

The Two Witnesses and the Seventh Trumpet

by John F. Walvoord

The two witnesses in Revelation 11 prophesy for 1,260 days, have miraculous powers, and are killed by the beast from the bottomless pit, only to be restored to life and caught up to heaven.

Topics: "End Times", "Revelation Prophecy"

Description

John F. Walvoord delves into the intricate and challenging Chapter 11 of Revelation, emphasizing the prophetic nature of the text and the differing interpretations surrounding it. The chapter unfolds with John being instructed to measure the Temple of God, symbolizing God's ownership and judgment over worshipers. The two witnesses are introduced, believed to be individuals with great prophetic powers, possibly representing historical figures like Moses and Elijah. Their ministry, death, and resurrection symbolize God's power and judgment during the great tribulation. The chapter culminates with the seventh trumpet sounding, signaling the kingdoms of the world becoming Christ's, leading to the eternal reign of Christ and the worship of the twenty-four elders in heaven.

Transcript

Careful students of the book of Revelation will probably agree with Alford that chapter 11 "is undoubtedly one of the most difficult in the whole Apocalypse."²⁰⁸ A comparison of many commentaries will reveal the widest kind of disagreement as to the meaning of this chapter. Even Alford attempts to spiritualize the city, the temple, and the events portrayed in this chapter. The guiding lines which govern the exposition to follow regard this chapter as a legitimate prophetic utterance in which the terms are taken normally. Hence, the great city of 11:8 is identified as the literal city of Jerusalem. The time periods are taken as literal time periods. The two witnesses are interpreted as two individuals. The three and a half days are taken literally. The earthquake is a literal earthquake. The seven thousand men who are slain by the earthquake are seven thousand individuals who die in the catastrophe. The death of the witnesses is literal as are their resurrection and ascension. These major assumptions provide an intelligent understanding of this portion of prophecy even though the possibility of difference of opinion on the part of the reader is taken for granted in some of these judgments.

Chapter 11 of the Revelation continues the parenthetical section beginning in chapter 10 and extending through chapter 14. With the exception of 11:15-19, introducing the seventh trumpet, the narrative does not advance in these chapters and various topics are presented. In chapter 15, the chronological developments continue as the contents of the seventh trumpet, namely, the seven vials, are manifested.

In 11:1-14 there is a continuation of the same subject as in chapter 10.

The Measuring Rod of God (11:1-2)

11:1-2 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

In the opening verse of chapter 11, John is given a reed compared to a rod. This reed is commonly grown in the Jordan Valley, and because of its light weight it constitutes a good measuring rod. John is instructed to measure the Temple of God, the altar, and them that worship therein. The introductory phrase, "the angel stood saying," is not in some manuscripts though found in Victorinus and in the Armenian version. As there is some question whether the angel actually says this, the phrase "it was said" could be substituted. It may actually be the voice of God rather than the voice of the angel, if the angel of chapter 10 is not Christ Himself.

This command to measure the Temple of God makes John the actor as well as the observer. The Temple of God (Gr., *naon tou theou*) refers to the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, not the outer court of the Temple. The altar may be a reference to the brazen altar which was in the outer court although the altar in chapter 8 seems to be the altar of incense. Only priests could go into the Temple, but others who were not priests could approach the brazen altar with their sacrifices. Although John is commanded to measure the Temple and the altar and them that worship therein, he is instructed not to measure the court without the Temple. The explanation given is that this is given to the Gentiles and that the outer court as well as the entire holy city will be under Gentile dominion for forty-two months.

A number of questions can be raised concerning this symbolic picture. In Zechariah 2, a man is seen measuring Jerusalem, a scene which evidently portrays God's divine judgment on the city. Another instance is found in Ezekiel 40, where the Temple of the future kingdom is carefully measured with a reed. Still another instance is Revelation 21, where the new Jerusalem is measured (21:15-17). The act of measuring seems to signify that the area belongs to God in some special way. It is an evaluation of His property.

