
Into Thy Word Bible Study in Revelation

Into Thy Word Ministries www.intothyword.org

Revelation 11:15-19: “The Seventh Trumpet”

General idea: The seventh angel now sounds his trumpet and loud voices echoing from the heavens proclaim that the entire world has now become a part of the Kingdom of God as Christ assumes His power and position. The twenty-four elders fall prostrate, worshipping and giving thanks and reverence to the Lord. But, the woe commences too, as His wrath is let out to judge and destroy the evil and the wicked, and His grace is poured out to reward His faithful. He is the One who looks for the faithful and holy ones who have placed Him first, even in the midst of trials and troubles. Then, the world shakes as the precious Ark of the Covenant is exposed, displaying a spectacular show of eminence and power.

We are also shown a contrast between goodness and wickedness, between those who oppress and those who seek liberty, such as the faithful Jerusalem under David and Solomon versus the wicked one that crucified our Lord.

Vs. 15-19: Now comes the third terror, and woe commences as the seventh angel blows the trumpet, declaring to the whole world that the kingdom of God is at hand. This passage closes the “second cycle of Judgments” (See Background Article) that prepares the way for the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ by showing us His Triumph and Victory as He rules (Rev. 8:2-11:19). John now shows the final trumpet and the end of the world as we know it. The language is poetic, but it is “imperative” that John demonstrates that this revelation is at the same level as that of Moses; thus, take heed!

- *Sounded his trumpet* refers to the arrival or accession of something or someone great, such as a king (1 Kings 1:34; Rev. 9:13).
- *The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord.* In John’s time, governments were worldly dominated kingdoms within kingdoms. The Jewish mindset and hope in their time was that they would one day be handed over to God and His Kingdom. It is all about His timing (Ex. 15:18; Psalm 2:2; 10:16; Isa. 9:7; Dan. 7:13-18; Zech. 14:9; 1 Macc. 2:57).
- *Twenty-four elders.* *Elders* refers to those with authority, God’s representatives who are called to declare and serve Him wholeheartedly and righteously. In the early Church, the number 24 meant the 12 Israelite tribes of the Old Testament and the 12 apostles. This also refers to the Church as triumphant, and the entirety of all believers—the sum total of the Church. This can also refer to angelic beings who are also worshipping God (Rev. 9:11; 5:5-14; 7:11-17; 11:16-18; 14:3; 19:4). (see Rev. 4: 1-5 study for more info).

- *The One who is and who was.* God is the beginning and the end. This term refers to His sovereignty as He rules over all humanity at all times. Some see this as the start of the reign of Christ on earth; however, the text does not support that theory (Rev. 1:4, 8; 4:8).
- *You have taken your great power.* This does not mean God was not in control before or had not exercised His power. Rather, the acknowledgment of His present rule is already a “given” in Jewish thought. This is celebrating His future rule over all nations and our participation in it as His faithful (Psalm 2).
- *The nations were angry* may refer to their panic and/or how corrupting was their sin. It is interesting to note that they are not afraid but angry, typical of rationalization, defiance, and preponderance of sin. It is always foolish to fight against God (Psalm 48:4).
- *Your wrath/anger* points to the Judgment that is coming (Joel 2:11; Mal. 3:2). God’s wrath and righteousness are a reality. However, Christ covers our sin for us (Zeph. 1:14-18; Nahum 1:6; Mal. 3:2; Rom. 1:18; 3:9-23; 6:23; Rev.19:15). We have hope and assurance when our trust is in Christ. He is our hope, even when the very foundations of the universe are collapsing around and under us. When our hope is in Christ, nothing can shake us (Luke 12:32-34; 1 Cor. 7:29-31; Heb. 12:25-29; Rev. 14:10-11; 16:15-21; 20:8-15).
- *Your servants the prophets.* Referencing Dan. 9:6, 10; Amos 3:7; Zech 1:6.
- *God’s Temple.* This metaphor refers to God’s preeminence and/or where God dwells, not necessarily an actual corporeal structure (throne). Nor does it say that the Temple will be rebuilt. It is an image of the Old Testament Tabernacle where the *copy* of God’s Throne Room, made for His presence, was made known. In the Near East culture of John’s audience, this had an extra meaning that contrasts with the mockery against the two witnesses. God’s Temple contrasts the pretentious dignity and prestige of worldly ways with God’s supremacy and the actuality that He is seated on His Throne in eminence and power. Now, John sees the *real* heavenly version in a corporal state that shows God in an understandable and approachable manner, as God “condescends” to us and John. This means that God “descends” to our level to make Himself known; He lowers Himself—makes Himself accessible—and gives us insight according to our level of understanding so we can perceive Him from our aptitude to recognize what is otherwise incomprehensible (Ex. 24:9-11; 25 (25:40)-40; 1 Kings 5-7; 22:19; 2 Chron. 2-4; Is. 6; Ezek. 1; 10:1; Dan. 7:9-10; Heb. 8:5-6; 9:1-14; Rev. 3:12; 4:2; 7:15; 14:15-17; 15:5-16:1, 16:17; 21:22).
- *The ark of his covenant* represents the presence of God, His faithfulness, and atonement in keeping the covenant He made with His people even when they disobeyed Him. This refers to the main Jewish icon, the box chest, made of

