Christ Reigns

The third and final woe... "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." (Rev. 11:14, 15)

Second woe is past... We identified the second woe as the time of God's wrath in the punishment of the wicked. This time is also seen as the punishment described by the third angel, and it was foreshadowed by the second wave of demonic power. So, if the second woe is past here in verse 14, we look to see if we can identify it in the preceding verses.

We can't. The witnesses and the partly-fallen city don't depict the punishment of the end-time wicked. The problem is clarified by considering the arrangement of the information given to John. The description of the first two woes *(for which the fifth and sixth trumpets were sounded in warning)* are shown in chapter 9. Then, chapters 10 and 11, instead of continuing a narrative sequence, explain the drama which sets the stage for these two woes.

The two chapters tell about the mighty angel with the bitter book of chapter 10, and the witnesses coming out of the oppressive 1260 years, being killed, and then giving testimony from heaven here in chapter 11. This understanding clarifies the great final conflict of the second and third woes outlined in chapter 9 and amplified in new terms in most of the rest of the book of Revelation.

Third woe coming quickly... Verse 14 expresses an interval of time between the second and third woes. The third woe, different from the first two, does not come at the time the trumpet sounds. *"The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly."* In Revelation, ***"quickly"*** doesn't necessarily mean, ***"after a very brief time"*** except for the person who is unprepared for it.

We may see an event as happening quickly when the time for it has come. For example, Jesus told the first of the seven churches, *"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."* (Rev. 2:5).

At the end of the book of Revelation, we read, *"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."* It's been about 2,000 years since John wrote the words, and I don't expect it to be much longer. (Rev. 22:20). So, then we could think of *"quickly"* as meaning *"suddenly."*

Perspective... The soundings of the last three trumpets warn about the three woes. Here, for the third, Christ takes over the kingdoms of the world.

Before examining this more closely, I suggest we look at the chart which explains the trumpets and hence the three woes... Then you can continue.

When taking a broad view of the blowing of the trumpets of Revelation, we must ask why the Holy Spirit chose the trumpet theme and how that relates to the overall purpose of the vision.

Framework of the Seven Trumpets

No.	Trumpet Description	Related Passages	Apostasy and Results
1	8:7 Hail and fire with blood thrown to earth; third of trees with all the grass burned	But now listen, O Jacob, my servant, Israel... *[Your descendants]* will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees... *–Isa. 44:1-4, NIV...* And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire... *Matt. 3:10* His blood be on us and on our children... *Matt. 27:25.*	**Apostasy** Jewish Rejection of Christ *(ending with the stoning of Stephen, AD 34).* See on Matt. 23.
2	8:8, 9... Burning mountain thrown into sea; third of sea as blood; third of sea life and ships destroyed.	"Babylon is suddenly fallen... Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD... and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain... The sea is come up upon Babylon... she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof..." Jer. 51:8, 25, 41	**Apostasy** Early Church *(papal)* Attempting to change God's plan, *(to the late 1700s)*
3	8:10, 11 Star Wormwood fell on third of water sources; they became bitter; many died.	"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart... I will exalt my throne above the stars of God..." Isa. 14:12, 13.	**Apostasy** *Atheist / Deist Initiated by Revolutionary France (to the early 1800s), See Rev. 11.*
4	8:12 Third of sun, moon, and stars darkened.	"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:" 1 John 1:6. The torch carried from the Reformation grows dim.	**Apostasy** Protestant When, for most, the torch of the Reformation has dimmed. Empowerment of the image to the beast.
5	9:1-12 Fallen star gets key to pit; locusts harm unsealed ones for five months.	"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." Isa. 26:20	**Woe** Beast's image speaks Oppression and soul searching for righteous, foreshadowed by the advance of Harlot
6	9:13-21 Four angels released; horsemen prepared; three	The verse following the one quoted above applies to the sixth trumpet sounding. "For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their	**Woe** Punishment of end-time wicked (The last plagues), foreshadowed by the Harlot power in

	plagues; none repented.	iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain. Isa. 26:21.	helping suppress the beast of the middle ages.
7	11:15-19 Kingdoms become Christ's; Temple is opened and God's law is seen. 20:9 Satan gathers resurrected wicked and fire devours them.	"...and they *[the court of heaven in prearrival judgment]* shall take away his *[the horn's]* dominion..." Dan. 7:26. Anyone "not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Rev. 20:15	**Woe** Punishment and 2nd death... The third woe is announced in Rev. 11:14. It is the punishment of all the wicked in the lake of fire.

