
THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Lesson #6 (19 February 2016): Revelation 10-11 John's Mission; Two Prophets: "Take it, and eat it up"

David A. LeFevre – Adult Education Class – Snohomish Stake

INTRODUCTION: JOHN'S MISSION; TWO PROPHETS (10:1 – 11:19)

In previous chapters, we saw the first six trumpet judgments unfold and now anxiously await the seventh and final one. But before it does, there is an interlude, a pause in the narrative that temporarily turns our focus to two other topics, just as the sealing of the 144,000 and the heavenly multitude were a break between the sixth and seventh seals.

The first topic in the interlude bears upon the mission of the prophet who is writing the revelation, what he is doing at the time of the vision and what he will do later. Because his mission lasts until the return of the heavenly King in glory, his vision becomes his life.

The second has to do with two other prophets who have significant roles in the great latter-day scene that is the seventh seal's purpose—to prepare the earth for the coming of the Lord. Only after these scenes does the seventh trumpet sound, though in a quiet, almost imperceptible way that instead of wrapping everything up, opens us to additional visions of the past, present, and future, and to another set of judgments before the true final end of the wicked and the reign of the King of Kings.

OUTLINE

There are many ways to outline any book, and Revelation is no exception. Below are the eleven lessons in this series with chapter summaries. For the lesson in these notes, the chapter is broken down into more detailed sections and bolded.

1. The Majesty of Christ (1:1-20)
2. The Messages to the Seven Churches (2:1 – 3:22)
3. God and the Lamb
 - a. The Vision of Heaven (4:1-11)
 - b. The Sealed Book and the Worthy Lamb (5:1-14)
4. The Scroll Begins to Open
 - a. The Six Seals (6:1-17)
 - b. The Seal of the Living God (7:1-17)
5. The Opening of the Seventh Seal
 - a. The Seventh Seal and the First Four Trumpets (8:1-13)
 - b. Two Trumpets and the Great War (9:1-21)
6. **John's Mission; Two Prophets**
 - a. **The Little Scroll (10:1-11)**
 - i. **Another Mighty Angel (10:1-7)**
 - ii. **Eating the Scroll (10:8-11)**

- b. **The Seventh Trumpet (11:1-19)**
 - i. **Measuring the Temple (11:1-2)**
 - ii. **The Two Witnesses (11:3-14)**
 - iii. **Seventh Trumpet/Third Woe: Redemption (11:15-19)**
7. The Woman, the Child, and the Dragon
 - a. The Church and the Devil (12:1-18)
 - b. The Beasts of Revelation (13:1-18)
8. Judgment and Praise
 - a. The Winepress of the Wrath of God (14:1-20)
 - b. The Seven Angels (15:1-8)
9. Seven Last Plagues and Babylon the Great
 - a. The Seven Bowls (16:1-21)
 - b. Babylon the Great (17:1-18)
10. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb
 - a. The Fall of Babylon (18:1-24)
 - b. The King of Kings (19:1-21)
11. Heirs of the Celestial Glory
 - a. The Thousand Years (20:1-15)
 - b. The New Jerusalem (21:1-27)
 - c. Blessed Are They That Do His Commandments (22:1-21)

THE LITTLE SCROLL (10:1-11)

While Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were translating 3 Nephi in 1829, they came across a passage that spoke of three of the Nephite disciples desiring of Jesus “the thing which John, my beloved, who was with me in my ministry, before that I was lifted up by the Jews, desired of me.” Jesus therefore granted unto them that they would “never taste of death; but ye shall live to behold all the doings of the Father unto the children of men, even until all things shall be fulfilled according to the will of the Father, when I shall come in my glory with the powers of heaven” (3 Nephi 28:6-7). This may have led them to John 21:20-23 which is a somewhat enigmatic discussion of the fate of John.

Considering these two passages, the two men had a discussion, wondering if John was granted the same thing as the three Nephite disciples? 3 Nephi just said he desired it but does not make clear that he received it. The two took opposing positions and determined to seek an answer from the Lord, which they did using Joseph’s seer stone. The result was a vision of a document that John himself wrote and hid up, which Joseph was able to translate as he was doing with the Book of Mormon. In this document, it is clear that John was permitted by the Lord to “tarry until I come in my glory, and shalt prophesy before nations, kindreds, tongues and people” (D&C 7:3).

