

## Revelation Chapter 11

Verses 1-2: Revelation chapter 11 continues the parenthesis that began in chapter 10. John is told to “measure the temple of God”, which may be a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem during the Tribulation period. Or more likely the prophesied millennial temple (compare Ezek. chapters 40 and 42).

The “rod” is a surveyor's instrument (compare Zechariah 2:1-5). The measuring anticipates the building of a new temple on earth during the Millennium. The outer “court” represents the control of Jerusalem and Israel by “Gentiles” during the last half of the Tribulation period.

The holy city is the earthly Jerusalem (compare Dan. 9:24; 11:45; Zech. 13:8-9; 14:2).

The “forty and two months” show that Jerusalem will be under Gentile control for three and one half years, probably the last half of the seven year Tribulation period, where the period of the Great Tribulation is seen as the Seventieth Week, or seven year period, in God's postexilic program for Israel.

**Revelation 11:1 "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."**

“Unto a rod”: This was a hollow, bamboo-like cane plant that grew in the Jordan Valley. Because of its light weight and rigidity, it was commonly used as a measuring rod (compare Ezek. 40:3, 5). Measuring the temple signified God's ownership of it (compare 21:15; Zech. 2:1-5).

This angel is telling John to take a measurement of the temple and the people. We read in Ezekiel 40:5, that this reed is nine feet long (six cubits). This seems to be a similar message in Ezekiel to the one here in Revelation.

“The temple of God”: Refers to the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place, not the entire temple complex (compare verse 2). A rebuilt temple will exist during the time of the Tribulation (Dan. 9:27; 12:11; Matt. 24:15; 2 Thess. 2:4).

This statement about the "temple and them that worship therein" is speaking of the true believers who collectively make up the temple (body of Christ).

“Altar”: The reference to worshipers suggests this is the bronze altar in the courtyard, not the incense altar in the Holy Place, since only the priests were permitted inside the Holy Place (compare Luke 1:8-10).

The outer court for the Gentiles means just this, the believer who is a Christian in name only, not in deed. The faithless portion of the church that we read about in (2 Timothy chapter 3):

2 Tim. 3:5 "has a form of godliness but denies the power".

This outer court is not the place for believers to be.

The terrible thing in all of this is that among the outer court (the unsaved), are many nominal Christians, who believe that they will be saved. This seems to be just asked of John to make him aware of the multitude of true believers who will be in the very presence of God. It is also, to remind him of those so-called Christians that have brought compromise and pleasing of the flesh into God's church.

**Revelation 11:2 "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."**

“Court which is without”: The court of the Gentiles, separated from the inner court in the Herodian temple by a low wall. Gentiles were forbidden to enter the inner court on penalty of death. That John is instructed not to measure the outer court symbolizes God’s rejection of the unbelieving Gentiles who have oppressed His covenant people.

“The holy city shall they tread under foot”: Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome all oppressed Jerusalem in ancient times (compare 2 Kings 25:8-10; Psalm 79:1; Isa. 63:18; Lam. 1:10). This verses refers to the future devastation destruction and oppression of Jerusalem by the forces of the Antichrist.

“Forty and two months”: The three and a half period covers the second half of the Tribulation and coincides with the visibly evil career of the Antichrist (verse 3; 12:6; 13:5). During this same time, the Jews will be sheltered by God in the wilderness (12:6, 14).

I would like to say again here that the Bible (and especially Revelation), must be understood by its signs and symbols through the spirit, and cannot be understood literally. As any dream or vision has to be interpreted, so does Revelation.

The outer court represents the control of Jerusalem and Israel by Gentiles during the last half of the Tribulation period. In other words, it is too worldly for God. He is saying (throw them out), they are not part of the elect. They are not part of the body of Christ. The inner court makes up the body of believers.

We see here in this forty-two months that the holy city is trodden down; that the believers in Jesus "holy city" will go through 3-1/2 years of trials and tribulations. All through Revelation, the "holy city" is symbolic of the body of believers.

The holy city is the earthly Jerusalem (Dan. 9:24; Zech. 13:8-9; 14:2). The forty and two months show that Jerusalem will be under Gentile control for three-and-a-half years, probably the last half of the seven-year Tribulation period (Dan. 9:24-27), where the period of the Tribulation is seen as the Seventieth Week, or seven year period in God's postexilic program for Israel.

