

## **Revelation 11:1-13**

### **The Two Witnesses**

- Revelation 11 is an interlude passage that reveals a very important ministry that will be going on during then entirety of the second half of the Tribulation.
    - The revelation and description of this ministry brings to mind a similar ministry seen in 1 Kings chapters 17-19. It is the ministry of the prophet Elijah as he opposes Israel's evil King Ahab and his queen, Jezebel.
    - Here in Revelation 11 we will see many similarities between Elijah's ministry in 1 Kings and the ministry of the two witnesses of Revelation 11. Just as Elijah confronted a very evil, despotic king, so the two witnesses of Revelation will confront the most evil and despotic ruler the world has ever seen.
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- To begin with, Revelation 11 begins with John's interaction with an unnamed person . . .

***Revelation 11:1— And there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and those who worship in it.***

- Though John only identifies the speaker as **someone**, there is strong contextual evidence that the speak is actually the Lord Jesus because two verses later, in v. 3 the speaker says **and I will grant authority to my two witnesses**. Since these two witnesses will be evangelists, it seems likely that the speaker here is the Lord.
- But, to begin with, in Revelation 11:1 we first learn that John **is given a measuring rod like a staff**.
  - A **measuring rod** describes a reed that grew in the Jordan valley. These **rods** commonly grew to be 15-20 feet tall. And because these reeds grew very straight and were very lightweight, they were excellent for use as measuring tools.
  - Because John also describes his **measuring rod** being **like a staff**, this means that the **rod** was thick and sturdy enough that it could be used as a walking **staff**.
  - In Ezekiel's vision, an angel used such a rod to measure the future Millennial Temple (Ezk. 40:3-43:17).
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- Here in v. 1 the Lord tells John to **rise and measure three things . . . the temple of God, the altar and those who worship in it**.
  - Just as John took the **little book** and became a participant in Revelation 10, here too John again becomes a participant in the scene. **Here he is instructed to perform a symbolic act as many of the prophets of past had done.**

- For example, Isaiah walked naked and barefoot as a sign of Egypt's impending captivity to Assyria. Cf Is 20:2-5.
- Ezekiel dug through the wall and carried his luggage out in the sight of Israel as a sign of coming exile (Ezk. 12:1-7).
- Here in Revelation 11:1 John is instructed to measure ***the temple of God, the altar and those who worship in it***. From this instruction, several interpretive questions arise.

**First, what temple of God and altar is being referred to here? And who are those who worship in it?**

**Second, why does the Lord instruct John to measure them?**

- First of all, the Lord commands John to measure ***the temple of God***. The question then arises, **which temple of God is referred to here?**
  - In Israel's history there have been **two temples** in Jerusalem.
    - The first temple was built by Solomon in 900 B.C. It was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. as the nation was taken into captivity for 70 years.
    - Following the return from exile, Zerubbabel built and completed the second temple in 516 B.C. This temple was later remodeled by Herod in the time of Christ. The second temple was destroyed by Titus the Roman in 70 A.D.
    - Since 70 A.D. there has not been a Jewish temple. But we know from Daniel and Revelation that the **third temple will be built during the Tribulation as a condition of the covenant that Israel will make with antichrist because it is this temple that will be desecrated by antichrist in the event known as the abomination of desolation.**
    - Therefore, it seems most likely that it is this third temple that John is being instructed to measure. The very fact that John is being instructed to measure it means that it will be present at the time of the events described in Revelation.
- Second, the Lord instructs John to ***measure the altar***. Which ***altar*** is this referring to?
  - There are two ***altars*** that are used in the temple service.
    - The ***altar of incense*** was previously referred to as the location of the martyred saints praying to God to avenge them for their martyrdom.
    - The ***brazen altar*** is the altar that is located in the courtyard, just outside the temple building and was the place where sacrifices were offered.
    - The common Jewish people were only allowed to come as far as the ***brazen altar***. They were not allowed in to see the ***altar of incense***.

- Because John is next instructed to *measure those who worship in it*, it seems likely that this is a reference to **the brazen altar**.
- Thirdly, John is instructed to *measure those who worship in it*.
  - Because only Jews are permitted into the court with the **brazen altar**, it seems likely that John is being instructed to *measure* . . . or *count* . . . the people who participated in the Jewish worship in the temple during the Tribulation period.
- **Why does the Lord instruct John to measure *the temple, the altar and those who worship in it*?**
  - It is unlikely that John in being commanded to obtain physical measurements because he gives none. It is best to see **the act of measuring as symbolic. The symbolic act John is participating in here is that of God claiming ownership over these three things . . . the temple, the altar and those who worship in it.**
  - We find evidence of this claim of ownership in Ezekiel 40 and Zechariah 2:1-8.
    - In Ezekiel 40 God takes Ezekiel to Jerusalem and shows the prophet the vision of the rebuilt **temple of God**. In chapter 40 God gives the exact measurements of the rebuilt temple, its courts, its walls and its gates. God is exact with His measurements.
    - In Zechariah 2:1-8 the prophet is shown a vision of a man measuring the rebuilt city of Jerusalem, after it had been destroyed by the Babylonians.
    - Both passages record the results of the same event . . . the destruction of the city and the temple by the Babylonians as God's just and promised punishment for Israel's long history of disobedience and idolatry.
  - We also find this concept of ownership by measurement in Revelation 21:15 . . .
 

