

# The Seventh Trumpet

📖 Revelation 11:15-19

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In the Book of Revelation, the sequence of judgments is contained in the little scroll, that's Revelation 5, and the way this works out, as the Lamb takes the scroll in Rev 6 is He breaks the first four seals, they're a group, most call them the four horsemen of the apocalypse, and they seem to trace the early career of the anti-Christ, then you have the fifth and sixth seals, and that's when the world can no longer explain these things away, there clearly is no other explanation than this is the wrath of God. After the sixth seal, in Rev 7 you have an interlude or intermission where you learn about the 144,000 Jews who are sealed and go out to testify to the nations in the midst of the coming seventh seal judgment. The result is a multitude come to faith in Jesus. At the end of the interlude John sees them victorious in the new heaven and new earth, which is after the millennium. So, John got a glimpse into the distant future in that chapter, all the way into Rev 21-22. Today we're going to get another glimpse into the distant future in Revelation 11 and I just wanted to point out the earlier one because there seems to be a pattern of occasionally getting a glimpse much further into the future. But before we get today's glimpse, after the first glimpse in Rev 7, the seventh seal was broken and out came seven trumpets. In Rev 8 we saw the first four trumpets sound and judgments came upon nature, then in Rev 9 the fifth and sixth trumpets sounded and judgments came upon man directly. That brings the world to the midpoint of the Tribulation. So, the big picture is that the first half will include the seals and the first six trumpets. In Rev 10 we see the little scroll and the seven peals of thunder and John being told not to write these judgments. This heightens the anticipation of what is coming in the second half of the Tribulation. They are revealed after the sixth trumpet but before the seventh and we don't know what the peals of thunder judgments are, but I'd place them in the second half of the Tribulation. Because we don't know what they are there will be some new revelation about God at that time. We're also told about the two witnesses and the Tribulation temple in Revelation for the first time.

Let's review this a little more intensely because this is just so interesting that God made this known and yet no one I've ever read really thinks through the significance of what this is telling us. I mean, when I read the commentaries, so much time is spent on saying, this view is wrong and that view is wrong and here's why and this is what I think it means. They're discussing the meaning of the words and the phrases and whether they are

literal or non-literal, which is fine, but when you spend so much time doing all of that, you don't have enough time to think about why God put it in the Bible. And now that I'm teaching through Revelation the second time, I'm having more time to think about what it's doing here and how it fits in a scenario. That's why this series is very different than the first series on Revelation. That one goes into detail on what the words mean and so forth. This one is more thought-provoking. It's much grander because it's trying to see the parts within the whole and how they might work in a real-life scenario. So, we still talk about who the two witnesses are, but more significantly, what are they doing, and why? And why in 11:1-2 is John told to measure the temple? This is the times of the Gentiles, when Jerusalem is trodden down by the Gentiles, but we're being told that during the times of the Gentiles for a period of 42 months, exactly half of the tribulation, the inner temple area is going to be taken over by God. And what's going to happen during that period is the Tribulation temple will be built and Jewish believers will be offering sacrifices on the altar. I took this to take place during the first half of the Tribulation because during the second half the anti-Christ is going to take over the Temple and the whole world will worship him in the Temple. To me it seems obvious that the two witnesses can't be in the second half, but most commentators put them in the second half. But doing that creates a number of very serious, and I would say, obvious, problems. I mean, would the two witnesses disobey Jesus' command in Matt 24:15-16 to flee Judea when they see the abomination of desolation? Does it even make sense that the two witnesses would be killed on the day of Christ's Second Coming and lie dead on the streets for three and a half days while the world celebrates? Of course not. The two witnesses simply won't fit in the second half. They have to witness in the first half, and we're being put on notice because during the time they control the inner court, the outer court and the rest of Jerusalem will still be under Gentile control.

