

Revelation - Chapter 10 & 11

The Mighty Angel, Two Fearless Witnesses & The Seventh Trumpet

John has just experienced what is probably one of the longest periods of silence in heaven, thirty minutes, and then the seven trumpets were given to seven angels. God poured out His wrath as each trumpet blast sounded. There was devastation on the earth, then the seas, then the waters and then the heavens. The latter judgments produced demonic destruction of people. As the sixth trumpet sounds a total of over half of the world's population was killed (three billion using today's population count).

As distressing as it was for John to watch this heavenly vision from God and as distressing as it is for us to read it today, it is even more disturbing to read that many survivors will close their ears to God's message of mercy and grace and reject the preaching of the 144,000 Jewish missionaries, choosing instead to accept God's wrath that will continue to increase in severity.

Limits are placed on the early judgments reminding us that God will still be exercising restraint allowing room for repentance and salvation even in the midst of wrath. The 144,000 Jewish missionaries will bring about the greatest revival every known.

An Interlude: The Little Book and Two Great Witnesses

Before the seventh trumpet sounds there is an interlude, which stretches from Revelation 10 to 11:14. This is the second interlude; the first interlude occurred between the sixth and seventh seals and revealed two groups of redeemed believers (the great multitude and 144,000 sealed Jews) that will be saved during the Tribulation.

This pause seems to allow John and all readers since to assimilate the startling truths that have been revealed to him. John is also recommissioned for the second half of his prophetic role. During these interludes God comforts His people that He has not forgotten them, that He is still in control, and that they will ultimately be victorious.

The Little Book

John describes a strong angel appearing with a small book that was open. The content of the scroll is not revealed but may be the written authority given to the angel to fulfill his mission. ¹

John describes the strong angel quite differently from the other angels he has seen so far. The angel appears to arrive on a cloud with a rainbow around his head, face shining as brilliantly as the sun and feet like a pillar of fire. This description is similar to characteristics given Christ although does not appear to be Christ.

The angel cries out in a voice so loud he sounded like a lion roaring and seven peals of thunder rang out. John heard the seven peals of thunder speak out but was instructed by God not to write it down. There is a similar passage in Daniel 12:8-9: "I heard but did not understand. So I asked, 'My lord, what will be the outcome of these things?' He said, 'Go on your way, Daniel, for the words are secret and sealed until the time of the end. Daniel heard what God said, but he did not understand it.



The angel so massive in size that he puts one foot on the sea and the other on the land then takes a vow before God that there will be delay no longer. He has answered the question of the martyrs, "How long?" (Rev 6:10) and the prayers of the saints in Rev 8:3-5. The seventh trumpet is about to sound bringing the final judgment over a period of time which will include the seven bowl judgments (Rev 16:1-21). The time of God's patience is seen as having ended. The final number of the redeemed will be fulfilled and the judgment of the wicked will soon be complete.



Then the mystery of God will be fulfilled as God communicated to the Old Testament prophets. It is the end of the Gentile age and the destruction of Christ's enemies. Then the truth about God previously hidden will be revealed; the full manifestation of the divine power, majesty and holiness of God will be seen in the glorious return of Christ, the establishment of Christ's Millennial Kingdom and then the eternal state that will follow.

Ignoring God and the disregard of His majesty that characterize the present age, as well as the Great Tribulation, will exist no longer when Christ returns and manifests Himself in glory to the entire earth. In that day all, from the least to the greatest, will know the Lord - that is, know the important facts about Him. ²

Then God instructs John to take the book from the strong angel and eat it. John is told that it will be sweet as honey in his mouth but sour in his stomach. This isn't the first time one of God's prophets was told to eat a scroll. God instructed Ezekiel to eat a scroll (Eze 2:8-3:4). Consuming the scroll was a symbol of completely appropriating the message. Ezekiel spoke God's words of judgment against the people of Israel after eating the scroll.

In the same way John was told to fully consume, understand, write and speak the message of judgment that made his stomach sick. Much of God's truth tastes sweet to those who are His. To those who are not His, the book of Revelation reveals the divine judgments that will be poured out on the earth as God deals in wrath with an unbelieving and Christ-rejecting world.