***Revelation 21:15— And the one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall.***
- In both the measuring of the rebuilt temple in Ezekiel 40 and the rebuilt Jerusalem in Zechariah 2, the concept of measuring something **symbolizes God's (1) ownership of it, (2) God's promise to rebuild the temple and the city, and (3) God's fulfillment of His promise to restore Israel in the land with their rebuilt city and temple.**
  - Here in Revelation 11:1 we are shown the future **third temple** in Jerusalem. This is shown to John as God's promise of the **future restoration** of Israel's temple sacrificial system during the Tribulation and God's **future preservation** of His people.
- John MacArthur writes, "The measuring of the temple, altar, and worshippers signifies something good, since what was not measured was evil (vs 2). It is best to see it as God's measuring of Israel symbolized by her temple, for salvation, and for His special protection, preservation, and favor. The prophecies yet to be given to John will thus distinguish between God's favor toward Israel and His wrath on the pagan world."

- Then, following the Lord's instruction to John on what he was to measure, in v. 2 John is given instruction regarding what he was **not** to measure

**Revelation 11:2—** *"And leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months."*

- The command to **leave out** (Gr. *ekballō exōthen*) means "to throw out, cast aside, or exclude."
- On the temple grounds there were **four courts**.
  - The innermost court, located immediately surrounding the Temple building, was the **court of priests**. Admission to this court was strictly limited to the Levitical priesthood in the performance of their official duties.
  - The next court was **the court of the men or the court of Israel**, which was restricted to those ritually clean male Jewish worshippers. It is likely that it is this court that Paul is accused of bringing unclean gentiles into in Acts 21:26-36, which provoked a riot.
  - The next court was **the court of women**. This court was restricted to ceremonially clean men and women Jewish worshippers.
  - The outermost court was **the court of the Gentiles**. This court was the largest and was open to all people, including foreigners. In New Testament times the Romans gave the Jews the right to execute any Gentile that went beyond the court of the Gentiles because the temple would be defiled (Lk. 21:28,29).
- It is likely that here in Revelation 11:2 that John is instructed to **leave out the court of the Gentiles**. And the Lord explains why this court was to be left out . . . **for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months**.
  - Here in v. 2 we learn that the **Gentile nations** will be guilty of **treading under foot the holy city for forty-two months**.
- This is a reference to the events that follow **the abomination of desolation**, described in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 and Matthew 24:15 . . .

**2 Thessalonians 2:3-4—** <sup>3</sup> *Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,* <sup>4</sup> *who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.*

**Matthew 24:15-22—** <sup>15</sup> *"Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),* <sup>16</sup> *then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; <sup>17</sup> let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house; <sup>18</sup> and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. <sup>19</sup> But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! <sup>20</sup> But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath; <sup>21</sup> for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever*

***shall. 22 And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.***

- In the phrase ***do not measure*** the New Testament depicts this as **an act of rejection** (i.e. to leave out). To remain unmeasured amounts to the opposite of being measured...it marks an exclusion of God's favor (Lk. 4:29, 13:28).

### **So, what is being pictured here in v. 1-2?**

- In v. 1, the worshippers were to be measured (i.e. given favor). The only ones allowed in the inner court would be the Jews. In v. 2, the outer court of the Gentiles was not to be measured (i.e. not to be given favor).
    - Robert Thomas states the reason for the exclusion of the Gentiles is that "it is this group who will be in rebellion against God and will oppress the Jewish remnant and wreak havoc in Jerusalem in the period just before Christ's return".
  - The phrase ***they will tread underfoot the holy city for forty two months*** reveals **what the Gentiles will do and for how long**.
  - The term ***tread underfoot*** (Gr. *pateō*) means that they will occupy the Jewish temple and prevent the Jews from worshipping there. By his act of desecration, even if the Jews were permitted into the temple, it would have to be ritually cleansed before temple worship could resume . . . and that wasn't going to be permitted. Antichrist will see to that.
  - The reference to ***forty-two months*** is yet another time marker for how long the Great Tribulation will last. **3 ½ years . . . 1260 days . . . forty-two months . . . time, times and half a time** all refer to the same length of time that the Great Tribulation will last until the Lord's Return.
    - John Walvoord states, "It is best to see this time as the second half of the tribulation, because the period of ill treatment by the Gentiles towards the Jews fits the latter half when taking into account the breaking of the covenant by Antichrist in the middle of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. (Cf Dan 9:27) The first half of the tribulation would have Jerusalem under Jewish control and would not require the need for special favor toward the worshippers as the measuring of vs 1 implies. Therefore a second half interpretation is better."
    - Tom Pennington notes that "the message here is God is not done with His temple, His city, or His people Israel. That's why He measures them. By having John measure the temple and its worshippers, God is marking them out. God is promising to preserve and restore them. The point of these two verses is to establish the emphasis of the ministry of the two witnesses who are about to be introduced."
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- Then, in Revelation 11:3 **two witnesses appear on the scene . . .**

***Revelation 11:3— "And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."***

- Having revealed in v. 2 that **the temple of God and the Jewish people** would be defiled and attacked, in v. 3 the Lord reveals that He will send **two witnesses** to engage in a ministry against the antichrist and those who follow him.
  - Also note that their ministry will extend for the duration of the Great Tribulation . . . 1260 days. So, from the time of **the Gentile oppression of Israel until just prior to the Second Coming of the Lord, these two witnesses will be on the earth witnessing to The Truth.**

