

Revelation 11

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We're still in the interlude between the 6th and 7th Trumpet Judgments. Remember, we said it seems that God brings judgments and plagues and then allows a respite... a time to catch our breath before the next plague... but what God is doing is orchestrating a time for repentance... for those He has chosen and is calling... to wake up and turn to Him. Even while He is pouring out His retribution on the World that has rejected Him, He continues to offer grace, mercy, forgiveness and salvation.

Many are coming to faith in Jesus Christ all through this 7 year Tribulation... God is actively drawing them to Himself. When the Lamb opened the 5th Seal we saw a large crowd of martyred saints under the altar in Heaven.

Just before He opened the 7th Seal, He sent out His sealed, protected 144,000 to witness and preach during the Trumpet Judgments, during the plagues of demonic locusts and 200,000,000 demonic horsemen. Right after the 144,000 were sealed, we saw '...a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

In chapter 14 we'll even see an angel flying, preaching the Gospel.

Jesus, while prophesying about the Tribulation said, 'This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.' Matt 24:14

God is Sovereign... He is always in complete control of everything and every person.

Before He is finished, He will have awakened, called and drawn to Himself every person, from all time that He had elected and chosen as His own from before He even created the World.

To us, the Church, Paul wrote, '**He chose us** in Him before the foundation of the world... having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will...' Eph 4:1

and... 'For **whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be** conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover **whom He predestined, these He also called**; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. Rom 8:29

Jesus said to Old Testament believers, 'You did not choose Me but **I chose you**,' John 15:16

Peter said, 'You **are a chosen generation**, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, **His own special people**... who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God'

All through the Tribulation... it's not just a time of God's judgment on the Earth but even more, it is the time when He completes His work with Israel, awakening them and calling them to Himself and also of drawing His chosen gentiles unto Himself... multiplied millions.

Gods' grace is poured out... even in judgment.

Revelation, the Tribulation, the 70th week of Daniel is about 3 things especially: Judgment on Satan and the unbelieving world, enlightening and drawing Israel to repentance, and completing His gleanings of the Gentiles. Regarding the Church, Jesus was the *firstborn of many brethren*. The early believers were the firstfruits of the harvest, the Rapture is the main harvest and the tribulation is the gleanings of the gentiles.

We saw the beginning of drawing Israel with the 144,000... now He will expand on that.

Revelation chapter 11: 'Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for **forty-two months**.' (3 1/2 years)

John is told to measure the Temple. We know this is a physical Temple in Jerusalem, not Heaven... and it's not in the Millennial Kingdom because he is told the outer court will be trodden by the Gentiles... these are not believing Gentiles coming to the Temple during the Millennium.

We know that the Antichrist is the one who will finally broker a 7 year Middle East peace treaty. No one else has ever been able to do it... no one since Israel's rebirth in 1948. Since that time, the World's Muslims have vowed to wipe Israel off the map... only by Gods' protection have they existed this long.

The Antichrist will sign a 7 year peace deal with Israel. Half way through, at the midpoint of the Tribulation, he will break the treaty; he will go into the temple in Jerusalem, into the Holy of Holies, probably sit upon the Ark of the Covenant, on the Mercy Seat and declare himself god. That is what the Bible calls the **abomination of desolation**. That is the midpoint of the Tribulation. From that moment the Antichrist will be trying to wipe out all Jews and Gentile believers.

In Daniel 9, reading about the 70th week of Daniel... 'Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate...'

Of that time Jesus said, 'Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.' Matt 24

There is no temple in Jerusalem today but all preparations have been made to build it, to restore the priesthood and to begin the sacrificial system at a moment's notice. All building materials have been stockpiled and much has been prefabricated even now. The temple must sit atop the Temple Mount which is currently impossible since the Muslim *Dome of the Rock* and *Al Aqsa Mosque* are there. All that will be necessary is an earthquake, possibly the one at the opening of the 6th Seal, to destroy them both or for the detonation of all the explosive materials most certainly stored within them.

That temple, probably built very shortly into the Tribulation is the one John is told to measure.

God doesn't need John to measure the Temple to find out its size, etc. His purpose is to indicate ownership, purpose, protection and preservation... this is the place of God, the One True God... the people worshipping there are the people of God... He will protect this place until He is done with it, until He allows it to be destroyed but He will protect the people forever and He will draw them to Himself as a Hen draws her chicks under the protection of her wings. Jesus said that same thing to Israel but they rejected Him so He set them aside for almost 2000 years until this time now, in the Tribulation, when He would once again begin to renew and fulfill all His promises to them.

He said, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you, desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'" Matt 23:37

He was saying, I will be gone and you won't see me again until I return at the end of the Tribulation... at the end of the 70th week of Daniel.