This section alludes to that mission using similar language: that John would “prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.” In short, John’s mission became extended down to our own day and beyond, making him not just a prophetic viewer of these events but a key player. He was seeing his own personal future tied up in the events of the last days.

ANOTHER MIGHTY ANGEL (10:1-7)

10:1 ***I saw another mighty angel.*** A “mighty angel” is contrasted with the angel in the pit in 9:11 that John just saw (Apollyon/Abaddon, meaning ‘destruction’ or ‘destroyer’). D&C 88:110-112 which indicates that this is the seventh trumpet angel and perhaps Michael

himself (in v. 112 he’s called “the seventh angel, even the archangel”).

10:1 ***clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow.*** These attributes were associated with the Lord earlier, and now they are with the seventh angel, displaying his divine authority and delegation of power. The rainbow represents his power to fulfill the covenant.¹ His face is like the sun and his feet or legs as fire, as well.² Some scholars believe this angel is a manifestation of God,³ but this isn’t the only time in the book that an angelic being is mistaken for divine (see 19:10). The messenger carries divine attributes to reflect his authority.

10:2 ***a little book open.*** This is not the sealed book, that only the Lamb could open (chapter 5). It is smaller and has a different purpose, which John will discover shortly.

10:2 ***set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth.*** Placing a foot on something symbolizes conquering it and having authority over it. The angel is showing that he has authority over the whole earth.⁴ See Joshua 10:24, where Joshua had his captains put their feet on the necks of the conquered kings to symbolize their total domination over the kings.

10:3 ***cried with a loud voice.*** The angel called out or exclaimed his message, like a lion roaring or seven thunders booming—both sounds immediately get your attention. It again represents his speaking the divine message (compare Psalm 104:7; Hosea 11:10; Job 37:5; 40:9).

10:3 ***seven thunders.*** In the Greek, this includes the definite article “the,” indicating a specific set of seven thunders known to John’s audience. The most likely candidate is Psalm 29, where the voice of the Lord is first heard as thunder, then progresses through six more similar descriptors for a total of seven expressions of the voice of the Lord.⁵

10:4 KJV	10:4 JST
4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about	4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about

¹ Draper and Rhodes, 650.

² Mounce, 202, suggests that his legs as pillars of fire could represent the Exodus motif of pillars of fire and smoke (Exodus 13:21-22; 14:19, 24).

³ E.g., Beale and Carson, 1115-1116.

⁴ Draper and Rhodes, 651, Mounce, 203.

⁵ Mounce, 203.

to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, **Seal up** those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, those things **are sealed up** which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

John saw that these things were already sealed up, which prevented him from writing them. (This is the only JST change in these chapters.)

10:4 **a voice from heaven.** The person who is the source of the voice is not identified but its certain origin in heaven renders it authoritative.

10:4 **seal up...write them not.** John had to seal up those things so a later prophet could write about them more fully, just as Nephi did for John; see 1 Nephi 14:24-28 where Nephi was told not to write some things because John will later; see also Daniel 12:9 where Daniel is also shown things that are sealed up “till the time of the end.” Similarly, Daniel was told to seal up some of his visionary material (Daniel 8:26; 12:4, 9) and Paul was commanded not to write some of his vision (2 Corinthians 12:4).⁶ The act of sealing up the vision is accomplished by *not* writing it (notice the order).⁷

Some of the sealed things are possibly now revealed in D&C 88:87-116, followed by 117-126 which tell us what to do to prepare!⁸

10:5 **his hand.** Ancient Greek NT manuscripts (and modern translations, including NIV, NASB, NAB, RSV, NJB, CJB, and NLT) have “right hand” here, as a sign of covenant or oath making (see v. 6). See Deuteronomy 32:40 and Daniel 12:7. With the right hand raise, we can deduce that the scroll was in his left hand.

10:6 **sware by him.** The angel made an oath⁹ testified by God himself, who created the heaven (to which the angel speaks), the earth, and the sea (he is standing on both of these).

10:6 **there should be time no longer.** Or, “There shall be no more delay” (NAB). Not that time will end but that there will be no more delay, in response to the martyrs’ question, “How long?” (6:10-11). “The angel swears that postponement from this point on is

impossible.”¹⁰ It may have looked like God’s plan had a chance of being defeated (it didn’t, but Satan would want everyone to think that) but now it will be clear to all that the plan will finish just as the Father and the Son designed it.