### **An interpretive question arises . . . why two witnesses? Why not one, or more?**

- Scripture teaches that the testimony of two people is required to confirm a fact or verify a truth (Dt. 17:6, 19:15; Mt. 18:16; Jn. 8:17; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Ti. 5:19; Heb. 10:28).
  - Therefore, one of the functions of these **two witnesses** is to verify the validity of the accusations against **those who dwell on the earth. In addition to evangelism, they are witnesses for the prosecution.**

### **Question: Who Are These Two Witnesses?**

- The most common question regarding these **two witnesses** is their identity? Who are they?
- First of all, **these are literal people**, not symbolic.
  - The early church, Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Hippolytus identified the two as **Enoch and Elijah**. The reason being that these two were raptured without seeing death (Gen. 5:24; 2 Ki. 2:11).
    - This, however is not warranted since not all people will see physical death (1 Thess. 4:13-17) (the doctrine of the rapture).
    - Early tradition (extra biblical) said that Enoch would join Elijah for such a ministry (1 Enoch 90:31; 4 Ezra 6:26) Enoch, however does not match the criteria for the two witnesses in Rev. 11:5,6.
  - The most prevalent view regarding the identity of these **two witnesses** is that they are **Moses and Elijah**
    - Old Testament miraculous signs of the two match those performed in Rev 11: 5,6. Elijah called down fire from heaven, 2 Ki 1:10, and shut off rain from heaven for 3 1/2 years (1 Ki 17:1, Lk 4:25; Jas 5:17).
    - Moses turned water into blood and struck the earth with plagues (Ex 7:14-11:10). There is a mystery concerning his death (Dt 34:5,6; Jude 9).
    - In addition, Malachi predicted the return of Elijah before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord (Malachi 4:5) and Dt 18: 15,18 prophesies a prophet like Moses would be raised up.

- Both Moses and Elijah were seen with Christ at the Transfiguration in the preview of the coming kingdom (Mt 17:3; Mk 9:4; Lk 9:30).
- **Conclusion**- Moses and Elijah are the most favorable view because they represent the Law and the Prophets respectively.

## **Their Ministry**

- In v. 3, the statement that ***they will prophesy for 1260 days, clothed in sackcloth*** tells us what their primary function will be.
    - The phrase ***they will prophesy*** (Gr. *prophēteuō*) may include the foretelling of the future, but undoubtedly **will be the preaching of repentance** with the warning of God's judgment yet to come and eternal hell to follow.
    - As mentioned earlier, the duration of their ministry is ***1260 days***.
  - The two witnesses are also described as being ***clothed in sackcloth*** (Gr. *sakkos*), which is woven from goats or camel hair, hence a dark color.
    - ***Sackcloth*** was **worn to (1) express mourning, distress or grief** (Mt 11:21; Lk 10:13) and **(2) for purposes of prophetic ministry** (Rev 11:3).
  - John MacArthur writes, "the two witnesses will put on sackcloth as an object lesson to express great sorrow for the wretched and unbelieving world, racked by God's judgments, overrun by demon hoards and populated by wicked, sinful people who refuse to repent. They will also mourn because of the desecration of the temple, the oppression of Jerusalem, and the ascendancy of Antichrist."
  - Pastor Tom Pennington states that their mourning is, **first**, because they know that all the people on this planet who don't repent will soon be destroyed by God's coming judgment and sent to the Lake of Fire, and, **second**, because the God they serve is being blasphemed and His Messiah is rejected.
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- In Revelation 11:4 John further describes the ministry of the ***two witnesses*** . . .

***Revelation 11:4— These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.***

- The reference here in v. 4 is an Old Testament reference to two faithful men of God found in the third and fourth chapters of Zechariah, Zerubbabel and Joshua.
  - In Zechariah 3 the prophet Zechariah is shown the high priest, Joshua. Joshua was the high priest in Judah when the nation of Judah returned to the Land after the Babylonian exile. In Zechariah 3 Joshua receives a message that God promising future spiritual renewal through Jesus Christ, who is identified in Zechariah 3:8 as ***My servant the Branch***.
  - Then, in Zechariah 4 the prophet is given a vision of a second character from the post-exilic period, named Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel who was the Persian-appointed governor of Judah and a direct

descendant of King David. Alongside the High Priest Joshua, Zerubbabel was tasked with leading the Jewish exiles to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple. It is Zechariah 4 that we find the reference used in Revelation 11:4 . . .

*Zechariah 4:2-3, 11-14— <sup>2</sup> And 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."** <sup>11</sup> Then I answered and 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."***

- In Zechariah's vision, the olive oil from the trees provided for the lampstands as an emblem of the light brought through Zerubbabel and Joshua.
- The oil pictures the working of the Holy Spirit. In Zechariah, there was only one lampstand with seven lights, but John's account has two lampstands to picture the two witnesses more distinctly.
- Like Zerubbabel and Joshua who led the rebuilding of the postexilic temple, **the mission of these two future witnesses in Revelation will be just like the mission of Zerubbabel and Joshua in their day**. Their preaching will be instrumental in Israel's national conversion (Rev 11:13; Ro 11:4,5,26) and the temple associated with that conversion will be the Millennial Temple.

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- In Revelation 11:5 we are told of the divine protection that is provided for God's two appointed witnesses . . .

