



Revelation - Chapter Eleven

- IV. Revelation 8:1-11:19 - The angels and the trumpets: warnings of coming wrath (continues/concludes)
- IV.b Revelation 8:6-11:19 - Angels sound seven trumpets (continues/concludes)
- IV.b.ii Revelation 10:1-11:14 - Interlude: the safety and suffering of God's city-sanctuary, his witnessing church (continues/concludes)

Summary of Chapter Eleven

John is now told of two witnesses, thought by many to be Elijah and Moses, who will have authority and will prophesy for three and a half years. They will be given power to pour fire out of their mouths, and to control rainfall during the days of their prophesying. They will also have the power to turn water into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague.

When their work is finished they will be killed by the beast in the same place where the Lord was crucified, i.e. the earthly Jerusalem. Their lifeless bodies will be on public display for three days and the people of the world will rejoice over their death. Then at the end of the three days, the breath of life from God will enter them causing them to stand on their feet. At that moment they were called and snatched up to heaven in a cloud. After this, there will be a great earthquake causing a tenth of the city to fall and seven thousand people to be killed. Those who survive will be terrified and give glory to God after witnessing these dramatic events.

Following this, the seventh trumpet will be blown and there will be tremendous worship in heaven following the declaration of God's reign over the kingdom of the world. God's temple in heaven will then be opened and the Ark of the Covenant revealed, and there will be flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

IV.b.ii.2 Revelation 11:1-14 - The Two Witnesses

The complementary visions of the temple and the witnesses, like those of the 144,000 and the international multitude between seals 6 and 7, provide reassurance of God's protection. Here, however, consistent with the bittersweet message committed to John (10:10-11), the motif of spiritual protection is interwoven with the darker thread of physical suffering.

Scripture requires two witnesses to confirm testimony: <<*A single witness shall not suffice to convict a person of any crime or wrongdoing in connection with any offence that may be committed. Only on the evidence of two or three witnesses shall a charge be sustained*>> (Deuteronomy 19:15), and: <<*In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid*>> (John 8:17). The two witnesses here may symbolise the saints, as the parallel between v.7 and 13:7 suggests. Wearing the sackcloth of repentance: <<*When King Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord. And he sent Eliakim, who was in charge of the palace, and Shebna the secretary, and the senior priests, covered with sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz*>> (Isaiah 37:1-2), <<*And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth*>> (Jonah 3:5), and as Jesus lamented: <<*Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes*>> (Matthew 11:21). To symbolise their message, they prophesy while the holy city suffers trampling (v.2), the Messiah's mother is nourished in the wilderness (12:6 and 12:14), and the beast wields its authority (13:5). Some scholars believe that these are two actual individuals who will appear at the end of history.

¹ Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, 'Come and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, ² but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample over the holy city for forty-two months.

Revelation 11:1-2

In 10:11 John was told something, i.e. 'they said to me', while here he was given something and then told what he must do with it. It can be assumed that this instruction either came from the mighty angel or the voice from heaven that had just instructed him to prophesy.

John was given a measuring rod and instructed to measure the temple of God. To measure here means to secure or establish, just as it does later in relation to the New Jerusalem (21:15), <<*Then I asked, 'Where are you going?' He answered me, 'To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its width and what is its length'*>> (Zechariah 2:2); refer also to Ezekiel Chapter 40. Many dispensationalists understand this to imply that during the great tribulation the Jewish temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem, and Jewish worship will be reinstated there, and that it is here that, in the middle of the tribulation, the Antichrist will take <<*his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God*>>

(2 Thessalonians 2:4b). They understand the reference to the holy city to mean the earthly Jerusalem. Others see the temple in this chapter as a symbol for believers. However, everywhere else in Revelation, the temple and the altar refer to those in heaven and not on earth.