Compare to Daniel 12:5-9 where one angel asks how long and the other responds, with both hands raised in prayer, 3-1/2 years; Daniel was then told this was sealed up.

10:7 **in the days of the voice of the seventh angel.** It is about to happen in 11:15, and the seventh angel’s trumpet will signal the start of several events that still need to happen before the Lord’s kingdom is fully established on the earth, though that outcome is inevitable.

10:7 **when he shall begin to sound.** Like the half hour of silence in 8:1, there is a moment of drama when we know what is about to happen, we see the angel lift the trumpet to his lips, and we wait, anxious for the next step. “The Greek here...creates an image of the angel lifting his trumpet to his lips and taking a breath.”¹¹

10:7 **mystery of God should be finished.** That which God planned and made possible through the blood of the Lamb will be fulfilled. A mystery is something which can only be learned by revelation;¹² the world will not understand these things.

10:7 **as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.** None of this will be a surprise to those who have studied and heeded the prophets, past and present. See Amos 3:7.

EATING THE SCROLL (10:8-11)

10:9 **eat it up.** This should be compared Jeremiah 15:16 and Ezekiel 2:7 – 3:14. In the former, Jeremiah uses the metaphor of eating God’s words and finding joy in doing so, but he is not given a scroll or anything similar. However, in Ezekiel, that prophet is given a scroll to eat that is written on both sides with the judgments of God against the people. He eats it and it is sweet in his mouth. However, as he preaches to the people and they reject his words (as the Lord said would happen), he

⁶ Arnold, 309; Mounce, 203-204.

⁷ Smalley, 262.

⁸ Wilcox, 134-136.

⁹ Mounce, 205.

¹⁰ Draper and Rhodes, 655.

¹¹ Draper and Rhodes, 656.

¹² Beale and Carson, 1117.

goes away in bitterness. In John's case, it could also be the judgments he must pronounce on the wicked that make his mission bitter.¹³

10:9 *in thy mouth sweet as honey*. The sweet taste, as in Ezekiel's experience (Ezekiel 2:7 – 3:14) is due "to the life-sustaining attribute of God's word that empowers the prophet to carry out his task."¹⁴ Two psalms speak of the sweetness of God's word (Psalm 19:7-10; 119:103).

D&C 77:14 explains John's role is to gather Israel, Elias-like: "Q. What are we to understand by the little book which was eaten by John, as mentioned in the 10th chapter of Revelation? A. We are to understand that it was a mission, and an ordinance, for him to gather the tribes of Israel; behold, this is Elias, who, as it is written, must come and restore all things."

Joseph Smith said, "John the Revelator [is] among the Ten Tribes of Israel who had been led away by

Shalmanaser, King of Israel,¹⁵ to prepare them for their return from their Long dispersion, to again possess the land of their father's."¹⁶ He was also one of the three who appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and restored the Melchizedek priesthood (D&C 27:12), thus making him a restorer Elias.

10:11 *Thou must prophesy again*. He "must" means he is subject to divine compulsion;¹⁷ compare Jeremiah 20:7-9 where that prophet felt compelled to continue teaching even though he was suffering for it. John was banished to Patmos at this time, so this reassured him that his mission would continue beyond his present circumstance.

10:11 *before*. Or, 'about' or 'to.'

10:11 *many people, and nations*. See D&C 7:3; this verse in Revelation was a reminder of the Lord's earlier prophesy to John.

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET (11:1-19)

There is much confusion about this chapter in general, with some calling it the most difficult chapter in the book to understand. Fortunately, with the help of latter-day prophets, it's much clearer.

Though we have not heard the seventh trumpet sound yet, the imagery of this chapter takes us down to the critical moment of the formal establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth. John's focus shifts from his own mission in chapter 10 to some scenes at the very end of the world—which are now at the end of his mission as well. In essence, he is again being reassured (and to comfort us all) that though things will look dark, God's plan accounts for all of it and it will turn out good in the end.

The remainder of the book cannot be taken as chronological but representational of God's purposes being fulfilled. "Any attempt to arrange the materials in a strictly sequential pattern is doomed to failure."¹⁸ We will move back and forth between times, places, and

events, each one building to the crescendo of the final triumph but not necessarily in order.