Now those who come and worship will have to use secret passageways to safely get to the protected area of the Temple. Once they get in there it will be no problem because of the protection of the two witnesses. 11:3 tells us that the two witnesses will prophesy for a thousand two hundred and sixty days in sackcloth, the ancient garments of the prophets who were calling Israel to repent. And that is what they will do. In verse 4 they are said to be two olive trees and two lampstands. This is rooted in Zech 4 where Zerubbabel and Joshua rebuilt the temple in their day, enabled by the Holy Spirit in order to withstand the opposition and complete the Temple. And in the same way, the two witnesses will rebuild the temple, enabled by the Holy Spirit in order to withstand the opposition to the Temple and animal sacrifices. Look at how they control the area in verse 5. If anyone tries to hurt them, they'll breathe fire out of their mouth and just melt them. In verse 6 they'll also be able to inflict painful plagues on the world; no rain, and fresh water into blood. We're not told who these two witnesses will be but they're usually interpreted to be Moses and Elijah. But it's my conviction that they will be two different men who come in the spirit and power of Moses and Elijah and therefore resemble Moses and Elijah and the nation Israel will wonder if they are Moses and Elijah but they are not Moses and Elijah. Of course, Elijah is another personage and he will come before the great and terrible day of the Lord, but he is not included in these two and there's no reason to make him one of the two because the prophecy of Elijah in Malachi 4 is just that, a

prophecy of Elijah and no additional person is mentioned. Now, in verse 7, when they finish their ministry, which is at the midpoint, the anti-Christ will have just been killed and then raised so that he comes up out of the abyss indwelt by Satan, and he will make war with the two and kill them. In verse 8 their bodies will lie in the street for three and a half days in Jerusalem and in verse 9 the people of various peoples, tribes, languages and nations will look at them, and not permit them to be buried out of disrespect. In verse 10 the earthdwellers will celebrate over their death. But in verse 11 after three and a half days they will be resurrected and those who see will fear. Then in verse 12 they will ascend to heaven in a cloud as their enemies watch them. In verse 13 an earthquake will occur, a tenth of the city of Jerusalem will be destroyed and seven thousand killed. The rest will give glory to God. So, what this pericope is doing is answering several questions people talk about all the time but never refer to this chapter as the answer; 1) How will the Dome of the Rock be removed from the Temple Mount? By the two witnesses who take complete control of the area. 2) How will the Tribulation temple be built? Under the protection of the two witnesses. 3) How will people get away with public animal sacrifices? Under the protection of the two witnesses. See, God is taking over the Temple for three and a half years during the times of the Gentiles. 4) Why is the Tribulation temple considered a temple of God? Because it has divine sanction for that period of time. He sends His witnesses to testify of Jesus, the Messiah. And maybe the whole sacrificial system under Moses is re-instituted during that time so that they can testify that the sacrifices looked forward to Christ! I've been trying to figure out why. But the Jews missed the connection between the sacrifices in the past and Messiah's sacrifice, so maybe it's to make that connection, so they see that Jesus Christ is the One whom all the sacrifices looked forward to. And, of course, the worshippers are believing Jews, so the sacrifices may also be for fellowship. I don't know all the details. I just know that the Tribulation temple is considered a temple of God and that if it were not then the abomination of desolation committed in that temple would not be an affront to God, but it is, so it must be a sanctioned temple.

Today I want to look at the seventh trumpet in Rev 11:15-19. This actually progresses the narrative, in the sense that it moves us forward in the chronology of the Tribulation. But it actually goes much further than that, because many of the elements here take us to the end of the millennium. So, it's a passage like Rev 7 which starts at a time during the Tribulation but then stretches far into the distant future. These are grand, sweeping snapshots of prophecy. As for the timing, the seven peals of thunder uttered judgments that will take place during the first portion of the second half of the tribulation and so the seventh trumpet will probably sound around the midpoint of the second half. So, about that time, 11:15 says, **Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Messiah; and He will reign forever and ever."** This is a very interesting statement because when **the seventh angel sounded** nothing is recorded here as happening on earth. The kingdom is said to come but the kingdom doesn't begin until Rev 20. So it is difficult to see how it could come in 11:15. And if you keep reading Revelation 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15, no kingdom of God comes on earth and you can't even tell what effect the seventh trumpet had. So, what is the seventh trumpet? Well, if you turn to Rev 16:1 you see seven

angels with seven bowls. This is most likely the seventh trumpet. The seventh trumpet is the seven bowls. The reason we come to this conclusion, which is a deduction, is because previously when the seventh seal was broken, the seven trumpets came forth. So, we simply reason by deductive logic that the seventh trumpet is the seven bowls. Now if that is so, and it seems to be, then that is what we mean by the judgments being telescopic. The seventh seal is the seven trumpets and the seventh trumpet is the seven bowls. But what that would mean is that when the seventh trumpet sounds it's not a short blast but a blast that continues for the duration of the seven bowls. That gives us a structure.

