

Charts: The Third Parenthetical Visions: Chart #15, with reference to Chart #5

PREFACE

I am the *last* person to be teaching Greek grammar, and to your benefit I seldom make the attempt. But it is important, as we open up this pivotal scene revealed immediately after the seventh trumpet is sounded, that we understand the verb tense often used in this passage—and not just here, but throughout the upcoming parenthetical visions and even throughout God’s word as a whole.

The verb tense I am referring to is the *proleptic* (or *prophetic*) *ao*rist. The English word “prolepsis” (“[proleptic](#)” is the adjective form) means “the treating of a future event as if it had already happened.” This is used in God’s word to express absolute certainty in the event happening. [For example, please turn to Romans 8.](#)

Read Romans 8:29-30.

Verse 30 presents a series of verbs that describes the steps in salvation. The first three—predestination, calling, and justification—have already been accomplished in the life of a believer, but the (final) glorification is yet in the future. In English we would use a verb such as “He also *will* glorify,” looking toward the day when we stand before Him in our glorified bodies. But the Greek includes the fascinating proleptic aorist verb tense which permits the writer a way to express the concrete surety of God’s salvation process—so sure that it can be expressed as if it has already occurred: “...He also glorified.” [Back to Revelation 11.](#)

In the passage before us I count at least three occurrences of this aorist verb tense being used. Let’s just look at one of them for now; [look at v15](#). “Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world **has become** the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.”

We are presently at the sounding of the seventh trumpet in the Tribulation; has the kingdom of the world already become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ? No, but the certainty of Christ’s reign is so absolute, it can be expressed as if it already *has* taken place.

We can also understand this as expressing the perception of God, or all of heaven. From that vantage point, as one writer has pictured it, one does not just see the float or marching band passing directly in front of the viewing stand, but one sees the entire parade from beginning to end at one glance. One can “see” the end as if it has already passed by.

Keeping this in mind will help us to better understand the meaning and placement of upcoming events. We are now at a point in these Last Things where, from heaven’s perspective, the events of the Eschaton are drawing to a close. From *our* perspective there remains much of the parade to pass before us; but the Godhead, its archangels and run-of-the-mill angels, as well as (we can assume) myriad throngs of heaven-dwelling saints like us are so eagerly anticipating the consummation of it all, with the return of Christ and His eternal reign, that *their* attention is fixed on the parade’s end. We saw their perspective expressed back in Chapter Ten, in the episode with the angel with the little book:

Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT, **that there will be delay no longer, but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished** (proleptic aorist), as He preached to His servants the prophets. (Revelation 10:5–7; emphasis added)

We will soon be addressing a collection of parenthetical visions and events that are presented roughly around the midpoint of the Tribulation. As I have stated before, I do not intend to force all of these into a tight adherence to the three-and-one-half-year mark; we will see right off that they span time frames far beyond the immediate narrative, shifting back and forth, overlapping each other, and retracing steps already taken. It is clear from Scripture, however, that the midpoint does indeed mark an important pivot-point in God’s economy of the final days.

- Daniel’s prophecy split the seventieth week—i.e., the last seven years of his “seventy weeks” (490 years)—in two in Daniel 9:27: “And he [i.e., Antichrist] will make a firm covenant with the many [i.e., Israel] for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”
- When John was told to measure the temple, he was informed that the nations [Gentiles], “will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months” (11:2).

- In the recent episode with the two witnesses we saw the Tribulation split in half; they would “prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sack-cloth” (11:3).
- Perhaps most important, the midpoint marks the revealing of Antichrist’s true character: evil incarnate. Up to that point his public career has been one of agreeableness and, for the most part, benevolent wisdom and power. But after three and one half years into the Tribulation the beast will renege on his agreement with Israel, take over the temple, establish it as his personal throne, have his second in command (the beast from the earth) erect and “bring to life” a statue in his honor in the temple that all are to worship as god under threat of death (13:12-15).

