

The Seventh Trumpet
Revelation 11:15-19
Dr. Steven R. Hereford

INTRODUCTION

1. We now come to the blowing of the seventh trumpet found in Revelation 11:15-19.
2. “We have been waiting since Revelation 8:13 for this third ‘woe’ to arrive and now it is here” (Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*), at least it’s introduction.
3. We do not see it’s pouring out until chapter 16.
4. Chapters 12-14 are “a digression” (MacArthur) where we will see Satan’s fall and his war in heaven with Michael and his angels, the beast and his false prophet, the 144,000 sealed saints, and the fall of Babylon.

Leon Morris says, “Once again John has brought us to the verge of final judgment and once again he breaks off to unfold further teaching in a new series of visions” (Revelation, p.148).

5. John first introduces the seventh seal found in Revelation 11:15-19.
6. Read Revelation 11:15-19.
7. We have just completed an interlude that occurs between the sixth and seventh trumpet.
8. In that interlude we saw *the little scroll* that John is told to

take out of the hand of the mighty angel in chapter 10 and eat it. It would be bitter to his stomach but sweet as honey in his mouth.

9. Then in chapter 11 we saw the measuring of the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there” (v.1) and then the “two witnesses.”
10. Both of these events took us back into the last half of Daniel’s 70th week.
11. The same will be true for chapters 12-15 and John gives us more details of this period.
12. As a note of comparison of the 7th trumpet with the 7th seal – in the opening of the 7th seal there was “silence in heaven for about half an hour” (8:1) but in the blowing of the 7th trumpet John says “there were loud voices in heaven.”
13. The 7th seal produced silence because of the horrific judgment that was to follow.
14. The 7th trumpet produced “loud voices” because in this trumpet judgment from which 7 bowl judgments will be poured out, “the wrath of God is complete” (15:1) and God reigns as the Sovereign King “forever and ever” (11:15).
15. Notice in verse 15 John says, “Then *the seventh angel sounded.*”

I. The Seventh Angel Sounded (vv.15-18)

The phrase, “Then the seventh angel sounded,” “establishes a chronological sequence that is important to recognize. The seventh trumpet must be the third and final woe” (The Revelation Commentary).

Verse 14 says, “The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.”

Three “woes” are mentioned in 8:13 coming from the voice of the flying eagle. He said, “Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!”

The first three trumpets have just sounded, so by this statement trumpets five, six, and seven are the three “woes” which “are about to sound.”

The first “woe” occurred in 9:1-12. The second “woe” occurred in 9:13 and now the third “woe” in 11:15.

“The seventh trumpet not only announces consuming judgment on unbelievers, but also the coronation of the Lord Jesus Christ” (John MacArthur, Revelation 1-11, p.309).

A. There were Loud Voices in Heaven (v.15)

In verses 15-18 there are “voices” mentioned. Notice that the word “voices” is in the plural.

“Though its effects on earth were delayed (as with the seventh seal; 8:2-5), there was an immediate response in heaven when the seventh angel sounded his trumpet” (John MacArthur, Revelation 1-11, p.310).

1. The source of the first “voices” is not identified other than coming from “heaven” (v.15)

If you remember Rev.4:5 said, “And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and *voices...*”

In chapter 19 those voices are heard again but this time as a “loud voice of a great multitude in heaven” (vv.1-6).

The “voices” in 11:15 is heard saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”

- a) That proclamation is obviously connected to the effects of the seventh trumpet
- b) There is unrestrained joy that the power of Satan is to be forever broken, and Jesus Christ is to reign supreme as King of kings and Lord of lords.

“Heaven rejoices that the long rebellion of the world against God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ is about to end”
(MacArthur).

T.F. Glasson refers to the common saying, ‘It’s all over bar the shouting,’ and remarks that the only difference here is that “the shout of victory has already begun” (p.71).

“All that happens from this point on leads up to the Son of God taking the reins of

government and conquering His enemies” (Warren Wiersbe, Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the New Testament).

- (1) The first word “kingdoms” (basileia) is singular and should be translated “kingdom” because all of the world’s diverse national, political, social, cultural, linguistic, and religious groups are in reality one kingdom under one king who is known in Scripture as “the accuser” (Rev.12:10), “adversary” (1 Pet.5:8), “Beelzebul” (Mat.12:24), “Belial” (2 Cor.6:15), “the dragon” (Rev.12:3,7,9), the “evil one” (Jn.17:15), “the god of this world” (2 Cor.4:4), “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph.2:2), “the ruler of demons” (Mk.3:22), “the ruler of this world” (Jn.12:31), “the serpent of old” (Rev.12:9; 20:2), “the tempter” (1 Thess.3:5), and, most commonly, “the devil” (Mat.4:1) and “Satan” (1 Tim.5:15).
 - (a) 3 times Jesus called Satan “the ruler of this world” (Jn.12:31; 14:30; 16:11)
 - (b) Paul called him “the god of this world” (2 Cor.4:4) and “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph.2:2)
- (2) The phrase “have become” is a proleptic aorist verb which “describes a future event that is so certain that it can be spoken of as if it has already taken place.