Now, some try to connect this seventh trumpet with the last trumpet of 1 Cor 15:52, which signals the rapture, and if that's the way they go then they usually are trying to support a mid-trib timing of the rapture. But there are several reasons these two trumpets should not be connected but disconnected. First, as I already mentioned, the seventh trumpet is a continual blast that goes on for the duration of the bowls, and so a trump that resounds for a couple of years, whereas the last trumpet that signals the rapture is just a short blast. Second, when Paul wrote about the last trumpet in 1 Cor 15:52, the Revelation had not been written. Therefore, his readers did not even know about the seven trumpet judgments, much less the seventh trumpet. For Paul to have actually communicated something the trumpet he referred to would have to have some definite meaning for them. In reality, they understood the trumpet to be an instrument that signaled something important. Third, the last trumpet signals the change of believers alive on earth into resurrection bodies. But the seventh trumpet signals the six bowl judgments. Fourth, the seventh trumpet is the last in this series but not the last of all time, and in fact occurs after the last trumpet of 1 Cor 15:52. What people have to understand is that the word "last" does not have to mean "last of all time." It can simply mean, "last in a sequence." And in fact, other trumpets will be blown after the last trumpet such as the seventh trumpet here or the trumpet in Matt 24:31 which will be "after the tribulation." So, the last trumpet is not the last of all, nor is the seventh trumpet, nor even is the trumpet in Matt 24:31 since there will be other trumpets throughout the millennium. And so, trying to connect some or all of these trumpets is a bad idea, because the contexts just don't support the connection. But my main reason for bringing up the connection some make between the last trumpet and the seventh trumpet to prove a mid-trib rapture is simply to show that that identification is indefensible.

The **seventh angel** will **sound** about midway through the second half until the end. When it sounds there will be a response in heaven of **loud voices**. The plurality of **loud voices** are probably all of the voices in **heaven**. Now not all have pointed this out, but this is the greatest worship scene up to this point in the Revelation. Ed Hindson and Mal Couch noted, "The crescendo of worship that is expressed by the angelic choirs in this section is the most dramatic and climactic in the entire Apocalypse. It is the fulfillment of all the prophetic promises of the coming kingdom of God on earth."<sup>1</sup> That last sentence is why there is such an eruption of worship in heaven. The kingdom of God is coming to earth. And what is contained in the seventh trumpet is what will bring it to earth. It's not new that the kingdom of God would come. Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2 of a four-metal statue being struck and demolished by a stone that filled the earth pictured four successive Gentile kingdoms

and the stone the kingdom of God that would strike the kingdoms and grow to fill the whole earth. So, all the revelation of the seventh trumpet is doing is unveiling the specifics of how this will take place. Also, in Daniel 7, the vision of the four beasts followed by the Son of Man depicted the same four successive Gentile kingdoms followed by the kingdom of the Son of Man. So, the seventh trumpet is just giving us more detail about how these ancient prophecies will be fulfilled. And when heaven realizes that the seventh trumpet contains all that is necessary to bring in the kingdom of God, its inhabitants erupt in praise.

