

REVELATION 11:11-19

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¹¹ 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.

¹² 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.

¹³ 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.

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

- A. **“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...”**
(Revelation 11:1a)

The deaths of these two witnesses are brief because God intervenes. The Spirit of life from God breathes life into these two corpses and they lived. The word “Spirit” [Gk: pneuma] refers to the life giving force from God (Luke 8:55).

Just as God – the author of life – “breathed into [Adam’s] nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7), so here, God breathes life into these two witnesses (Job 33:4; Ezek. 37:5-14).

- B. **“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”**
(Revelation 11:1b)

When the two witnesses are resurrected, there is “great fear” from those who have celebrated over their deaths. Unlike the resurrection of our Lord Jesus which was witnessed by a few, here the resurrection of the two witnesses is watched by the whole world. What is even more unique is that because they are not buried, the process of the resurrection will be seen.

Their resurrection is evidence of their message and the power of God. Their resurrection brings life to the veracity of the Bible, the witness of the church, and God’s judgment of the world.

The witnesses are not raised as a means to convert the unbelievers; they are raised as evidence of their coming judgment.

John did not say except to state the fact of the resurrection. However, the resurrection may be seen as proof of the reality of resurrection of the dead when our Lord Jesus returns (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

It is also possible that this resurrection should be understood symbolically. Ezekiel speaks figuratively about the resurrection of the dead (Ezekiel 37:10-13).

C. “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” (Revelation 11:12)

In Revelation 1:10, John heard “a great voice,” and it belonged to our Lord Jesus Christ. In Revelation 4:1, John heard a voice saying to him, “Come up hither,” and that voice also belonged to our Lord Jesus. On these two bases, we can surmise that this voice in verse 12 also belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ.

There are obvious similarities between the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ and that of these two witnesses.

	Acts 1:9-10	Revelation 11:12
	they beheld	
Upward	he was taken up	they ascended up
Glorious	a cloud received him out of their sight	in a cloud
Visible and Public	they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up	their enemies beheld them

In Greek, it is written that the two witnesses “ascended up to heaven in **the** cloud.” This is a specific reference to the glory which appeared when Jesus was transfigured (Matthew 17:5) and which brought Him up to at His ascension (Acts 1:9).

D. ““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)

In the same hour that the two witnesses ascended, there was a great earthquake. The shaking of the earth is always a picture of God’s wrath (2 Samuel 22:8; Psalm 18:7; Hebrews 12:25-26).

E. “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)

John adds that seven thousand people died in the earthquake, or one tenth of the city’s population. From that, it is inferred that the city’s population would have been seventy thousand.

Some people take verse 13 symbolically pointing out that there are other symbolism used in Revelation 11 (Examples: 11:2, 8). Thus, the number “seven” is used to symbolize “completeness.”

The use of symbols and figures of speech in the same passage does not mean that the whole passage must be interpreted symbolically. Here, only a tenth of the population or seven thousand people perished in this earthquake serves as a warning to the rest of the city and provides an opportunity for those remaining to repent and turn to God.

F. **“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)**

Those who remained were struck with fear. Is this evidence of genuine repentance or false remorse? There are some who believe that the remnant who are spared in the earthquake turned to God, and they repented of their deeds. The fact that the remnant fear and gave glory to God seems to indicate there is ongoing spiritual regeneration of the Jews even at this time, similar to the sealing of the 144,000 (Revelation 7:4-8).

However, others believe that the remnant who “gave glory to God” did not really repent, and there is no possibility of conversion for two reasons. First, their act of devotion in giving glory to God was motivated not by genuine repentance, but by fear. Paul makes this difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:10; see also Matthew 27:3-5)

Second, salvation is possible as long as there is preaching of the Gospel. However, after the two witnesses had ascended to heaven, the offer of the Gospel has ceased, and there is no possibility of salvation after that.

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

The woes referred to here are the three woes which correlate with the last three trumpet judgments (Revelation 8:13; 9:12). The end of the first woe is mentioned in Revelation 9:12. The second woe is related to the sounding of the sixth trumpet (9:13ff). Although the immediate effects of the second woe come to a close with the ending Revelation 9:14, it seems to suggest that the events recorded in Revelation 10 and 11 happened while the effects of the second woe continue to be felt.

At the end of the second woe, John did not tell us what constitutes the third woe. There are several views. There are some who think that Chapter 16 which reveals the seven plagues make up this third woe. The objection is that there seems to be a long period of time between the announcement of the third woe and the actual occurrence. Therefore, it is better to see the announcement of the third woe (11:14b) as introducing the seventh trumpet (Revelation 11:15-19), which makes up the content of the third woe.