Look at Chart #15.

The seventh trumpet is the doorway opening onto the very final chapter of God’s plan for man: the end of rebellion, the end of sin, the end of evil, ultimately the end of this earth’s system and everything familiar to us. The seventh trumpet is the gateway to eternal light and righteousness, a *new* earth and *new* heavens, and an intimate, tangible relationship with God and Christ Jesus *on* that new earth unimaginable—and not possible—through the pages of history.

J. A. Seiss: We here approach the grand climacteric of this world, and of judgment-work of the Almighty One. The seventh angel, restrained so long from ushering in the final scenes which separate us from the glorious world to come, at length pours out his wondrous blast... And if there is anything in all the round of human thought to absorb, fix, and intensify interest and attention, we have it in this subject.

Read Revelation 11:15-17.

v15

Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.”

Revealing its importance, there is an immediate response in heaven to the sounding of the final trumpet. A full chorus, a symphony of the angelic and redeemed voices, cries out in abandoned praise of Father God and the Son. This praise also declares the inauguration of the long-awaited answer to the prayer Jesus gave as a model prayer to His disciples:

“Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:9–10)

In the better manuscripts the word “kingdom” is singular, rather than the plural of the KJVs. Some say the difference between the two is insignificant, but I do not agree. The plural “kingdoms” suggests God’s victory over the multitudinous kingdoms scattered around this globe. True enough, but that doesn’t quite capture the more profound depth of this thought. Whether or not it is acknowledged, there is only one king and only one kingdom of this world. Since Eden there has been only one ruler over it all: Satan. Jesus confirmed this more than once:

“Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”
(John 12:31)

“I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.” (John 14:30)

His—Satan’s—kingdom will be the one, once and for all time, defeated, expunged, and replaced by “the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.”

Note: I have from time to time pointed out how especially in the Revelation God the Father and God the Son often become synonymous. Did you catch the pronoun that follows that last line? The (new) kingdom will be “of our Lord” *and* “of His Christ.” Yet the following pronoun is singular: “*He* will reign forever and ever.”

v16

And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God,

Personally I look forward to the day when, free of the dark influence of evil on this earth, which clouds and diffuses our adoration, we will—like the elders and the four creatures, who are nearest to the throne—worship the Lord God unabashedly, unfiltered. These twenty-four men, so holy they occupy seats immediately surrounding the throne of God, leave those honored seats to fall down prostrate, their faces to the floor, in worship. In v17 we have the content of their worship.

Parenthetically, my impression of the twenty-four elders is that they are the “worship leaders” of heaven. They are the ones down front, closest to the throne, supplying the words of praise and worship and prompting the rest of the congregation to a higher adoration. These twenty-four are the ones showing the rest of us how to do it.

...saying, "We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign."

Here in their praise and thanksgiving is expressed the ultimate goal and purpose of all things—the purpose of Creation itself. Until now, God's power has not been fully voiced; some of it has been held in check as His forbearance and grace have been in the fore. But now nothing is held back; now is the time for His full power—first the fullness of His wrath against evil, followed by the fullness of His sovereign rule over all—to be expressed both against and in behalf of His creation. All this is detailed in vv18-19.

Here, however, is also announced—as if it has already occurred (because in the perception of God Almighty it *has*)—the fulfillment of the prophecy of Psalm 2:

Psalm 2:4-12

⁴ [David speaking] He who sits in the heavens laughs,
The Lord scoffs at them [the kings of the earth].

⁵ Then He will speak to them in His anger
And terrify them in His fury, saying, [Yahweh speaking to Messiah, His Son]

⁶ "But as for Me [Yahweh], I have installed My King
Upon Zion, My holy mountain."

⁷ "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD:
He [Yahweh] said to Me [Messiah], 'You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.

⁸ Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.

⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron,
You shall shatter them like earthenware.'"

¹⁰ [David speaking] Now therefore, O kings, show discernment;
Take warning, O judges of the earth.

