

# REVELATION 10 AND 11

## (PART 7)

# HAPPENING SOON

## (REVELATION 11:18-19)

***“And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth” (Revelation 11:18).***

This verse continues with key events that follow the close of probation.

- Nations are angry – tribulation – depicts the time of Armageddon – sixth Trumpet setting (Revelation 9:13-21)
- Wrath of God – seen with the pouring out of the Seven Vials (Revelation 15:1)
- Time to give the saints their reward (eschaton) – kingdom citizenry already made up
- Time for the judgment of the dead (millennial judgment) – review of seven-sealed scroll
- Destruction of the wicked

### **The Angry Nations**

These are the earth-dwellers of 11:9-11. They are the enemies of God and the saints (11:5, 12). Contextually, they are also in great conflict among themselves. This is reflected in many verses, i.e.:

- *“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.... And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another” (Matthew 24:7, 10).*
- *“And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them” (Revelation 9:5-6).*

War is about to burst onto planet earth: *“And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them” (Revelation 9:16).*

Though there is a spiritual side to this war (Revelation 19:11-16),<sup>1</sup> a final physical confrontation between earth's warring forces is foreseen:

“Four mighty angels hold back the powers of this earth till the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. The nations of the world are eager for conflict; but they are held in check by the angels. When this restraining power is removed, there will come a time of trouble and anguish. Deadly instruments of warfare will be invented. Vessels, with their living

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<sup>1</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Last Day Events*, p. 251.

cargo, will be entombed in the great deep. All who have not the spirit of truth will unite under the leadership of satanic agencies. But they are to be kept under control till the time shall come for the great battle of Armageddon.”<sup>2</sup>

“The world is becoming more and more lawless. ***Soon great trouble will arise among the nations,—trouble that will not cease until Jesus comes.***”<sup>3</sup>

“Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are ***watching the relations that exist among the nations.*** They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place,—that ***the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.***”<sup>4</sup>

At a time of intense warring conflict between nations – the end arrives.

### **The Wrath of God**

Little attention is directed towards the imagery that John portrays of God’s initial reaction to rebellion in the first four Trumpets. Of that time Isaiah prophesied:

*“For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act”* (Isaiah 28:21).

“There will soon be a ***sudden change*** in God’s dealings.... His forbearance will not always continue. Who is prepared for the ***sudden change*** that will take place in ***God’s dealing with sinful men?*** Who will be prepared to escape the punishment that will certainly fall upon transgressors?”<sup>5</sup>

Joel proclaimed: *“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand ... Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly”* (Joel 2:1, 15).

The first four trumpet angels signal God’s first salvo against rebellion (Revelation 8:6-12). This is His initial response to the cry of the martyrs of the fifth seal (Revelation 6:9-10): *“How long, O Lord?”*

That is the beginning of God’s “strange act” (Isaiah 28:21). Yet, it still signals the hand of mercy as outstretched to some who will yet commit themselves to heaven’s grace.

“The Lord will not suddenly cast off all transgressors or destroy entire nations; but He will punish cities and places where men have given themselves up to the possession of Satanic agencies. Strictly will the cities of the nations be dealt with, and ***yet they will not be visited in the extreme of God’s indignation,*** because some souls will yet break away

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>3</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Review and Herald*, February 11, 1904 (emphasis added).

<sup>4</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Evangelism*, p. 703 (emphasis added).

<sup>5</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 356.

from the delusions of the enemy, and will repent and be converted, while the mass will be treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.—Manuscript 35, 1906.”<sup>6</sup>

The final phase of wrath is presented in the last period of earth’s redemptive history noted in this verse. It is called the “great tribulation” in Daniel 12:1 and Matthew 24:21. This is the final “day of God’s wrath” (Ezekiel 7:19; Zephaniah 1:18, 2:2-3; Lamentations 2:2).<sup>7</sup> This is what John notes just before the Seven Plagues:

- “And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the **wrath of God**” (Revelation 15:1).
- This heralds the accelerated response of God to sin and wickedness. Mercy will then have ceased.

“God keeps a record of the sins of nations and of individuals, and when they have reached a certain measure they are full; then **when the long forbearance of God is exhausted, His wrath slumbereth not.**”<sup>8</sup>

“God’s judgments will be visited upon those who are seeking to oppress and destroy His people. His long forbearance with the wicked emboldens men in transgression, but their punishment is nonetheless certain and terrible because it is long delayed. ‘The Lord shall rise up as in Mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act.’ Isaiah 28:21. To our merciful God the act of punishment is a strange act. ‘As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.’ Ezekiel 33:11. The Lord is ‘merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, ... forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.’ Yet He will ‘by no means clear the guilty.’ ‘The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.’ Exodus 34:6, 7; Nahum 1:3. By terrible things in righteousness He will vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. The severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor may be judged by the Lord’s reluctance to execute justice. The nation with which He bears long, and which He will not smite until it has filled up the measure of its iniquity in God’s account, will finally drink the cup of **wrath unmixed with mercy.**”<sup>9</sup>

These seven vials end with Christ’s cry: “It is done” (16:17). His Second Coming quickly follows. The remaining wicked cry:

*“For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”* (Revelation 6:17).

