

REVELATION 10 AND 11

(PART 6)

GOD’S JUSTICE AND HIS MERCY

(REVELATION 11:13-17)

The narrative now “breaks” with a special “commentary insert.” The timing of this new event, which immediately precedes the Second Advent, opens a link to other prophecies.

“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” (Revelation 11:13).

“And the same hour there was” shifts from the present tense to the word “was” (*egeneto*) – past tense. This, plus “the same hour,” suggests that immediately preceding the ascension of God’s people (11:12), these events transpire!

“A great earthquake” occurs three times in Revelation. They all refer to the same block of time surrounding the eschaton.

Revelation 6:12: When the sixth Seal opened – a great earthquake occurred. The Second Advent is depicted shortly thereafter.

Revelation 11:13: Surrounding the Second Advent – a great earthquake.

Revelation 16:18: During the seventh Vial Plague Christ announced “It is done” – then a great earthquake.

Looking at these verses contextually, one can develop a tentative story-line:



In 16:19 the “great city” (Babylon, harlot) is split into three parts. This announcement of the end of Babylon reveals the terminus of apostate Christianity – the false trinity (16:19) (spiritualism, Catholicism, apostate Protestantism).

- The announcement that a ***tenth of the city*** falls (7000 individuals killed) appears to be another rhetorical number.

- In Elijah’s day 7000 individuals remained loyal to God (I Kings 19:18) (symbolic of the total church).
- Here, it is reversed – 7000 are destroyed (symbolic of virtually the whole apostate church).
- The meaning of a tenth remains elusive.

The 7000 represent the “perfect number” – “seven” – but this is emphasized by the multiplication by a thousand – often done by the ancient Hebrews. The number suggests that it is as God would want it to be!

There are additional insights that these collective apocalyptic prophecies suggest:

- The earthquake kills the wicked – but some, however, remain (God-designed).
 - Revelation 11:21 implies that, later, many are destroyed from hail.
 - In II Thessalonians 2:8 and Revelation 6:16 it appears that the brightness of Christ’s glory will destroy all vestiges of the wicked.
- During the Vial plagues many perish: “The **seven last plagues** will be poured out, after Jesus leaves the Sanctuary.... It is the wrath of God [cf. Revelation 11:18] and the Lamb that causes the **destruction or death of the wicked.**”¹
- “In the plague that follows, power is given to the sun ‘to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat.’ Verses 8, 9. The prophets thus describe the condition of the earth at this fearful time: ‘The land mourneth; ... because the harvest of the field is perished.... All the trees of the field are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.’ ‘The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate.... How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture.... The rivers of water are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.’ ‘The songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God: there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast them forth with silence.’ Joel 1:10-12, 17-20; Amos 8:3.

“These plagues are not universal, or the inhabitants of the earth would be wholly cut off. Yet they will be the most awful scourges that have ever been known to mortals. All the judgments upon men, prior to the close of probation, have been mingled with mercy. The pleading blood of Christ has shielded the sinner from receiving the full measure of his guilt; but in the final judgment, wrath is poured out unmixed with mercy.”²
- One concludes that apparently most apostate Christians who enter this time period are destroyed by the earthquake. But hail, plagues and, finally, Christ’s Coming bring the rest to their end.

The judicial climax of history is in view.

¹ White, Ellen G.; *The Review and Herald*, November 1, 1850.

² White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 628-629.

“And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground” (Jeremiah 25:33).

“Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.... The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word.... The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.... Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate” (Isaiah 24:1, 3, 5-6).

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

- Most scholars claim that this refers to conversion of the wicked “at the same hour” the saints are taken to heaven.
- This verse is a commentary insert. While the wicked are coming to their end, it is a fearful time for God’s people. But soon they will be delivered and give glory to God.

The true “remnant” who fear during this desolating phase quickly turn that terrifying uncertainty into praise.

