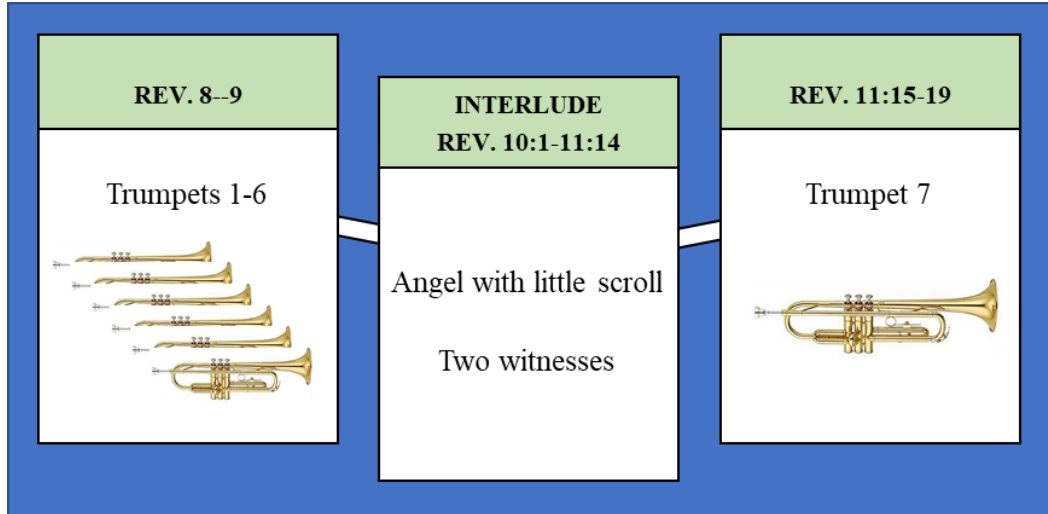


PART 7: THE TRIBULATION, CONT'D

CHAPTERS 10-11

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MAIN IDEA

Revelation 10:1-11:14 describe a break (interlude) between the 6th and 7th trumpet judgments. These verses show God's intention to encourage and comfort his people during this terrible time and to remind them that he is still in full control as Sovereign Lord. His people have not been forgotten and they will ultimately be victorious. The events in this passage include:

- The mighty angel coming down from heaven with a little scroll
- Two witnesses of God who prophesy and perform miracles in Jerusalem for 3½ years
- The 7th trumpet is sounded

COMMENTS

The Angel and the Little Scroll (10:1-11)

In this parenthetical break between the sixth and seventh trumpet, John sees another mighty angel coming down from heaven. This angel is described as “another” angel (Gr. *allon*) which suggests that this angel is in the same rank and order as the “strong angel” in Revelation 5:2. For this reason “another angel” is probably not referring to Jesus Christ.



However, this particular angel is given a more detailed description (“robed in a cloud, rainbow above his head, face like the sun, legs like fiery pillars”). This description and his extraordinary powers suggest that it may be Michael, called the archangel (Jude 9) who heads the holy angels (Rev. 12:7).

- He held an open scroll.
 - He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land.
 - He gave a loud shout like a roaring lion which caused “seven thunders” to speak. John was told not to write what they said. Apparently, John could understand the thunders and was about to write it down when he was forbidden to do so.
- The mighty angel then “...raised his right hand to heaven and swore by Him who lives forever and said there shall be no more delay, but in the days when the 7th angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as He announced to his servants the prophets” (10:5-7 NIV).

The mystery spoken of here could be referring to one of the following interpretations:

- Tim LaHaye believes the mystery is about how a holy God could love sinful beings so much as to have His only Son die for them.¹
- Hal Lindsey believes the mystery may be a reference to God’s delayed intervention or “Why has God allowed evil to continue in the world and not put down His enemies and establish His perfect Kingdom long ago?”²
- John Walvoord believes the mystery of God is apparently a reference to details about the Second Coming of Christ not previously revealed. The prophecy to be fulfilled will be the full revelation of the glory of God which will fulfill what the prophets had predicted.³

This little scroll (Gr., *biblaridon*) is different from the scroll (Gr., *biblion*) mentioned in Revelation 5:1 in heaven. There is no explanation as to what this little scroll contained but it probably represents the Word of God. The command to “eat the book” is a metaphor for reading (believing) the book,⁴ much like today one would say “the book was so interesting I devoured it.” The Word is sweet when the reader believes in Christ and can enjoy all the wonderful promises of God. There is a bitter

¹ LaHaye, 180.