The next phrase is a puzzle to many scholars. The word “time” is used to cover, first, the judgment of the dead, and then “time” to reward those who have remained faithful.

**The “time of the dead, that they should be judged” and “shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth” (vs 18)**

<sup>6</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Evangelism*, p. 27 (1906).

<sup>7</sup> Aune, David E.; *52B World Biblical Commentary; Revelation 6–16* (World Books; Publisher, Dallas, Texas), 1997, p 664.

<sup>8</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, pp. 138-139 (emphasis added).

<sup>9</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, p. 627 (emphasis added).

This phrase is impossible to grasp unless there is a clear understanding of Revelation 4–6 and 8:1 (the preamble to the seven-sealed messages and those messages).

1. God begins a judicial process of selecting kingdom citizens (Daniel 7:9-10).
2. A new phase of that courtroom scene is noted (Revelation 4:1-5, 11:1).
3. God sealed the record that explained why the wicked were rejected (Revelation 5:1) with seven seals.
4. Jesus, the worthy Lamb, begins to break each seal – ushering in the end of time (Revelation 6).
5. When the last seal is broken (post-Second Advent), the heavens are silent in awe (Revelation 8:1).
  - That scroll can then be reviewed by Christ and the saved.
  - Purpose? God's final judicial acts to vindicate His throne by rejecting wickedness. Were those decisions fair, based upon the government standards of heaven? A solemn, sacred, grand finale of adjudication of God's character is unveiled by this courtroom review.

It is then that the dead will be judged! They are the wicked dead who “destroy the earth” spiritually. (Most scholars do not believe it is literal.)

Expositor E. G. White grasped this time:

“After the saints are changed to immortality and caught up together with Jesus, after they receive their harps, their robes, and their crowns, and enter the city, Jesus and the saints sit in judgment. The books are opened – the book of life and the book of death. The book of life contains the good deeds of the saints; and the book of death [parallels the seven-sealed scroll] contains the evil deeds of the wicked. These books are compared with the statute book, the Bible, and according to that men are judged. **The saints, in unison with Jesus, pass their judgment upon the wicked dead.** ‘Behold ye,’ said the angel, ‘the saints, in unison with Jesus, sit in judgment, and mete out to the wicked according to the deeds done in the body, and that which they must receive at the execution of the judgment is set off against their names.’ This ... was the work of the saints with Jesus through the one thousand years in the Holy City before it descends to the earth.”<sup>10</sup>

“During the thousand years between the first and the second resurrection, the Judgment of the wicked dead takes place. The righteous reign as kings and priests unto God; and **in unison with Christ they judge the wicked**, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Bible, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body. Then the portion which the wicked must suffer is meted out, according to their works; and it is written against their names in the book of death. Satan also and evil angels are judged by Christ and his people.”<sup>11</sup>

Scholar G. K. Beale also grasped this event:

“The OT and Jewish writings expected the judgment of all dead unbelievers at the conclusion of history (e.g., Dan. 12:2). The parallel of Rev. 20:12-13 makes this interpretation explicit: ...

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<sup>10</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Early Writings*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>11</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Spirit of Prophecy*, p. 475.

(‘the dead were judged.... Hades gave up the dead ... and they were judged’). The end of v 18 expands on the nature of the judgment. God will ‘destroy’ ... the oppressors because they have been ‘those who destroyed ... *the earth*,’ that is, God’s people. The use of the same verb for both God’s judgment and the oppression it answers is to emphasize once again that divine punishment is patterned to fit the sin. Now the consummated punishment resembles the same ‘eye for an eye’ verdict. The gravity of the punishment equals the gravity of the crime. As with murder in the OT, so here the crime of destroying God’s people merits destruction by God. ‘Their sins have come back on their own head’ (e.g., Ps. 7:14-16).

“The judgment, as in 8:8 and 19:2, is patterned after Jeremiah’s announcement of the judgment of historical Babylon:

Jeremiah 51:25

... (‘the destroyed mountain,  
which destroyed the whole earth’;  
cf. Odes Sol. 1–2 ).

Revelation 11:18c

... (‘to destroy the ones destroying  
the earth’).

“Babylon is a type of the eschatological world community, which will be judged at the end. This ties v 18 with Babylon, ‘the great city,’ which is destroyed in 11:13.”<sup>12</sup>

“This expression brings to mind the identification of the antediluvians in Genesis 6:12-14 as the destroyers of the earth who did so by ‘filling the earth with iniquity.’ Just as the antediluvian destroyers of the earth had to be destroyed with the earth, so will be the fate of the end-time destroyers of the earth. This suggests that Revelation 11:18 does not refer to ecological concerns of destroying the earth by modern technology, a rather contemporary view, but to the activities of end-time Babylon filling the earth with sins which have ‘accumulated unto heaven, and God has remembered her unrighteous acts’ (Rev. 18:5). This assertion is further supported by the fact that Jeremiah identifies historical Babylon as the ‘destroying mountain, who destroys the whole earth’ (Jer. 51:25). In Revelation 19:2, end-time Babylon is judged because she has corrupted (or destroyed) the earth with her immorality (cf. Rev. 17:1-6).”<sup>13</sup>

The sentences will be pronounced before the “great white throne” and then will finally be executed (Revelation 20:11-15).<sup>14</sup>

**The “time” has come that God should give out His rewards**

(to servants, prophets, saints and then them that fear His name “small and great”)

The notice that it is time for God’s people to receive their rewards is sandwiched between two judicial statements against the wicked.

