

## Part 6: The Great Vision of the END

### 5 The Judgment of God Arrives (7:9—15:5)

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5.1 John sees the great multitude from the nations  
(7:9-17)

**Revelation 7:9**      **AFTER THESE THINGS I LOOKED**, and here was an enormous crowd that no one could count, made up of persons from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb dressed in long white robes, and with palm branches in their hands. 7:10 They were shouting out in a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God, to the one seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!

7:11 And all the angels stood there in a circle around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they threw themselves down with their faces to the ground before the throne and worshiped God, 7:12 saying, “Amen! Praise and glory, and wisdom and thanksgiving, and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”

7:13 Then one of the elders asked me, “These dressed in long white robes—who are they and where have they come from?” 7:14 So I said to him, “My lord, you know the answer.” Then he said to me, “These are the ones who have come out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! 7:15 For this reason they are before the throne of God, and

they serve him day and night in his temple, and the one seated on the throne will shelter them. 7:16 They will never go hungry or be thirsty again, and the sun will not beat down on them, nor any burning heat, 7:17 because the Lamb in the middle of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

- 7:9 The enormous crowd /innumerable multitude

Many, if not most, commentators understand this crowd to be the 144,000 seen from a different angle. However, this ignores both the fact that this is an independent vision *structurally* – it follows an “after these things I saw...” and the group is described in very different terms.

First this group is from every nation, tribe, people and tongue which indicates they have come from *all nations, not just the nation of Israel*. Secondly, they have specifically come out of the Great Tribulation.

It seems to me best to take these visions at face value: the 144,000 represent the people of national Israel sealed for salvation, whereas this uncountable group is gentiles who come to faith during “the Great Tribulation.”

*(We will discuss what this Great Tribulation is shortly)*

- 7:9 Every nation, tribe, people and language

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**IN THE BACKGROUND 26:** *The Nations Glorify the LORD God*

**Isaiah 11:10** At that time a root from Jesse will stand like a signal flag for the nations. Nations will look to him for guidance, and his residence will be majestic.

**Isaiah 66:18–21** “For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory, 66:19 and I will set a sign

among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. **And they shall declare my glory among the nations.** 66:20 And they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the LORD, on horses and in chariots and in litters and on mules and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, just as the Israelites bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD. 66:21 And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD.

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- 7:9 White Robes / Palm Branches
- 7:10 “Salvation belongs to our God...”
- 7:11-12 Heavenly Worship
- 7:14 “Who are they and where have they come from?”  
They have come out of *The Great Tribulation*

Here again, we deal with meaning of the term *thlpsis* which could be translated as affliction, tribulation, persecution. First we need to take note of the definite article here; this is THE Great Tribulation which seems to point to something unique.

There are two major options for the meaning of this term:

1) The Great Tribulation could refer to *the whole time* from the ascension of Christ to His return (basically the Church Era). Jesus warned his people of the persecution to come (Matthew 24:9). In the context of Revelation, John sees himself as already sharing in *thlpsis* (affliction/persecution) with the other churches (see 1:9 and 2:9-10). Those who take this view see the “great” as referring to the *duration* (time-span) of the affliction/persecution.

2) The Great Tribulation could refer to a specific span of time after the “Abomination of Desolation” and the rise of the Beast leading to the return of Christ that Jesus identifies a “a great tribulation/affliction/persecution” (see Matthew 24:21). Those who take this view see the “great” as referring to the *intensity* of the affliction/persecution.

Outside of the above references, the actual phrase “great tribulation” appears only in Acts 7:11 in Stephen’s speech referring to the affliction of the Israelites at the time of the Egyptian slavery and in Revelation 2:22 in reference to the “great affliction” what would be placed upon “Jezebel” if she did not repent.

Since it appears that John does not use the term “great tribulation” as a technical term for a specific period of time, I take the view that “the great tribulation/persecution/affliction” here references the time of the Church Age and includes an intensification of this affliction in the Last Days during the reign of the Beast.