acacia wood and overlaid with gold, which held the tablets of the Ten Commandments and was placed behind the sanctuary curtain in the inner sanctum where the presence of God dwelt. This image could also represent the Ark going to war. It went missing after Nebuzaradan (meaning: "the captain of the guard" who invaded and captured Jerusalem and destroyed the temple for Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25:8-20; Jer. 39:11; 40:2-5). Here it is meant to display God's dwelling and power and our reverence of Him. Now, it is Christ, who paid for our sin, with whom we have our covenant (Ex. 25:10-22; Lev 26:11-13; Duet 10:1-2; 2 Kings 25:8-10; Matt. 27:51; Heb. 9:23; 10:19-20; Rev. 3: 10-13; 4:6-8).

- *Lightning...hailstorm* points to God's supremacy and authority, the true God and His right of vengeance, His self-revelation, and His awesome majesty and power, and represents an important event, possibly the curse and plagues associated with mocking and disobeying God while worshipping the fake god, *Zeus*. It is our duty to heed His voice and reverence Him (Ex. 19:16-19; Job 37:5-6; Psalm 18:11-15; 77:18; Ezek. 1:4, 24; 43:2; Dan. 10:6; Heb. 12:18-29; Rev. 4:1-11; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18).

Keep hope and Christ in mind, as well as the fact that God is understandable and approachable! In devastating times of stress and war, to fathom something such as the Temple or our Church being destroyed would make it seem that God had lost. But, the message here is that of victory. It is a call to trust in Him and continue our walk in faith. God is still in control and He does win. He allows things to happen as consequences for sin yet in His perfect plan, all things will come together to give Him glory (Psalm 2; Rom. 8).

We are also shown that when all seems lost in our personal lives, when people and events come against God and His faithful, they really do not win. No enemy can do to us what God does not allow—nothing that could really, effectively, eternally hurt us. Those who do evil will be judged beyond what we could or would want to do to them. They get their deserved *what is coming* as we who are faithful get our reward. The key is to trust Him; be assured and confident that He is reigning and in control.

These judgments are deserved. Do not mourn for those who are reprobates, who continually refuse to repent while dragging others down with them. These people want the judgment; they have begged for it by their refusal to reconcile to or recognize the Sovereign reign of our Lord and by their contradictory evil ways. They know better, but in spite of that, still sin. There is no sadness or grief on their part and there is none needed by those of us who are the faithful. The choice is before us; we can accept the love, forgiveness, and grace of our Lord or we can refuse. Next come natural consequences and justified judgments to those who are wicked, and the wonders of paradise to those who have received His election (Deut. 30:19).

The Preterist view: They see this passage as discords of the Roman war against Jerusalem, and the eventual downfall of Jerusalem from God because of civil and religious rebellion that already took place. Others see this as the story of the witnessing Church and the suffering and rejoicing it endured. *The Kingdoms of the earth have become the kingdoms of God* does not mean that everyone comes to Christ; rather, they see it as Rome sweeping away Jerusalem while in reality, the world still belongs to God and everything is in His control. Some see it referring to Christ's ascension, that He is in control when we think He is not, and/or the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. Others see it as the introduction and importance of the Christian world and the fall of Judaism. *The judging of the dead* is seen as the final judgment when Christ appears and/or God's revenge on those who are evil and the vindication of the faithful and those who suffered. *The Temple being opened* is seen as figurative; the real, important Temple is in heaven, not on earth, and will be revealed to us in time and/or it refers to God's glory. The *Lightning...hailstorm* is seen as the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The *kingdom of our Lord* is seen as Christ's dominion and rule. As the kingdoms of earth are swept away, His Kingdom always remains. Others see it as Christ's ascension or the fifth kingdom spoken about in Daniel.