The Temple here is apparently that which will be in existence during the great tribulation. Originally constructed for the worship of the Jews and the renewal of their ancient sacrifices, during the great tribulation it is desecrated and becomes the home of an idol of the world ruler (cf. 2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:14-15; Dan. 9:27; 12:11). For this reason it is most significant that John is instructed to measure not only the Temple and the altar but also the worshipers. It is saying in effect that God is the judge of man's worship and man's character and that all must give an account to Him. It also implies, inasmuch as the reed is ten feet long, that man comes far short of the divine standard. Even a person very tall would fall short of the ten-foot measuring rod. God is therefore not only claiming ownership by this measurement of the Temple and the altar but demonstrating the shortcomings of the worshipers who do not measure up to His standard.

The second verse adds further light to the situation in that instruction is given not to measure the outer court because it is given to the Gentiles along with the holy city for a period of forty-two months. Here again is the familiar three-and-one-half-year period or half of the seven-year period predicted by Daniel the prophet (Dan. 9:27) in which Israel's history will be consummated with Christ's returning at its close.

Expositors have differed as to whether the forty-two months are the first half of the seven years or the second half. The decision is complicated by the fact that in verse 3 another reference is made to the three and one-half years as the period during which the two witnesses give their testimony. On the basis of the evidence, it is not possible to be dogmatic. If the point of view is adopted, however, that Revelation is primarily concerned with the latter half of Daniel's seventieth week, this perspective would seem to give weight to the conclusion that this is the latter half of the week or the last three and one-half years prior to the second coming especially in light of the details of judgments portrayed in the seals, trumpets, and vials.

This conclusion is substantiated in verse 2 by the fact that the Gentiles have control of the outer court and the city. It would seem that under the covenant relationship between the beast and the children of Israel they are given considerable freedom in their worship for the first three and one-half years, and this would probably preclude the Gentiles trampling on the outer court, even though the holy city as such is under Gentile dominion. Since the Gentiles are said to tread the holy city underfoot only forty-two months, this ill treatment better fits the latter half of the week. If the former half were mentioned, Jerusalem would be trodden underfoot for the entire seven-year period rather than for only forty-two months. The passage seems to anticipate freedom from Gentile dominion after the three and one-half years have run their course, which would mean that the second half of the seven-year period is in view.

The statement that the holy city is under Gentile control is borne out by the prophecy of Christ in Luke 21:24 where He predicted of the people of Israel, "They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." The times of the Gentiles end at the second coming of Christ when Gentile dominion is destroyed and Christ establishes His kingdom. This is predicted in the seventh trumpet revealed later in this chapter. The first two verses then signify that while God is permitting Gentile dominion and persecution of Israel, God Himself will be the judge of her persecutors.

The Prophecy of the Two Witnesses (11:3-6)

11:3-6 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

In verse 3, two unusual characters are introduced, described as two witnesses who shall prophesy 1,260 days. This is exactly three and one-half years or forty-two months of thirty days each, and is unquestionably related to either the first three and one-half years or the latter three and one-half years of the seven years of Daniel 9:27. Expositors have differed as to which of the two periods is in view here. From the fact, however, that the two witnesses pour out divine judgments upon the earth and need divine protection lest they be killed, it implies that they are in the latter half of the seven years when awful persecution will afflict the people of God, as this protection would not be necessary in the first three and one-half years. The punishments and judgments the witnesses inflict on the world also seem to fit better in the great tribulation period.

There has been much debate on the identity of these two witnesses.²⁰⁹ Some have suggested that these represent Israel and the church, or Israel and the Word of God, as the two principal instruments of witness in the world. Arno C. Gaebelin regards the two witnesses as representative of witness in the great tribulation: "Perhaps the leaders would be two great instruments, manifesting the spirit of Moses and Elijah, endowed with supernatural power, but a larger number of witnesses is unquestionably in view here."²¹⁰ Gaebelin implies that the two witnesses are individuals but representative of a larger witness. Others like J. B. Smith are quite sure that they are Moses and Elijah, because of the similarity of judgment inflicted to those pronounced by Elijah and Moses, namely fire from heaven, turning water into blood, and smiting the earth with plagues.²¹¹ Support for the identification of Elijah as one of the two witnesses is found in the prediction that Elijah will come "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5). This seems to be at least partially fulfilled by the coming of John the Baptist according to the discussion of Christ with His disciples (Matt. 17:10-13; Mark 9:11-13; cf. Luke 1:17). Evidence for both Moses and Elijah is found in the fact that they are related to the second coming and the transfiguration (Matt. 17:3). The dispute of Michael with the devil over the body of Moses (Jude 9) is mentioned preceding a prophecy of the second coming, but no specific connection is made between the two. All the evidence for the identification, however, is circumstantial and not clear. There are great difficulties in all points of view identifying the two witnesses with historical characters.