Perhaps no other expositor has captured this period of time as has E. G. White:

“Like Jacob, they were wrestling with God. The angels longed to deliver them, but they must wait a little longer; ***the people of God must drink of the cup and be baptized with the baptism.*** The angels, faithful to their trust, continued their watch. God would not suffer His name to be reproached among the heathen. The time had nearly come when He was to manifest His mighty power and gloriously deliver His saints. For His name’s glory He would deliver every one of those who had patiently waited for Him and whose names were written in the book.”³

“... some, with strong faith and agonizing cries, 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.”⁴

Then a time comes when the saints will “know” that their deliverance has come:

“Through a rift in the clouds there beams a star whose brilliancy is increased fourfold in contrast with the darkness. It speaks hope and joy to the faithful, but severity and wrath to the transgressors of God’s law. Those who have sacrificed all for Christ are now secure, hidden as in the secret of the Lord’s pavilion. They have been tested, and before the world and the despisers of truth they have evinced their fidelity to Him who died for them. A marvelous change has come over those who have held fast their integrity ***in the very face of death.*** They have been suddenly delivered from the dark and terrible tyranny of men transformed to

³ White, Ellen G.; *Early Writings*, p. 283.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

demons. Their faces, so lately pale, anxious, and haggard, are now aglow with wonder, faith, and love. Their voices rise in triumphant song: 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.' Psalm 46:1-3."⁵

This now ends the commentary *insert and the interlude*.

“The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly” (Revelation 11:14).

Revelation 10:1–11:13 has been an interlude depicting events that commenced with 4:1 onward. That drama brings into focus the parallel themes of events transpiring in heaven **and** on earth preceding the Second Coming of Jesus.

- Jesus prophesied that this would occur when the seventh Trumpet sounds:
- *“But 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” (Revelation 10:7).*

Thus – this interlude and the previous prophecies (Judgment/Seals/Trumpets) serve as a dramatic preface to the remainder of the book!

This verse (14) begins where 9:21 left off.

- The heavenly choirs and open celestial temple will shortly be a reminder that the mystery of God has been completed!

Why is it called a third “woe?” All hope for the wicked has ceased. Probation will be closed.

The interlude or “informational pause” has ended. The final, or seventh, trumpet – called the third woe – has sounded. Expectation of terrible judgments is anticipated. But – that’s not what is recorded here! That seventh Trumpet signals to the heavenly beings that redemptive victory has come.

Though the saints arrive in heaven during the interlude, we move briefly back in time to what transpires in heaven just preceding the eschaton. The end is in sight – the judicial decisions have been completed and the marriage of the Lamb is presently expected.

First the Trumpet, then the heavenly choir is heard. Perhaps the same ones singing in Revelation 7:9-12! Here, a new strain is heard.

⁵ White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 638-639.

The Seventh Trumpet Sounds

“And the seventh angel sounded, and 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!’” (Revelation 11:15 – NET).

This is likely a “mega symphony” of millions of voices.⁶ The information gleaned from 10:7 and 11:14 suggests that this trumpet sound goes on for a period of time!

The “**great voices**” represent that heavenly choir.⁷

- This outburst of praise (amplified in the next three verses) is “loud” (cf. 5:9-10).
- It suggests that perhaps even the very universe must hear the message.

This is a song of victory. The redemptive plan has come to its end. A 6000-year historical point from Eve’s fall has just occurred!

- It comes when the cry echoes throughout the universe: “It is done” (Revelation 16:17).
- It represents the brief time preceding Christ’s journey to planet earth.
- Then, when Christ comes, heaven will be empty (Matthew 25:31). Those “choirs” will be with Him.

The age of sin has come to an end.⁸

- Jesus had noted: *“My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence”* (John 18:36).
- Now – the **heavenly kingdom** is the only reality.
- Satan’s rule has ceased (II Corinthians 4:4; cf. Ephesians 6:12, John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11). **“Kingdoms of the world”** refers to the totality of creation that rebelled against God.

The kingdom belongs to the Lord (Father) and Christ. Then it notes: “he will reign,” switching to the singular. This rivets into the content the oneness of the two.⁹

- Then later the wonderful proleptic message
- That the heavenly kingdom will become an earthly one (Revelation 22:1-2)

The eternal nature of the lordship of these “kings” is emphasized. In turn, this describes the eternal nature of:

⁶ Osborne, Grant R.; *Revelation* (Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 440.

⁷ Aune, David E.; *52A World Biblical Commentary; Revelation 6–16* (World Books, Dallas, Texas), 1997, p. 637.

⁸ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 440.

⁹ Beale, G. K.; *The New International Greek Testament Commentary; The Book of Revelation* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Grand Rapids, Michigan; 1999), p. 611.