Though John is an exile on Patmos and experiencing the bitterness of persecution, the Word is a precious assurance of his salvation, a basis for his present fellowship with Christ and the ground for his hope of glory to be fulfilled in the future. Like John, believers today should eat with the assurance that the Word will be sweet, whatever sufferings and trials they may endure in this life. ³

There are many wonderful and glorious symbols given to us as we review John's vision of the strong angel:

Description	Meaning
Arrives on a cloud	Arrives with power & brings judgment. Clouds are associated with the second coming of Christ (Rev 1:7; 14:14-16; Mat 24:30; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 21:27).
Rainbow on his head	God's covenant mercy endures even in the midst of judgment. God gave the rainbow as a sign that He would never again destroy the world by water. The rainbow will reassure God's people of His mercy in the midst of coming judgments.
Face like the sun	His brilliant radiant glory lit up the earth like the blazing sun symbolizing God's power, majesty & glory.
Feet like pillars of fire	Symbolizes his unbending holiness in stamping out His judgement on the earth - fire that consumes the ungodly.
Angel's massive size	Demonstrated God's sovereign authority to judge the entire earth (Ex 20:11; 1 For 10:26).
Angel's stance - right foot on sea and left on the land	Indicates a position of power and authority over the entire earth.
Angel's act	Symbolically anticipates the coming judgments of the 7th trumpet and the 7 bowls on the entire earth.
Angel's loud voice	Reflects the power & authority of God; OT prophets connect lion voice with judgment (Jer 25:30; Hosea 11:10; Joel 3:16; Amos 1:2; 3:8)
7 peals of thunder	Completeness & perfection
Thunder	Mark of judgment - Since it was not the voice of the angel it may have represented the voice of God (1 Sam 7:10; Psalm 18:13)
Angel's vow	Indicates the sovereign power of God our Creator.

Since John does not worship the angel as he would Christ, he does not give the angel a title as He does when seeing Christ, and Christ would not swear to Himself that He had created heaven and the earth, we can conclude that this angel is not Christ but as indicated by Scripture a strong angel.

Two Fearless Witnesses and The Seventh Trumpet

John witnesses several events that appear to occur during the last three and one half years of the Tribulation Period, the Great Tribulation. He sees the temple of God and also two unusual witnesses of God.

Measurement of the Temple

John is given a measuring rod, a bamboo-like cane that grew abundantly along the banks of the Jordan River and could reach a height of twenty feet. He is told to measure the temple of God which refers to the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, the inner parts of the temple. John is told not to measure the outer court. The outer court will be trampled by Gentiles under Gentile domination for forty-two months.



There are several instances in the Bible where Jerusalem and the temple are measured signifying that the area belongs to God. It is an evaluation of His property:

- In Zechariah 2, a man is seen measuring Jerusalem, a scene that evidently portrays God's divine judgment on the city.
- In Ezekiel 40, the temple of the future kingdom is carefully measured with a rod.
- In Rev 21:15-17 the new Jerusalem is measured.⁴

John is told that there will once again be a temple in existence during the Great Tribulation or the last three and one half years of the Tribulation period. As of John's writing of Revelation the second temple in Jerusalem had already been destroyed in A.D. 70 by the Romans. John's vision therefore is the third temple. In the book of Ezekiel we see the fourth temple built during the Millennial Period. God Himself will be the temple in the eternal state (Rev 21:22).

Many orthodox Jews today dream about and have begun the work to rebuild their temple, but its site is now occupied by the Islamic Dome of the Rock. It is the most sacred shrine in the Islamic world. Muslims believe it to be the place where Muhammad ascended to heaven. In today's political climate it would be almost impossible for the Jews to take that site from the Muslims but during the Tribulation, under the protection of Antichrist (Dan 9:24-27), the Jews will be able to rebuild their temple. This will occur during the first three-and-one-half years of the Tribulation.

As we will see later in this study, during the Great Tribulation this temple John sees is desecrated and becomes the home of an idol of the world ruler. (2 Thes 2:4;

Rev 13:14-15; Dan 9:27; 12:11). Although God permits Gentile dominion and persecution of Israel during the second half of the Tribulation, God will also judge Israel's persecutors.