The picture in chapter 19 may help us understand the second woe so we can see how the third relates to it. There, Christ comes on the white horse to punish the wicked. He is King of kings and rules them with a rod of iron. This ***time of trouble*** can be seen as the 2nd woe *(with the 6th trumpet call).* All three woes are announced at the end of chapter 6:14. You may want to review the verse.

"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand" (Rev. 6:12-17)

The End of the Time of Grace. Like a scroll... *"And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places."* (Rev. 6:14)

The scroll is significant in discussing the seals. Remember ***"And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book [scroll] written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals."*** (Rev. 5:1)

The great significance that I see in the scroll is that it is the record of human lives. Satan has claimed that we all deserve to die but Jesus breaks his seals. The righteous who claim Christ's name are vindicated in the pre-advent judgment. Now it is over and the record is closed. The sign in heaven ***(where the judgment took place)*** indicates this as the scroll is rolled up. I assume that this sign will be literal as well as figurative. In some way those living at the time will see it. Perhaps you and me; we must wait to find out.

Mountains and islands displaced... What do mountains generally represent? Jerusalem is on top of a mountain which is sometimes called Zion. The mountain is often a symbol of the nation. The Lord declared that the holy mountain would be above the other mountains and hills. Even now (2017) the nations of our world are becoming unstable. When the spirit of the Lord is fully withdrawn at the end of human probation and the four winds are allowed to blow (Rev. 7:1-3), we may expect total chaos as represented by every mountain and island moved out of its place. We may expect physical movement, too, and be thankful for divine protection.

Running from God... *"And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks," (Note 6:16 Judgment) "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:"* (Rev. 6:15, 16)

What a terrible scene. Violent death is preferred to facing judgment unprepared after probation has closed! This is hard to imagine. We may pray not to need to experience it. This whole scene may represent the time just before the punishment of the end-time wicked or the time of trouble. See the fifth and sixth seals.

Being seated on the throne implies judgment. The wicked do not want to hear the sentence! Again, this scene concludes the one in chapter 5. *"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne."* (5:6, 7)

Who can stand... *"...Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"* (Rev. 6:16, 17)

God does not lose control of His temper as we sometimes do. In fact, His love is abounding and always will be. *"...As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live..."* (Ezek. 33:11)

Justice and mercy at this point demand the punishment and destruction of the wicked. In chapter 19 we will see this destruction which occurs at the second coming. The wicked will be raised again at the end of the thousand years to experience final judgment, but this we will study later.

It's easy to get the idea that God is just trying to get us on His side by fear. This is not the case. He gives us the freedom to make our choice without pressure... *"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."* (Eccl. 8:11) All flesh is as grass.

An angry lamb... The sheep who becomes the shepherd to the righteous is seen here as the Meek and lowly lamb who is ready to punish the wicked. In His mercy, God warns us of the natural result of our course of action, ***(will)*** granting the freedom to choose.

Who then *can* stand... Chapter 7 answers the question for us. I am renewing my pledge to be faithful in the strength and grace of Christ, and I invite you to yield Him your heart, too.

The question is, who can stand through the time of trouble? The righteous, of course are able. We see them as the 144,000 in chapter 7

Final woe for the wicked... Christ's assumption of power comes when it is clear that He has the last sheep ***(soul)*** accounted for. The 24 elders praise God. This seems to be a joyful time. How could it be a woe? As you think of it, what will be the last suffering of the wicked? The wicked will be punished ***(6th woe),*** then die to await the second resurrection coming at the end of the thousand years. After that they will be punished again as fire comes down from heaven to destroy them.

When Christ comes at the beginning of the millennium, the woe will be certain for the living wicked. Eternal life will have been forever lost. The wicked slain at that time will join the wicked who have died through the ages. All will sleep through the thousand years, then experience the final suffering paying the wages of sin.

