

- The Third Woe (Rev 11:14-19)

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Please open your Bibles to the Revelation of Jesus Christ, Rev 11:14 (2X). Today we have come to the last sermon on Rev 11. It does not mean that the content of Rev 11 can be shoved aside, for the content of Rev 11 will show up again and again as we venture forward through this prophecy that is called the Revelation of Jesus Christ. As I said already in the beginning of this chapter, and have repeated it throughout this chapter, Rev 11 is a chapter that gives us a general overview of the entire history of the NT era. And then in the following chapters the Lord is giving us pictures of this history in more detail. And so, we must remember that Rev 11 is only a general description of what will be presented in detail in the following chapters of Revelation. It might be called the general index of the chapters that follow. In the beginning of this chapter we found a general description of the condition of the church in the world, which was already poor from the beginning. In the first place, within the largest circle of Christianity in the outward sense is the false church, which does no more adhere to Christ, but tramples under foot the blood of His atonement. Secondly, within the same sphere of Christianity there is the show church, which enters with the people of God into the sanctuary, but which does not worship Him in spirit and in truth. And thirdly there is the true church, the body of true believers, who are implanted into Christ by a true and living faith. Then we found in this chapter a general picture of the calling and work of this true church in the symbol of the two witnesses. Then we found in this chapter a general indication of the rise of Antichrist, the beast that comes up out of the Bottomless Pit, who is successful in silencing the witness of the church. And finally we also found in this chapter a general picture of the final victory of the church, or rather the ultimate deliverance of the church. They are raised from the state of death, changed, and taken into heaven at the sound of the Last Trumpet. This brings me to the title of this sermon: "The Last Trumpet Sound" (2X). We read in Rev 11:14 about:

- The Third Woe (Rev 11:14-19, 8:13, 22:20)

Re 11:14-15 The second woe is past; *and*, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. 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.

Re 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.

Re 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. 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 second woe is past; *and*, behold, the third woe cometh quickly". You remember that in the last verse of Rev 8, Rev 8:13, God said with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by

reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!" In the first four trumpets we have entered into the FTP, when the one third of mankind, representing the institutional church, goes astray with all kinds of man-made doctrines. When the institutional church has fallen away with the first four trumpets, God was ready to widen His judgment upon the whole world. The next three trumpets are called "The Woe Trumpets". The first woe was the cloud of demons out of the Bottomless Pit released on all mankind, to ensure that Satan's hold on all the unsaved was secure. The second woe was the army of demons, represented by the 200 million horsemen, who were sent specifically to devastate the church, to ensure Antichrist's entry into the churches worldwide. This was the second woe, which was at the same time pictured as the beast out of the Bottomless Pit who killed, or silenced the two witnesses. The third woe is identical to the blowing of the last trumpet, which is in fact the announcement that Christ has come to rapture the saints up to be with Him forever, and Judgment Day has arrived for all the unsaved of the world. There are people who interpret the entire section from Rev 9:13 to Rev 11:13 as the second woe. But this cannot be true, because there is nothing woeful for the world in chapter 10 and in chapter 11:1-13. And thus Chapter 10 must be an interlude to assure the people of God that Christ shall certainly bring the Kingdom and perfect it, and chapter 11 must be a general overview of what will be described in the future chapters in connection with the blowing of the 7th trumpet, or the third woe. And although there is a lengthy description from Rev 12 to Rev 20, Christ assures us that the third woe cometh quickly, just like He said in Rev 22:20, "Surely I come quickly". His 2nd coming is not a long drawn-out process, but will be accomplished quickly. And so, what we have here in the last part of chapter 11 is a delightful announcement:

#1. An Announcement of Victory (Rev 11:15, 12:10, 14:2)

Re 11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdom* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