*Revelation 11:5— And if anyone desires to harm them, fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their enemies; and if anyone would desire to harm them, in this manner he must be killed.*

- Revelation 11:5 begins with a first class conditional statement . . . *if anyone desires to harm them*. The use of the first class condition assumes a statement that is true. In other words, **many will desire to do them harm**.
- Then, having stated the fact that many will desire to harm them, in the second part of v. 5 John reveals how God **two witnesses** will protect themselves . . . *fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their enemies*.
  - Since **fire** is symbolic of divine judgment, the use of **fire proceeding from their mouth to devour their enemies** indicates that the **two witnesses** are given the authority to immediately judge those who seek them harm.
  - Interestingly, John would have been familiar with this imagery since he and his brother, James, had once asked the Lord Jesus for permission to call down fire from heaven to consume the evil Samaritan men who rejected Jesus in Luke 9:54 . . .

***Luke 9:54— And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"***

- Having stated the fact of their divinely-given self protection . . . ***if anyone desires to harm them, fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their enemies*** . . . in the closing phrase of v. 5 John then states ***why this judgment is prescribed . . . if anyone would desire to harm them, in this manner he must be killed.***
  - In other words, immediately fiery death and judgment are prescribed as a warning to any who would attempt to harm them.
  - To be certain, some would be sent to try to kill them. But after witnessing the attackers immediately incinerated, fear of being likewise killed would be sufficient warning to prevent further attacks.
- In addition to their evangelistic ministry on the earth in a time of unbridled evil and opposition to the truth of the gospel, in Revelation 11:6 we are told another reason the world will hate these ***two witnesses*** . . .

***Revelation 11:6— These have the power to shut up the sky, in order that rain may not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.***

- The fact that these ***two witnesses*** will have the power to inflict physical suffering upon ***those who dwell upon the earth*** will make them the object of hostility and hatred. And, yet, they will be divinely protected from ***anyone who would seek to do them harm.***
- Interestingly, if one of the ***two witnesses*** is Elijah, the act of ***shutting up the sky, in order that rain may not fall during the days of their prophesying*** . . . 3 ½ years . . . is the same curse that Elijah pronounced on Israel during the days of his earthly ministry.

***1 Kings 17:1— Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."***

- In addition to stopping rain from falling on the earth for 3 ½ years, we also see in v. 6 that ***they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.***
  - If Moses is, indeed, the other ***witness***, this is the same thing Moses did in Egypt in the first of the ten plagues inflicted in the book of Exodus (Exodus 7:17-21).
  - And the phrase, ***as often as they desire***, indicates the degree of authority they receive from God. While Moses had to await a divine command before he could inflict a plague in Exodus, here he is given authority in advance to act.

- One of the questions that arises in regard to the ability of the **two witnesses** to **shut up the sky for 3 ½ years and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they desire** is **WHY? Why does God given them this power?**

- The answer is, for the same reason God gave Moses and Elijah the power to do what they did during their earthly ministries . . . to authenticate them as being from God. We see this explanation in Exodus 4, when Moses asks God, “what if the people will not believe me or listen to what I say?”

**Exodus 4:1-5—** *1 Then Moses answered and said, "What if they will not believe me, or listen to what I say? For they may say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.'" 2 And the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" And he said, "A staff." 3 Then He said, "Throw it on the ground." So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. 4 But the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand and grasp it by its tail"—so he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand— 5 **that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.**"*

**Exodus 4:29-31—** *29 Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the sons of Israel; 30 and Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. **He then performed the signs in the sight of the people.** 31 **So the people believed;** and when they heard that the LORD was concerned about the sons of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed low and worshiped.*

- When the **two witnesses** perform their miracles even the hard-hearted unbelieving **earth-dwellers** will not doubt that they are sent from God.

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- But while the world is unable to kill God's **two witnesses** for 3 ½ years, at the end of that time, in the very last days before the Lord's return, **they will be unexpectedly killed . . . by the beast.**

**Revelation 11:7—** *And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them.*

- In the phrase, **when they have finished their testimony**, we are reminded that theirs was a God-given mission. And, as we see in v. 7, that ministry has a finite appointed time. It is God who sovereignly determines when their mission is **finished**.
  - And, as we read in v. 7, when God sovereignly determines their mission is complete, **God will sovereignly ordain that the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them.**
- Here, for the first time, the term **the beast** (Gr. *thērion*) is introduced. In the book of Revelation the term **the beast** will be used **36 times**.
  - **The term, the beast**, signifies “a beast of prey, one with a ravenous appetite, a carnivore like a lion or a panther.” It connotes a cunning of unreasoning violence that acts according to its cruel nature.

- Here in Revelation the term, ***the beast***, is used to identify **the antichrist**. **The *beast* is not Satan. In Revelation Satan is referred to as *the dragon*.**
- In Daniel, the term ***beasts*** was used to describe earthly empires that oppose the saints (cf Daniel 7:17,18, 23-25).
- We learn in chapter 13 that ***the beast*** is actually a human. He is a world ruler who behaves like a savage beast. The Greek word (Gr. *thērion*) refers to a beast of prey. So, this beast-like person will be like a carnivore with a ravenous appetite. He'll be like a wild animal. He'll be characterized by cunning and savage brutality. He will kill and he will maim, and he will destroy. In Revelation 11:7 we learn that ***the beast*** is an actual individual who is ultimately responsible for the deaths of the ***two witnesses***.
- In Revelation 11:7 the phrase, ***the beast comes up out of the abyss***, denotes the source of his power . . . it is from the ***abyss***, the domain of demons.
  - **In other words . . . and importantly . . . *the beast*** is not a being **residing in the abyss**, but is a man **energized by** the demonic presence and power coming from ***the abyss***. One could possibly argue that this is a demonic possession, although not by Satan, himself. **He is a human ruler who is satanically empowered and controlled. He is the antichrist.**
- And in Revelation 11:7 we learn what ***the beast*** will be empowered to do that the rest of the world could not. He will ***make war with them, and overcome them and kill them***.
  - But ***the beast's*** success is not by his own strength or might. It is by the sovereign will of God to permit the ***two witnesses*** to be killed.
- Then, to demonstrate the level of hatred and animosity ***the beast*** and the world have toward the ***two witnesses***, Revelation 11:8 describes what happens after they are killed.