In the OT, Ezekiel in his vision watched an angel measure the temple: *<<He brought me, in visions of God, to the land of Israel, and set me down upon a very high mountain, on which was a structure like a city to the south. When he brought me there, a man was there, whose appearance shone like bronze, with a linen cord and a measuring reed in his hand; and he was standing in the gateway>>* (Ezekiel 40:2-3), but John must measure not only the sanctuary and its altar but also those who worship there, probably referring to counting the number of people. This measuring of people shows both God's protection and his ownership, and suggests that the temple itself symbolises the saints, as the NT elsewhere affirms: *<<Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple>>* (1 Corinthians 3:16-17), *<<So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling-place for God>>* (Ephesians 2:19-22), and: *<<Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture: 'See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.' To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner', and 'A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall.' They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy>>* (1 Peter 2:4-10).

John must not measure the court outside, probably indicating a place on earth, outside of the heavenly temple, because the holy city will be given over to the nations for trampling over. Because this language echoes Jesus' prediction of Jerusalem's destruction: *<<Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress on the earth and wrath against this people; they will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken away as captives among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled>>* (Luke 21:23-24), which confirmed an OT prophecy: *<<Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one that spoke, 'For how long is this vision concerning the regular burnt-offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled?>>* (Daniel 8:13),

some believe that Revelation was written before the destruction of the city by the Romans in AD70 and predicted that disaster.

However, others do not think that the holy city refers to earthly Jerusalem, in the same way that it does not in 21:2 and 22:19. Instead, they understand it as a reference to the true church. They argue that 11:8 implies that the earthly Jerusalem that rejected its Messiah now belongs to 'the great city', along with Sodom and Egypt (v.8 and 17:18).

Forty-two months, refer also to 13:5, is equivalent to the 1,260 days, counting 30 days to a month, of v.3 and 12:6, and <<**a time, and times, and half a time**>> or three and a half years (12:14), which is one-half of a sabbatical-year cycle, symbolising the brevity of the church's suffering, which lasts until Christ returns.

These calculations of time echo Daniel 7:25 and 12:7, and are thought by premillennialists to refer to a final great tribulation period (7:14), during which the Antichrist will make war against the saints (13:7).

³ And I will grant my two witnesses authority to prophesy for one thousand two hundred and sixty days, wearing sackcloth.' ⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

Revelation 11:3-4

I will grant my two witnesses authority to prophesy. The power and authority of the language used here indicates that the one speaking is in the Godhead. Yet he goes on to speak in the third person of the Lord of the earth, the breath of life from God (v.11), and the God of heaven (v.13). This is characteristic of many biblical oracles in which God speaks through a prophet, partly from God's own perspective in heaven and partly from that of the prophet who delivers the message on earth. The oracle does not end after v.4, but continues to the end of the sixth trumpet and the announcement of the third woe (v.14). This is God's voice speaking through John, as John fulfils his commission to <<**prophesy again about many peoples and nations and languages and kings**>> (10:11b), which compares to <<**peoples and tribes and languages and nations**>> (v.9b).

Just as the nations will trample over the holy city (v.2), the two witnesses are granted authority to prophesy for forty two months or one thousand two hundred and sixty days. They do so wearing sackcloth not for their own repentance but as a symbol for the need for the nations to come before God in repentance.

The wearing of sackcloth was a sign of mourning: <<**Then David said to Joab and to all the people who were with him, 'Tear your clothes, and put on sackcloth, and mourn over Abner.'** And King David followed the bier>> (2 Samuel 3:31), and to show repentance: <<**Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the people of Israel were assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads**>> (Nehemiah 9:1).

These are the two olive trees. In Zechariah's vision, the two olive trees symbolised 'two anointed ones' (Zechariah 4:11 and 4:14), that is, a royal leader to rebuild God's temple (Zechariah 4:6-10), and a high priest to lead worship in it (Zechariah 3:1-5). Thus these two witnesses aptly represent all whom the Lamb has redeemed to serve as priests and rule as kings (1:6 and 5:10).