The kingdoms are all His... *"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. 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."* (Rev. 11:15-17)

What a glorious and wonderful day that will be! *"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another..."* (Matt. 25:31, 32)

The trumpet warns us to be ready... The issue is the contest of Satan for this planet. At this point in history, he will have had full sway to show the results of his kingdom of hate and anarchy. He will get only one more chance, that at the end of the thousand years. Jesus Christ is anointed seven times, each time recognized as worthy in a different sense.

The Father doesn't just tell us, ***"Here is my Son. He's your new King."*** The way is made clear at each step so that you and I as faithful followers will recognize Him as our personal Lord. No one can ever tell us, as Satan did Eve, that another way is better. When studying chapters 4 and 5 we made a table showing seven times of anointing. Here, when He takes over the kingdoms of the earth, is the seventh.

Perspective, plagues within the seventh trumpet... *"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. 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."* (Rev. 11:15-17)

Bigger picture... We will understand this cataclysmic time of the seventh trumpet better as we progress. We have been enjoying the tiny details but need to see the grand movements, too. Just

as the seven trumpets unfold in the opening of the seventh seal, so we will find the seven last plagues unfolding within the time of the seventh trumpet. God has scheduled a judgment (Rev. 14:6; 11:13) when there would be ***"time no longer"*** (Rev. 10:6; Dan. 7:13, 14, 26).

This is also described as when the seventh angel is about to sound (Rev. 10:7) and the mystery of godliness is clarified. Godliness is a mystery because, without the power of divine grace, it is impossible. When we studied chapter 10, we saw that as Christ's work of redemption is seen in the miraculous cleansing of character in His people, they and He are found to be righteous. This is like a verdict; hence the finishing of the mystery is accomplished in judgment.

It's possible that the plagues are also seen in the scenes of the 6th trumpet. Some things will be clear when the time comes for them.

"And at that time [when the wicked king comes to his end] shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Dan. 12:1-3

At the time the false religious power makes the ultimate challenge against the God of heaven, Michael stands up *(from sitting in judgment).* He takes on the robe of wrath or punishment, and in our verse the elders get up from their seats and fall on their faces in worship.

Our verse in Daniel told us that the righteous will be delivered during this time of trouble. Also, the verse itself indicates that the judgment has ended. The names of the delivered ones were found to have been written in the book.

Sequence of final events... Let's take a quick look at the verses near the end of the present chapter.... ***"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. 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. 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."*** Rev. 11: 15-18

Here we see the end of life as we know it on this planet. Christ comes and conquers the kingdoms of earth. From the pen of John here *(verse 18)* we see the series of events surrounding this pivotal time in history.

At the sounding of the last trumpet when God takes power... Anger of the nations will be past

Wrath of God begins; ***[Righteous are saved];*** Second coming; (Dan. 12:1) Judgment of the dead soon to begin. All the wicked are dead at this time. Servants of God rewarded. Destroy those who destroy the earth.

Anger of the nations... Anyone can see the increase in hatred on this planet. Only the Holy Spirit can bring us the peace and joy of Christ and forgiving love. And that spirit is being withdrawn from all except those who sincerely want it.

"And... I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." (Rev. 7:1-3)

Wrath of God... *"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God."* (Rev. 15:1) God tells us through the third angel that His wrath will be poured out on the beast worshippers. This full wrath is administered by the seven last plagues.

To clarify, Christ does two things when He comes. He saves the faithful ones and He punishes the end-time wicked. Focus here is on the wicked. Rescue of the righteous isn't explicit. We see both at the end of chapter 14 where the righteous are the grain to be harvested and the wicked are the grapes to be trampled.

Judgment of the dead... What reason do I have for assuming that only the wicked are dead? This is true because at this time, the time of the seventh trumpet, the ***"dead in Christ"*** will be resurrected, the righteous *(who are living in Christ)* will join them and together they will be received up to meet Him in the air. The wicked then dead *(not "in Christ")* simply stay dead. The wicked living at that time will face Christ who comes in this wrath as the One on the white horse. They are all slain in this *"wrath of God"* leaving no wicked humans living anywhere.

This is the time for the *"judgment of the dead" (who are all wicked),* a judgment which continues through the millennium. *"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep [not alive]. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."* (1 Thess. 4:15-17)

In 1 Cor. 15, the apostle Paul refers to this *"trump"* or *"trumpet call"* as the last. *"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."* (1 Cor. 15:51-53) This is indeed the time of the last trumpet call, the seventh. It is also the time of the second coming of Christ (Rev. 1:7).