Verses 3-6: Next "A Powerful Proclamation to the World". Christ is certainly not saying that this gospel must be preached to every person. Millions have already died without hearing it. Rather it must be proclaimed "in all the world for a witness to all nations." That phrase sounds as though the day is coming when not only individuals but all the nations of the world will be powerfully confronted by the gospel and the consequences of rejecting it. John seems to have been shown such a time in his vision in (Rev. 11:3-6).

Verses 3-4: God's two witnesses" will "prophesy" or preach in Israel for 1260 "days" (three and a half years), based on prophetic years of (360 days each). Again, this will probably occur during the last half of the Tribulation period, while invading Gentile forces are in control of Jerusalem. The "sackcloth" symbolizes mourning, confessing and repentance. The "witnesses" will proclaim a message of judgment and the need for repentance. They bear similarities to John the Baptist, and will be the ultimate fulfillment of the promised return of Elijah (compare Mal. 4:5-6; John 1:21). They are also identified as "the two olive trees and the two candlesticks". These symbols relate to (Zechariah 4:2-6), where Zerubbabel and Joshua the priest are pictured as two olive trees furnishing oil for a lampstand (Israel). They provided help and power for Israel in a time of need. These two witnesses will be for Israel in the future what Zerubbabel and Joshua were in the past: the channels of God's power and message to Israel during the Tribulation period.

**Revelation 11:3 "And I will give [power] unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred [and] threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."**

"Two witnesses": Individuals granted special power and authority by God to preach a message of judgment and salvation during the second half of the Tribulation. The Old Testament required two or more witnesses to confirm testimony (compare Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Matt. 18:16; John 8:17; Heb. 10:28). And these two prophets will be the culmination of God's testimony to Israel: a message of judgment from God and of His gracious offer of the gospel to all who will repent and believe.

These two witnesses of Revelation 11 will have awesome power and impact, together with the 144,000 witnesses, in producing the enormous soul harvest of the first forty two months of the Tribulation described (in Rev. chapter 7). They will provide the millions of Jews in the Holy Land a theological and spiritual bridge to the Christian gospel. Many of the souls harvested at that time will be the sons and daughters of Abraham.

"A thousand two hundred and threescore days": Forty-two months or 3-1/2 years (compare 12:6; 13:5; see note on verse 2).

"Sackcloth": Coarse, rough cloth made from goat or camel hair. Wearing garments made from it expressed penitence, humility, and mourning (compare Gen. 37:34; 2 Sam. 3:31; 2 Kings 6:30; 19:1; Esther 4:1; Isa. 22:12; Jer. 6:26; Matt. 11:21). The witnesses are mourning because of the wretched wickedness of the world, God's judgment on it, and the desecration of the temple and the holy city by the Antichrist.

**Revelation 11:4 "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth."**

This imagery is drawn from Zech. chapters 3 and 4 (see notes there). Zechariah's vision had both a near fulfillment (the rebuilding of the temple by Joshua and Zerubbabel), and a far future fulfillment (the two witnesses, whose ministry points toward Israel's final restoration in the Millennium).

"Two olive trees, and the two candlesticks": Olive oil was commonly used in lamps; together the olive trees and lampstands symbolize the light of spiritual revival. The two witnesses' preaching will spark a revival, just as Joshua's and Zerubbabel's did in Israel after the Babylonian captivity.

What a dynamic and compelling message from God these two amazing witnesses will bring to "all nations!" No one can write them off as crazies, for they display incredible supernatural powers and defy the Antichrist and his underlings to stop them. No doubt they will be seen daily on international television in every corner of the earth as they warn mankind of God's coming judgment.

Verses 5-6: They will perform miracles similar to those performed by Moses (compare Exodus 7:14-20; 8:12), and Elijah (1 Kings 17:1; 2 Kings 1:10-12; Luke 4:25; James 5:17). They are protected from harm for three and a half years. Their miraculous powers are apparently for the purpose of authenticating their divine message (as in the case of Jesus and His apostles). Their message will be twofold:

- (1) Jesus is the Lamb of God (Savior); and
- (2) Jesus is the King (Ruler).