John was instructed to measure the temple to set the bounds between the righteous and the wicked. The attack of a large army was temporarily thwarted by two prophets with great power. They were overcome in the end with much celebration by the wicked, but soon their true victory was assured in front of all of their enemies, which then triggered the seventh trumpet blast.

MEASURING THE TEMPLE (11:1-2)

11:1 *a reed like unto a rod*. This was a "giant reed" that could reach heights of twenty feet and was often used as a surveyor's rule or measuring tool.¹⁹

11:1 *measure the temple of God*. Ezekiel had a similar, though substantially lengthier and more involved experience in Ezekiel 40-48. There are at least four

¹³ Draper and Rhodes, 671.

¹⁴ Beale and Carson, 1117.

¹⁵ This is a scribal error as it should be Assyria; see 2 Kings 17.

¹⁶ Joseph Smith Papers, John Whitmer, History, 1831-circa 1847, p. 31,

<http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/john-whitmer-history-1831-circa-1847?p=31>.

¹⁷ Smalley, 268.

¹⁸ Mounce, 207.

¹⁹ Draper and Rhodes, 682.

possible interpretations as to the purpose of measuring the temple:²⁰

- Rebuilding or restoring
- Preparing for destruction
- Preservation from physical harm
- Preservation from spiritual harm

In this case, the measuring was likely to set up a line of protection between the Saints (as represented by the temple) and the Gentiles (the outer courtyard), and to prepare the world for judgment.

11:1 **the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship.** The things John was commanded to measure (temple, altar, and worshippers in the courtyard) are the same ones that are atoned for on the Day of Atonement by the high priest (Leviticus 16:6, 11, 16-18). In fact, the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70, many years before John received this revelation, so he was probably measuring the future temple in Jerusalem, as described in Ezekiel 40-48. Symbolically, the temple probably represents the faithful who have the seal of the Father and are in white robes (7:4, 9).²¹

11:2 **the court which is without the temple.** Meaning, the court outside the temple itself, known as the court of the Gentiles. The Jerusalem temple at the time of Christ had boundary markers and signs between the public or Gentile area and the area where the people of Israel could go. Other temples (Solomon's and the Tabernacle) simply had the temple and everything outside of it, representing the world, which symbolism fits John's pattern better than Herod's more complex architecture.²²

11:2 **tread under foot.** See Luke 21:24; the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled with the Restoration: read D&C 45:28-30. "Tread under foot" can also mean "trample on" (NIV, NJB) or "trample over" (RSV).

Joseph Smith taught, "Judah must return, Jerusalem must be rebuilt, and the Temple, and water come out from under the Temple, and the waters of the Dead Sea be healed: It will take some time to build the walls <of

the city> and the Temple &c. and all this much be done before the Son of Man will make his appearance."²³

11:2 **forty and two months.** Or, three and one half years which equals 1,260 days (see v. 3) in the Jewish calendar. This is 'time, times, and a half'; a time of apostasy, persecution, and spiritual famine, when the enemies of God temporarily dominate. Other examples of this seeming Satanic win:

- Elijah's 3-1/2 year famine (1 Kings 18:1 says the drought ended in the third year but see Luke 4:25 and James 5:17 with both put it at 3 years and 6 months)
- Antiochus Epiphanes' 3-1/2 year persecution at the time of the Maccabees, 167-164 B.C.
- Daniel's prophecy of a 3-1/2 year tribulation (Daniel 7, 9, 12)
- The time of the children of Israel in the wilderness (two years of wandering first, then forty years after they sinned); they also had forty-two encampments (Numbers 33:5-49)
- Christ's ministry, which is reckoned to that length by starting with his baptism to his crucifixion

The number may be more symbolic than literal. Three and a half is half of seven, the number symbolizing perfection and completeness. The Hebrew word for seven, *sheva*, is the same word that means 'take an oath,' tying seven and covenant together. Thus 3-1/2 also represents an incomplete covenant or a false religious system that tries to appear true but lacks the power of God. It can also mean an incomplete event, "that which is arrested midway in its normal course." Finally, 42 months can also mean something just short of perfection, because it is 7x6, not 7x7.²⁴

THE TWO WITNESSES (11:3-14)

Some see this section as reflecting the content of the scroll that John ate in chapter 10, an interesting interpretation that has some merit, given the description of the scroll as being mixed good and bad

²⁰ Mounce, 213, n63.