- God (Revelation 1:6; 4:9-10; 5:13; 7:12; 10:6; 15:3, 7) and Christ (1:18, 5:13)
- And, here, the kingdom (Romans 8:18-25; II Peter 3:11-13; Revelation 21:1, 5; Psalm 82:8; Daniel 2:44)¹⁰

Our eternal reign with Christ is noted later (22:5).

- *“And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed”* (Daniel 7:14).
- This is the consummation of what we pray in the Lord’s prayer: “thy kingdom come” (Matthew 6:10).¹¹

This climax of human history is again to be described (Revelation 15:1).¹²

- This climaxes at the “last trump” (I Corinthians 15:51-52).
- “Mission accomplished!” (Zechariah 14:9) (*fait accompli*)¹³

The weight of evidence would suggest that the seventh Trump sounds when Michael stands up in Daniel 12:1. It is at that point that the destiny of everyone is sealed! The “great tribulation” begins. Earth’s final three-and-a-half-year period will end shortly thereafter.

“About His coming cluster the glories of that ‘restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.’ Acts 3:21. Then the long-continued rule of evil shall be broken; ‘the kingdoms of this world’ will become ‘the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.’ Revelation 11:15. ‘The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.’ ‘The Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.’ He shall be ‘for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of His people.’ Isaiah 40:5; 61:11; Isaiah 28:5.”¹⁴

“And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God” (Revelation 11:16).

The 24 elders have been engaged in a judicial process associated with God’s throne (Revelation 4:4). They were seated around that divine center on 24 seats (cf. Matthew 19:28, Daniel 7:9a).

- John has already been told that these were redeemed (Revelation 5:9).

¹⁰ Brighton, Louis A; *Revelation, Concordance Commentary* (Concordance Publishing House; Saint Louis, MO), 1999, p. 308.

¹¹ Stefanovic, Ranko; *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, p. 359.

¹² Thomas, Robert L.; *Revelation 8–22 – An Exegetical Commentary* (Moody Press; Chicago, IL; 1992), p. 104.

¹³ Mounce, Robert H.; *The Book of Revelation* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1977), p. 226.

¹⁴ White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, p. 301.

- These were redeemed and taken to heaven with Jesus at His ascension (Revelation 5:9, Ephesians 4:8, I Thessalonians 4:13-18).¹⁵
- They respond by dropping down from those thrones and “falling on their faces” (cf. Revelation chapters 4 – 5, 7:9-12, 8:3-4, 16:5-7, 22:1-5).

This highlights their supreme honor, recognition and holy praise to Him. They are eternally His and that seventh Trumpet seals that hope!

- No wonder it says in their first words of praise (next verse): “We give thee thanks.”
- This further affirms the honored position they have, seated around God’s throne.

“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” (Revelation 11:17).

It is intriguing:

- “In depictions of the heavenly court in Israelite literature, God is always *seated* (1 Kgs 22:19; Isa 6:1; Dan 7:9) and is surrounded by members of the heavenly court who are always *standing* (1 Kgs 22:19; Isa 6:2; Dan 7:10).¹⁶
- However, these saved “leaders” had been seated with God (Revelation 4:10). This echoes the promise that the redeemed will be kings (Revelation 1:6) – here, serving with God. Amazing!
- Like all worship scenes in Revelation, it is in heaven.¹⁷

“O Lord God Almighty,” (vs 17)

God is addressed with the threefold attributes noted previously (1:4, 8; 4:8). There, He is the God of the past, “who was;” the present, “who is;” and the future, “who is coming.”

- He is the incomparable, sovereign Lord of history.¹⁸
- Here He is not the God of the future but one who has “begun to reign.”
- That means that in this end of time the “prophetic future” has arrived!
- The sound of the seventh Trumpet heralds the onset of that kingdom.

Interestingly, in 16:5 the final judgment/decisions have occurred. Here, the final kingdom has begun.¹⁹

¹⁵ White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 786.

¹⁶ Aune, *op. cit.*, p. 642.

¹⁷ Mounce, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

¹⁸ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 613.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

- We now arrive at the eschaton.²⁰
- God is introducing eternity.²¹

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²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 443.

²¹ Osborne, *op. cit.* p. 442.