The Futurist view: There are varying views in this camp, but most see this as the herald to Christ's second coming. The *trumpet* is seen as proclaiming it is here, the second coming. This view is contradictory for them, as most in this camp believe the rapture took place in Rev. 4:1 which is prior to these events (even though there is no Scriptural support for such a premillennial view). Thus, some see this *trumpet* as the end of the Millennium, which would contradict their theories on the coming chapters. Some see verse 18 as the accumulation of the entire Millennium. *The Kingdoms of the earth* is seen as a problem and discrepancy in their chronology, and thus, many speculative views, such as associating it with chapter 20 and the millennial reign, or seeing it as meaning that the earth is no longer under the control of people. *The judging of the dead* is also out of their sequence, because they teach a rapture that has already occurred; this happened prior to the Tribulation (neither are evident in the text). The common response is that after the tribulation, people come to Christ and this passage is talking about these people.

The Idealist view: They see the Trumpet as God's reign on earth and His eternal nature. *The judging of the dead* is seen as the stubborn and unyielding world versus the faithful and what Christ offers. This passage is also an interlude of praise to God and the Ark; *lighting* is seen as a metaphor for God's faithfulness and His promises, as well as a display of God's "artillery," His power and control.

The Historicist view: The *trumpet* is seen as the end of the age of papal interdiction and persecution of the faithful, and the treaty with the Turks in 1699. The *Temple* is seen spiritually because it no longer exists. Others see the trumpet as the end of the first series of visions of John, demonstrated by praise,

rejoicing, and worship. Others see this as the rejoicing of the journey's end for the Church as the final judgment and close of the Church Age commences. Still others see this as the victory of Christ over the apostate Church, and some, the vindication of the faithful through times of trials and sufferings. Some see this as the beginnings of the French and/or American Revolution, while others say it has not happened yet. The earthquake is seen as the political upheavals that happened after the Reformation.

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see [Inductive Bible Study](#)):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. How do you like to praise, rejoice, and worship God? How would you contrast goodness and wickedness?
2. How vast and magnificent is God in your life? What metaphors, language, or feelings do you have for God's omniscience? Why is it our duty to heed His voice and reverence Him?
3. What happens when we read in what we think and not take careful time to see what the context, cultural considerations, and word meanings are? Do you think that some of these theories of end times would be utterly ridiculous to the original readers and Author? Why, or why not?
4. Why do you suppose God allows such things as persecution to happen? Why do you and/or other people still sin in spite of the fact that you know better?
5. What needs to happen for your relationship with Him to become more faithful? How is your faithfulness to Christ reflected in your behavior and words?
6. How does it have an effect on your trust and faith in God that He "condescends" to you, as in "descends" to your level to make Himself known

so He is more accessible and understandable to your ability of comprehension? What can you do to perceive Him better?

7. Do you think that humanity has been warned enough? If not, what do you think it would take for people to see their sins and accept Christ?
8. Why is it that no prophecy, no matter how valid and true it is, will sway those who are evil or entrenched in their own ways?
9. What can you do to more fully trust that His judgment and what He gives you are sufficient? How can you better keep hope and Christ in mind in devastating times of stress and war?
10. When all seems lost and people and events come against you, how can you have greater perseverance? What about if you better realized that God, not all the evil, will win? What about that God will not allow any enemy to do anything to us that can really, effectively, eternally hurt us (Psalm 34:11-22)? When bad things happen, we naturally desire vengeance. How does the fact that those who do evil will be judged beyond what we could or would do to them help you to have assurance and confidence to trust God to judge, that you do not need to take matters in your own hands or go against the civil law?
11. How can you have hope and faith that even with suffering and the consequences of sin, His perfect plan, that all things will come together to give Him glory, will come to fruition? What will you do to gain more hope and faithfulness for your life?
12. Why is it important, in our Christian lives, that we be faithful? What can happen when we stay faithful in Christ? What can you do to show greater trust in Him and continue your walk in faith as He gets you through and vindicates you? What about not looking to your fears and not turning your face from our Lord? How will you do that?