²¹ Smalley, 272.

²² Draper and Rhodes, 683.

²³ Joseph Smith Papers, History 1838-1856, volume D-1 [1 August 1842-1 July 1843], p. 163,

<http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/history-1838-1856-volume-d-1-1-august-1842-1-july-1843?p=163>.

²⁴ Draper and Rhodes, 709-710.

news and the power of the prophets in these verses that are later defeated by their enemies.²⁵

11:3 **my two witnesses**. In the last explanation provided in D&C 77, the following is given about these witnesses: “Q. What is to be understood by the two witnesses, in the eleventh chapter of Revelation? A. They are two prophets that are to be raised up to the Jewish nation in the last days, at the time of the restoration, and to prophesy to the Jews after they are gathered and have built the city of Jerusalem in the land of their fathers” (D&C 77:15).

“Witnesses” is the Greek *martysin* from which we get martyr. Persecution and possible death are implied in being a witness of the truth of God. Two witnesses are the minimum required to make an action legal in the Mosaic Law (Numbers 35:30; Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15).

11:3 **clothed in sackcloth**. They wore black garments woven from goat hair, symbolic of mourning.²⁶ They are mourning the sins of the people upon whom they render judgment and punishment.

11:4 **two olive trees, and the two candlesticks**. Olive trees represent peace while lamps (lampstands is the better translation of “candlesticks”) equate to light and truth. They also figure in the prophecy of Zechariah about Joshua and Zerubbabel who rebuilt the temple after the Babylonian destruction (Zechariah 4:1-14; 6:11-12). Zerubbabel and Joshua were anointed king and high priest, respectively, and referred to as “two olive trees” providing oil to light two lampstands (Zechariah 4:11). Their partnership was the key to rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple after the Babylonian destruction.

The context is even more linked to John’s vision when we consider the vision in Zechariah 1:12-17 and 2:1-5 where an angel measures Jerusalem and promises Zechariah that the city and temple will be rebuilt.

In other words, John is essentially saying to the inhabitants of Jerusalem with the olive tree and lampstand images, “There will be a future Zerubbabel (king) and Joshua (high priest) with the latter-day

temple in Jerusalem!”²⁷ The two prophets together play the role of king and priest to the city under siege.

It’s interesting to note that Zerubbabel means ‘sown in Babylon’ and Joshua is the Hebrew name equivalent to Jesus, meaning ‘Jehovah is salvation.’ Together their two names represent coming out of Babylon and being saved by the Lord, which is the call of the two prophets here in Revelation.

2 Nephi 8:18-20 is the Book of Mormon’s version of Isaiah’s prophesy (Isaiah 51:18-20) that seems to refer to these same two prophets as “two sons” who have not fainted like the others but like “a wild bull in a net, they are full of the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of thy God.”

11:4 **standing before the God of the earth**. Most Greek manuscripts read *kurios*, or “Lord,” usually referring to Jesus, instead of *theos*, or “God,” typically meaning the Father. The curious phrase here is “God of the earth.” We expect to see God in heaven, as we have already in previous chapters. That he now claims to be God of the earth demonstrates his moving toward the conclusion of the plan and toward Christ’s full reign on earth.

11:5 **fire proceedeth out of their mouth**. Just as Jesus was portrayed with a sword coming from his mouth that represented his words meting out justice and rewards (1:16), so fire coming from the mouths of the witnesses represents the power of their words. Jeremiah 5:14 has a similar concept: “I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.” Isaiah 11:4 also carries the same connotation.²⁸ More significantly, consider JST Genesis 14:30-32 (Appendix) for examples of the literal power God can give his prophets to defy nations and armies.

This and the other powers mentioned in subsequent verses evoke images of Elijah and Moses, meaning that these witnesses have priesthood power over their enemies and are stronger than earthly forces and false gods, reminiscent of the two most famous prophets of the Old Testament who symbolically represent the Law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah).

- Elijah: Called down fire to destroy enemies (2 Kings 1)
- Elijah: Caused it to stop raining (1 Kings 11, 17)
- Moses: Turned water into blood (Exodus 7:20)

²⁵ Mounce 212-213, Smalley, 275.