Can you see that there is no description in this passage about the effects of the sounding of the Last Trumpet? It is a general vision of the victory of Christ over Satan. Moreover, it is only a proleptical vision of it. A proleptical vision (I wrote those words on the board) is a vision of a future development or future action as if it presently was already accomplished, (2X). There are many proleptical visions and statements in this prophecy that is called Revelation. The entire Rev 11 is a series of proleptical visions. We must not be surprised to read again of the church, even though we saw her already going up to heaven. We must not be surprised to read again of the false church, of Babylon, of Antichrist, and of the murderous plans of Satan against the church. The same is true of the blowing of the Last Trumpet. The voices in heaven and the elders tell us what the effect of this Last Trumpet is, in general terms. That Last Trumpet finishes all, which is given to us here as a proleptical vision. There are seven seals which seal the decree of God for all His creation. The last seal reveals itself as seven trumpets. When therefore the

7th trumpet shall have had its effect, everything shall have been completed, and the mystery of God shall have been finished. Babylon shall have fallen and Antichrist shall have been judged, Gog and Magog shall have been destroyed. The Devil and all his host shall have been cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. The NH&NE shall have been realized, & Christ shall have delivered His Kingdom to the Father. In this way the 7th trumpet shall finish all things, and shall carry us into timeless eternity. But here in Rev 11:15 we have a general statement, a proleptical vision, revealing in a few sentences the entire effect of that 7th trumpet. And this is a statement of the effect of this trumpet as viewed from heaven.

We read here in Rev 11:15 that at the blowing of the 7th trumpet “great voices were heard in heaven.” In this prophecy we read of voices many times. When the dragon is cast out of heaven we read in Rev 12:10 that a loud voice is heard in heaven, speaking about the salvation of God’s people and of woe to the earth. When in chapter 14 the 144000 sing, we read in Rev 14:2 of “a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, and as the voice of harpers.” Chapter 15 tells us of the multitude that stands by the sea of glass and sings the song of Moses and of the Lamb. Chapter 16 tells us of a voice that proceeds from the temple and speaks to the angels who hold the seven bowls of wrath. And as the time approaches that the Kingdom shall be completed, the voices in heaven multiply. It is as if the entire host of heaven has been watching and waiting for a long time. An occasional voice is heard now and then. But in the end, when it becomes plain that God Almighty shall have the victory, heaven appears teeming with life and rebounding with songs and outcries and voices that rejoice, and they rejoice in taking part in the carrying out of the plan of the Almighty. Therefore, we need not be surprised that at the sounding of the 7th trumpet great voices are heard in heaven. And what do these voices say? They shout with great joy over:

- **A New Kingdom** (Rev 11:15, Mat 28:18, 1Cor 15:28)

Re 11:15 There were great voices (loud voices, mega voices) in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdom* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

In our KJV Bibles we read, “The Kingdoms (plural) of this world”, but in the newer Bible versions we read “The Kingdom (singular) of this world.” There are more such differences in verse 17, and many more throughout the whole Bible. Which version can we believe? All these differences are based on two different Greek texts. First there is the Greek text that is called the “Textus Receptus”, which was the Greek text from which the NT in the KJV was obtained in the year 1611 AD. More than 250 years later the Greek text has been modified with manuscripts found in Alexandria, Egypt, and in the Vatican, Rome, and this revised Greek text is called the “Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament”. If you plan to buy an interlinear Bible, I recommend that you buy the Bible that is based on the “Textus Receptus”, for this is the most reliable Greek text. The manuscripts found in Alexandria and in the Vatican are corrupted manuscripts, which most likely have been corrupted by the Gnostics, who were based in Alexandria, and

who were very active in the 1st, and 2nd, and 3rd century in their opposition to the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us now turn to the message the voices in heaven were saying. They said, “The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdom* of our Lord, and of his Christ”. The idea is that the sovereign rule over the world has completely fallen to God Almighty and His Christ. That world was originally made to be a Kingdom of God and to be an organic whole. That is how it initially was in the Garden of Eden. But Adam sold himself and all his posterity, and all the world into the hands of Satan. But now, at the end, when the 7th trumpet blows, God has with and through His Christ regained the actual sovereign dominion over all the world. This is what these voices are shouting, but they are saying it proleptically. They speak as if this sovereignty has already been accomplished.