¹¹ Worship the LORD with reverence
And rejoice with trembling.

¹² Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way,
For His wrath may soon be kindled.
How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

The book of Revelation forces us out of our self-centered perspective, in which it seems as if God's very existence is for our salvation and a pleasant eternity. We wouldn't say this out loud, and if forced would deny it, but part of the fallenness of this earth, part of living—even as a Christian—where reality is clouded by evil, is that we believe ourselves to be the center of the universe.

And, of course, we are not. We know that, but we don't always think or live that truth. The center of this universe, the one who holds it all together ([Colossians 1:16-17](#)), is Messiah, Christ Jesus. He is about to take His rightful place upon the throne as King of all things, not least of a new kingdom on earth (Millennium), a kingdom extended as well into a *new* earth. This is the content of the twenty-four elders' praise.

Read Revelation 11:18-19.

v18

In v18 the twenty-four elders apparently have more to add to their thanksgiving and praise, since all our common versions but the KJV include this verse in the quotation from v17.

“And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.”

First let me point out that which is not obvious in the English of our common versions. In the NASB the words translated “enraged” and “wrath” are the same; the root is *orge*, meaning anger, wrath, passion. The same word is being used to describe man's anger and God's righteous judgment. And John Walvoord makes an excellent point:

The wrath of men is impotent; the wrath of God is omnipotent. The wrath of men is wicked; the wrath of God is holy.

Here the prophecy of Psalm 2, as well as that anticipated in Revelation 6:15-17 is being (or about to be) fulfilled.

Read Revelation 6:15-17.

It is not by accident that the predominant culture of this earth prefers to think of a one-dimensional God and Christ (if it bothers to think of them at all); they like to say (as they convince themselves) that “God is love,” and wouldn't dream of inflicting judgmental wrath on anyone. If, they conclude, God is *not* love, then He simply does not exist. By such means man deludes himself that “I'm OK, you're OK—we've got nothing to worry about.” This culture also does not subscribe to the depravity of man; popular thought dictates that people are essentially “good,” and if they are evil, that evil has been forced upon them by external forces.

One would think that anyone still dwelling on this earth by the time of the seventh trumpet would have at last discarded these notions, but if so, why then are they “enraged”? Here on display is the truth of the depravity of man; by whatever perverse logic still remains in their brains, they believe it is still worth their time and energy to shake their fist at heaven and vent their rage against God.

By now in the flow of time that response is not just depraved, but utterly stupid and futile. Yet we see it played out even so late as the last battle thrown together by Satan when he is released after the Millennium, and the Great White Throne judgment, resulting in Satan and all unbelievers thrown into the eternal lake of fire.

If we so chose to, we could fill multiple sessions of this study just reading all the passages that speak of the future day when God will judge unbelievers; God’s word is filled to overflowing with it. His judgment and His wrath—the wrath of even the Lamb—are a surety.

...and the time came for the dead to be judged,

I agree with MacArthur that the elders here are not referring to a specific judgment. During the final days there are several resurrections (as we detailed in Chart 5), with concomitant judgments and/or rewards following; some are for the saints, some are for unbelievers; some *may* be for both, depending on one’s position.

Here I think the elders are just speaking generally, in reference to any and all future (to them) judgments. Jesus did much the same thing in John 5:28-29.

“Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.”

and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great,

Our various versions organize and punctuate this phrase differently; depending on where commas are placed, one could group these together under the one heading of believers, or break it down into several sub-groups:

- bond-servants the prophets—all who declared God’s truth, including the last Two Witnesses;
- saints—a common term in the Bible for referring to true believers;
- those who fear Your name, the small and the great—I would say this is synonymous with saints.

For all these, judgment brings reward. If this scene post-dates the Rapture of the church, which we believe it does, then the reference here is to those who subsequently “come to faith” during the Tribulation.

and to destroy those who destroy the earth.”