REVELATION 11:15-19

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ 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.

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 11:15–19)

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven...” (11:15a)

When the seventh trumpet is sounded, the end of the end is near. The seventh trumpet is not to be confused with the last trump (1 Corinthians 15:54), which is precedes the rapture. The sounding of the trumpet is followed by the heavenly chorus. The setting is in heaven. The loud voices are praising God and our Lord Jesus Christ. John did not identify the singers, but it could be said that the whole of heaven would be singing.

A. “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).

The original text has it as “kingdom” (singular) as opposed to the AV translation “kingdoms” (plural). There are several keys lessons here.

First, the use of the singular “kingdom” instead of the plural “kingdoms” presents an important truth. All of the world’s diverse national, political, social, cultural, linguistic, and religious groups are in reality one kingdom under one king. That king is known in Scripture by many names and titles –

- the accuser (Revelation 12:10),
- the adversary (1 Peter 5:8),
- Beelzebub (Matthew 12:24),
- Belial (2 Corinthians 6:15),
- the dragon (Revelation 12:3, 7, 9),
- the “evil” (John 17:15),
- the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4),
- the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2),
- the roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8),
- the ruler of the demons (Mark 3:22),
- the ruler of this world (John 12:31),
- the old serpent (Revelation 12:9; 20:2),

- the tempter (1 Thessalonians. 3:5), and, most commonly,
- the devil (Matthew 4:1) and Satan (1 Timothy 5:15).

Second, the kingdoms of this world were what the devil promised to give our Lord Jesus if He would worship him (Luke 4:5-6; Matthew 4:8-9). Quoting the Old Testament, John affirms that the kingdom belongs to God and His Christ (Psalm 2:2, 8-9; 22:28; Daniel 7:14; Obadiah 21).

Third, although the kingdom will not have arrived in totality until all seven bowl judgments are poured forth (Revelation 16:17) and the King Himself returns to earth to defeat the armies of the nations (Isaiah 63:1-6; Zechariah 12:1-9; 14:1-8; Revelation 19:11-21), the event is so certain John presents it as if it is already accomplished. The Bible also describes the day with absolute certainty (Psalm 22:27-28; 72:8-11; Isaiah 9:7; Daniel 2:44; 7:14; Zechariah 14:9-11; Luke 1:32-33).

Fourth, the phrase “our Lord and His Christ” signifies the equality between God the Father and God the Son (see also Revelation 20:6; 22:3). In Revelation, John equates God and Christ, and they are called King, for they are worthy of praise and adoration. In other words, there are no two separate kingdoms. There is only one kingdom. The rule of Christ and God is the same, because God rules his kingdom through his Son. Christ has been king in his kingdom all along (Psalm 110:1; Matthew 28:18).

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

The twenty-four elders are mentioned in Revelation 4:4, 10; 5:8; 11:16; 19:4). They have been given the privilege of surrounding God’s throne and are closer to this throne than angels. The twenty-four elders are engaged in worship of God.

C. “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)

The twenty-four elders praise God as the “Lord God Almighty” The word “Almighty” [Gk: *pantokratōr*] literally means “all ruling” or “omnipotence” (see Revelation 19:6). The “omnipotence” of God means that all things are subject to His power.

In verse 17, the omnipotence of God is seen in His commissioning the Son to redeem His people, to forgive their sins, to grant them eternal life, and to teach them his Word. Now the elders thank God, who is their sovereign and all-powerful Lord. Their words of praise show a typical Jewish background consistent in David’s psalms (1 Chronicles 16:8, 26; Psalm 105:1; 106:1, 47; 136:1-4).

- D. **“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)

The phrase “which are, and wast, and art to come” is also used in Revelation 1:4, 8; 4:8. In other translations, the “art to come” is missing. The reason for the omission in verse 17 is that by this time, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ has already occurred, and John is now looking backward at the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise.

- E. **“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)

The last phrase in verse 17 affirms God’s victory over His enemies, and His right to govern over His creation. The phrase “hast taken to thee thy great power” means “to assume power.” The connotation here is that there will be no power that will ever rise against God to diminish His authority. God will be king over the entire entire realm. Satan will no longer be the “prince of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; 1 John 4:4; 5:19).

In Greek, John stresses the adjective “great,” emphasising God’s awesome power directed against his opponents. With the absolute and total defeat of the enemies, God begins his unrestricted reign.