The miracles show that the King is coming again to set up His kingdom, and therefore Israel must repent.

**Revelation 11:5 "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."**

"Fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth": Probably this refers to literal fire. These two will be invincible during their ministry, protected by supernatural power. The false prophet will counterfeit this sign (13:3).

The world police and even the military will be powerless to silence them. Anyone who attempts to stop them from preaching is instantly destroyed. Even Antichrist's satanic powers are no match for these two fearless and God empowered preachers of truth. There can be no doubt that these two witnesses will have the attention of the entire world! Their message will be a declaration to all the nations on this earth to repent and to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the world's rightful ruler.

**Revelation 11:6 "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".**

“Power to shut heaven”: Miracles have often authenticated God’s messengers. Here, bringing a 3-1/2 year drought (as did Elijah before them), will add immeasurable torment to those experiencing the worldwide disasters of the Tribulation, and exacerbate their hatred of the two witnesses.

“Power over waters to turn them to blood”: The earth’s water, already devastated by the effects of the second and third trumpets, will become undrinkable, adding immensely to the suffering caused by the drought.

Who Are They? Some try to identify one of the witnesses with Enoch (because he never died; Gen. 5:24), and the other with either Elijah (who also never died; 2 Kings 2:11-12), or Moses. For three reasons Tim LaHaye is inclined to think they are Moses and Elijah.

- (1) Moses and Elijah are the two most influential men in the history of the Jews. Moses introduced God's written law to Israel and wrote the first five books of the Old Testament. Elijah was the first of the writing prophets and started the school of the prophets. Whenever the Jews said, "Moses and Elijah," they usually meant "the law and the prophets."
- (2) Moses and Elijah accompanied Jesus and the 3 disciples when He was "transfigured before them", on the mount and where He discussed His impending sacrifice on the cross (Mat. chapter 17).
- (3) The 2 witnesses are said to reproduce the very miracles that Moses and Elijah performed while on this earth. John said of them, "And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire" (Rev. 11:5-6).

Elijah is famous for calling down fire from heaven. The most famous instance occurs (in 1 Kings 18:36-38), in the account of the contest between the prophets of Baal and Elijah. The Lord sent fire on Elijah's altar on Mt. Carmel in response to his simple prayer: "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel, and that I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your Word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again."

Elijah is connected to divinely caused drought as well as to judgments of fire. In fact, the very first time he is mentioned in the Scriptures he is heard saying to wicked King Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word." (1 Kings 17:1). And there wasn't; God honored the prophet's word.

Moses, of course, is intimately connected with the ten plagues that struck Egypt just before the Exodus (Exodus chapters 7-12). In the very first plague God turned the waters of Egypt into

blood, including the Nile, all streams, rivers, ponds, pools, and even the water in buckets of wood and stone. The water turned to blood, killed the land's fish and caused the water to stink, and conditions did not return to normal for a week.

How fitting that Moses and Elijah would return to Jerusalem to commence these last 7 years of the Tribulation to "witness, testify and prophesy."

Verses 7-10: The "beast" from the "bottomless pit" is apparently the same as the "beast" from the sea (in 13:1), the Antichrist or false messiah. His place of origin shows his demonic character and the control of Satan. At the end of the three and a half years of preaching, the witnesses will finally be killed by the beast in the "great city", identified as the place "where also our Lord was crucified". This must be a reference to Jerusalem, which at this time is under Antichrist's control. As such it is called "Sodom", referring to uncleanness and immorality, and "Egypt", depicting oppression and bondage. Not allowing their "dead bodies" to be buried is the ultimate indignity. The unbelievers of the "earth", having submitted to the authority of the Beast, will "rejoice", because they hate the plagues and the message of the "two prophets" (compare 1 Kings 18:17; John 16:20).

**Revelation 11:7 "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."**

"The beast": The first of 36 references to this person in Revelation, who is none other than the Antichrist (see chapter 13). That he will ascend out of the bottomless pit indicates that his power is satanic.

The beast that comes up from the Abyss refers to the beast described (in Rev. 13:1-7), and is an expression used here for the first time. The fact that he will come up out of the Abyss is a reference to the death and resurrection of the Antichrist. However, let me interject something here. Satan indwelt two people in the bible. Do you know who they were? If you said Judas and the Antichrist you are correct.

