

The Extraordinary Preparation Needed to Finish God's Work!



Revelation
10-11
Study Five

Lesson Five

“Tribulation – Then Victory”

A production of *Prophecy Research Initiative* (PRI)

Even though we have noticed that the two witnesses “finished” their task and that their “killing” suggests “silencing,” follow-up verses suggest that Satan has the upper hand:

“And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” (Rev. 11:8)

Refusing burial of the dead was a universal insult in the ancient world. But what do those *nations* mean?



The Great City: Elsewhere in Revelation it is a descriptive word for “Babylon.” (14:8, 18:1-5) It is also the name of the “harlot” – an apostate church (17:5, 18) and for the “false trinity.” (16:19) It is best seen as a coalition of “apostate churches.”

God’s people are humiliated, publically, by the collective apostate religious powers of the world. “Babylon” defies truth (Rev. 17:4-5) like the “little horn.” (Dan. 8:12) This “city” will later be contrasted with the “Holy City!”



Egypt: Represents the wicked world in defiance of God, oppressing His people (Hos. 8:13, Joel 3:19); slavery (Ex. 2:23, 6:6; Deut. 5:6, 6:12) and a place of idolatry. (Isa. 19:1, Eze. 20:7)

Sodom: Represents a wicked city filled with fornication and open sin. (Jer. 49:18, Amos 4:1, Rom. 9:29) (GC 269)

Where our Lord was crucified: This has been a problem phrase. It appears to most scholars it suggests that “Jesus dies” wherever and anytime the gospel is silenced.

Collectively (paraphrased): “Those silenced witnesses will be publically humiliated by the apostate church, which is then filled with defiance, open sin and which rejects the grace and purity of the gospel.”

As the apostate leaders would want, we are told (Rev. 11:9):



“And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.”

This statement reveals that the attention of the whole world will be riveted on God's people! It parallels the 7 days Noah and his family were in the ark before the rain started!

The 3½ days is rhetorical – likely berating the world for the 3½ years that God's people were persecuted. But, God permits the wicked to sense a brief victory:



“And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.” (Rev. 11:10)



The two witnesses are now called “prophets.” This shows us that the original intent of the commission given to John after eating the little book (Rev. 10:11) was to give the gospel to the world!

They were “tormented” because their consciences were pricked. They remained, however, unrepentant. The celebration reveals their degeneracy and perversion.



Why did God permit a period of time for the wicked to sense their “victory over right?”

Their hatred will shortly be turned to remorse and terror as the seven last Plagues begin! Before their end – they will understand that they have been terribly wrong, and why.

Recall the stories of others:

Elijah – a “troubler of Israel” (I Kings 18:17)

Micah – does not prophesy “good”
(I Kings 22:8, 18)

Paul – Felix called him “mad” (Acts 26:25)



“Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.” (John 16:20)

“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” (Mark 13:13)

In prophecy there are many “transitions” in time, events, or when God’s purposes come to an important focal point. The next verse is one of those “transitions”:



“And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.” (Rev. 11:11).

The 3½ days are again rhetorical – not unlike the “waiting” several days before Noah’s flood. “Life” then enters the two witnesses!

“They stood on their feet” implies that the “total control” or destiny of the witnesses by the wicked is now reversed! They are delivered!

- The “Spirit of life” means that they will never be inactive again. Eternal life has come to them.
- This echoes the dry bones coming to life in Ezekiel’s prophecy. (Eze. 37:5)

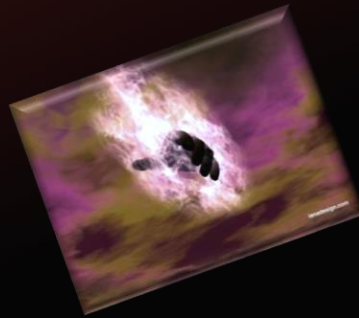
Another very important issue now unfolds.
This “deliverance” has deep end-time meaning!