- 7:14 Washed their robes...in the blood of the Lamb
- 7:15 They are before the Throne and Serve...
- 7:16 No hunger, no thirst, no scorching...
- 7:17 The Lamb will shepherd...
- 7:17 Living water, the wiping away of tears

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5.2 The Seventh Seal is opened (8:1-5)

**Revelation 8:1** Now when the Lamb opened the seventh seal there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. 8:2 Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. 8:3 Another angel holding a golden censer came and was stationed at the altar. A large amount of incense was given to him to offer up, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar that is before the throne. 8:4 The smoke coming from the incense, along with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. 8:5 Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it on the earth, and there were crashes of thunder, roaring, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

- 8:1 The Seventh Seal... Silence for half and hour
- 8:2 Seven Angels, Seven Trumpets
- 8:3 the Angel, golden censer, prayers of the Saints...
- 8:5 The Censer thrown to Earth

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5.3 Angels with Seven Trumpets appear;  
Six trumpets are blown (8:6-9:21)

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**IN THE BACKGROUND 27:** *The Judgments of Egypt*

Much of the imagery in the Trumpets is paralleled in the judgments of the Exodus. In both cases these are meant to be seen clearly as Divine Judgments—God intervening to call all to repentance before the final judgment.

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**Revelation 8:6** Now the seven angels holding the seven trumpets prepared to blow them 8:7 The first angel blew his trumpet, and there was hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was thrown at the earth so that a third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

- First Trumpet: Hail and Fire  
This parallels the Seventh Egyptian Plague: Exodus 9:13-35
- 1/3rd of Earth, trees, and grass burned

**Revelation 8:8** Then the second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain of burning fire was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea became blood, 8:9 and a third of the creatures living in the sea died, and a third of the ships were completely destroyed.

- Second Trumpet: Mountain of Burning Fire

This (and the next trumpet) parallels the First Egyptian Plague: Exodus 7:20-21

- 1/3rd Sea to blood, sea creatures dead, ships destroyed

**Revelation 8:10** Then the third angel blew his trumpet, and a huge star burning like a torch fell from the sky; it landed on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. 8:11 (Now the name of the star is Wormwood.) So a third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from these waters because they had turned bitter.

- Third Trumpet: The Star Wormwood  
Wormwood is used in the OT as a symbol of divine judgment:  
Jeremiah 9:15 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, “behold, I will feed them, this people, with wormwood and give them poisoned water to drink.  
Jeremiah 23:15 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets, “Behold, I am going to feed them wormwood And make them drink poisonous water, For from the prophets of Jerusalem Pollution has gone forth into all the land.”
- 1/3rd of the waters turned bitter

**Revelation 8:12** Then the fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. And there was no light for a third of the day and for a third of the night likewise.

- The Fourth Trumpet: Sun, Moon and Stars Darkened

This parallels the Ninth Egyptian Plague: Exodus 10:21-23  
*Darkness is especially a sign of God's Judgment:* Isaiah 13:10,  
 Amos 5:18, Joel 2:2, Mark 13:24)

- 1/3rd of the daylight and “nightlight” is darkened

**Revelation 8:13** Then I looked, and I heard an eagle (vulture?) flying directly overhead, proclaiming with a loud voice, “Woe! Woe! Woe to those who live on the earth because of the remaining sounds of the trumpets of the three angels who are about to blow them!”

- The Vulture Imagery:  
 Here the term for “eagle” is used by Jesus in Luke 17:37 where it refers to a vulture. The image of the vulture—a carrion bird—would be much more appropriate for the context. If this is to be seen as a vulture and not an eagle then a key OT text comes to mind:  
 Hosea 8:1 Set the trumpet to your lips!  
 One like a vulture is over the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant and rebelled against my law.
- Woe! Woe! Woe! the Three final trumpets

**Revelation 9:1** Then the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the abyss. 9:2 He opened the shaft of the abyss and smoke rose out of it like smoke from a giant furnace. The sun and the air were darkened with smoke from the shaft. 9:3 Then out of the smoke came locusts onto the earth, and they were given power like that of the scorpions of the earth. 9:4 They were told not to damage the grass of the earth, or any green plant or tree, but only those

people who did not have the seal of God on their forehead. 9:5 The locusts were not given permission to kill them, but only to torture them for five months, and their torture was like that of a scorpion when it stings a person. 9:6 In those days people will seek death, but will not be able to find it; they will long to die, but death will flee from them.