The Two Witnesses

The two witnesses will prophesy for exactly three-and-one-half years in Jerusalem, which has become so wicked and evil in the Tribulation it is described as “Sodom and Egypt” and also “where their Lord was crucified”. This time period matches Daniel’s prophecy of seven years and the seventieth week. Their ministry will likely go from the midpoint of the

Tribulation until just before the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

They will preach the gospel, participating in Jesus’ declaration that, “the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matt 24:14). They will likely pronounce that the disasters falling on the world are the judgments of God and they will be used by God to bring salvation to Israel. They will probably warn about God’s final outpouring of judgment and that eternal hell will follow. Their gospel preaching will be part of a final expression of God’s grace offered to the unbelieving world.⁵

The two witnesses are wearing mourning clothes. They are expressing their great sorrow for the unbelieving world, the desecration of the temple, the oppression of Jerusalem, and the rise of Antichrist.

God grants these two witnesses the power to pour out divine judgments upon the earth and they need divine protection in order not to be killed. They are given power to stop the rain, turn the waters to blood and strike the earth with plagues as often as they need to carry out their mission.

They will stop the rain for three-and-one-half years which will cause further widespread devastation of crops and loss of human and animal life through thirst and starvation as the third trumpet judgment has already resulted in the poisoning of one-third of the earth’s fresh water supply.

Because their miracles and plagues will intensify the torment people are experiencing they will be greatly hated and feared. People will search for ways to destroy them.

When attacked they will destroy their enemies with fire flowing out of their mouth. They will be unstoppable as long as God deems.

When their mission is complete at the end of the Great Tribulation, God lifts their protection and they are killed by Antichrist, the beast, who is empowered by Satan. This is the first of thirty-eight references in Revelation to a beast. This unholy trinity is the satanic counterfeit of the divine Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit:

- The beast out of the pit - Satan
- The beast rising out of the sea - the world dictator, Antichrist (Rev 13:1)
- The beast rising out of the earth - the false religious leader of that day (Rev 13:11)

The two witnesses' bodies are laid in the street of Jerusalem for three-and-one-half days which will be a horrible insult to Jews whose custom is to be buried immediately. The unrepentant sin-hardened masses will gloat along with the Antichrist and glorify him for his victory over the two irritating preachers.

John states that everyone all over the world will be able to see their dead bodies lying in the street of Jerusalem. This may occur by satellite transmission however, since everyone does not have access to satellite transmission this may occur by God's hand much like described in Rev 1:7:

"Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen." (Revelation 1:7, NASB95)

Because they believe that Satan has won the victory for them and they will no longer be tormented by God's prophets, all that oppose God will have a giant victory party to celebrate the death of God's prophets. They will even exchange gifts in celebration. Ironically, this is the only mention in Revelation of rejoicing on earth. Sadly, this represents the finality of their rejection of God.

However, their worldwide party will be cut short when God brings the two witnesses suddenly back to life and they ascend into heaven. The sight of this incredible miracle of God along with the loud voice from heaven telling the two witnesses to "Come up here," will put a great fear in those watching.



Immediately after the resurrection of the two witnesses, there was a great earthquake killing seven thousand, based on the Greek text probably prominent people, perhaps leaders. Once again they acknowledge God but do not necessarily accept Him as Lord and Savior. For the unbelieving world, there is given a sobering warning that the second woe is past and the third woe is coming quickly. The seventh trumpet will soon sound bringing with it the final, violent bowl judgments and the return of Christ in glory to set up His kingdom.

Who are these two witnesses? John does not reveal who they are and much speculation has been made over the centuries. Throughout history God has faithfully sent His prophets to call sinners to repentance. Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jonah and many others confronted both wayward Israel and sinful Gentile nations.

Perhaps God selects his two greatest prophets, Elijah and Moses to carry out their prophetic office and shine for God in earth's darkest hour. The powers given to the two witnesses were similar to the powers given both Elijah and Moses.