Their praise is significant. **The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.** First of all, note that there can be no kingdom now because the sounding of the seventh trumpet is still future. Yet if I were a betting man I'd bet that there's not a single pastor in this entire town that doesn't think the kingdom is now. That's because they've all bought into some form of replacement theology instead of the Bible. And yet this verse makes very clear that until the seventh angel sounds, the kingdom can't come. And the theology that the kingdom is now is a point that colors the rest of your theology. So it is a major point and no trivial issue. Second, note that **the kingdom** is singular, not plural. Now there are some manuscripts that have a plural here, but the best reading is the singular. What this means is that at the time the seventh trumpet sounds there will be only one **kingdom** in the world. It won't be a diversity of kingdoms like it is now. So by this time there will be one world government. Having said that, there will also be one world ruler. Who will he be? Ultimately Satan. Remember what Satan told Jesus in the temptations? If you bow down to Me I will give you all the kingdoms of the world." Kingdoms plural there, but by this time one world government and one world ruler. The ruler is Satan but the man through whom he rules will be the anti-Christ. And that's what Rev 12 and 13 are explaining. Rev 12 is about Satan; Rev 13 is about the anti-Christ. So, Satan will rule through anti-Christ during the second half of the Tribulation and that is why the second half is the anti-Christ's supernatural career. Third, note that the kingdom of the world must be replaced by **the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ**. In other words, the two kingdoms exist in the same sphere. This is because the kingdom of this world must be removed so that the kingdom of God can come in its place. And yet very few theologians, again, hold to this idea. They have the kingdom of God in believer's hearts or some other sphere, but not here on earth. But this verse proves that it will be on earth. What else is the entire Book of Revelation about? It's judgments that God will pour out upon the kingdom of this world so His kingdom can come.

Now all these truths amount to premillennialism. Premillennialism is the truth that Christ will return before the kingdom comes to earth. We are premillennial and if you are not premillennial you will not get along very well in this Church for very long because we discuss it so often. We think it is important and not a side point. And the reason we think it is important is because Adam's mandate to reign for God was never fulfilled, and we think it will be fulfilled in the last Adam. So, premillennialism is necessary because without it history and God's purposes are unfinished. And another reason we think it is important is because of the unconditional covenants made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the Twelve Tribes and David. We think that for God's integrity to be maintained He has to fulfill those covenants in the terms in which they were given, which include the land. Abraham wandered

around in the land but he never received any of the land. So, premillennialism is not a side truth. It's a crucial truth and it will take place when Christ returns.

Now when He does return, then His kingdom will be established and we are told here that it will continue **forever and ever** because **He will reign forever and ever**. There won't be a break in His reign. And the **He** is Christ. His reign begins at His Second Coming and continues for the entire duration of the one-thousand-years. But that's not the entire kingdom because once the kingdom begins it continues forever. So, the one-thousand years must simply be an aspect of the kingdom and then another aspect will pick up after the thousand years. And that indeed seems to be what 1 Cor 15:20-24 describes when it says, "then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power." So, the one-thousand-year aspect is focused on abolishing all rule and authority and power. And once that is done then the kingdom will continue in its eternal aspect. But ultimately Jesus **will reign forever and ever**. So, He will begin to reign at the beginning of the one thousand years and when it says He will hand over the kingdom to the God and Father it means that at that point the two will co-reign for all eternity. To summarize so far, Tony Garland said this, "The sounding of the seventh trumpet "proclaims the coming coronation of earth's rightful king, the answer to the prayer of the ages, 'thy kingdom come' [Mat. 6:10]...."<sup>2</sup>

This kingdom belongs to **our Lord and His Christ** and our **Lord** is a designation of our Father and **His Christ** is a reference to Messiah. When we see the title **Christ** we're talking about the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew Messiah. The word refers to being rubbed with oil, and is translated, "the anointed One." Jesus was anointed Messiah at His first coming but He will not be crowned King until His second coming. But at this point the kingdom is so certainly coming that it can already be said to **have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ**.

In 11:16, **And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God**. We haven't seen the **twenty-four elders** mentioned since Rev 5:8. We discussed earlier their two common identifications, either angels or men. We concluded that they are redeemed representatives of the Church, already raptured, resurrected and rewarded before the Tribulation begins. Here they are seen doing what they were seen doing before. They **fell on their faces**, a prostrated position, and **worshiped God**. What do we mean by worship? We mean appreciation. Worship can take many forms but central to it is appreciation for the one true God. Anything else is idolatry. In verse 17 we see their expression of their appreciation, **We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign**. Again, it sounds as if God has already begun to reign in the kingdom at the seventh trumpet. But the meaning of these past tenses is that it is so certain that He will take His great power and begin to reign that it can already be said to have taken place. Some, of course, will simply say that God reigns because He is sovereign. But the Bible clearly teaches that God has permitted others to rule such as Satan and kings, but that one day He will take over and use His great power and begin to reign Himself in a much more obvious way.