The use of the article with the expression "two witnesses" in verse 3 seems to signify that they are specific persons. The actions are those of people; and their resultant death and resurrection, including their bodies lying in the streets of Jerusalem for three and one-half days, can hardly refer to Israel, the church, or the Word of God. There are also difficulties, however, in defining them as any two characters such as Elijah and Moses or, as some would have it, Enoch and Elijah. Govett identifies the two witnesses as Enoch and Elijah and cites in support early tradition and apocryphal writing.²¹² The fact that Enoch and Elijah did not die but were translated has been seized upon by some as a violation of the general rule of Hebrews 9:27, "It is appointed unto men once to die." But this argument is nullified by the fact that the entire living church at the time of the rapture will go to heaven without dying. If Moses is included as one of the two witnesses, there is an added difficulty in that he once died. Could he die a second time? It seems far preferable to regard these two witnesses as two prophets who will be raised up from among those who turn to Christ in the time following the rapture. Ainslie identifies the two witnesses as "two strange men" whose identity cannot now be determined who will literally have prophetic ministry for twelve hundred sixty days and then be slain.²¹³ Many other conservative expositors agree with Easton who takes these two witnesses "to be two men, not two companies of men, nor yet a mere symbol of 'adequate testimonies.'" He finds this confirmed in verse 10 in the expression "these two prophets." He adds, "Who they may be, can be but conjecture, and is best left in the obscurity in which God has surrounded them."²¹⁴

Though the word power in verse 3 is not in the best manuscripts, it is evident that they do have power from God--such power, in fact, that they are able to witness for 1,260 days in spite of the antagonism of the world. Their unusual character as prophets of doom is symbolized in the fact that they are clothed in sackcloth (cf. Isa. 37:1-2; Dan. 9:3).

The two witnesses are described as two olive trees and two lampstands (A.V., "candlesticks") who stand before the God of the earth. This seems to be a reference to Zechariah 4, where a lampstand and two olive trees are mentioned. In answer to the question in the Zechariah incident, "What are these?" the answer is given to Zerubbabel: "This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." It is evident that a similar meaning is intended in the book

of Revelation. The olive oil from the olive trees in Zechariah's image provided fuel for the two lampstands. The two witnesses of this period of Israel's history, namely Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel, were the leaders of Israel in Zechariah's time. Just as these two witnesses were raised up to be lampstands or witnesses for God and were empowered by olive oil representing the power of the Holy Spirit, so the two witnesses of Revelation 11 will likewise execute their prophetic office. Their ministry does not rise in human ability but in the power of God.

Verses 5 and 6 record the miraculous powers given to the two witnesses. Anyone who attempts to hurt them will be destroyed by fire proceeding out of their mouths. This is at once a judgment of God upon their enemies and a means of protection of the two witnesses, so that no one can lay a hand on them. A parallel is found in the prophetic ministry of Elijah, who on two occasions called fire from heaven upon the company of fifty soldiers sent to arrest him. The third company was delivered from this judgment only because they besought Elijah for their lives (2 Kings 1). In a similar way, the enemies of Moses were destroyed (Num. 16:35).

Like the Prophet Elijah, the two witnesses also have power to shut up the heavens that it cannot rain. This is reminiscent of the judgment of God imposed on Israel when in answer to Elijah's prayer it did not rain for three and one-half years, curiously the same length of time as the ministry of these two witnesses in Revelation. Like Moses, they have power to turn water into blood and to bring plagues upon the earth as often as they will (cf. Exodus 7:17-19). Taking all the facts furnished, it is evident that these two witnesses have a combination of the greatest powers ever given prophets on earth, and this accounts for their ability to withstand their enemies for the entire period of 1,260 days.²¹⁵ It is only at the end of the great tribulation when their ministry has been accomplished that their enemies temporarily have the upper hand, and this is allowed by sovereign appointment of God.