²⁶ Arnold, 312.

²⁷ Wilcox, 151.

²⁸ Beale and Carson, 1119-1120.

- Moses: Inflicted other plagues on Egypt (Exodus 8:12)

Both Moses and Elijah were translated and returned to the Mount of Transfiguration. In our day, they both also returned to give keys to Joseph Smith (D&C 110).

While these two prophets in Revelation are symbolized by figures of the past (Zerubbabel and Joshua/Moses and Elijah) they are also going to be real prophets, according to D&C 77:15. Elder Bruce R. McConkie offered this view:

Their ministry will take place after the latter-day temple has been built in Old Jerusalem, after some of the Jews who dwell there have been converted, and just before Armageddon and the return of the Lord Jesus. How long will they minister in Jerusalem and Holy Land? For three and a half years, the precise time spent by the Lord in his ministry to the ancient Jews. The Jews, as an assembled people, will hear again the testimony of legal administrators bearing record that salvation is in Christ and in his gospel. Who will these witnesses be? We do not know, except that they will be followers of Joseph Smith; they will hold the Melchizedek priesthood; they will be members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is reasonable to suppose, knowing how the Lord has always dealt with his people in all ages, that they will be two members of the Council of the Twelve or of the First Presidency of the Church" (*The Millennial Messiah*, 390).

11:7 when they shall have finished their testimony.

The two witnesses are protected until their mission is completed, much like John himself or other ancient prophets such as Samuel (Helaman 16:1-7).

11:7 beast. The beast is brought into the story without an introduction or explanation, which comes in chapters 12-13. In contrast to the Lamb, this beast is the Greek *therion* or wild animal, no friend to man. The same beast is likely portrayed in Daniel 7:19-21, which "made war with the saints, and prevailed against them."

11:7 the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit. The beast comes out of the pit where the star fell and locusts emerged already. Similarly, in Daniel 7:3, the four wicked beasts "came up from the sea."

11:7 shall make war against them. The beast can only defeat the two prophets with great effort. No mere sniper fire or ambush will do it—it requires a great, all-out war.

11:7 shall overcome them, and kill them. How their deaths are brought about is not revealed, though from the statement that it cannot happen until they "have finished their testimony" indicates a submission on their part, knowing what will happen next.

11:8 their dead bodies shall lie in the street. In the ancient world as it is today in many cultures, bodies are buried or disposed of within one day. In this case, the prophets' bodies will lie where many can see them (imagine the images on CNN being broadcast all over the world) for three and a half days, showing disrespect and dishonor to their remains.²⁹

11:8 the great city. Perhaps meaning, Jerusalem (because of the reference to it being where Jesus was crucified). However, some scholars note the use of "the great city" is tied to the residence of the wicked only in Revelation, represented by Rome or Babylon, symbolically distinguishing between the earthly home of the saints and that of the enemies of God.³⁰

11:8 which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt. Figuratively, the wicked city's status was such that she could be compared to both Sodom that was destroyed for great wickedness, and Egypt, which made slaves of Israel.

11:8 where also our Lord was crucified. The city where Jesus' death took place. An early Christian tradition, however, blamed Rome for Jesus' death as much as Jerusalem, because Pilate, a Roman, was the one who sentenced him.³¹

11:9 dead bodies. Not burying a body was the ultimate insult in the Jewish culture, and remains so even today among many Jews, Arabs, and others.³²

11:10 shall rejoice over them. The enemies of God will be thrilled that their tormentors are finally dead, inducing them to rejoice, make merry, and even send gifts to each other. For three and a half years, the prophets have protected the city, called people to repent, declared eternal truths, and called down drought, famine, and plagues upon those who opposed

²⁹ Mounce, 220.

³⁰ For example, Arnold, 314; Mounce, 220-221.

³¹ Arnold, 314.

³² Arnold, 314-315; Mounce 281.

them. No doubt their enemies rationalized the success of the prophets in resisting for so long in some way. But the prophets' deaths now prove the power of the beast's evil cause, so they believe. However, as with those who killed prophets and even Jesus in the past, their celebration is premature.