Now, verse 18 **And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great and to destroy those who destroy the earth.** Now it's this verse that is really a summary of everything from the Tribulation to the end of the Millennium. It's like John just backs off and gives us the big picture of prophecy. I say that because the things lumped into this verse occur at different times. There's no chronology here. It's at the beginning of the Tribulation when **the nations were enraged** and God's **wrath came**, at least by the sixth seal, because there they said to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come..." But then he jumps way ahead to after the millennial kingdom when it will be **time for the dead to be judged**. The **dead** are the unbelieving **dead**, and all unbelieving dead will **be judged** after the millennium at the Great White Throne Judgment. And the mention of **the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name** occurs at many times, depending on what group is in view. If it's the Church age believers discussed in Rev 2-3 then the time of their reward is after the rapture. If it's the Old Testament believers then the time of their reward is the Second Coming. So, the picture of this verse is more of a summary of Bible prophecy. And rather than make a big deal about the timing of this or that in this verse, the big issue is the justice of God. God is saying that God's justice will prevail. His wrath will come against the enraged nations because they are in continual rebellion against Him. His judgment of them will come because He is the ultimate judge. He will reward those who belong to Him because He is just. So it's a summary of the justice of God prevailing over both believers and unbelievers. The last phrase **and to destroy those who destroy the earth** is a picture of God's justice again. **Those who destroy the earth** are those who destroy it by sin. From the beginning man's sin has brought God's curse on the earth. It's idolatry, sexual immorality, lying, deceiving, hating, greed, malice, murder, gossip, arrogance, disobeying parents, et al that destroy the earth. They destroy the earth because sin corrupts the earth. But God is just and He will make it all right. So verse 18 is a picture of the justice of God being enacted perfectly.

In 11:19 some people think this verse should go with what follows in Rev 12, which is a picture of the history of Satan and his hatred of Israel. But I think it fits better with what we've been discussing about God's justice that will prevail in the remaining judgments. It says, **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.** Again, John saw the **temple of God** in heaven. This is the real temple after which Moses was instructed to make a copy. When it **was opened**, John was permitted to see **the ark of His covenant**. The ark of the covenant was part of the temple furniture that was placed within the Most Holy Place. It's appearance at this juncture is somewhat strange. However, when we recall that it held one of the two copies of the Mosaic Law its significance becomes clear. The Mosaic Law was the law God as King gave to the nation Israel. While other nations were not under this Law and the Church is not under this Law as a rule of life, it has and remains a standard that reveals God's holiness and man's failure to satisfy God's holy

demands. Therefore, because man has failed God must judge. Therefore, the **flashes of lightning, sounds and peals of thunder and quake and great hailstorm** John saw in vision are divine forebodings of coming judgment because of man's failure to meet God's standards of holiness revealed by the Law. If they would realize their sinfulness and Christ's righteousness they could come to Him by faith and receive eternal life and be prepared for Him at His Second Coming and be granted kingdom entrance and reward according to faithfulness.

So, then the seventh trumpet contains everything that is in the seven bowls and so in it there is no more delay because at their consummation the King will have come in His kingdom. That is why heaven erupted with praise.

In conclusion, I'd like to just say a few words before I'm gone from this capacity for the summer. First, sorry to those of you who will be disappointed. But I know we will all be better off in the end. Sometimes the shortest way home is the longest way around. Second, be on guard for all the flock. The enemy is alive and well and his workers come from within and from without the local church. They may promote false doctrine or false practice so be on guard and do not believe gossip or murmurings as they are lies that could divide us. Third, remember the things I have taught you and how I have lived among you for thirteen years. Recall them often as I have endeavored to set an example among you, both in sound teaching and in sound living and remain true to that. Fourth, pray for me as I will be praying for you, that Christ would dwell within you richly and you would be able to comprehend the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ so that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Fifth, I commend you to God and the word of His grace which is able to build you up and give you a future inheritance in the kingdom. The grace of God is all-sufficient.

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<sup>1</sup> Hindson and Couch, *The Book of Revelation: Unlocking the Future*, 127.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book\\_of\\_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/11.html#46430](http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/11.html#46430)