The Death of the Two Witnesses (11:7-10)

11:7-10 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

As in the case of many other great prophets of God, when their ministry is finished, God permits their enemies to overcome them. According to verse 7, the beast from the bottomless pit, which is none other than Satan himself, makes war against them and overcomes them and kills them. Of interest is the fact that this is the first of thirty-six references in Revelation to the beast (Gr., the „rion), not to be confused with the living creatures of chapter 4. The beast out of the pit is Satan. The beast out of the sea is the world dictator (13:1). The beast out of the land is the false religious leader of that day (13:11). This unholy trinity is the satanic counterfeit of the divine Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (For further discussion see exposition of 13:1-4; 17:7-8.)

So great is the victory over the two witnesses and so significant to their enemies that their dead bodies are allowed to lie in the street of the city described as "the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." It is unquestionably the city of Jerusalem in which these two

witnesses have their prophetic ministry as well as their martyrdom. In the effort to capitalize as much as possible on their death, their bodies are exhibited in the streets for three and one-half days contrary to all reasonable laws of humanity. Apparently great throngs of people come to witness the bodies of the two witnesses whom they so greatly feared in life.

According to verse 10, their death is the occasion for great rejoicing. The expression "they that dwell upon the earth" seems to refer to those who are not only dwelling on the earth in their physical bodies but whose hope is limited to the present life. The phrase is repeated a dozen times or more in Revelation. Apparently the celebration is worldwide. By means of television and the transmission of pictures throughout the world by communication satellites and other means, the entire earth will see graphically the dead bodies of the two witnesses, a symbol of victory for the beast and those who oppose God. They will have merry feasts and send gifts one to another, certain that their fear of God's wrath and power is no longer justified.

A righteous prophet is always a torment to a wicked generation. The two witnesses are an obstacle to wickedness, unbelief, and satanic power prevalent in that time. If their ministry is in the time of great tribulation, it is all the more a thorn in the side of the world rulers of that day; and their death symbolizes the silencing of the prophets who announce the doom of those who will not believe in God. The Word of God makes it clear that it is often possible to silence a witness to the truth by death, but such action does not destroy the truth that has been announced. The power of God will be ultimately revealed. If this is at the end of the great tribulation, only a few days remain before Christ comes back in power and great glory.

The Two Witnesses Restored to Life and Caught up to Heaven (11:11-12)

11:11-12 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. 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.

The merrymaking of those who rejoice in the death of the two witnesses is cut short after three and one-half days by the witnesses' restoration to life. As they stand on their feet before the startled gaze of those who watch, it is recorded that great fear falls upon those who see them. Their amazement increases as they hear a voice from heaven saying to the witnesses, "Come up hither." As they watch, the two witnesses ascend up into heaven.

Though there are similarities between this event and the rapture of the church, the contrast is also evident. The rapture will take place in a moment, and apparently will not be gradual enough for people to observe. The parallel here is to the ascension of Christ on the Mount of Olives, when the disciples beheld Him ascending into heaven, and, like the two witnesses, He was received by a cloud. This is a special act of God addressed to those who reject His grace and designed as a final warning of the supreme power of God over man whether in life or in death. This act of resurrection and catching up into heaven is distinct from any other mentioned in the Bible in that it occurs after the rapture and before the resurrection in chapter 20.

From the fact that the resurrection takes place three and one-half days after the martyrdom some have attempted to construct an interpretation that the three and one-half days represent three and one-half years as in Daniel's seventieth week (Dan. 9:27) where each unit does represent a year. Under this interpretation, those who minister on the earth as the two witnesses are on earth the first three and

one-half years of the seven-year period, are dead for the next three and one-half years, and then are raised at the end. Though this is a possible interpretation, it is unlikely. If the 1,260 days of verse 3 are literal days, it would seem strange to have days mentioned immediately thereafter which are to be taken in another way. It is preferable to understand the word day here to refer to a twenty-four-hour day. It does not seem possible to allow the bodies of the two witnesses to lie in the streets of Jerusalem for three and one-half years. The Scriptures seem to imply that it is a short period and that the people are still in the process of rejoicing when the witnesses are restored to life and caught up to be with the Lord. Just as their ministry on earth is a literal 1,260 days, so their period of experiencing death is a literal three and one-half days. Likewise also their resurrection from the dead and their being caught up to heaven are literal events.