- 9:1 The fallen star  
The Star here is clearly an angelic being who is given the key to the Abyss. This is parallel to 20:1 where another angel will come with the keys to the Abyss to seal Satan in it. The first angel unleashes the powers from the Abyss, the second comes to seal it up again.

- 9:1 The Key to the Abyss

This term “Abyss” is used 7x in Revelation and only two other times in the NT. In Luke 8:31, the recently cast out demons implore Jesus not to send them to the Abyss. In Romans 10:7 it is used as a poetic reference to the place of the Dead.

In Ancient thought, The Abyss seems to be associated with the “chaos waters” at the beginning of Creation in the OT and in the Intertestamental literature. It is the place where evil creatures were kept (See 1 Enoch 18-21).

In the NT there are a couple of references to fallen angels that are now bound in prison awaiting the day of judgment:

2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but threw them into hell (Tartarus) and locked them up in chains in utter darkness, to be kept until the judgment,

Jude 1:6 You also know that the angels who did not keep within their proper domain but abandoned their own place of residence, he has kept in eternal chains in utter darkness, locked up for the judgment of the great Day.

- 9:2 The Opening of the Abyss

- 9:3 The “Locusts” like Scorpions
- 9:4 -5 Torture but not to Kill...
- 9:6 Not able to find Death...

**Revelation 9:7** Now the locusts looked like horses equipped for battle. On their heads were something like crowns similar to gold, and their faces looked like men’s faces. 9:8 They had hair like women’s hair, and their teeth were like lions’ teeth. 9:9 They had breastplates like iron breastplates, and the sound of their wings was like the noise of many horse-drawn chariots charging into battle. 9:10 They have tails and stingers like scorpions, and their ability to injure people for five months is in their tails. 9:11 They have as king over them the angel of the abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon. 9:12 The first woe has passed, but two woes are still coming after these things!

- 9:7-10 Locusts like Horses
- 9:11 Abaddon, Apollyon  
Abaddon is the name of the place of destruction (and death) in the OT (Job 26:6, 28:22, 31:12; Psalm 88:11; Proverbs 15:11, 27:20). Apollyon is unique, but it comes from the Greek “to destroy.” Witherington makes the suggestion that the Greek god Apollo was symbolized by the locust and that Domitian claimed to be Apollo incarnated. If this is the case, then John is showing Domitian to be parallel to the leader of the forces of hell. This would fit a biblical worldview well where the forces and powers of the Earth are shown to be controlled or guided by the forces and powers of the Heavens (See Deuteronomy 32:8

and Daniel 10:13). However, John is clearly showing that in the End Times THE leader of the forces of chaos and evil that are now in the Abyss will be unleashed upon the planet.

- 9:12 The First Woe is Past

**Revelation 9:13** Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a single voice coming from the four horns on the golden altar that is before God, 9:14 saying to the sixth angel, the one holding the trumpet, “Set free the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates!” 9:15 Then the four angels who had been prepared for this hour, day, month, and year were set free to kill a third of humanity. 9:16 The number of soldiers on horseback was two hundred million; I heard their number. 9:17 Now this is what the horses and their riders looked like in my vision: The riders had breastplates that were fiery red, dark blue, and sulfurous yellow in color. The heads of the horses looked like lions’ heads, and fire, smoke, and sulfur came out of their mouths. 9:18 A third of humanity was killed by these three plagues, that is, by the fire, the smoke, and the sulfur that came out of their mouths. 9:19 For the power of the horses resides in their mouths and in their tails, because their tails are like snakes, having heads that inflict injuries.

- 9:13 A single voice from the altar...
- 9:14 The Four Angels bound at the Euphrates
- 9:15 “for this hour, day, month, and year”...