The two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth is a reference to the lampstand made for the Tabernacle of God: <<*You shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The base and the shaft of the lampstand shall be made of hammered work; its cups, its calyxes, and its petals shall be of one piece with it*>> (Exodus 25:31), and also formed part of the prophet's vision in Zechariah Chapter 4.

⁵ And if anyone wants to harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes; anyone who wants to harm them must be killed in this manner. ⁶ They have authority to shut the sky, so that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have authority over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.

Revelation 11:5-6

If anyone wants to harm them is probably a reference to the inhabitants of the earth (v.10), who must be killed in this manner, as described here.

There are striking similarities between the mission of the two witnesses and the trumpet series as a whole. At the sounding of the first three trumpets, fire fell to earth (8:7-11), and in the case of the witnesses fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes, clearly a reference to them proclaiming the Word of God but something seen quite literally from God himself: <<*And fire came out from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men offering the incense*>> (Numbers 16:35). The second trumpet turned a third of the sea to blood (8:8-9), and the two witnesses have authority over the waters to turn them into blood, and in fact to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire. The implication is that all the plagues described in connection with the first four trumpets are now under the control of the two witnesses!

The witnesses especially fulfil the church's prophetic role, proclaiming God's Word as fiery judgment pours from their mouth: <<*But Elijah answered the captain of fifty, 'If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty.'* Then fire came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty>> (2 Kings 1:10), and they have authority to shut the sky, so that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, announcing drought like Elijah: <<*Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, 'As the Lord the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word'*>> (1 Kings 17:1), and turning waters into blood like Moses in Exodus 7:14-25.

Although the witnesses are never named, many believe them to be Elijah and Moses for the reasons given. Some commentators claim they will be Enoch and Elijah, for they are the only two people in the bible who were taken into

heaven without having first tasted physical death: <<Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him>> (Genesis 5:24), and: <<As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven>> (2 Kings 2:11). Still others propose the apostles Peter and Paul, who were both martyred in Rome. However compelling the arguments may be, there is no requirement for them to be anyone from the past. Their identities will only be known when the events actually take place.

⁷ When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, ⁸ and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that is prophetically called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. ⁹ For three and a half days members of the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb; ¹⁰ and the inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and celebrate and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to the inhabitants of the earth.

Revelation 11:7-10

Although the witnesses are invincible until they have finished their testimony, when their mission is accomplished, the beast from the bottomless pit (13:1) will conquer them, not through spiritual seduction, for God will soon vindicate them, but through martyrdom, for the beast will kill them.

John makes reference to the beast that comes up from the bottomless pit as if it had already been introduced. Whether or not John has consciously transformed Apollyon into the beast from the Abyss, the terminology of the fifth and sixth trumpets is echoed in John's references to the beast's making war against the two witnesses and killing them. The deadly war of invading locusts and cavalry against the earth's inhabitants is here transformed into a war of the beast that comes up from the Abyss against God's people and their prophets.

The great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt is identified as the site of the martyrs' death and the place where their Lord was crucified. See also references to the great city in 16:19 and 17:18; and five times in 18:10-21, where in these instances the great city is symbolically identified as Babylon, a euphemism for Rome. In this verse, however, the symbol is apparently to be understood in a broader sense to include Jerusalem. It is likely that John has merged Rome and Jerusalem here into one combined symbol, which would be fitting because Jerusalem was under the domination of Roman rule and because Jerusalem is identified as the capital of the new 'unholy Roman Empire', where the Antichrist himself will establish his rule: <<So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand), then those in Judæa must flee to the mountains>> (Matthew 24:15-16), and: <<Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day

will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the lawless one is revealed, the one destined for destruction>> (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

The great city is further identified symbolically or spiritually as Sodom, known for its depravity and rebellion against God; and as Egypt, known for its persecution of God's people, both of which again correspond to the city of Jerusalem, both in its persecution and martyrdom of the prophets, and its rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah. Thus the symbol of the great city had broad significance in John's day, but it also stands as a representative symbol for every empire that grasps after divine glory and afflicts Christ's church even in this present day.