The perspective of the verb tense looks to a point after the action of the seventh trumpet will have run its course” (John MacArthur, Revelation 1-11, p.311).

- (3) The second “kingdoms” (basileia) is also singular so that the verse should read: “The kingdom of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever” (NASB and NIV).

- (4) “Lord” is kurios which “usually refers to Jesus throughout the New Testament, while in Revelation it more often refers to God the Father” (MacArthur). (See 1:8; 4:8,11; 6:10; 11:15,17 - it is used of Jesus in 11:8).

- (5) “Our Lord and of His Christ” “is not an unusual way to refer to God the Father and His Anointed. This is an allusion to Psalms 2:2, which will control the content of this section--Revelation 11:15-18. The temporal kingdom of Christ (the millennium) has not begun at this point. Therefore, Christ who will rule during the temporal kingdom is subordinate to the Father. Since God the Father is invisible and will never manifest Himself in physical form, God the Son will act as visible King on the earth” (The Revelation Commentary).

- (6) “He shall reign forever and ever” “does

not agree with the previous statement. One would expect the last sentence to say; "They will reign." However, the loud voices from heaven are correct in their theology. He will reign applies to God the Father. God the Father will reign forever and ever. This is specifically declared in OT Scriptures (Exod 15:18; Ps 10:16; Dan 4:3). Jesus, on the other hand, will reign over a temporal kingdom (one millennium) after which He will subject Himself and all rule and authority to God the Father forever (1 Cor 15:27-28)" (The Revelation Commentary).

It is important to note that "Christ will continue to rule because His reign is eternal (Rev. 11:15), but He will reign in His former, full, and glorious place within the Trinity, subject to God (v. 28) in the way eternally designed for Him in full Trinitarian glory" (John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible).

- (a) 1 Cor.15:24-28 - "Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put

all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”

- (b) Dan.7:13-14 - “I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.”

The phrase “all peoples, nations, and languages” – “These distinctions are earthly and speak of the promise of an earthly kingdom, ruled by Christ, that merges into the eternal kingdom (cf. vv. 18,27; Rev. 20:1-4,21,22)” (John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible).

So the phrase “He shall reign forever and ever” with the use of the singular “He” “emphasizes the unity of this joint sovereignty” (Robert Mounce, The Book of Revelation, p.231).

Jesus will reign on earth for one millennium (1000 years) but “at the end of the thousand years, the millennial kingdom will merge with the eternal kingdom, in which Christ will reign forever and ever. Once the reign begins, it will change form, but never end or be interrupted” (John MacArthur, Revelation 1-11, p.311).

2. The second voice is identified as coming from “the twenty-four elders” (vv.16-18)
 - a) The “twenty-four elders” are first seen in 4:4 as being “around the throne” in heaven. They were on “twenty-four thrones...sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads.”
 - b) Some say that these “twenty-four elders” are “redeemed humanity made up of both Old Testament and New Testament saints” (The Believer’s Study Bible) or they “symbolize the people of God in heaven, enthroned and rewarded” (Warren Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary) as “human representatives of the church” (John MacArthur, Revelation 1-11). Others say they are “probably a superior order of angels” (Leon Morris, Revelation). All of this is speculation because their identity is not revealed. What we can say though is that they are “heavenly beings” (Revelation Commentary).

I personally do not identify them with the

church but see them as separate from them especially when you look at Revelation 7. One of the elders is talking with John concerning the multitude that suddenly appeared in heaven who are identified as “the ones who come out of the great tribulation” (v.14). This group, I believe, is the church. If you take that interpretation then they cannot be the church but a separate group.

- c) John says that the “twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God” (v.16).
 - (1) The last time we saw the twenty-four elders they had fallen “on their faces before the throne and worshiped God” (7:11) in response to the praise of the multitude. They with the angels join in worship.
 - (2) Here they are seen again “on their faces” in worship to “God.”
 - (3) In Revelation 4:4 they are seen sitting on “thrones” but elsewhere they are seen falling down in worship (4:10; 5:8, 14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4).
- d) Verses 17-18 record what they said “to the One who with a great display of power will enter upon His eternal reign. The event is so certain that throughout this section it is repeatedly spoken of as already having taken place” (Robert Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, p.231).

- (1) “We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come” – this is similar to the statement of the “four living creatures” in Rev.4:8. “They do not rest day or night, saying: ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!’”

“Lord God Almighty” describes “God’s sovereign, omnipotent, irresistible power” (John MacArthur, Revelation 1-11, p.315).

“Almighty” Gr.pantokrator occurs 10 times in the NT, 9 of which occur in Revelation (cf. 1:8; 4:8; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6, 15; 21:22).

- (2) Verse 17 continues with “Because You have taken Your great power and reigned.”

The perfect tense of the verb translated *You have taken* signifies the permanence of God’s sovereign rule.

In this passage, Psalm 24:1 is realized as Christ reigns in absolute power and authority over the earth.

It says, “The earth is the LORD’S, and all its fulness, the world and those who dwell therein.”