- 9:16 200,000,000 soldiers on horseback
- 9:17 -19 The vision of the Riders and Horses
- 1/3rd of humanity killed by the plagues

**Revelation 9:20** The rest of humanity, who had not been killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so that they did not stop worshiping demons and idols made of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk about. 9:21 Furthermore, they did not repent of their murders, of their magic spells, of their sexual immorality, or of their stealing.

- 9:20-21 *And the rest did not repent!*  
This refrain will appear twice more in the 4th and 5th Bowls of wrath in 16:9 and 16:11.  
  
\*From this statement, there is some reasonable expectation that these judgments are meant to call the wicked to repentance, yet they will not turn even when given a “taste” of the judgment yet to come
- The Seventh.... *Wait a minute...*  
Just as there was an interlude between the 6th and 7th seals, so now there is an interlude between the 6th and 7th trumpets. This creates a narrative tension (the old “cliffhanger”) but also may be serving to show that God is delaying the end so that all have opportunity to repent. *The Seventh Trumpet will herald the arrival of the Kingdom, but we will not see this until 11:15.*

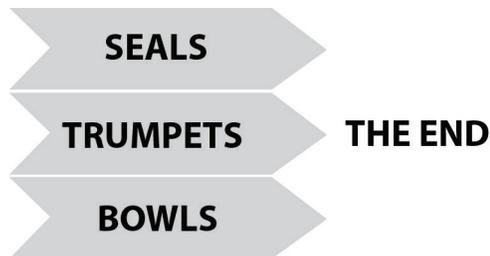
**(16) The Relationships of the Three Sets Judgments:**

(16.1) Possible Relationships

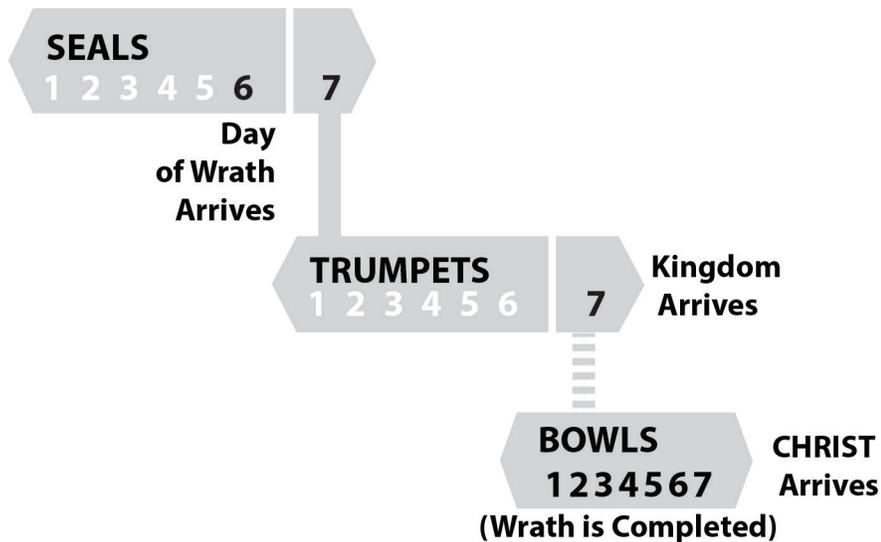
- The Sequential View:



- The Parallel View:



- The “Telescopic” View



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5.4 A giant Angel appears with a Little Scroll (10:1-11)

**Revelation 10:1** Then I saw another powerful angel descending from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun and his legs were like pillars of fire. 10:2 He held in his hand a little scroll that was open, and he put his right foot on the sea and his left on the land. 10:3 Then he shouted in a loud voice like a lion roaring, and when he shouted, the seven thunders sounded their voices. 10:4 When the seven thunders spoke, I was preparing to write, but just then I heard a voice from heaven say, “Seal up what the seven thunders spoke and do not write it down.”

10:1-2 Another Powerful/Mighty Angel

*This angel seems to share some of the characteristics of the glorified Christ in Chapter 1 and also of the Lord-God enthroned in Chapter 4. This may indicate that this angel stands in the presence of the Lord in a unique way.*

Some have suggested that the term “mighty angel” may be a play on the name “Gabriel” which in Hebrew means “the mighty one of God.” If this is the case, this would fit well with Daniel 10-12 where Gabriel is the messenger who brings word to Daniel.