For three and a half days members of the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb. The celebration of the rebellious over the church's apparent demise through persecution will be short-lived. The Jewish readers of John's book, and indeed any decent person, would find the refusal to give these witnesses a decent burial to be abhorrent, as indicated by the psalmist: <<*They have given the bodies of your servants to the birds of the air for food, the flesh of your faithful to the wild animals of the earth. They have poured out their blood like water all around Jerusalem, and there was no one to bury them*>> (Psalm 79:2-3). It was also seen as divine punishment upon the wicked: <<*And the people to whom they prophesy shall be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem, victims of famine and sword. There shall be no one to bury them – themselves, their wives, their sons, and their daughters. For I will pour out their wickedness upon them*>> (Jeremiah 14:16).

The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and celebrate and exchange presents. In John's day it may have seemed a puzzle as to how the message of their witness and subsequent death could have reached the whole world in such a short period of time. However, modern communications would allow an event like this to be covered globally on live television via satellite links or be viewed on streamed video on the Internet. God alone knows what communications technologies will be available when the event takes place!

That the testimony of these two prophets had been a torment to the inhabitants of the earth indicates that the people have some awareness that their opposition to God is wrong and yet they persist in their apostasy.

¹¹ But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and those who saw them were terrified. ¹² Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, 'Come up here!' And they went up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies watched them. ¹³ At that moment there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. ¹⁴ The second woe has passed. The third woe is coming very soon.

Revelation 11:11-14

The three and a half days is seen by many to be symbolic of the three and a half year periods that feature frequently in these visions. It is equivalent to half the sabbatical-year cycle and half of the period of the Great Tribulation.

The breath of life from God entered them is reminiscent of the creation of humankind: <<*then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being*>> (Genesis 2:7). The Greek word for breath, *pneuma*, is the same word as used for spirit, indicating that it is the work of the Holy Spirit that resurrects the two faithful witnesses.

Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, 'Come up here!' This is reminiscent of John being invited into the very throne room of God: <<*After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this'*>> (Revelation 4:1).

They stood on their feet, they went up to heaven in a cloud. If the two witnesses symbolise the church, then these verses predict the vindication of God's witnessing church in resurrection: <<*I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude*>> (Ezekiel 37:10), and enthronement in heaven: <<*As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him*>> (Daniel 7:13), and: <<*When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight*>> (Acts 1:9). If they are two actual individuals, then they are miraculously resurrected at this point (v.7). Even if they are taken as literal people, their resurrection could still symbolise the resurrection of the saints either in the middle or at the end of the great tribulation period (7:14).

Those who saw them were terrified. To see the dead rise in this way would have seemed like something from a horror movie to those who do not believe in God. It still has the power to surprise those who do! Greater terror was yet to come when they witnessed the death toll as a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified.

As in Acts 1:9, Revelation 1:7, and several OT passages, the cloud symbolises the mysterious active presence of God. This event will coincide with a great earthquake (6:12 and 16:18) that strikes terror in the hearts of survivors. However, in their terror they gave glory to the God of heaven, transforming the ending of the trumpet series from non-repentance (9:20-21) to repentance.

The second woe has passed. The third woe is coming very soon. It is perhaps the voice of the eagle once more that announces the seventh and last trumpet is about to be sounded and its judgements poured out on the earth.

IV.b.iii Revelation 11:15-19 - The Seventh Trumpet

The first two woes must have filled John's heart with dread and yet there was great hope in the promises of God's great mystery being revealed. When the seventh trumpet is sounded, it must have felt more like the fulfilment of a promise rather than a dreaded woe as heaven once again erupts in praise to God.

¹⁵ Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying,

‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord
and of his Messiah,
and he will reign for ever and ever.’

¹⁶ Then the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshipped God, ¹⁷ singing,

‘We give you thanks, Lord God Almighty,
who are and who were,
for you have taken your great power
and begun to reign.