Back to our question about the judgment of the dead. In 1 Thess. 4:17 above, Christ does not come down all the way to the earth. When those who are resurrected are joined by those who are alive, both are taken to heaven. They/we don't stay on the earth. We shall be *"ever with the Lord"* from that time on. He does come all the way at the end of the thousand years (Zech. 14:1-5) when the city comes down.

Another promise of Christ broadens the picture. *"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."* (John 14:2, 3). So, where does He take us? It's where He went?

After the resurrection, He ascended to heaven. *"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."* (Acts 1:9-11).

He went to heaven and that's where He takes us when He comes to get us. What does this tell us about the dead who are judged after the seventh trumpet? Only the *"dead in Christ"* are raised at the coming of Christ. Also, those who pierced Him and some like them (Rev. 1:7) will, of necessity, be raised to see Him come. Their resurrection is before Christ comes because they will see Him coming (Matt 26:64). Then they will die again in the final time of God's wrath. So, they along with all the living wicked and the wicked dead who died earlier will stay dead until all the nations are gathered by Satan to take the city (Rev. 20:7-9). We will look more closely at this later.

Servants of God rewarded... *"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."* (Rev. 11:18)

Although we receive our reward of eternal life at the coming of Christ (22:12), the final joy comes at the end of the thousand years after sin and sinners have been destroyed. Then, as I understand it, we will take full possession of the earth, under King Jesus.

Earth destroyers destroyed... While conservation of the environment is important, one might wonder why those who destroy the earth would be specifically brought to view in the list of final events. Actually, the picture is broader. When God created the earth, He placed our first parents here in a garden. At the introduction of sin, this perfect environment began to suffer. Satan claimed rulership of the planet since its rightful owners had chosen to obey him. From day to day, as God's spirit is being withdrawn, we have increasing chaos and hatred. The earth was our gift from God. We were to have dominion over it (Gen. 1:26). When sinners are no more, God will melt down our world, create it fresh and new, and turn it back to us as His people.



"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up... Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." (2 Peter 3:10, 13, 14).

In Psalm 46, we see the picture of melting and restoration. Notice both the anger of the nations and the wrath of the Lord.

"The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah." (Ps. 46:6-11)



Divine authority revealed... *"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."* (Rev. 11:19)

This verse is unique. It might even be considered as the centerpiece at the heart of the book of Revelation.
We have said that God does not impose the divine government on us. Its citizens will be only those who ***want*** to live in the holy and loving atmosphere of heaven. As the time of trouble is boiling with hatred, and the righteous are saved out of it, the temple will be opened. The teachers in the massive end-time religious movement will be suffering, still wanting life on their own terms with control over the consciences of men.

Then all will be able to see into the heavenly temple itself *(although we don't now know how)*. Christ has come out of the most holy place at the end of the pre-arrival judgment... the sanctuary has been cleansed *(or vindicated)*. While God is a God of mercy, He is also a God of justice. As the world gazes into the most sacred place in heaven, they see the ark of the covenant. It is called this because inside, under the mercy-seat lid, are the two tables of stone and the law God wrote with His own finger.

When the ark is revealed, all the arguments will fall limp and contrived. The covenant in that ark of the covenant is written on stone. That law will be seen as clearly and positively important to the sovereign God of the universe.

The temple opened, not all at once... Our verse covers more than the moment of truth seen at the close of probation. The temple, or sanctuary tabernacle, represents Christ's ministry for us... the ministry made effective by the marvelous gift of sacrifice of the Son of God!

Here again is our verse... *"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."* (Rev. 11:19)

So, we have... The door opened in heaven where Christ began His ministry after the cross. The door opened to the most holy place for the day-of-atonement ministry. The door opened at or near the end of this ministry for the world to see the ark and its treasure.

Opened at the beginning of the most holy place ministry. The revelation of the ark in the temple which is above is also significant in the context of the chapter. The two witnesses after their resurrection were seen in heaven. The people who saw them understood from the Bible that the sanctuary to be cleansed was in heaven. They also saw the importance of God's holy law.



The ark of his testament... Verse 19 is an amplification on the end of verse 18. In revealing the ark with the covenant, God's standard of life and happiness, the world will understand that Christ is justified in rewarding His servants and destroying the wicked.