Announcement of the Third Woe (11:13-14)

11:13-14 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. The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

As an aftermath to the resurrection of the two witnesses, the Scriptures record that a great earthquake occurs in which a tenth part of the city of Jerusalem falls and seven thousand men are killed. These dramatic events bring great fear to those who remain, and it is recorded that they "gave glory to the God of heaven." The reference to "the God of heaven" is one of two in the New Testament (cf. Rev. 16:11). It is a familiar phrase in the Old Testament where it is used to distinguish the true God from pagan deities. Here the significance is that they recognize the true God to the extent indicated as in contrast to their worship of the beast. Even though they recognize the power of the God of heaven, it does not seem to indicate that they have come to the point of true faith in Christ.

With this event, the second woe is brought to its completion and is evidently regarded as the final phase of the sixth trumpet. The third woe contained in the seventh trumpet is announced as coming quickly. The end of the age is rapidly approaching.

The Seventh Trumpet Sounds (11:15)

11:15 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.

When the seventh trumpet sounds, John hears great voices in heaven announcing that the kingdoms have become the kingdoms of Christ and that henceforth He shall reign forever and ever. In contrast to previous instances where a single voice makes the announcement, here there is a great symphony of voices chanting the triumph of Christ. The expression "the kingdoms of this world" in the best manuscripts is in the singular, but the meaning is much the same. The fact that earthly rule will pass into the hands of God is frequently mentioned in Old Testament prophecy (cf. Ezek. 21:26-27; Dan. 2:35, 44; 4:3; 6:26; 7:14, 26-27; Zech. 14:9). The question that remains, however, is how can the kingdoms of the world become at this point the kingdoms of Christ when, as a matter of fact, the seven vials seemingly are still to be poured out?²¹⁶ The answer as indicated previously seems to be that just as the seven trumpets are comprehended in the seventh seal so the seven vials are comprehended in the seventh trumpet. The process of destruction of earthly power is therefore already under way.²¹⁷

A further problem is presented in the fact that Christ is declared to reign "for ever and ever." This is more than simply announcing His kingdom over the earth. The millennial reign, while it extends for only one

thousand years, is in some sense continued in the new heaven and the new earth. Never again will the earth be under the control and over-lordship of man. Even the brief rebellion recorded in Revelation 20 at the close of the millennium is unsuccessful.

The Worship of the Twenty-four Elders (11:16-17)

11:16-17 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 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.

The twenty-four elders, who here fall down to worship God, have previously appeared seven times in the book of Revelation in a similar context. Here they give thanks to God as the eternal One "which art, and wast, and art to come," because He has manifested His power and assumed authority over the earth. The event for which they give thanks is of course the fulfillment of Psalm 2:9, where Christ the Anointed of God reigns supreme over the earth. Twice in verse 17 mention is directed to the power of God in the word almighty (Gr., *pantokrator*) and the word power (Gr., *dynamis*). God's power here is demonstrated in the sense of authority as well as in the sense of ability to accomplish His will as reflected in *dynamis*.

Events Marking the Reign of Christ (11:18)

11:18 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.

This comprehensive statement of the main features of the transition from the kingdom of earth to the kingdom of God begins with the fact that the nations are angry at the time when the wrath of God comes. There is a play on words in the Greek which is not indicated in the Authorized Version, the same word (Gr. verb form of *orge*), being used for "angry" as for "wrath" referring to the righteous judgment of God. The wrath of men is impotent; the wrath of God is omnipotent. The wrath of men is wicked; the wrath of God is holy. That which was anticipated in Revelation 6:16-17 as well as in Psalm 2:4 is here being fulfilled.

It is not clear from the text whether verse 18 is a continuation of the thanksgiving of the twenty-four elders or an observation made by John and given by direct revelation to him. In either case, other important events related to the judgment of God are mentioned. The dead are judged at this time. The context seems to indicate that the resurrection of the righteous dead is especially in view rather than that of the wicked dead, who are not raised until after the millennium. The comment, which follows immediately, speaks of the reward given to the prophets who are servants of God, to saints in general, and to those who fear the name of God whether small or great. The time has also come when God destroys those who destroy the earth, referring to those living on the earth at that time who rebel against God.