¹⁸ The nations raged,
but your wrath has come,
and the time for judging the dead,
for rewarding your servants, the prophets
and saints and all who fear your name,
both small and great,
and for destroying those who destroy the earth.’

Revelation 11:15-18

The seventh angel blew his trumpet. Nearly all futurists and many idealists see this trumpet as heralding the Second Coming of Christ. What it does do is provide a great fanfare to another rousing period of worship in heaven.

As with the seventh seal (8:1-6), the scene now shifts from woes on earth to worship in heaven. Songs from the future consummation speak back through time to the suffering church, announcing the day when the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, reversing the present when the nations and their rulers still rage: <<*against the Lord and against his Anointed*>> (Psalm 2:2b). God's redemptive Kingdom was inaugurated in Christ's First Coming, death and exaltation: <<*Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the*

good news’>> (Mark 1:15), <<And he said to them, ‘Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power’>> (Mark 9:1), and: <<Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, “He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.” This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’” Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified’>> (Acts 2:30-36).

He will reign for ever and ever. It had always been an expectation that God would one day have acknowledged dominion over all things: <<Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. The Lord is faithful in all his words, and gracious in all his deeds>> (Psalm 145:13), <<The lame I will make the remnant, and those who were cast off, a strong nation; and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion now and for evermore>> (Micah 4:7), and: <<He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end>> (Luke 1:33).

Here, the twenty-four elders celebrate a day still future, when God and his Christ have begun their unchallenged reign by judging the dead, foreshadowing 20:11-13, rewarding their servants (21:1-7 and 22:1-5), and destroying the destroyers of the earth (20:14-15). Many futurists think that v.18 skips forward beyond the millennium to the final judgment.

Lord God Almighty, who are and who were. John does not use the singular is and was but refers to the plurality of the Godhead by using are and were, which was something first reflected during creation: <<Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness>> (Genesis 1:26a). John had opened the letter with the greeting: <<Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come>> (1:4b). ‘Who is to come’ has now been dropped from the praise for there is now a recognition that God has come to claim his Kingdom on earth. This is confirmed by the elders singing: for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.

The time for judging the dead follows the Second Coming of Christ. Judgement on your servants, the prophets, and saints and all who fear your name, will see such people rewarded for their faith, but will bring destruction for those who had continued in their apostasy. Jesus had made this clear during his earthly ministry: <<Do not be astonished at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation>> (John 5:28-29).

Destroying those who destroy the earth. The first four trumpets might easily have left the impression that God was destroying the creation with fire from

heaven, but by now the trumpet series has been transformed. Responsibility for the damage rests not with God, but with those who provoked God's anger. This is strangely similar to Paul's solemn warning to the Corinthians: *<<Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple>>* (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). Here in Revelation, it is as if the whole earth is God's temple, the outer court of his sanctuary in heaven (v.2), given over to the Gentile nations for a limited time, but now holy once again and ready to be reclaimed.

¹⁹ Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

Revelation 11:19

A deeper opening of God's temple in heaven brings the ark of his covenant into view as John peers into the Most Holy Place itself, prepared to receive visions that expose the deepest perspective on the church's spiritual conflict. The location of the ark was unknown following the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians and the exile of the remaining people of Judah in 586BC. Prior to this it had been kept in the Holy of Holies: *<<Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the most holy place, underneath the wings of the cherubim>>* (2 Chronicles 5:7), and: *<<Behind the second curtain was a tent called the Holy of Holies. In it stood the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which there were a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat. Of these things we cannot speak now in detail>>* (Hebrews 9:3-5).

At the same time the trumpet series, like that of the seven seals, is terminated by a storm in heaven reminiscent of Mount Sinai: flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. There will be more visions and more judgments, but no more trumpets.

The double series that began with the seven-sealed scroll in Chapters 4-5 is now at an end. Although there is definite continuity between Chapters 11-12, there is at least a momentary pause in the action. Many readers have found this as good a place as any to divide the book of Revelation into two approximately equal parts: Chapters 1-11 and Chapters 12-22.