11:11 **after three days and an half.** Like Jesus waiting to raise Lazarus until the fourth day (John 11:17), God does not resurrect the prophets until after the customary three-day period that in many ancient cultures demonstrating that they were truly dead.³³

11:11 **Spirit of life from God.** The wind or breath of life entered into their dead corpses, and "they stood upon their feet," an event that would shock all those who witnessed it to no end, bringing "great fear" upon them.

11:12 **heard a great voice from heaven.** The speaker is not definitively identified but the location of the voice is heaven, so we can be certain of its authority.

11:12 **ascended up to heaven in a cloud.** The cloud represents the presence of God. Elijah (2 Kings 2:11) did the same thing, and Jesus ascended into heaven in a cloud as well (Acts 1:9).

11:13 **the same hour.** Perhaps not literally within 60 minutes but the phrase does emphasize that it will be a short time between the resurrection of the two prophets and the earthquake that happens next.

11:13 **a great earthquake.** A *seismos megas* evokes the day of judgment, as the prophets have been taken up to glory in the cloud and now those who killed them will suffer for their sin.

11:13 **a tenth part of the city fell.** "One tenth, or a tithe, is the Lord's portion, that which he demands."³⁴ The number should not likely be taken literally in terms of the destruction.

11:13 **slain of men seven thousand.** This number represents a large and perfect number. Together with "a tenth part," we can take the symbol to mean that the wicked will be killed.³⁵

11:13 **gave glory to the God of heaven.** This may not imply conversion or repentance³⁶ after the earthquake,

but a recognition of God's power which is clear and obvious at this point. It is only brought about because they are "affrighted." However, their recognition of God's power can lead to a more humble change of heart and conversion (see Zechariah 14:1-4; 12:2-3, 8-11; 13:6, 9; and D&C 45:48, 50-53).

11:13 **seven thousand.** Or, a perfect many; the right number in God's economy. It is also the approximate population of 1/10 of a large city of John's day (since 1/10 of the city collapsed in the quake).

11:14 **The second woe is past.** With the resurrection of the prophets and the great earthquake, we come to the end of the second woe or sixth trumpet judgment and are now ready for the seventh trumpet and the third woe. This transitional verse moves us between the two.³⁷

SEVENTH TRUMPET/THIRD WOE: REDEMPTION (11:15-19)

These verses are an interlude, even a table of contents, for chapters 12-19. John again looked to heaven, saw what was happening there, and then turned back to earth in chapter 12 to see how those actions impact the planet.

11:15 **the seventh angel sounded.** Before this point (the seventh trumpet) it would almost appear that Satan could win, with Church members suffering martyrdom and persecution, and the city being overcome by its enemies. But with the sounding of this trumpet and the view into heaven, John again saw that there was no doubt that God would triumph. It's as if we were all holding our breath in the events of the sixth trumpet, praying that it would turn out better than it looked like it might.

11:15 **great voices in heaven.** In contrast to the silence after the seventh seal was opened, the seventh trumpet elicits a mighty shout and doxology.³⁸

11:15 **the kingdoms of this world.** See Daniel 7:9-14 where the ancient of days comes, judgment is rendered,

³³ Draper and Rhodes, 719.

³⁴ Draper and Rhodes, 722.

³⁵ Draper and Rhodes, 722.

³⁶ Though Draper and Rhodes, 723, say the words carry that idea.

³⁷ Smalley, 287.

³⁸ Smalley, 288.

the books are opened, and the Son of man is given dominion.

11:16 **the four and twenty elders.** Though silent since 7:11, the twenty-four seated elders once again fall down before the Father and kissed his feet, singing his praises.

11:17 **and hast reigned.** Or, “have begun to reign” (NIV). He already reigned over the universe but now has shown forth his power and established that rule before all men on earth.

11:18 **the nations were angry.** Referring back to the prophets directly but also indirectly to all the times prophets, saints, and others spoke for the Lord and triggered the wrath of the world.

11:18 **the time of the dead, that they should be judged.** Or, “the time for the dead to be judged” (NASB, RSV). Not the final judgment but the first wave of resurrections among the righteous, “the prophets and your people who revere your name” (compare D&C 133:52-56).

11:19 **the ark of his testament.** Though the earthly ark was gone, the heavenly one was still there and the

covenant it represented was not broken. The temple was opened here and in full view of all saints, showing that everyone has access to the presence of God, unlike in Biblical times when only the high priest could enter into the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement (tying back to John’s instruction to measure the temple at the beginning of the chapter).