Now, this raises an important question: In what sense does God become sovereign over all the world at the end of time? Is He not sovereign now? Is Christ not actually sovereign over all creation now? Did not the Lord Jesus say at the end of His ministry in Mat 28:18, “All authority is given unto Me in heaven and on earth”? But although this is true and Christ is absolutely sovereign, even now, yet His sovereignty is not undisputed. It is also true that the Devil conceived of a plan to become the sovereign ruler of this creation instead of God, and he has employed other angels and man to realize this plan of his own sovereignty. And therefore the Devil, together with his agencies the army of devils from the Bottomless Pit, and Babylon, and Antichrist, rise up in rebellion against the Sovereign of heaven and earth. There is therefore a battle going on for the possession of this whole world, between God and His Anointed, Christ, and the Devil and his anointed, Antichrist. God’s sovereignty is now being disputed. The Devil can presently show that he is on the winning side, and he is continually making more and more progress. And thus the full sovereignty of God does not appear until these enemies of God and His Christ have been defeated and God and His Christ shall reign in undisputed sovereignty forever. When the 7th trumpet shall sound all this shall have been realized.

But this raises up another question: What is the relationship between the sovereignty of God Almighty and the sovereignty of His Christ after the blowing of the 7th trumpet? Shall they reign side by side, or shall there be some subordination? To answer this question, we must remember that the plan of God is, and always was, that the kingdom of the world shall be a kingdom of man under God. Man is made king of this world in obedience to God Almighty as the Sovereign ruler over all. The first man, Adam, went with his power and royal glory and subjected himself to the prince of darkness. Now God has sent His second man, the man Christ Jesus. He is to take man’s place. He is the Servant of God, the Head of the covenant which must be realized for all His chosen ones, the King of the new creation. Now He reigns, seated at the right hand of God, and carries out the decree of God with a view to the coming Kingdom. He breaks the seals, He causes the trumpets to blow, He sends the vials of wrath to this earth. But in the end, when all is completed and the 7th trumpet shall have finished its work, He shall subject Himself also and shall reign over all the works of God forever and ever, but under God as His Sovereign. In

Christ, the Anointed of God, the new creation shall lie at the foot of its Maker and give Him glory. God says in 1Cor 15:28, “And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” And this is what the voices in heaven are shouting. All creation is lying at the feet of the Sovereign God forever and ever. What a glory and a joy that shall be! And this brings me to the point that there shall be:

#2. Joy in Heaven (Rev 11:16-17)

Re 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.

In concert with the voices of the mighty angels in heaven, we also hear the voices of the 24 elders. I have explained some time ago who these 24 elders represent. They are the representatives of the church of all ages, both of the OT as well as of the NT time. At the sound of the 7th trumpet they fell upon their faces and worshipped God. Why was that? Must it not be that the actions of the 24 elders are in complete harmony with the loud voices of the other creatures in heaven? You see, the 24 elders, representing all those who have been saved and have gone to heaven, are overwhelmed by the realization of the sovereignty of God and by God’s victory over Satan and all the evil ones. O sure, they knew that He was sovereign. They were aware of God’s great power. They felt assured that God would overcome His enemies at the end. But the reality of it all is still so overwhelming that they fall down and bow with their faces to the ground. They see the fulfillment, the full carrying out of all that is implied in the 7th trumpet. They see the complete carrying out of the mystery of God, seeing how everything is fulfilled, and they are overwhelmed with the reality of the things that they now see happening before their eyes. And they fall down and worship. So, in like manner, shall reality far surpass our boldest expectations. Living in this universe we cannot imagine how great God’s majesty and sovereignty is, for we are simply limited by what this universe allows. But when we have been translated to the new creation, and we see with our own eyes the glory and majesty and sovereignty of God, we will, like these 24 elders, fall down and worship Him who is forever and forever. We will be so overwhelmed with the glory of God that it will seem incredibly short-sighted how a creature like Lucifer could rebel against God, and thereby plunge himself into eternal hell. It will seem incredibly short-sighted how there could be people who would ignore God, or who would deliberately violate His commandments because it may feel good to them in this short life on earth. But this they do because they live in this universe, and within the limits of this universe it takes great faith to believe in God, and believe the Bible, and believe the promises of a glorious future. Only if God gives us this faith will we believe, and will we have hope for a glorious NH&NE. Now we are children of God. Now we have a revelation of the things that are to be, of the power of God and of His Christ that is to be revealed in the future, and of the glory of the children of God that is to be revealed in us. Now we can speak, or stammer, about these things in imperfection; and joy fills our hearts when we