\*Interesting side note: There are three names given to “angels” in the Scripture

**Gabriel** which means “mighty one of God” (Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26)

**Michael** which means “Who is like God?” (Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Revelation 12:7)

**Azazel** which the meaning is unclear, but has been suggested it may be “God is Angry/Fierce”. The name shows up in Leviticus 16:8, 10, 26 and was translated as “scape goat” in some early English translation. The term, however, seems to be a personal name that is set parallel to the name of the LORD. *Some take it to be the name of Satan before his rebellion and fall.*

- 10:3 The Seven Thunders  
See Psalm 29 where the voice of the Lord is powerful and represented seven times, one of which is associated with thunder.
- 10:4 Seal Up

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**IN THE BACKGROUND 28:** *Sealed Until the End*

**Daniel 12:4-13** ...“But you, Daniel, close up these words and seal the book until the time of the end. Many will dash about, and knowledge will increase.”

5 I, Daniel, watched as two others stood there, one on each side of the river. 6 One said to the man clothed in linen who was above the waters of the river, “When will the end of these wondrous events occur?”

7 Then I heard the man clothed in linen who was over the waters of the river as he raised both his right and left hands to the sky and made an oath by the one who lives forever: “It is for a time, times, and half a time. Then, when the power of the one who shatters the holy people has been exhausted, all these things will be finished.”

8 I heard, but I did not understand. So I said, “Sir, what will happen after these things?”

9 He said, “Go, Daniel. For these matters are closed and sealed until the time of the end. 10 Many will be purified, made clean, and refined, but the wicked will go on being wicked. None of the wicked will understand, though the wise will understand.

11 From the time that the daily sacrifice is removed and the abomination that causes desolation is set in place, there are 1,290 days. 12 Blessed is the one who waits and attains to the 1,335 days. 13 But you should go your way until the end. You will rest and then at the end of the days you will arise to receive what you have been allotted.”

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**Revelation 10:5** Then the angel I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven 10:6 and swore by the one who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, and the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, “There will be no more delay! 10:7 But in the days when the seventh angel is about to blow his trumpet, the mystery of God is completed, just as he has proclaimed to his servants the prophets.”

- 10:5-6 The Angel Swears  
(see the preceding Background on Daniel 12)
- 10:6 No more delay!
- 10:7 The Seventh Trumpet: Completion of the Mystery

**Revelation 10:8** Then the voice I had heard from heaven began to speak to me again, “Go and take the open scroll in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.” 10:9 So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, “Take the scroll and eat it. It will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.” 10:10 So I took the little scroll from the angel’s hand and ate it, and it did taste as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. 10:11 Then they told me: “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages, and kings.”

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**IN THE BACKGROUND 29:** *Ezekiel 2:8-3:3*

**Ezekiel 2:8–3:3** As for you, son of man, listen to what I am saying to you: Do not rebel like that rebellious house! Open your mouth and eat what I am giving you.” 2:9 Then I looked and realized a hand was stretched out to me, and in it was a written scroll. 2:10 He unrolled it before me, and it had writing on the front and back; written on it were laments, mourning, and woe. 3:1 He said to me, “Son of man, eat what you see in front of you—eat this scroll—and then go and speak to the house of Israel.” 3:2 So I opened my mouth and he fed me the scroll. 3:3 He said to me, “Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your belly with this scroll I am giving to you.” So I ate it, and it was sweet like honey in my mouth.

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- 10:8-10 Take and Eat
  - 10:10 Sweet/Bitter
  - 10:11 “You must prophesy again ...”
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5.5 John measures the Temple and Two Witnesses appear (11:1-14)

**Revelation 11:1** Then a measuring rod like a staff was given to me, and I was told, “Get up and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and the ones who worship there. 11:2 But do not measure the outer courtyard of the temple; leave it out, because it has been given to the

Gentiles, and they will trample on the holy city for forty-two months.