- e) They continue in verse 18 by saying, “The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged.”

John MacArthur says, “The seventh trumpet vision reveals that, no longer afraid (cf.6:15-17), the impenitent nations were defiant and enraged at the prospect of Christ’s kingdom being established over the whole earth. The verb translated *were enraged* (angry) suggests a deep-seated, ongoing hostility. This was not just a momentary emotional fit of temper but a settled burning resentment against God. Eventually, they will assemble armies to fight God (16:14, 16; 20:8-9). With no desire to repent of sin, angry resentment and hostility against heaven (16:11) will drive the nations to gather for their destruction at Armageddon (cf. Ps.2:1,5,12; Acts 4:24-29)” (Revelation 1-11, pp.315-316).

Warren Wiersbe says, “Note the change in attitude shown by the nations of the world. In Revelation 11:2, the nations ruthlessly take over Jerusalem. In Revelation 11:9, they rejoice at the death of the two witnesses. But now they are angry; their arrogance and joy did not last very long. This belligerent attitude finally will cause the nations to unite to fight God at the great battle of Armageddon” (The Bible Exposition Commentary).

Psalm 2 speaks of this very event.

- f) The judgments spoke of here by the phrase “And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth” is a general reference to all future judgments.

This is not referring to the Great White Throne judgment (20:11-15) because that judgment explicitly involves only unbelievers.

The word for “time” (kairos) refers to a “season, era, occasion, or event.”

“The elders in their song make no attempt to separate the different phases of judgment as they are separated in the closing chapters of Revelation. They simply sing of future judgments as though they were one event, in the same way that other Scriptures do not distinguish future judgments from each other (cf. John 5:25, 28-29; Acts 17:31; 24:21)” (John MacArthur, Revelation 1-11, p.319).

- (1) The judgment will first of all be the time for God to reward “the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great” (v.18).
- (a) Believers will receive a reward (Rev.22:12; 2 John 8)

- (b) They are promised crowns, including the crown of righteousness (2 Tim.4:8), the crown of life (Jas.1:12; Rev.2:10), and the crown of glory (1 Pet.5:4)
- (c) The “prophets” refers to all those who have proclaimed God’s truth throughout redemptive history, from Moses to the two witnesses (11:3-13). They too will be rewarded with “a prophet’s reward” (Mat.10:41).
- (d) “The saints” which are further defined as “those who fear Your name, small and great” will be rewarded as we have just mentioned.
- (e) The last phrase “And should destroy those who destroy the earth” is not a reference “to those who pollute the environment, but to those who pollute the earth with their sin” (MacArthur). This includes all unbelievers, especially in the context of Revelation: Antichrist and his followers, Satan, the false prophet, etc.

John MacArthur says, “Given stewardship and dominion over the earth (cf. Gen.1:28), man instead fell into sin and throughout history has continually corrupted the earth (cf. Rom.8:19-21). When that

corrupting reaches its apex, God will destroy the earth and create a new one (21:1; Isa.65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet.3:12-13)” (Revelation 1-11, p.320).

II. The Temple of God was Opened in Heaven (v.19)

Some “connect this verse with the next three chapters, thus making yet another parenthesis, from 11:19-14:20, before the unveiling of the vial [bowl] judgments in chapters 15-16” (KJV Commentary).

As we have already noted chapters 12-14 are “a digression” (MacArthur) where we will see Satan’s fall and his war in heaven with Michael and his angels, the beast and his false prophet, the 144,000 sealed saints, and the fall of Babylon.

A. The Temple of God is God’s Throne (v.19a)

1. When the temple of God was opened there were “lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail”
2. In Rev.4 when John is told to “come up here” (v.1), he says he saw “a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne” (v.2). Verse 5 records that “from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices.”
3. This designation is similar to that of 11:19 but with the addition of “voices” but that is mentioned in 11:15
4. In Rev.7:15 it says that the raptured saints “are

before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.”

5. Rev.15:5-8
6. In the New Jerusalem it says in Rev.21:22 that John “saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.”

B. In the Old Testament the Temple and the Ark were Symbols of God’s Presence

1. After the Tabernacle which Moses and the children of Israel built was finished, Exodus 40:35 says, “And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.”
2. When Solomon finished building the temple the priests brought the ark into “the most holy place” then “the cloud filled the house of the Lord” (1 Kings 8:10).

John MacArthur says, “The opening of the temple of God which is in heaven revealed the ark of His covenant. The ark symbolizes that the covenant God has promised to men is now available in its fullness. In the midst of the fury of His judgment on unbelievers, God, as it were, throws open the Holy of Holies (where the ark was located; Ex.26:33-34; 2 Chron.5:7) and draws believers into His presence. That 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)” (Revelation 1-11, p.321).

“The entire scene is a gracious reminder that God will faithfully carry out his covenant promises and destroy the enemies of his people” (Robert Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, p.233).

CONCLUSION

“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.

In the light of that sobering truth, Peter exclaims, "What sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness" (2 Pet. 3:11)!" (John MacArthur, *Revelation 1-11*, p.321).