Elijah called down fire from heaven (2 Kings 1:10, 12) and pronounced a three-and-one-half year drought on the land (1 Kings 17:1; James 5:17), the same length as the drought brought by the two witnesses (Rev 11:6). Moses turned the waters of the Nile into blood (Ex 7:17-21) and announced the other plagues on Egypt recorded in Exodus 7-11. ⁶

Jewish tradition expected Moses and Elijah to return in the future. Malachi 4:5 predicted the return of Elijah, and the Jews believed that God's promise to raise up a prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18) necessitated his return (John 1:21; 6:14; 7:40).



Both Moses and Elijah (perhaps representing the Law and the Prophets) appeared with Christ at the transfiguration, the preview of the second coming of Christ. (Matthew 17:3). And finally, the two witnesses' ascension to heaven is reminiscent of the ascension of Elijah (2 Kings 2:11) and the mysterious death and burial of Moses (Deut 34:5-6).

A righteous prophet is always a torment to an evil generation. The two witnesses are an obstacle to evil, unbelief and satanic power prevalent in that time. The Word of God makes it clear that it is often possible to silence a witness to the truth by death, but such action does not destroy the truth that

has been announced. The power of God will be ultimately revealed. If this is at the end of the Great Tribulation, only a few days remain before Christ comes back in power and great glory. ⁷

The Seventh Trumpet

The seventh angel blew the seventh trumpet and John hears great voices in heaven. This is in contrast to previous proclamations where a single voice makes the announcement. There is a great symphony of voices expressing unrestrained joy that the power of Satan is to be forever broken and Christ is to reign supreme.

The seven bowls of judgement are contained in the seventh trumpet; the destruction of earthly power is already under way. Heaven rejoices as if the long-anticipated day when Christ will establish His kingdom had already arrived, although some time on earth must elapse before that actually happens.



Christ is declared to reign forever and ever. Christ will reign during the Millennial Period and then continue to reign in the new heaven and the new earth. Never again will the earth be under the control of humans.

The twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God appear for the eighth time falling on their faces giving thanks to God because He has manifested His power and assumed authority over the earth. Psalm 2:9 has been fulfilled:

"You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.' " (Psalm 2:9, NASB95)

The seventh trumpet reveals a comprehensive statement giving the main features of the transition from the kingdom of earth to the Kingdom of God:

- The nations have a settled burning resentment against God. They will eventually assemble armies to fight God.
- The wrath of God is certain and omnipotent. The day of grace will be gone. The desperate, last-ditch effort to keep Christ from establishing His kingdom will fail and they will be destroyed.
- The dead are judged. Probably refers to the righteous dead because the evil dead are raised after the Millennium.
- Prophets and the saints are rewarded.
- Destruction of those who oppose God and the resulting sin.

In general the Tribulation is a time of divine wrath, resurrection of the dead and their reward, and of dealing with those who oppose God. All these topics are further discussed in later chapters of Revelation.

Unbroken Fellowship

Also in the seventh trumpet is the promise to believers of unbroken fellowship with God forever. This fellowship is symbolized by the opening of the temple of God which is in heaven revealing the ark of His covenant. The covenant God has promised to men is now available in its fullness. This would have been unthinkable in the Old Testament temple when only the high priest entered the Holy of Holies once a year (Heb 9:7).

The ark symbolizes God's communion with the redeemed because that is where blood sacrifices were offered to atone for men's sins (Lev 16:2-16; Heb 9:3-7). Inside the ark was a golden jar holding the manna, Aaron's rod, and the tables of the covenant. All these symbolized that God would supply His people, He is sovereign over His people, gave His law to His people and entered into an eternal saving covenant with His people.



Then John hears again the sounds of judgment that are heard throughout the book of Revelation; flashes of lightning, sound and peals of thunder, earthquake, and hail storm. Heaven is the source of vengeance on unbelievers as well as covenant blessings for the redeemed. ⁸

Summary

The message of the seventh trumpet is that Jesus Christ is the sovereign King. The consummation of the ages will occur as Jesus takes his rightful rule of the earth away from Satan. At Jesus' second coming He will bring covenant blessings to the redeemed, but eternal judgment to those who reject Him.

If you have not accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, it is not too late. You too can be counted in the redeemed and spend eternity with God in Heaven. Please pray the Scripture below:

“that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”
(Romans 10:9–10, NASB95)