"Kill them": With the ministry of the two witnesses completed, God will withdraw the two witnesses' supernatural protection. The beast will then be able to accomplish what many had died trying to do.

The beast or Antichrist, the man of sin, will hate the two witnesses, make war against them, and kill them. However, note that he will have no power over them until "they have finished their testimony." In other words, they will be "immortal until their work is done", which can be said of all God's servants who walk in obedience to His will.

The completely degenerate and inhuman characteristics of people living during the Tribulation period is seen (in Rev. 11:8), which informs us that the bodies of the two witnesses will be left open in the streets of Jerusalem.

The Holy City will be so degenerate spiritually that she will be called Sodom and Egypt, Sodom being a symbol of immorality and Egypt a symbol of materialism. The lives of the people going back to occupy the Holy Land today are anything but Holy. They seldom even attend synagogues on the Sabbath.

**Revelation 11:8 "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."**

“Bodies shall lie in the street”: Refusing to bury one’s enemies was a way to dishonor and show contempt for them (compare Acts 14:19). The Old Testament expressly forbids this practice (Deut. 21:22-23).

“The great city”: Identifying Jerusalem as a city like Sodom and Egypt stresses the city’s wickedness. Its Jewish population will apparently be the focus of the witnesses’ ministry, leading to the conversions (of verse 13).

**Revelation 11:9 "And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves."**

“Three days and a half”: The entire world will watch (undoubtedly on the latest form of visual media), and glorify the Antichrist as the bodies of the dead prophets who have been killed begin to decay.

The most supernatural event of those times will be televised instantly around the world, "to the people, tribes, tongues, and nations." Among other things, this will be a loving gesture by God Almighty, not only to resurrect and take to heaven His two prophets, but also to make known His existence and power around the world. We have no doubt that millions of souls to whom the 144,000 Jewish witnesses will be speaking and whom the Holy Spirit will be convicting will see this demonstration of the divine and respond to the Savior.

And then the unsaved people of the world that hate the witnesses so much will comment an incredibly evil deed. They refuse them a decent burial, leaving their dead bodies to decay in the streets of Jerusalem. They even make a Christmas like celebration out of their murders by sending and receiving gifts "in honor" of the occasion. Then an even more incredible thing happens. John prophesies that "those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three and a half days" (Rev. 11:9). How could the whole world see their dead bodies? Not many years ago, it was impossible to fulfill that prophecy, but today it could happen at any moment. We are the first generation ever to have that televising capability through Satellite transmission technology!

**Revelation 11:10 "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".**

“Rejoice ... make merry ... send gifts”: Wild with joy over the death of their tormentors, those who dwell on the earth (a phrase used 11 times in Revelation to speak of unbelievers), will celebrate the two witnesses’ deaths as a holiday.

These are the same people who "rejoice," "make merry," and "send gifts to one another" over the murders of God's two witnesses at the midpoint of the Tribulation (Rev. 11:10); the same people who "blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory" (Rev. 16:9); the same people who "blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds:" (Rev. 16:11); the same people who "blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail" (Rev. 16:21); and the same people whose "sins have reached to heaven", who are guilty of "the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth" (Rev. 18:5, 24).

Verses 11-14: The two witnesses are brought back to “life”, and then taken up into “heaven”. Their “enemies” react in “fear”, since their resurrection is incontrovertible proof that their message was true and the Jesus is God and Messiah. An “earthquake” kills “seven thousand men”. Compare the earthquake that opened tombs and allowed many to be raised at the time of Christ’s death (Matt. 27:51-53). The “remnant” are the “rest”, those who are not killed by the earthquake. Many of them repent and give “glory to God”. The parenthesis begun with chapter 10 ends here. The “third woe” is the seventh trumpet, which “comes” next (verse 15).

**Revelation 11:11 "And after three days and a 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."**

“The Spirit of life from God entered into them”: The festivities however, are short-lived as God vindicates His faithful witnesses by resurrecting them.

**Revelation 11:12 "And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them."**

“Ascended up to heaven in a cloud”: Some may wonder why God will not allow them to preach, assuming their message would have more force following their resurrection. But that ignores Christ’s clear statement to the contrary:

Luke 16:31 "And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

The Witnesses Resurrected. After the three and a half days, a breath of life from God entered them and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up to heaven in a cloud.