speak of them. Now we fall down in humble worship and thanks whenever we obtain a glimpse of God's power and grace, and it has not even been revealed what we shall be. If these glorified elders, who at least know far more of the glory that is to be expected than we here on earth, fall down at the blowing of the 7th trumpet when they see all things realized, how much more will reality surpass our expectation while we are still in the period in which we look toward the future in hope. Surely these elders knew His great power. But now He has fully revealed it and taken it on. And this great power He has revealed in two ways:

- **His Wrath and His Grace** (Rev 11:18, Luke 18:28-30, 2Cor 5:10, Rom 3:12, Eph 2:10, Phil 2:13)

God has revealed His great power in His wrath against the enemies of His Kingdom. We read in:

Re 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.

Proleptically, the elders have seen, just before the time of the blowing of the 7th trumpet, how the enemies of Christ made a last attempt to control this world, and how they through all the history of this world fought against the holy city and trampled it under foot and trampled the blood of the covenant, and how they allied themselves against God and His Christ and purposed to destroy His church. But He who was in the heavens laughed them to scorn. He has come to destroy them with the breath of His mouth. His power revealed itself against their power, and they were completely defeated. The Devil, Antichrist, Babylon, Gog and Magog, and all the enemies of the King and of His Kingdom have been destroyed. They that oppressed the people of God have been removed from them. God has revealed His power and now reigns forevermore. And thus the representatives of the church triumphant give Him thanks and worship, because He has revealed His great power.

But God has revealed His great power also in His grace towards us, His people who are the oppressed and the faithful. We read in Rev 11:18, "And that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great". Again proleptically the elders see how all is accomplished. That same judgment which cast the enemies of the Kingdom into the Lake of Fire brought the reward to the faithful people of God. They see the NH&NE realized with the blowing of the 7th trumpet. They see how God's temple is with men and how He spreads His tabernacle over them all. They see the mighty prophets of the OT time; they see the saints of the NT time; they see the formerly weak, and the timid, but faithful children of God who feared His name; they see the small and the great and also the little ones, and they see that all have their reward and not one is forgotten. And at the sight of all this the elders fall on their faces and worship and they give God thanks. But let us be careful that we understand what this reward is.

Please turn in your Bibles to the Gospel according to Luke, Luke 18:28 (2X). The Bible speaks of reward or rewards in two different ways: Either they are wages (plural) for either good works or bad

works done here on earth, or the reward (singular) is the reward of Christ for His work on the cross. Most people believe that when Christ returns He will evaluate our works and hand out special rewards to those who have served Him extra diligently. But that is not how the Bible speaks about rewards. Rewards are wages given for either good works or bad works. We read here in Luke 18:28,

Lu 18:28 Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.

Lu 18:29-30 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

Peter was implying that he and the other disciples deserved something extra. But the Lord Jesus said, in verse 30, that the manifold blessings that come to those who have denied themselves to follow Christ, are received "in this present time", which means in this present life. These are the wages that are received by those who diligently witness the Gospel, and then see others turn to faith in Christ. As a child of God we experience a great joy when we use our gifts and resources to serve the Lord. These are our rewards in this life. But in the world to come life everlasting is what Jesus promised. That is the common denominator for everyone who has become a child of God. That is why in Rev 11:18 God speaks of giving reward (singular) unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great". Those last three words, "small and great", underscore that both the small and the great will be given the same reward on the Last Day. Both the Apostle Paul and the thief on the cross shall receive the same reward, which is eternal life with Christ in the NH&NE. This is a reward that is infinitely greater than can be expected for works done here on earth. Why do we want more? It makes us only selfish to ask for more. Please turn to the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians, 2Cor 5:10 (2X). Here is a verse which seems to teach that we will receive extra credits for works done here on earth. This verse is used by many to teach that believers will stand before the "bema" seat of Christ, or before the great white throne, where we will receive extra rewards for how well we have served Him. The fact is that the word "bema" simply means "Judgment Seat". We read in 2Cor 5:10,

