

(11.19) And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

1. Lehman Strauss:

“The chapter division here is unfortunate because verse 19 seems to introduce chapter 12. But we shall examine it in the order that we have it here, as it is included in chapter 11. Actually we have in the verse before us an entirely new prophecy which continues on through chapter 14. It is one which is related chiefly to Israel. The ark of the covenant had to do with Israel, not with the Gentiles or the Church.

It is stated that “*the temple of God was opened in Heaven.*” The Revelation is the book of the unveiling, the book of the opening. Seven great openings characterize it which are not depicted elsewhere in Scripture:

- In 4:1—a Door is opened in Heaven
- In 6:1-8:1—the seals are opened
- In 9:2—the abyss is opened
- In 11:19—the temple of God is opened
- In 15:5—the tabernacle of testimony is opened
- In 19:11—the Heaven is opened
- In 20:12—the books of judgment are opened.”<sup>19</sup>

2. William R. Newell also has profitable comments on this verse: “This passage, if simply believed, becomes a key to seven chapters,—Revelation 10-16.

1. There is a *literal temple* in heaven. The one on earth was a *pattern* of the *things* in heaven (Hebrews 8:5; 9:22).
2. The real “*ark of his covenant,*” which declares His purposes and His faithfulness, is there.
3. This ark’s *pattern* was given to *Israel* not to the Church: the Church does not have to do with earthly temple-worship, nor with those governmental affairs of earth with which God has connected Israel.
4. The ark of Israel’s temple disappeared (for it was all typical of things to come) ; but when God begins again to deal with Israel and those governmental affairs with which Israel is bound up, the real ark appears in the opened temple on high.
5. The ark of old was the place of God’s dwelling in the Holy of Holies, with His people. But here we see the ark connected with the putting forth of *judgment,—lightnings, thunders, an earthquake.* For God had said to Moses, when He renewed His covenant with Israel, after the great breach, of the calf-worship; that He would do thus: “Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people (Israel) I will do marvels, such as have not been wrought in all the earth, nor in any nation . . . for it is a terrible thing that I do with thee.” “In the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them”

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<sup>18</sup> L. Sale-Harrison, *The Remarkable Revelation*, (New York: Sale-Harrison Publications, 1930), page 124.

<sup>19</sup> Lehman Strauss, *The Book Of The Revelation*, (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1963), page 224.

(Exodus 34:10; 32 :34). God is here in this part of The Revelation, showing that He *will do as He has said*: therefore is His temple in heaven opened, and the ark—symbol of His covenant-keeping, seen.

6. This judgment-action of God will involve all the earth: for Israel are to be established as God's elect royal nation,—*but punished first*. And *all nations* will be brought up against Jerusalem to battle, at Armageddon.
  7. Therefore, Revelation 11:19 and 15:5-8 become luminous: God is acting *in judgment, from His temple in heaven*, and *according to His covenanted arrangements*, to restore the Kingdom to Israel, albeit by means so severe as to be *bitter*, indeed, for the Seer, who loved his nation, to know.”<sup>20</sup>
3. Notice Jeremiah 3.16: “And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall *that* be done any more.” When Babylon overran Jerusalem, the Ark of the Covenant was lost. People forgot about it for thousands of years. But did God ever forget? No. And as we draw closer to the end, there is renewed interest in this long-forgotten furniture piece.
  4. The Ark was symbolic of God's promises to Israel and was a replica of the genuine and original Ark mentioned here in Revelation 11.19, which is in heaven. Though the Jews would forget their unique relationship with God, God would never forget His special relationship with them. The opening of the Temple in heaven to see the heavenly Ark illustrates that God has never forgotten Israel.
  5. Two things, to recapitulate, from this verse:
    - a. One, since the Ark is in view, we see we are on Israelite ground, not Church ground. During this period, God's dealings are with the nation of Israel, not Churches.
    - b. Two, from the Ark, comes forth the rumblings of judgment. Few people today understand their God of love also to be a righteous and holy God. How difficult can we comprehend righteous demands and merciful salvation springing forth from the same heart? But they do. We must forever struggle to prevent a distorted view of God arising up in our hearts that emphasizes one aspect and diminishes the other, thereby destroying balance and harmony.

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<sup>20</sup> William R. Newell, *The Book Of The Revelation*, (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1935), pages 168-169.