There was a legend in John’s day (reflected in 2 Maccabees 2:4-8) that Jeremiah had hidden the ark in Mt. Nebo (or Sinai) until “God finally gathers his people together and shows mercy to them” (2 Maccabees 2:7). That tradition could be reflected here in this moment.³⁹

The presence of the ark as a witness to the destruction of the wicked may also hearken back to the fall of Jericho where the ark was marched around the city seven days before it fell at the trumpet blasts from the priests.

11:19 **lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.** All manifestations of divine power and judgment, their appearance signifies the end of the era and the beginning of God’s reign on earth.

CONCLUSION

These chapters have taken us through a brief side-trip that taught us about John’s mission but then returned to the narrative of the end of the sixth trumpet, which is the second woe. With our eyes fixed on two prophets who defend Jerusalem for a lengthy time against enemy attack, we finally see them die at their enemies’ hands. The enemies may celebrate for a season but it is in vain; the prophets rise up and ascend at the invitation of a heavenly voice, seen by their enemies who cannot believe their own eyes. An earthquake destroys the most wicked and the remainder begin a conversion that

will culminate only when they personally see Jesus Christ appear before them and recognize the wounds of his Atonement. Though Jesus is rightfully declared the ruler of the world at that point, the battle with evil is not yet fully over, and won’t be for a few more chapters. Next, John will look back to give us some insight into the eternal nature of this battle, followed by more heavenly praises. The true end of the wicked in the world must wait until chapters 16-20 before at last God can wipe away all tears shed for death, pain, and sorrow (21:4).

³⁹ Mounce, 228.

SOURCES CONSULTED

- Beale, G. K., and Carson, D. A., eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007).
- Brown, Raymond E. *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997).
- Danker, Frederick William, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).
- Draper, Richard D. *Opening the Seven Seals: The Visions of John the Revelator* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1991).
- Draper, Richard D. and Rhodes, Michael D. *The Revelation of John the Apostle* (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2013); electronic version from Deseret Bookshelf, so page numbers may differ depending on the device used.
- Faulconer, James E., *The New Testament Made Harder: Scripture Study Questions* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, 2015).
- Faulring, Scott H., Jackson, Kent P., and Matthews, Robert J., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, Religious Studies Center, 2004).
- Holzapfel, Richard Neitzel and Wayment, Thomas A., eds., *The Life and Teachings of the New Testament Apostles* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 2010).
- Holzapfel, Richard Neitzel and Wayment, Thomas A., eds., *Making Sense of the New Testament* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 2010).
- MacArthur, John, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 2 vols. (Chicago, Moody Press, 1999).
- McConkie, Bruce R. *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary (DNTC)*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1977).
- Millet, Robert L., ed. *Studies in Scripture: Vol. 6, Acts to Revelation* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 1987).
- Mounce, Robert H. *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1977).
- Osborne, Grant R., *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002).
- Parry, Jay A., and Parry, Donald W. *Understanding the Book of Revelation* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1998).
- Ryken, Leland, Wilhoit, James C., Longman, Tremper, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1998).
- Smalley, Stephen S., *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005).
- Smith, Joseph Fielding, ed., *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1977); cited as TPJS.
- Wall, Rob, *Lectio: Guided Bible Reading—Revelation*, <http://blog.spu.edu/lectio/readings/revelation/>.
- Wayment, Thomas A., *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the New Testament* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 2005).
- Welch, John & Hall, John. *Charting the New Testament* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002).
- Wilcox, S. Michael. *Who Shall Be Able to Stand? Finding Personal Meaning in the Book of Revelation* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003).
- Wilson, Mark, "Revelation," in Arnold, Clinton E., ed. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).
- Bible versions cited (if no version is cited, it is the KJV; any translation or paraphrase in single quotes is the author's):
 KJV – King James Version (Authorized Version)
 JST – Joseph Smith Translation
 BYU – BYU New Testament Rendition (from Draper and Rhodes)
 CJB – Complete Jewish Bible
 LXX – Septuagint (Greek Old Testament)
 NAB – The New American Bible
 NASB – New American Standard Bible
 NIV – New International Version
 NJB – New Jerusalem Bible
 NLT – New Living Translation