2Co 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

This tells us that every human being will be judged by God, and will receive "according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad". And what every human being deserves is eternal punishment in Hell, for we read in Rom 3:12, "There is NONE that doeth good, NO NOT ONE". All we have done in our unsaved state is only sin. And when we become saved are there any good works that we will do? The answer is Yes! But how does it come to pass that we can do good works after the moment of our salvation? God tells us that in Eph 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." In other words, we do not receive any credits for the good works we do, for God has prepared those works beforehand, and we just walk

through them. And thus it is altogether in agreement with God's statement in Phil 2:13, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The doctrine of extra rewards is a wicked doctrine, which creates a religion of selfishness. It is a doctrine which tells us that God owes us something extra. Well, God never owes anyone anything. And thus when we read about a reward in Rev 11:18, we understand that it is a reward that Christ earned on the cross and that He freely gives to "all them that fear His Name, both small and great". Let us now return to the Revelation of Jesus Christ, Rev 11:19 (2X). And there we read about:

#3. Judgments on Earth (Rev 11:19)

Verse 15 begins with "there were great voices in heaven", and thus the passage of verses 15 through 18 is a vision in heaven. Now, verse 19 is a vision from the viewpoint of earth. We read in:

Re 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 fact that heaven is opened and that the temple of God is seen plainly reveals that the viewpoint is on earth. And it tells us in general that the opening of the temple in heaven and the appearance of the Ark of God's covenant spells woe and judgment to the inhabitants of the earth. This is symbolized by the lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail. The temple of God in Jerusalem was made after the pattern of the heavenly temple, as it was shown to Moses on the mountain. The idea of the temple is that of a dwelling place of God. But it was a limited place where God dwelt in distinction from the world in general, and in distinction also from the holy city. It speaks of the fact that in the world, in the kingdom of darkness, the Holy One cannot take up His residence. But that distinction is only temporal. God shall not remain in His temple, excluded from the world. In the end that distinction shall be wiped away. God shall come forth from His holy temple and shall make of all the world His dwelling place. And for that reason we see that the temple of God was opened.

The same idea is expressed in the appearance of the Ark. The Ark was the symbol of the presence of God. It is called the throne of God. It contained the Ten Commandments, a pot with manna and Aaron's rod that budded. All of these were pointing to Christ, the only source of our salvation. And therefore the Ark of the Covenant is the symbol of God in His covenant greatness, issuing His law to His people, and blessing them with all the blessings of the covenant in the blood of the atonement. The appearance of the Ark tells us that the time has come that the Law of God's covenant shall issue forth over all the earth. But when the Holy One comes forth to make all the earth His temple and when He is about to issue His Law and realize to the full His holy covenant, it means that first all the wicked must be removed into a place called Hell. It means that judgments must follow the opening of the temple, and these are judgments that will defeat the enemy and make the world fit for a temple of the Almighty. And thus out of that temple comes the angel with the sharp sickle. Out of that temple come the seven angels with the

seven bowls of the wrath of God. Out of that temple comes the command to empty those vials of wrath. And out of that temple comes the voice that announces that all is finished after the seven vials of wrath have been poured out. And for that same reason we read here that the opening of the temple is followed by “lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail”, all of them symbols of judgment.

But we should keep in mind that the Last Trumpet is also full of comfort to all the faithful. When that Last Trumpet sounds we shall stand in our reward, small and great, as many as fear the Name of our God. That Last Trumpet shall do the people of God no harm, but will bring their complete salvation. We will be raptured to be with Christ, and so shall we forever be with the Lord. Therefore we comfort one another with these glorious promises.

AMEN.

Let us turn to the Lord in prayer.