No doubt many *unbelievers* today—especially those who worship at the temple of Gaia, the earth goddess—would say that this refers to all who do not follow their false religion. But as God’s word says repeatedly, even *He* will destroy this earth and replace it with another. So that can’t be what this phrase is saying.

The word twice translated “destroy” here are two forms of the same root (*diaphtheirai* and *diaphtheirontas*, from *diaphtheiro*). The word can mean to destroy utterly, but is also used to express corruption, spoiling, decay, depravity, to rot thoroughly—and this is how it is used here.

This earth, theoretically, could have been a paradise, in exquisite, joy-filled harmony with its Creator. But sin entered in, and that possibility was destroyed. I doubt that I need to cite examples for anyone reading or hearing these words to substantiate the position that it is those rejecting God and His Christ who are spoiling this earth with their evil corruption and rot. I will just offer the names of two cities to make the case: Portland, Oregon and San Francisco, California. Back in the seventies and eighties these were my two favorite cities to visit. Portland was a jewel, and San Francisco a unique and fascinating city to visit. Today both of these have been reduced to rotting corpses, stinking from filth and overrun with destruction and crime by those who hate—hate just about everything, but especially God.

If God’s “bond-servants” are rewarded, these will be judged and found guilty—and “destroyed.”

v19

Supposedly v19 is in John’s voice—the observer and chronicler of the Revelation—rather than the voices of the twenty-four elders.

And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

When Jesus died upon the cross the veil of the temple—the veil that separated man from God’s mercy seat atop the ark of the covenant—was torn in two by God Himself. Now man—any person without priest or advocate save for Christ Jesus Himself—could approach God directly and receive mercy and forgiveness. And here gloriously revealed to John from the *heavenly* temple of God is “the ark of His covenant,” His promise to man, His promise of atonement in Christ.

Yet remember, as the rest of the verse reminds us, that same ark in history served as a potent weapon for harm upon the enemies of God ([1 Samuel 5](#))—even those who loved Him but disobeyed His law ([2 Samuel 6:6-7](#)).

The ark represents God’s mercy shown to man; the “flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm” represent His power and righteous wrath ([Exodus 20:18-19](#)).

And this last, His wrath, is about to be poured out—without mercy—upon the remaining enemies of God.



THE TRIBULATION

The Seventh Trumpet

Third Parenthetical Visions

Revelation 11:15 to 15:8

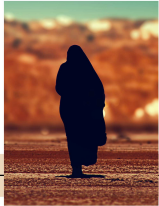
The twenty-four elders offer praise and thanksgiving to God. The heavenly temple (sanctuary) opened.



11:15-19



A woman (Israel) is hidden by God in the wilderness, protected and nourished for 1,260 days.



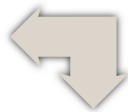
12:1-6



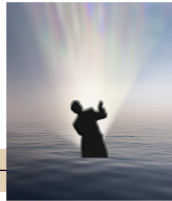
War in heaven. Michael fights with the dragon (Satan). The dragon is defeated and is thrown down to earth.



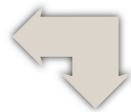
12:7-17



The beast from the sea (Antichrist). Given authority for forty-two months; worshiped by those whose names are not in the book of life.



13:1-18



The beast from the earth (false prophet). Able to perform great signs, gives breath to the image of the beast, causes it to speak.



The Lamb on Mt. Zion with 144,000, having His name and the name of His Father on their foreheads.



14:1-5



Three angels: one with an eternal gospel to preach, a second saying, "Fallen is Babylon," a third declaring wrath upon all bearing the mark of the beast.



14:6-13



The reaping of the earth by Christ and His angels.



14:14-20



A scene of heaven: preparation of the seven angels with the seven last plagues; worship and praise around the throne; the glory of God fills the temple until the seven bowls are finished.



15:1-8



← refers to previous events

↓ refers to current narrative

→ refers to future events