***Revelation 11:8— And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt where also their Lord was crucified.***

(See Psalm 79:1-7)

- In the phrase, ***and their bodies will lie in the street of the great city***, we see the intentional and ultimate degradation that can be inflicted on a vanquished foe . . . to be left unburied, lying in the street like trash.
- In Revelation 11:8 we see a reference to ***the great city***. Here in v. 8 the location is actually referred to in three different ways: ***the great city, which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt*** and, finally, ***where also their Lord was crucified***.
  - It is this final reference . . . ***where their Lord was crucified*** . . . that tells is the location. It is Jerusalem. **But what do the other references mean or refer to?**
  - **First**, the term, ***the great city*** is a reference to the fact that of all the cities in the world, throughout history, Jerusalem has always been the most prominent. Even today Jerusalem is the focus of the world's attention. It is not the largest or the richest, but it is the focus of the attention of the world.

- **Second**, it the identifier, **which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt**, the term **mystically** (Gr. *pneumatikos*) literally means “spiritually,” signifying the term here is used allegorically or metaphorically.
  - **Sodom** and **Egypt** are not the real names of this city. Their end times notoriety for immorality and idolatry make the references to **Sodom and Egypt** figurative in their likeness.
  - **Egypt** is a symbol of oppression and slavery. Both were known for their hatred of God and His people.
- The **third** phrase, **where also their Lord was crucified**, clearly identifies the city as Jerusalem and where Antichrist’s (**the beast**) power will be consolidated (2 Thess 2:3,4).

- Then, following the defeat and humiliation of the **two witnesses**, in Revelation 11:9-10 we see the world’s reaction to **the beast’s** victory . . .

**Revelation 11:9-10—** *9 And those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. 10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.*

- The phrase **the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations** may be limited to those present in Jerusalem at the time, but there is no reason to place this limit on them. It is very likely, since the infliction of judgment (lack of rain and the many plagues) were world-wide that all **the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations of the entire earth** will see and rejoice over the deaths of their tormentors.
  - With technology allowing real-time world-wide coverage of world events, the whole world will be able to see these events happening in real time.
  - The fact that the **two witnesses** will lie, dead, in the street for 3 ½ **days** is symbolic, since their ministry lasts for 3 ½ **years**.
- Revelation 11:10 describes the world-wide euphoria and celebration that accompanies the murder of the **two witnesses** . . . **And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry; and they will send gifts to one another because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.**
  - As Pastor Tom Pennington says, the deaths of the **two witnesses** will be celebrated as **dead prophets day** or a hellish Christmas as **those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry; and they will send gifts to one another**. There will be world-wide celebration.
- And why the celebration? **Because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.**
  - The world will see God’s **two witnesses** not as evangelists in service to God, but as tormentors who made their life hellish.

- But their celebration will be short-lived.

**Revelation 11:11— And after the three and a half days the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were beholding them.**

- Then, while the world watches and celebrates, something unexpected happens . . . **they stand on their feet**. Just as Lazarus was four days in the tomb, the **two witnesses** were well and truly dead. So there is worldwide shock when the **two witnesses** suddenly receive **the breath of life from God and stood on their feet**.
  - You can imagine the feeling of celebration quickly turns to one of great dread as **great fear fell upon those who were beholding them**.
- Then, having been resurrected, the **two witnesses** are raptured back to heaven . . .

**Revelation 11:12— And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies beheld them.**

- The use of the pronouns **they** and **them** in v. 12 beg the question, **who hears and sees what happens to the two witnesses after their resurrection?**
  - It seems that **they and them** refers to the **two witnesses**. But in the closing phrase of v. 12 it appears that the whole world witnesses them go up into heaven.
  - When the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven, in Acts 1:9, only the apostles saw Him lifted up into the clouds. But here in Revelation 11:12 it appears that the whole world . . . **their enemies** . . . witness the rapture of the **two witnesses**.
- And then, as we see in Revelation 6:12, at the breaking of the sixth seal, and in Revelation 8:5, at the breaking of the seventh seal, there is **a great earthquake**. And Revelation 11:13 reveals the result of the **earthquake**.

**Revelation 11:13— And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; and seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.**

- As a result of the **earthquake** we then see that **a tenth of the city fell**. This describes a literal physical destruction of Jerusalem. But, once again, the destruction is not total, but only a portion. Once again God gives men an opportunity to repent of their sinfulness.
  - Likewise, **7,000 people were killed in the earthquake**. Not the entire population, or even a majority of the population.
  - But here in this event we learn that **the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven**.
    - Evidence supports the view that this is a genuine repentance. **This event comes toward the end of the bowl judgments** . . . that is, **the end of the Tribulation**. And since the inhabitants

of Jerusalem will be mostly Jews, this could very well be the future repentance of Israel that will accompany the second coming.

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- Here, in Revelation 11:1-13, we have the interlude explanation of God sending His **two witnesses** to evangelize the world. Because their ministry is in Jerusalem, the capital of Israel . . . **and** because a great percentage of the occupants of Jerusalem are and will continue to be Jews . . . **it is likely that those who are terrified and give glory to the God of heaven after the resurrection of the two witnesses will be Jews.**

- Why do I say this? For several reasons.