- F. **“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”** (Revelation 11:18).

Here, John reverts to Psalm 2. In that Psalm, David speaks of God’s anger and wrath against the rebellious nations (Psalm 2:1-5, 12; see also Acts 4:25-27; Jeremiah 30:23-24).

Notice that the nations were also angry and they also raged. The anger and wrath of God differ from the anger and wrath of God’s enemies. God’s enemies direct their anger against God to destroy his kingdom and the Messiah. God’s wrath is directed at the nations to bring them to justice and just end.

The wrath of God speaks of the entire period of the judgments which are being loosed upon the earth, beginning with the first seal loosed by the Lamb (Revelation 6:1), and God’s wrath will intensify until it is complete (Revelation 15:1).

- G. **“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 shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth” (Revelation 11:18).

The word “time” [Gk: *kairos*] refers to an appointed time, during which God will judge the dead. Every man, once dead, will have such an appointed time (Hebrews 9:27).

In Revelation, the sixth seal (6:17), the seventh trumpet (11:18), and sixth bow (16:14) all refer to great day of God’s judgment.

The term “the dead” occurs eight times in Revelation and signifies all those who have died (1:5; 11:18; 14:13; 20:5,12, 13). It refers to both believers and unbelievers. In Daniel 12:2-3, Daniel wrote about the resurrection of the dead, which also has two categories.

Just there are two categories of dead and resurrection, there are also two categories of judgments – one for believers and another for unbelievers. Although the two judgments are mentioned in verse 18, the timing of these two judgements are apart by about one thousand years. The believers are raised before the start of the millennium (Revelation 20:6).

The judgment of the righteous is known as the Bema seat. It will be a judgment for reward rather than punishment (1 Corinthians 3:13-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

The unbelievers will be raised and judged at the end of the millennium. And the judgment of the unbelievers is known as the Great White Throne judgment, and they will be judged for their sins (Revelation 20:11, 13-14)

- H. **“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).**

While reward and deed are linked, it is not in the sense of cause and effect. In other words, rewards are given as tokens of God’s free grace.

John mentions three categories of people who will be rewarded.

- Servants and prophets. These are God’s servants who have called to serve and declare God’s truth.
- Saints. This is a common term for all believers. Saints simply refer to people whom God has sanctified through the blood of Christ.
- God-fearers refer to those who have a reverential attitude toward God.

- I. **“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).

The word “destroy” can denote both physical and moral destruction. It is also translated “corrupt” (Luke 12:33; 1 Timothy 6:5). Sinful man has destroyed the earth by corrupting the earth, abusing it to satisfy his own greed and lust, and God will use their corruption as His judgment upon them.

J. “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).

Following the praise of the twenty-four elders, the temple of God in heaven was opened. With the temple of heaven opened, the ark can be seen. Since the curtain separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place was rent at the time of our Lord Jesus’ death, the ark of the covenant is open to view.

The ark of the Testament (or covenant) in the tabernacle and later in the temple of Solomon represented the dwelling place of God. This ark symbolized God’s presence, and into that sacred presence only the high priest could enter once a year to atone for his own sins and the sins of the people.

On the cover of the ark, blood was sprinkled; and in the ark included the two tablets on which God had written the Ten Commandments, a pot of manna, as well as Aaron’s rod which budded (1 Kings 8:9; 2 Chronicles 5:10; Hebrews 9:4).

There has been much speculation concerning the location of the earthly Ark of the Covenant. Numerous locations have been suggested for the earthly Ark of the Covenant:

- Shishak took the ark to Egypt (1Kings 14:25-26; 2 Chronicles 12:2-4, 9).
- Nebuchadnezzar took the ark to Babylon (2 1Kings 25:13-15; 2 Chronicles 36:17-19; Jeremiah 52:17-22; cf.)
- Jeremiah hid the ark in a cave (2 Maccabees 2:4-6; Ezra 1:9-11)
- Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) took the ark to Syria (1 Maccabees 1:21-24, 57).
- General Titus took the ark to Rome.
- The ark is hidden below the Temple Mount.
- The son of the Queen of Sheba took the ark to Ethiopia.
- The ark no longer exists and will never appear again (Jer. 3:16).
- The ark was taken to heaven by God.

The last is perhaps the most common view. The fact that John speaks of the ark shows that God’s moral law endures and remains relevant.

- K. “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).

The description of “lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail” are reminiscent of the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:16-18). These phenomena are reminders of the Sinai event and suggest that God’s judgment has come. Here, John portrays the end of time.