² Lindsey, 152.

³ Walvoord, 571.

⁴ See also Ezekiel 3:1-2.

side that may be referring to believers who experience suffering and death for their beliefs. The bitterness may also be a reference to the divine judgments of the Tribulation Period and the eternal torment that awaits unbelievers.

The Two Witnesses (11:1-14)



The parenthetical break between the 6th trumpet judgment and the 7th trumpet judgment continues. John is now told to measure the Temple of God, and the altar, and the worshippers there. Measuring shows both God's protection and ownership.⁵ Dispensationalists believe the symbolism here may be referring to the conditions of the 3rd Temple in Jerusalem during the Tribulation Period when it is desecrated, and when the sacrifices are stopped, and the worship of the Antichrist is enforced (Daniel 9:27; 12:11-12; Matt. 24:15, II Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:14-15). This will take place for 42 months, or 3½ years.

When the Antichrist establishes a peace treaty (Daniel 9:27) it is very likely that it will enable Israel to reconstruct the 3rd Temple, and for the first time since 70 A.D., resume their sacrifices and offerings in the Temple.⁶

After 3½ years, the beast from the bottomless pit⁷ murders these two witnesses, and people literally go berserk with happiness. They even exchange gifts with each other to celebrate their death (11:10).

Everyone sees their dead bodies lying in the street for 3½ days, after which God breathes life back into them and they stand up alive in full view of the whole world. A voice calls them back to heaven and they are taken to heaven in a cloud as their terrified enemies looked on.

At that time a severe earthquake occurs resulting in the destruction of 1/10 of Jerusalem and the death of 7,000 people. The survivors gave glory to God. This judgment represents the 2nd "Woe" given in Rev. 8:13.

Who Are the Two Witnesses? The names of these two witnesses are not given but scholars believe they may be any of the following.

- Joshua and Zerubbabel: The phrase "two olive trees" seems to be strongly associated with these two men in Zechariah 3 and 4.
- Enoch and Elijah: Since these two men never experienced death, perhaps it was

⁵ ESV, 2478, note.

⁶ This is the Dispensational View. Readers are encouraged to examine other views such as the Maccabean View, the Preterist View and the Covenantal View. ESV Crossway Bibles. *ESV English Standard Version*. Wheaton: Good News Publishers, 2008, "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel," p. 1608.

⁷ "Beast from the bottomless pit" is most likely not Satan since he is depicted as a dragon (12:3, 9). This beast is probably the Antichrist who is empowered by Satan. See Rev. 13.

postponed until the Tribulation (II Kings 2:11; Mal. 4:5,6).

- Moses and Elijah: The pattern of miracles seems to suggest these two men. Moses turned water into blood (Exod. 7:20), and Elijah shut up the rains (I Kings 17:1; James 5:17).

The exact identity of these two witnesses cannot be stated with any certainty.

The 7th Trumpet Judgment (11:15-19).



The first six trumpet judgments took place in Revelation Chapters 8 and 9. The events in Chapters 10 and 11 occur between the 6th and 7th Trumpet Judgments. When the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, there is a great proclamation made in heaven, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Like the little scroll John was told to eat (10:10), how can the Bible be sweet as honey at times and bitter at other times?

2. Like the two witnesses, believers today have the power of the gospel in them (2 Cor. 4:7). How can this affect believers who are somewhat timid about sharing their faith?

3. What wonderful transition takes place when the seventh angel blows his horn (11:15)? For what specific reasons did the 24 elders worship God (11:16-18)?

4. How can knowing that someday Jesus Christ will physically rule over the earth as his kingdom (11:15) affect the way we confront life’s problems and disappointments today?