Ending a very important prophecy, called the *ha hazon*, Daniel writes:

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time [this reflects the time when the witnesses lie in the streets]: and at THAT time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”
(Dan. 12:1)

Just as Israel was delivered from Egypt, so will God “deliver” His people at the last extreme point of time. When everything seems hopeless, His mighty hand comes down to save! It will be then that they know that they are saved!



Expositor White captured
this in graphic language:

“It is at midnight that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people. The sun appears, shining in its strength. Signs and wonders follow in quick succession. The wicked look with terror and amazement upon the scene, while the righteous behold with solemn joy the tokens of their deliverance. Everything in nature seems turned out of its course. The streams cease to flow. Dark, heavy clouds come up and clash against each other. In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters, saying: ‘It is done.’”

(Rev. 16:17) (GC 636)

The wicked now realize they are forever lost.
They have totally divested themselves of
God's mercy!



*“Great fear fell upon them
which saw them.”* (Rev. 11:11)



Jesus promised: *“Look, I will make
them come and bow down at your
feet and acknowledge that I have
loved you.”* (Rev. 3:9)

“There is a terrible awakening of those who have lost all in the great conflict of life.... No language can express the longing which the disobedient and disloyal feel for that which they have lost forever – eternal life.” (GC 654-655)

“The world see the very class whom they have mocked and derided, and desired to exterminate, pass unharmed through pestilence, tempest, and earthquake. He who is to the transgressors of His law a devouring fire, is to His people a safe pavilion.” (GC 654)

Something wonderful now happens!

“And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.” (Rev. 11:12)



This is a significant point in prophecy! The conflict on earth is over. Peace and joy now come to God's people. The invitation: "Come up!"

“Are we getting ready to meet the King? When He comes in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, will you be able to say, ‘Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us’? To those who can say this, Christ will say: ‘Come up higher. Upon this earth you have loved me. You have loved to do My will. You can now enter the holy city, and receive the crown of everlasting life.’”

(General Conference Bulletin, April 6, 1903)



“And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.” (Rev. 11:12)

God’s people will enter that cloud made up of angels. The journey to heaven will take seven days. (Rev. 19:9) [Broadside1, April 6, 1846; EW 16 (1851)] This is commensurate with the Feast of Tabernacles. The “eighth day” was a “harvest feast” celebrating the year’s blessing of God! That will occur as the “marriage supper of the Lamb.”





It is so interesting that Daniel and John were witnesses to heaven's judicial scenes. (Dan. 7:10-11, 26; Rev. 4:2-7, 11:1)

Then they saw the outcome of those judgment events.

(Dan. 7:13-14, 27; Rev. 11:15-18)



The invitation to “come up” validates the completion of the final witnessing mission of the saints. There is a sad note, however:

“Their enemies beheld them.” (Rev. 11:12)

From the prophecies of the Trumpets and the Seven Vials (Plagues); from the horrors of the end-time conflagrations, it is clear that millions will lose their lives during earth’s last events.

- But God has pre-designed that a select group of the wicked will see Christ’s Second Coming and the salvation of His people.
- *“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.”* (Rev. 1:7)

Interestingly, the wicked wanted to kill God's people. Now, when they see Jesus' face and the saints being drawn upward to Him, they cry out for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them! (Rev. 6:15-16)

- They defied God's people by saying: "Who can make war with the beast?" (their antichrist leader). (Rev. 13:4) Now, they turn to the inanimate world to save them. (Rev. 6:15-16) All of their earthly support has gone!



God often “pauses” in a prophetic discourse to “orient” the student as to time or place. This is one of those times. When does all this occur? This is what John notes:

“And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.” (Rev. 11:13)



“And the same hour...” (Rev. 11:13)

This refers to the time immediately preceding the Second Coming of Jesus. (Rev. 11:12)

“... was there a great earthquake” (Rev. 11:13)

Elsewhere we find that this is when the sixth Seal is broken (Rev. 6:12) and shortly thereafter when the seventh Vial (Plague) begins.

(Rev. 16:18) It becomes so severe that islands will disappear.