- This suggests that **before** the final completion of divine justice against the wicked, God’s saints will receive their eternal rewards.
- Contextually, the reward is at the onset of the seventh millennium (Revelation 20).

<sup>12</sup> Beale, G. K.; *The New International Greek Testament Commentary; The Book of Revelation* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1999), pp. 615-616 (the Greek text deleted in quotation).

<sup>13</sup> Stefanovic, Ranko; *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, p. 361.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas, Robert L.; *Revelation 8–22 – An Exegetical Commentary* (Moody Press; Chicago, IL; 1992), p. 110.

Scholars posture over the differences between servants, prophets and saints. We have simply taken the generic view that they represent God's covenant community.

The chapter shortly ends with a view of the heavenly sanctuary. To this point in this apocalyptic book we have had four distinct pictures of heaven's activity.

1. Throne room – judgment of the living (Revelation 4:2-10; cf. 11:1)
2. Throne room – throne surrounded by the saved (Revelation 7:9, 14)
3. High Priest Jesus – accepting/accelerating the prayers of the saints before the altar of incense (Revelation 8:3-4). A censer reveals a Day of Atonement is pending.
4. Now – a view of the “most Holy” Place **when** all heavenly sanctuary activity has ceased (Revelation 11:19)

The amazing story that began in chapter 10 presents distinct affirming themes for God's end-time people! Then it becomes “mission specific”:

- Must prophesy before world (10:11)  
*“I will give power unto my two witnesses to prophesy”* (11:3a, 4-6)
- Judgment of the living by a standard (11:1)  
The ark of His testament – law was the standard (11:19)
- Satan and his host initiate wrath against God's witnesses (11:7-10)  
God's wrath begins against the wicked (11:18)
- Persecution for 42 months (11:2)  
Successfully witnessing for 1260 days (11:3) – same period
- Time to reward the saints (11:18)  
Saints taken to heaven (11:12)
- Heavenly praise for completion of redemption (11:15-16)  
No more judicial activity in the Most Holy (11:19)

***“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”*** (Revelation 11:19).

This is an amazing verse. All prior heavenly scenes included celestial **activity**. This is without any “beings” in evidence. The work is completed! The center of God's government remains eulogized by the Ark of the Testament, which contains the Decalogue.

- That is the standard upon which His covenant promises rest.
- God's mercy and justice rest on all its foundational principles.

The bolts of lightning, voices, peals of thunder and an earthquake with hail noted here are at the **same point in time** as the seventh vial (16:17-18, 20-21).

- There, a “great voice” came out of the temple and from God’s throne, saying: “It is done.”
- Our imagery of a silent Most Holy Place is the outcome.
- The intercessory role of Christ and all heaven has ceased.
- The great “sanctuary purpose” has come to an end.

The lightning represents God’s power and presence; the voices mean a judicial decree has sounded; the thunder, judgment will begin or has begun – the hail punishment.

- From eternal destiny decisions (4:5) to
- Divine intercessory work (8:3-4) to
- Probation’s end (16:18) –
- A sweep of heaven’s last work of redemption is in view.

“Rev. 11:15-19 notes the end of the evil world kingdoms and the church’s reward in escalated typological fulfillment.”<sup>15</sup>

The “open” Holy Place echoes the tearing of the temple veil at Christ’s death (Mark 15:38). There, the purpose of the earthly sanctuary ceased. Its function was transferred to heaven.<sup>16</sup> Here, the purpose of the heavenly sanctuary has now ended.

At the last trump (I Corinthians 15:52) the temple in heaven will be opened. That open sacred room visualizes the coalition of all Bible themes toward their redemptive finale. “Human language fails in an attempt to state its true significance.”<sup>17</sup>

“The temple of God is opened in heaven, and the threshold is flushed with the glory which is for every church that will love God and keep His commandments. We need to study, to meditate, and to pray. Then we shall have spiritual eyesight to discern the inner courts of the celestial temple. We shall catch the themes of song and thanksgiving of the heavenly choir round about the throne. When Zion shall arise and shine, her light will be most penetrating, and precious songs of praise and thanksgiving will be heard in the assemblies of the saints. Murmuring and complaining over little disappointments and difficulties will cease. As we apply the golden eyesalve we shall see the glories beyond. Faith will cut through the heavy shadow of Satan, and we shall see our Advocate offering up the incense of His own merits in our behalf. When we see this as it is, as the Lord desires us to see it, we shall be filled with a sense of the immensity and diversity of the love of God.”<sup>18</sup>

The sin issue that God solved “had to be done just right.”

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<sup>15</sup> Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 619.

<sup>16</sup> Osborne, Grant R.; *Revelation* (Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 448.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 449-450.

<sup>18</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 368.