The 70th week of Daniel's main focus is the time when God finishes His work with Israel, when He finally calls unbelieving, blinded Israel back to Himself.

At the beginning of the Tribulation God revealed Himself to Israel by miraculously protecting them from the Ezekiel 38 invasion of Russia, Iran, Turkey and several other Muslim nations. When the temple is rebuilt and the sacrificial system renewed, national Israel will be awakened spiritually and they will begin to once again look for their Messiah and they will individually begin to realize that the sacrifices can't really cover their sin... they will begin to realize they need a savior. They will begin to read the New Testament as God confirms His Word to them... one by one. They will begin to discover that Jesus of Nazareth was and is the true Messiah.

This spiritual renewal is what will cause the Antichrist, suddenly indwelt by Satan himself at the midpoint of the Tribulation to shut it all down by declaring Himself god and demanding that everyone worship him as god, signified by taking the Mark of the Beast... and here we are at the midpoint of the Tribulation.

Verse 3: And I will give *power* to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days (3 1/2 years), clothed in sackcloth.” ⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. ⁵ And if anyone wants to harm them, ***fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies***. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. ⁶ These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

These two witnesses are prophesied in Zech 4. Zechariah sees the lampstands and olive trees and is told, “These *are* the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.”

Remember, just before the opening of the 7th Seal, God sent out His 144,000 witnesses. Now, before the blowing of the 7th Trumpet, He sends forth these, His 2 Witnesses. They are probably Elijah and Moses.

Elijah never died; remember... he was the 2nd person 'raptured' (Enoch was the first)... Elijah was taken up, alive, in a flaming chariot when God decided his ministry at that time was finished... and Moses' death was unusual in that God Himself, secretly disposed of Moses' body and Satan argued with Michael and disputed over the body of Moses. Deut 34, Jude 9... Even though Heb 2:27 says, 'It is appointed unto men once to die and after that, the judgment,' God is certainly free to make exceptions as He sees fit. He did so with Lazarus when Jesus raised him from the dead, as well as a few others we know of.

These two witnesses cause rainfall to cease for the 3 1/2 years of their 'ministry'... that was a miracle of Elijah, no rain for 3 1/2 years... Malachi declares that Elijah will return before Jesus Christ ***returns***, not before His first coming... “See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that ***great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.***” **Mal 4:5**

John the Baptist was not Elijah returned... he specifically said so. Jesus said, 'And from the days of John the Baptist until now ***the kingdom of heaven*** suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. ¹³ For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. ¹⁴ And if you are willing to receive ***it***, he is Elijah who is to come. ¹⁵ He who has ears to hear, let him hear! Matt 11:12 ***Jesus is speaking of the Kingdom***. He was saying, 'if you are willing to receive IT, the Kingdom, then John can fulfill Malachi's prophecy... ***here I Am!***... but they were unwilling to receive IT, the Kingdom or Him... so, John did not fulfill Malachi's prophecy and therefore Elijah was still to come... and here he is, during the Tribulation as one of God's Witnesses, along with Moses.

That they can turn waters into blood and strike the earth with 'all plagues' at will is certainly reminiscent of Moses' work in Egypt before Pharaoh...

Both Moses and Elijah were seen with Jesus Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration which was a picture of His 2nd Coming in power and glory.

Granted, killing enemies with fire proceeding from their mouths is a bit beyond the previous ministries of Elijah and Moses... or anyone else... but don't forget... this is now the Tribulation... The End! This is real!

For years now... in our time... TV, movies, books... they always reference 'the apocalypse'... everything is 'apocalyptic.' Every disaster is 'apocalyptic of Biblical proportions'... but now, for these people... ***it really has come... now it really is 'apocalyptic'*** and no one ever imagined anything like this... the real thing! God has removed all the filters... this is it... mankind's last chance. They are seeing things no one has ever seen... demonic locusts, 200,000,000 demonic fiery horsemen... all the plagues of Egypt... deadly fire out of these 2 prophets' mouths... God is proving over and over... He is God Almighty; He is Sovereign over everything... He meant everything He ever said about sin... He can do anything and He does it at His will... but now... instead of seeming to turn a blind eye to man's sin... He is pouring out payment for sins upon the sinners... everything they have worked so hard, so long, to deserve... payment in full... beyond anything they ever imagined... God

is real; His Wrath is real and anyone who doubts or disbelieves Him now, does so to his eternal damnation in the Lake of Fire... this is the second half of the Tribulation... this is the Great Tribulation.