How do we identify the numeric issues in this verse?

“And the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand.” (Rev. 11:13)

These appear, again, to be rhetorical expressions. In Elijah’s day 7000 individuals remained loyal to God (I Kings 19:18) (symbolic of God’s total “church” then). Here, it is reversed: 7000 are destroyed (symbolic of the whole apostate church).

“And the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.” (Rev. 11:13)

This is a difficult phrase.
It is a time of great
fear for God’s people.

But, as we have seen, they will shortly be
invited to “come up!” This time is captured
by Expositor White in graphic language:



“Some, with strong faith and agonizing cries, [were] pleading with God. Their countenances were pale and marked with deep anxiety, expressive of their internal struggle. Firmness and great earnestness was expressed in their countenances; large drops of perspiration fell from their foreheads. Now and then their faces would light up with the marks of God’s approbation, and again the same solemn, earnest, anxious look would settle upon them.”

(EW 269)

The formal part of the “interlude” in Revelation 10 and 11 is now complete. The Trumpet prophecy is now going to continue. It resumes with the seventh Trumpet sounding, also called the “third woe.”

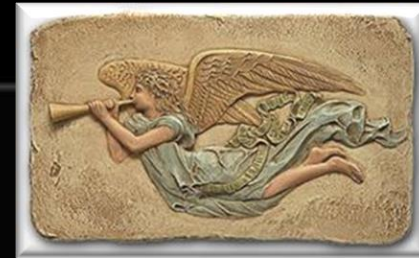
The Trumpets are part of earth’s last events:



“The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven.” (Rev. 11:14-15)

Before we observe what John heard, we recall from the last chapter Christ speaking to John with these words:

“In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.” (Rev. 10:7)



Redemptive history is closing! The restoration “mystery of God” is to become a known reality! The Trumpet has sounded!

When the word “voices” is used in prophecy, it usually denotes that some legal or judicial point has occurred. The Trumpet “sounds” are identified as “voices” in Revelation 8:13. In the “seventh trumpet” there is not only the “voice” of that instrument, but John tells us of many voices he distinctly hears coming from heaven!

Let’s listen in:



“There were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” (Rev. 11:15b)

The imagery of “great” voices suggests that the whole heavenly choir is making this declaration for the universe to hear! A great prophecy given in Daniel 7:14 has just been fulfilled. Christ has just received His kingdom!



John hears the word “eternal” in that song. “Forever” for God’s remnant people has just begun! Our eternal reign with Christ is later noted. (22:5) There’s more!

“And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.” (Rev. 11:16-17)

The 24 elders are those who were redeemed and already in heaven. (5:9) Their salvation has legally come! No wonder their song begins, *“We give thee thanks.”*



This stunning worship setting, occurring right in the heavenly courts, likely is when Michael “stands up” in Daniel 12:1. Probation has just closed and those heavenly saints are forever secure. Interestingly, the earthly saints will shortly be delivered also, as noted in that verse!

Should that be the case, and it is, then a time of great tribulation would then begin or follow on planet earth. Note these parallels:

“And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.”

(Rev. 11:18)

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”

(Dan. 12:1; cf. Luke 21:26a, Rev. 9:5-6)

Earthly history is coming to an end. If that is so, then the work in the heavenly sanctuary should be closing also.

“And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.” (Rev. 11:19)

This is the “time” of the seventh Plague. (Rev. 16:17-21) The “great tribulation” or “time of trouble” is coming to a close. Jesus is about to return to gather the harvest – the citizens of His kingdom! No activity is noted in that temple.





Jesus then comes! What a wonderful time, a sense of relief, freedom and joy like we have never sensed before – ever!

Nothing is more important than to be ready and to hear the words of Jesus: “*Come, ye blessed of my Father!*” (Matt. 25:34)

This completes Lesson Five,
“Tribulation and Chaos,” of the series:

*The extraordinary preparation
needed to finish God’s work!*

A Revelation 10–11
study

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The End



All for Him

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