Another approach to the exegesis of this verse is suggested by J. B. Smith, namely, that in the first part of verse 18, three statements are made concerning the wicked: (1) the nations are angry, (2) the time of their wrath is come, and (3) the time of the judgments of the wicked dead is come. This is repeated in the threefold description of the reward to the prophets, to the saints, and to all who fear the name of God.²¹⁸ The passage itself, however, does not indicate whether the dead include the wicked dead, much less that it is restricted to them. The return to the divine judgment upon those on the earth in the latter part of verse 18 seems to destroy a strict antithesis of the wicked versus the righteous. Rather the verse teaches that in general it is a time of divine wrath, a time of resurrection of the dead and their reward, and a time of

special dealing with those living on the earth. All of these aspects of the second coming of Christ are borne out in later prophecies in the book of Revelation.

The Opening of the Temple of God in Heaven (11:19)

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.

The opening of the temple of God in heaven seems to be related to the revelation given in chapter 12 rather than to the seventh trumpet specifically. There may be an antithesis between the temple of God in heaven (v. 19) and the temple of God in Jerusalem during the great tribulation (vv. 1-2). Though the earthly temple may have been desecrated by the beast, its counterpart in heaven reflects the righteousness and majesty of God. The heavenly ark of the covenant, which in its earthly equivalent originally contained the law, speaks of God's righteousness. Aaron's rod that budded typifies resurrection, and the golden pot that had manna represents Christ as the basis of the shed blood of the sacrifice.

With the opening of the temple in heaven, there are accompanying lightnings, voices, and thunderings, apparently in the earthly scene, as well as an earthquake and a great hail. The plain implication is that now God is going to deal in summary judgment with the earth. J. N. Darby believes what precedes verse 19 "brings the general history of the ways of God to a termination." He outlines the material which follows under three headings:

first, the causes of evil, and what proceeds from those causes; secondly, the development of Satan's power and of the moving springs of evil in the instruments he used, and which manifests itself under a very decided form; and thirdly, what God does in order to destroy the evil.²¹⁹

Before the details of the judgment to follow are unfolded in the seven vials in chapter 16, the divine revelation turns to other important aspects which relate to this period and which chronologically precede the consummation. Apart from the outpourings of the vials, which occur in rapid succession, there is little chronological movement from this point until chapter 19 and the second coming of Christ. Events and situations are now introduced which are concurrent with the seals and the trumpets. These serve to emphasize the dramatic climax of this period in the second coming of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

208 Henry Alford, *The Greek New Testament*, IV, 655.

209 For various view on the two witnesses, see John Peter Lange, *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, XXIV, 230-33.

210 *The Revelation*, p. 70.

211 *A Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pp. 169, 70; also L. M. Haldeman identifies the two witnesses as Moses and Elias who were seen together on the Mount of Transfiguration (*Synopsis of the Book of Revelation*, p. 13). This view has real problems, however, as Moses died.

212 Robert Govett, *The Apocalypse*, pp. 225-50.

213 Edgar Ainslie, *The Dawn of the Scarlet Age*, pp. 93-94.

214 William Easton, *Gleanings in the Book of Revelation*, p. 83.

215 British Israelites interpret the 1,260 days (11:3) as so many years of Roman power. The three and one-half days the witnesses remain dead are the three and one-half years of the persecutions by Queen Mary (Feb. 1555--Nov. 1558). This ridiculous interpretation illustrates the problems of the historical interpretation of Revelation (cf. Augusta Cook, *Light from Patmos*, p. 85).

216 Tacy W. Atkinson like Scofield begins the great tribulation with the seventh trumpet but like most others offers no evidence whatever for this conclusion (*A Guide to the Study of Revelation*, p. 44).

217 Norman B. Harrison identifies the seventh trumpet with the last trump, that is, the rapture, anticipated in the rapture of the two witnesses in 11:12. He holds that the rapture occurs three and one-half years before the coming of Christ in Revelation 19. This viewpoint confuses the trumps of judgment of the angels with the trump calling for the resurrection and rapture of the church. It further requires that there be no wrath prior to the seventh trumpet which is contradicted by Revelation 6:17 as well as the content of the preceding sixth trumpet (cf. *The End*, pp. 116 ff).

218 Cf. Smith, *A Revelation of Jesus Christ*, p. 181.

219 J. N. Darby, *Notes on the Apocalypse*, p. 55.

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