As our Lord was crucified, buried, and in three days rose from the dead, these men, after being slain and exposed to the eyes of the world, will hear the voice of God resurrecting them. A cloud will receive them out of sight in the face of their enemies. It is no wonder that "terror struck those who saw them." The resurrection of these men will be the final confirmation that they were men of God, another illustration that God does not forget His own.

"Enemies beheld them": Those who hated and dishonored the two witnesses will watch their vindication.

**Revelation 11:13 "And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven."**

"Earthquake": God punctuates the ascension of His prophets with a earth shattering earthquake. The destruction and loss of life may be primarily among the leaders of the Antichrist's forces.

God loses no time dealing with those who have rejected the Lord or even those who have said, I will straighten up later. There is no later. It is now. We see here that one tenth of the people lose their life in this earthquake.

"The remnant": This refers to the Jews still living, who will not yet have come to faith in Christ.

"Gave glory to the God of heaven": A genuine experience of the salvation of Jews (compare Luke 17:18-19), in contrast to those who blaspheme and refuse to glorify God (16:9). This makes a key fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy (12:10; 13:1), and Paul's (Rom. 11:25-27).

Great rejoicing and loud worship fill heaven, and on earth many lightning's, noise, thundering, hail, and an earthquake announce the approaching end.

**Revelation 11:14 "The second woe is past; [and], behold, the third woe cometh quickly."**

"Second Woe": The sixth trumpet (see note on 9:12). The interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets ends (see note on 10:1). Israel's repentance will shortly usher in the millennial kingdom (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 11:25-26). But first will come the final, climatic judgments.

**Revelation 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".**

The seventh trumpet results in the establishment of the millennial kingdom of Christ. The seven vials or bowls (16:1) are probably contained in the judgment of the seventh trumpet. They will occur in a very brief period of time at the end of the Great Tribulation. The second coming of Christ, while a great blessing for believers, will be God's most severe judgment of the earth. "The kingdoms of this world" will be completely overthrown by the coming kingdom of Christ (19:11-21; Dan 2:34-35, 44), who will reign for ever and ever (Dan 7:13-14, 27).

“The seventh angel sounded”: The seventh trumpet includes the 7 bowl, final judgments depicted in chapter 16 and all the events leading up to the establishing of the millennial kingdom (chapter 20), and the coronation of Jesus as King (chapter 19).

“Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ”: Despite its many political and cultural divisions, the Bible views the world spiritually as one kingdom, with one ruler, Satan (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4). Following Satan’s lead, the human rulers of this world are generally hostile to Christ (Psalm 2:2; Acts 4:26). The long rebellion of the world kingdom will end with the victorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ to defeat His enemies and establish His messianic kingdom (Isa. 2:2-3; Dan. 2:44; 7:13-14; 18, 22, 27; Luke 1:31-33). This kingdom also belongs to God the Father (see notes on 1 Cor. 15:24).

The Seventh Trumpet - Loud Voices in Heaven - The 3rd "woe,". The blowing of the 7th trumpet is like the breaking of the 7th seal in that it introduces the next series of divine judgments. The 7th trumpet is not in itself a judgment but rather shows all heaven rejoicing at the soon to be consummated victory of Christ over the Antichrist. John records that "loud voices" in heaven shouted, "The kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

Verses 16-19: “God” is “worshipped” by the “elders” because what He promised is now accomplished. Their gratitude is for the establishment of the millennial kingdom (compare 1 Cor. 15:24). The Gentile “nations” will be subjugated (compare Psalm 2:1-2). The “wrath” of God will take vengeance on His enemies (compare Psalm 2:5; 2 Thess. 1:7-8). The “dead” of all ages will be “judged” at the future Great White Throne (20:11-15). Old Testament and Tribulation “saints” who have died will be raised and rewarded (compare Isa. 26:19-20; Dan. 12:2; Matt. chapter 25). Those who have tried to “destroy the earth” will themselves be destroyed by God (compare 19:20-21).

“The ark of his testament” (covenant), is a symbol of the presence of God and of His faithfulness in fulfilling His covenant promises.