**First**, the **two witnesses** will be present on the earth during the second half of the Tribulation. And since their earthly ministry takes place over the period of 3 ½ years, that means they will be killed by **the beast** at the end of the Tribulation, just prior to the Second Coming of Christ.

- Chronologically the murder of the **two witnesses** will occur as the last of the seven bowl judgments are being poured out on the earth.

- **Second**, we learn in the Old Testament that there will be a great number of Jews who receive faith at the end of the Tribulation, in fulfillment of Zechariah 12 and 13, and is affirmed by the apostle Paul in Romans 11 . . .

**Zechariah 12:10—** “And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that **they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.**”

**Zechariah 13:8-9—** <sup>8</sup> “And it will come about in all the land,” Declares the LORD, “That **two parts in it will be cut off and perish; But the third will be left in it.** <sup>9</sup> **And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'**”

**Romans 11:25-26—** <sup>25</sup> For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in; <sup>26</sup> and **thus all Israel will be saved**

- As you read these Zechariah and Romans passages, we learn that at the end of the Tribulation only **one third** of the Jews will remain alive. **Two thirds of the Jews will be killed by the beast.** But the **one third** that survive to the end will have the **hardening** that Paul speaks of in Romans 11:25 removed from their hearts and they will be given faith in **Me whom they have pierced.**
  - And it is this **one third** of Israel that will receive faith and protection from God and it is they who will enter into the Lord’s Millennial Kingdom.
- Pastor Tom Pennington writes of this promise by God to rescue **one third** of the Jews at the end of the Tribulation . . . “Revelation 11 is the fulfillment of God’s longstanding covenant promises to redeem

His people and the prophecy that Paul made in Romans 11. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. He will, in fact, preserve them, a portion of them, until that future day when a believing remnant will be saved, and they will be saved through the ministry of these two remarkable witnesses - likely, Moses and Elijah. When you look at those attributes, recognize that those are not only true toward the Jews, they are eternally true toward us who are His people in the church as well."

- The interlude of the recommissioning of John and the ministry of the two witnesses is finished and John now resumes the chronology of the tribulation...the seventh trumpet angel.

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## **Revelation 11:14-19**

### **The Seventh Trumpet**

- With the interlude of Revelation 10—11:13 now complete, Revelation 11:14 tells us that the ***second woe is past; behold the third woe is coming quickly.***

***Revelation 11:14— The second woe is past; behold the third woe is coming quickly.***

- Recall that the ***first woe*** is the release of the demon locusts under the fifth trumpet judgment, Rev 9:1-12. The ***second woe*** is the **sixth trumpet** with a 200 million horsemen army given authority to kill 1/3 of mankind (Rev 9: 13-21).
- The phrase ***coming quickly*** is usually reserved for the imminence of Christ's return and describes the coming of the ***third woe*** (Rev 2:16; 3:11; 22:7,12,20). The **imminence**, as used in this verse, stems from the fact that the events of the seventh trumpet are those that lead into and include the second coming.
  - **The seventh trumpet is the crescendo of God's judgments as each of the seven bowl judgments are poured out in rapid succession.**

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***Revelation 11:15— And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."***

- While the blowing of the seventh trumpet in Revelation 11:15 signals the beginning of the last of the trumpet judgments, the contents of the ***seventh trumpet . . . the third woe . . .*** will not be described until Revelation chapters 15-16, after a parenthetical section from Revelation 12-14 which reveals the various subplots of God's providence.
  - Robert Thomas states that "the sounding of the seventh trumpet brings a great heavenly celebration over the anticipated establishment of God's kingdom on earth (Rev. 11:15-19), but a disclosure of the subject matter of the (final) trumpet awaits an extensive examination of background matters. Revelation 12:1—14:20 is necessary to comprehend the final trumpet's contents once they are divulged."

- The phrase, **a loud voice**, appears 19 times in Revelation, used of the voice of God or those speaking with His authority. But here in Revelation 11:15 we have the only time in Revelation that the plural . . . **voices** . . . is used. Revelation 11:15 says, **there arose loud voices in heaven**.
  - We aren't told who these **voices** belong to, but it seems very likely that these are the **voices** of the angels in heaven and of redeemed men. **It is the entire composition of heaven . . . angelic and human.**
- **And what are these voices saying? "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."**
  - Last year our church choir learned Handel's **Hallelujah Chorus**. And singing the bass part, one of the difficult sections was one in which the bass part was separate from the rest of the chorus. For this reason, I spent a lot of time learning this tricky section of the chorus. And, amazingly, that tricky section was composed of these exact words . . . **"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ and of His Christ . . . and He will reign forever and ever.**
  - So, when I read these words, they have a profound effect on me because I spent so much time learning to sing them properly. And the thought that I'll again sing them in heaven is truly exhilarating.
  - Pastor Tom Pennington notes that these words, in the Greek, have a lyrical rhythm. Yes, they do! Handel wrote them into his majestic Hallelujah Chorus!
- Tom Pennington also makes an excellent observation regarding Revelation 11:15. Pennington points out that these voices in heaven sing of **the kingdom of this world**. Note that **kingdom** is not plural . . . **kingdoms** . . . but singular.
  - This is significant because, ultimately, every **kingdom of this world** originates from a single **kingdom of this world** that is ruled by Satan. There is really only one **kingdom of this world**. It is the kingdom that stands in opposition to God.
  - As John MacArthur says, "All of the world's diverse national, political, social, cultural, linguistic, and religious groups are, in reality, one kingdom under one king. That king is known in Scripture by many names and titles, most commonly, the devil and Satan."
  - Satan is the ruler . . . He is still the ruler . . . of all the worldwide kingdoms that stand in rebellion to God.
- Also of significance in v. 15 is the phrase, **the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord**. The verb **has become** is a **proleptic** (looking ahead) use of the **Greek aorist tense**. **It is used this way when an event that is still future is so absolutely certain it can be spoken of as if it's in the past.**
  - **In other words**, though the establishment of Christ's Millennial Kingdom has not yet occurred, **temporally . . . in time . . .** its fulfillment is so certain that God speaks of it as having already been completed. This demonstrates God inviolable sovereign will in all things.