11:3 And I will grant my two witnesses authority to prophesy for 1,260 days, dressed in sackcloth.

- 11:1 Measure the Temple...  
See Ezekiel 40-42

### **Which Temple is this?**

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#### **IN THE BACKGROUND 30: The Tabernacle and Temples**

The Bible mentions several “temples”:

1. **The Heavenly Temple** (where the Lord-God dwells)  
This is actual Temple that all other earthly temples were based on. Moses was given the pattern of the Tabernacle based on this temple (Hebrews 8:5, Exodus 25:40). It is also the temple where Jesus offered the blood of His sacrifice (Hebrews 9:11).
2. **The Tabernacle** was built by the Israelites at the beginning of their Wilderness wanderings through instructions given to Moses on Mount Sinai.
3. **Solomon’s Temple** was built by the orders of King Solomon at the high point of Israel’s Kingdom era. This temple was utterly destroyed by the Babylonians led by Nebuchadnezzar in 586BC.
4. **The Restored Temple/Herod’s Temple** (often referred to as the Second Temple) was the Temple rebuilt when the Israelites were allowed to return to the land by the Persians in 539BC. It was renovated by Herod beginning around 1BC and would have been the Temple Jesus taught in. It was destroyed by the Romans under General Titus in AD70. To this day, a Temple has not been rebuilt in Jerusalem.

### 5. **The Temple of the End Times/Millennial Temple**

Jesus assumes in His teaching on the “signs of the end” that there will be a Temple in existence in the Last Days. Paul also makes this same assumption in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 when he states that the “Man of Lawlessness” will sit in the Sanctuary/Temple and proclaim Himself to be God. This is probably the same event that Jesus refers to as the “abomination of desolation” in Matthew 24:15. This is the Temple that John is measuring in this passage. This Temple of the end times may be renovated to be the Temple that Ezekiel sees in his grand vision of chapters 40-42.

- 11:2 “given to the Gentiles/Nations... they will trample”

Luke 21:20-24 “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near... 23 For there will be great distress on the earth and wrath against this people. 24 They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away as captives among all nations. **Jerusalem will be trampled down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.**”

- 11:2, 3 Forty Two months, 1,260 day

see Daniel 9.24-27; 12.7

3 1/2 years = 42 months = 1260 days

**Revelation 11:4** (These [witnesses] are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.) 11:5 If anyone wants to harm them, fire comes out of their mouths and completely consumes their enemies. If anyone wants to harm

them, they must be killed this way. 11:6 These two have the power to close up the sky so that it does not rain during the time they are prophesying. They have power to turn the waters to blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague whenever they want.

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**IN THE BACKGROUND 31:** *Zechariah 4:1-14*

**Zechariah 4:1-14** The angelic messenger who had been speaking with me then returned and woke me, as a person is wakened from sleep. 2 He asked me, "What do you see?" I replied, "I see a menorah of pure gold with a receptacle at the top and seven lamps, with fourteen pipes going to the lamps. 3 There are also two olive trees beside it, one on the right of the receptacle and the other on the left." 4 Then I asked the messenger who spoke with me, "What are these, sir?" 5 He replied, "Don't you know what these are?" So I responded, "No, sir." 6 Therefore he told me, "These signify the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by strength and not by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD who rules over all." 7 "What are you, you great mountain? Because of Zerubbabel you will become a level plain! And he will bring forth the temple capstone with shoutings of 'Grace! Grace!' because of this."

8 Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me as follows: 9 "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundations of this temple, and his hands will complete it." Then you will know that the LORD who rules over all has sent me to you. 10 For who dares make light of small beginnings? These seven eyes will joyfully look on the tin tablet in Zerubbabel's hand. (These are the eyes of the LORD, which constantly range across the whole earth.)

11 Next I asked the messenger, "What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the menorah?" 12 Before he could reply I asked again, "What are these two extensions of the olive trees, which are emptying out the golden oil through the two golden pipes?" 13 He replied, "Don't you know what these are?" And I said, "No, sir." 14 So he said, "These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

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