**Revelation 11:16 "And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,"**

“The four and twenty elders” (see note on 4:4).

These you remember, represented all of the believers. They have something to praise about, seeing that they were spared the wrath of God. It was the time to fall on their faces in total adoration to God.

**Revelation 11:17 "Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned."**

“God Almighty, which art, and wast and art to come”: The coming of the kingdom is no longer future, it will be immediate.

We see here that Jesus took power. The establishing of His kingdom brings final victory to the Christian. The thanks really go to Jesus here; the believers have not established the kingdom, Jesus did. All we can do is to praise him for establishing the Kingdom. It was not done through our power and might, but by His (Lord-Supreme Authority, Divinity, Almighty-Omnipotent). You see from this, He is all of it. His power is beyond reproach. His reign is forever and ever. He has no beginning and no end. He alone is worthy of our praise.

**Revelation 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 shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth."**

“Nations were angry”: No longer terrified (compare 6:15-17), they will be filled with defiant rage. Their hostility will shortly manifest itself in a foolish attempt to fight against Christ, a doomed, futile effort that is the apex of human rebellion against God (16:14); 19:17-21).

“Thy wrath”: Almighty God answers the feeble, impotent fury of the nations (compare Psalm 2:1-9). The 24 elders speak of God’s future wrath (20:11-15), as if it were already present, signifying its certainty. That God will one day pour out His wrath on rebellious men is a major theme in Scripture (compare Isa. 24:17-23; 26:20-21; 30:27-33; Ezek. 38:16ff; 2 Thess. 1:5-10).

The nations, (worldly people), had a hay-day persecuting the believers. They were angry and very unfavorable to those with faith. Now the tables are turned. These very ones, whom they persecuted, will rule over them. Here we see punishment for those who did not accept the gift of salvation and great rewards given to those who did accept and live for Jesus. These, who will be destroyed, are actually the cause of the earth being destroyed. The wrath of God not only destroyed them, but damaged the earth as well.

“Dead ... judged”: The final outpouring of God’s wrath includes judging the dead (compare Matt. 25:31-46; John 5:25-29). The judgment has two parts:

- (1) God rewards Old Testament saints (Dan. 12:1-3; compare 22:12; 1 Cor. 3:8; 4:5), the raptured church (1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:13-18), and Tribulation saints (20:4); and
- (2) God condemns unbelievers to the lake of fire forever (20:15).

**Revelation 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."**

“Temple of God ... heaven” (see 3:12; 7:15; 14:15, 17; 15:5-8; 16:1, 17). The heavenly Holy of Holies (see notes on Exodus 26:31-36), where God dwells in transcendent glory, already is identified as His throne (chapters 4 and 5), and here the Holy of Holies.

“Ark of his testament”: This piece of furniture in the Old Testament tabernacle and temple (see notes on Exodus 25:11-18), symbolized God’s presence, atonement and covenant with His people. That earthly ark was only a picture of this heavenly one (see Heb. 9:23; 10:20). It was there God provided mercy and atonement for sin. As the earthly Holy of Holies was open when the price of sin was paid (Matt. 27:51; Heb. 10:19-20), so the Holy of Holies in heaven is opened to speak of God’s saving New Covenant and redeeming purpose in the midst of judgment.

We see here the dwelling of God in all its awesomeness. There was an ark of the covenant in the tabernacle in the wilderness. There is much speculation about where that earthly ark is today. Some believe that it is underneath the city of Jerusalem; some believe it is in Rome. The strange thing is that it is unimportant where it is.

“Lightnings, thunderings ... earthquake ... great hail”: What was anticipated (in 4:5 and 8:5), will become a terrifying reality. These events occur as part of the seventh bowl (16:17-21), and are the climax of the seventh trumpet. Since heaven is the source of vengeance, judgment also comes out of God’s Holy of Holies (14:15, 17: 15:5-8; 16:1, 7, 17; see note on 6:1).

We are reassured that God's covenant with us will never fail. We see God's power and might in all these manifestations such as these earthquakes. We must remember continually, that Revelation is not in chronological order. God does not tell us just exactly when each thing happens. We just know they will happen. All of these earthquakes etc., just show God's dealing with man.