- For this reason, note that when the seventh angel sounds, yet no earthly activity immediately resumes. Instead, a dramatic heavenly announcement (Rev 11:15b) and a hymn of thanksgiving (Rev 11:16-18) follow.
- **So, here in Revelation 11:15 God is declaring that Satan's *kingdom* . . . his tenant rule over this world . . . is now at an end and the Lord Jesus Christ is instituting His *kingdom*, beginning with the Millennial Kingdom, here on earth. And Jesus Christ will reign *forever and ever*.**
- This declaration in Revelation 11:15 fulfills the promise of Messiah's coming *kingdom* found in Psalm 2 and in the prophecies of Daniel . . .

*Psalm 2—* ***1 Why are the nations in an uproar,  
And the peoples devising a vain thing?  
2 The kings of the earth take their stand,  
And the rulers take counsel together  
Against the LORD and against His Anointed:  
3 "Let us tear their fetters apart,  
And cast away their cords from us!"  
4 He who sits in the heavens laughs,  
The Lord scoffs at them.  
5 Then He will speak to them in His anger  
And terrify them in His fury:  
6 "But as for Me, I have installed My King  
Upon Zion, My holy mountain."  
7 "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'Thou art My Son,  
Today I have begotten Thee.  
8 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance,  
And the very ends of the earth as Thy possession.  
9 'Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron,  
Thou shalt shatter them like earthenware."  
10 Now therefore, O kings, show discernment;  
Take warning, O judges of the earth.  
11 Worship the LORD with reverence,  
And rejoice with trembling.  
12 Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way,  
For His wrath may soon be kindled.  
How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!***

*Daniel 2:34-35, 44—* ***34 "You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. 44 And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.***

*Daniel 7:13-14, 18, 22, 27— <sup>13</sup> "I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. <sup>14</sup> And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed. <sup>18</sup> 'But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.' <sup>22</sup> . . . and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom. <sup>27</sup> 'Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.*

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- Then, in response to *all the loud voices in heaven singing, ""The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever,"* in v. 16 we then see *the twenty-four elders* lead the heavenly host in worship by *falling on their faces and worshipping God*.

*Revelation 11:16— <sup>16</sup> And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, <sup>17</sup> saying, "We give Thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who was, because Thou hast taken Thy great power and hast begun to reign. <sup>18</sup> And the nations were enraged, and Thy wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to Thy bond-servants the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear Thy name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth."*

- The worship of *the twenty-four elders* is recorded in Revelation 11:17-18.

**First**, the *twenty-four elders* praise God, *the Almighty*, which acknowledges and praises God for His omnipotent sovereignty.

**Second**, the *twenty-four elders* worship God for His **self-existence and eternity** with the phrase, *who art and who was*.

- Being **self-existent** means that God has not beginning or end. God is uncaused by anything or anyone and everything is caused by Him.
- **Notice** that the phrase, *who is and who was* omits the usual third part, *and who will be*. **Why is this third part of the phrase left out?**
  - Because with the seventh trumpet the Lord Jesus is viewed as having already come and having already established His kingdom. **In other words**, the Lord's kingdom is not coming . . . it has now come. It's promised coming is now fulfilled.

**Third**, having praised God for who He is, the *twenty-four elders* then state the things for which they give the Lord **thanks and praise** . . . *because Thou hast taken Thy great power and hast begun to reign*.

- Having promised long ago that He would evict Satan and institute His kingdom on earth, the Lord is now fulfilling that promise. With God's infinite power, He is now beginning to reign on the earth.

**Fourth**, as the Lord institutes His kingdom, **He is also pouring out His wrath** on those on the earth who opposed Him . . . *And the nations were enraged, and Thy wrath came.*

- As he did in v. 15, John uses the **proleptic** (looking ahead) **aorist tense** verb in the phrase *Thy wrath came*. The use of this verb tense again is used to speak of **a future event as though it has already come to pass because it's fulfillment is certain**.
- **But notice** that God's wrath is in response to *the nations being enraged*. The word *enraged* (Gr. *orgisthesan*) means "**defiant rage**" and denotes hostility against God. This **defiant rage and hatred of God** will be on full display when the armies of the earth assemble against Him at Armageddon (cf. Rev 16:14,16,19; 20:8,9)
- The words here are a repeat of the opening verses of Psalm 2 . . .

*Psalm 2—<sup>1</sup> Why are the nations in an uproar,  
And the peoples devising a vain thing?  
<sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth take their stand,  
And the rulers take counsel together  
Against the LORD and against His Anointed:  
<sup>3</sup> "Let us tear their fetters apart,  
And cast away their cords from us!"*

- Here we are reminded that God's wrath is not arbitrary or capricious. God, the Holy Creator, is hated by the world unjustly. Therefore, He is just in his judgment and pouring out of His wrath who unjustly accuse and hate Him.