For the first 3 1/2 years Israel had their temple and sacrifices... God was using those to awaken them spiritually. To thwart that *Spiritual Renewal*, the Antichrist broke his treaty with Israel, desecrated their temple, halted the sacrifices and declared Himself as god... the Great Tribulation had begun. These two witnesses came to Jerusalem as a real thorn in the Antichrist's side... by their preaching and prophesying during the second half of the Tribulation they further awakened Israel to their coming Messiah... looking to Jesus Christ's return.

Verse 7: When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. ⁸ And their dead bodies *will lie* in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. ⁹ Then *those* from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. ¹⁰ And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

Finally they will be killed by the Antichrist and their bodies will lie in Jerusalem for 3 1/2 days... probably in the outer court of the Temple. The whole world will see their bodies and rejoice over their death. Television... everyone has a TV... that'll be the lead story on CNN as it had been for 3 1/2 years. There will be parties and gift giving because these two fundamentalists had brought plagues on the world along with their wild, radical preaching... *'as if there could be any other god besides our own Antichrist... the very idea!' but then...*

Verse 11: Now after the 3 1/2 days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹² And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. ¹³ In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.

They will lay dead for 3 1/2 days but God will bring them back to life and rapture them up to Heaven. Once again... terror on Earth, but no turning to the God of Heaven.

A great earthquake... 7000 killed... a tenth of the city is destroyed. When it says that *the rest gave glory to the God of Heaven*, it doesn't mean they raised their hands saying, 'Glory to You Oh Lord, we worship you,' or something like that. It simply means that they acknowledged that there is a real God who has done this. In fact, look how God is named here... anonymously... no name, no person... just... the god of heaven. In other words, not Antichrist... everyone will know that some god is more powerful than Antichrist and that will make him that much angrier.

Verse 14: The second woe is past. Behold, ***the third woe is coming quickly.***

After the ministry of these two witnesses, the 7th trumpet will sound and the 7 bowl judgments will be rapidly poured out in a final fury of God's Wrath... His final judgment on the World will be poured out before Jesus Christ returns at the Battle of Armageddon to destroy all His remaining enemies and to set up His 1000 year Millennial Kingdom, ruling from Jerusalem with us, His Bride at His side.

This final onslaught... this final fury, the 7th Trumpet which includes all 7 Bowls is like the end of a fireworks show on the 4th of July. You know how it goes... on and on for 30 to 40 minutes. Then, when the end has come... the fireworks blow off constantly for the last 2 minutes in a wild furious storm of explosions. That's what will happen here... that's what we're getting ready for now.

Verse 15: Then the 7th angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" And the 24 elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying:

“We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty,
The One who is and who was and who is to come,
Because You have taken Your great power and reigned.
The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come,
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.”

The final 2 minutes of fireworks are about to blast off...

Remember... God is not bound by time at all. For us, time follows a straight line... forward... from beginning to end... from one point to the next. With God... it is all just one big **NOW**.

When the 7th **Seal** was opened... it was then at the end of the Tribulation... but He took us back and began to fill in some of the missing pieces for us. The same is true now with the sounding of the **7th Trumpet**... it is again at the end, but now He will once more take us back and begin to fill in even more of the missing pieces.

Verse 19: 'Then the Temple of God was opened in heaven, and the Ark of His covenant was seen in His Temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.'

Here, at the end of the Tribulation, we see the Ark of the Covenant in the Heavenly Temple... not the Earthly.

1,2 Maccabees, not canonized books of the Protestant Bible, but still useful for historical purposes, says that when Judah was being taken captive to Babylon, before the Babylonians looted and destroyed the Temple, the prophet Jeremiah took and hid the Ark of the Covenant with the Tabernacle and the Altar of Incense in a cave, on Mt. Nebo, on the East side of the Jordan River. "...the place shall remain unknown **until God gathers his people together again and shows his mercy.**' 2 Maccabees 2:5

the Ark was never recovered or brought into Herod's Temple of Jesus' time, the one destroyed by the Romans. If the prophecy in Maccabees is true and accurate, God was referring to our time and during the Tribulation when He would once again gather His people, the Jews into Israel, and show His Mercy as He did in 1917, 1948, 1967 and several more times since.

I would be very surprised if the Hebrew priests, preparing to reinstate Temple worship in the soon to be built Temple, don't already have the Ark hidden, having been previously recovered from the cave of Mt. Nebo.

Then, when the Antichrist desecrates the Temple at the midpoint of the Tribulation, I wouldn't be surprised if God miraculously then takes the Ark up into Heaven, keeping it from the Antichrist, where we see it here at the blowing of the 7th Trumpet.

Notice verse 18: The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come...

It reminds us of Psalm 2 which is prophetic of our time now...

Why do the nations rage,
And the people plot a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying*,
“Let us break Their bonds in pieces
And cast away Their cords from us.”

The leaders of the Earth are plotting even now to crown their coming king... Antichrist. They are ready now.