**Fifth, and finally**, the *twenty-four elders* praise God and remind us that **God's judgment is coming upon all mankind . . . and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to Thy bond-servants the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear Thy name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.**

- The judgment spoke of here in Revelation 11:18 includes **both righteous** (Rev 20:4) **and the wicked** (Rev 20:11). No attempt is made here to distinguish between the different phases of judgment, just that both will be accomplished. Judgment of the righteous and of the wicked are elaborated in the closing chapters of Revelation.
- With the end of the Tribulation **there is coming God's remunerative and retributive justice upon mankind.**

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• **What is God's remunerative and retributive justice?**

- God's **remunerative justice** refers to **the distribution of rewards to the saints**. These rewards are, most significantly, eternal salvation by grace through faith. Here in Revelation 11:18 these are

identified as *Thy bond-servants the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear Thy name, the small and the great*

- The greatest reward we can ever receive is rescue from God's wrath. And, amazingly, this reward is for something we don't even do. We are rescued from God's wrath by His electing grace. We contribute nothing, yet we receive a reward for what Christ does in us.
- But there are also **crown rewards** that are given by God to the redeemed. These **crown rewards** are listed in Scripture as *the crown of righteousness* (2 Timothy 4:8), *the crown of life* (James 1:12), and *the crown of glory* (1 Peter 5:4).
- On the other hand, God's **retributive justice** refers to the infliction of retribution . . . punishment . . . upon the reprobate in the form of God's divine wrath being poured out upon them. These are identified in Revelation 11:18 as *those who destroy the earth*.
- This reference to *those who destroy the earth* is not a reference to pollution. In biblical terms, *those who destroy the earth* are **those who pollute and corrupt the earth with their sin**. When Adam sinned in the garden, sin not only entered mankind, but it entered all of creation. And since that time the earth has suffered the effects of sin as we have. We see this stated by Paul in Romans 8:20-22 . . .

*Romans 8:20-22— 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that **the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.** 22 For we know that **the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.***

- This retributive justice is the just penalty incurred by the lost for their refusal to believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. In refusing God's rescue for their sin by the blood of Christ on the cross, the unbelieving members of humanity will be condemned to suffer the penalty for their sins by enduring God's eternal wrath in the Lake of Fire.

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- John then closes this chapter of Revelation by observing additional **proleptic events** . . .

*Revelation 11:19— And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm..*

- Here in Revelation 11:19 the reference to *the temple of God which is in heaven* refers to the **temple** which the earthly **temple** is patterned after.
- The event of the opening of the temple is very probably the same event that is seen fulfilled in Revelation 15:5, where the chronological progression of judgments resumes with the introduction of the seven bowls.

**Revelation 15:5-6—** *5 After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened, 6 and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple . . . .*

- Next, John observes that ***the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple***. This observation brings a difficult question . . . **is this the ark that once was in the earthly temple that has been lost for more than 2500 years?**
    - The ***ark of the covenant*** was part of the temple worship. It symbolized God's presence in the holy of holies in the temple and was the place where the annual **Day of Atonement** was observed. But sometime near or prior to the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians in 605 B.C. the ark disappeared. No one knows, for certain, where it went or where it is now. Here a few theories on what happened to ***the ark of the covenant*** . . .
      - Some say the ark was destroyed when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the temple (cf. 2Ki 25:9; Jer 3:16)
      - Some say the ark was taken as a trophy by Nebuchadnezzar and placed in the Babylonian treasury, along with the other temple implements that were plundered in 605 B.C.
      - Some say the ark was removed by Shishak, the Egyptian pharaoh, in 925 B.C., in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign over Israel, when he sacked Jerusalem and carried off treasures from the palace and the temple (cf. 1Ki 14:25-26).
      - Some believe the ark was removed from the temple by Manasseh, who defiled the temple when he set up an idol in the temple (cf. 1Chron 33:1-7).
      - Jewish tradition has it that the prophet Jeremiah removed the ark and hid it in a cave on Mt Sinai, prior to the Babylonian captivity, where it will remain until the final restoration of Israel (cf. 2 Mac 2:4-8)
      - A popular current view is that the ark is safely hidden in a chamber deep under the city of Jerusalem, ready to be revealed and placed in the holy of holies in the third temple, when it is constructed during the Tribulation.
      - And, finally, some scholars believe that God removed the ark to heaven for safe keeping.
    - Since the ark is of great importance to Israel, the fact that there is no mention of it being destroyed, stolen or hidden argues that God has placed it somewhere for safe keeping only known by Him. **For John, a Jewish Christian, the appearance of the ark would certainly signify that the visions to follow would be pertinent to Israel and God's dealings with them.**
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- Finally, John closes v. 19 with the observation that ***there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.***

- This **storm theophany** ends the heavenly response to the sounding of the seventh trumpet. The ***flashes of lightning, sounds and peals of thunder, earthquake and a great hailstorm*** manifest the divine presence and wrathful judgment of God and connects to Rev 15:5.
- John MacArthur writes of Revelation 11:15-19, "the message of the seventh trumpet is that Jesus Christ is the sovereign King of kings and Lord of lords. He will one day take the rule of the earth away from the usurper, Satan, and from earth's petty human rulers. History is moving inexorably toward its culmination in Christ's earthly reign. When He returns, He will bring covenant blessings to the redeemed but eternal judgment to those who reject Him."