

Revelation

13

Chapter 11

Six of the seven trumpets have sounded and a period of time is given for the inhabitants of the earth to repent and turn to God for salvation. But instead they continue their persecution of Christians and refuse to believe the truth of God's Word. Even some who 'claimed' to be Christians had given in to Satan's lies and had begun to pervert the Word of God to meet their own desire for power. This will be symbolized in the 'killing of the Word' – the two witnesses of God spoken of in this chapter. But the truth of God will remain unchanged and will symbolically take its place in heaven.

Revelation 11:1-2

I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, “Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, with its worshipers. ² But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months.

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Ezekiel 42:15-20

When he had finished measuring what was inside the temple area, he led me out by the east gate and measured the area all around:¹⁶ He measured the east side with the measuring rod; it was five hundred cubits.¹⁷ He measured the north side; it was five hundred cubits by the measuring rod.¹⁸ He measured the south side; it was five hundred cubits by the measuring rod.¹⁹ Then he turned to the west side and measured; it was five hundred cubits by the measuring rod.²⁰ So he measured the area on all four sides. It had a wall around it, five hundred cubits long and five hundred cubits wide, to separate the holy from the common.

Ezekiel has a vision of the heavenly temple being measured – the idea of the measuring was that it was made to God’s exact specifications. (God requires things done to His will)

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1 Corinthians 6:19

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?

2 Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

Ephesians 2:19-22

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household,²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

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1 Peter 2:5

you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Measuring the temple, the worshippers, the altar are all symbolic of examining the worship, the hearts, and the sacrifices of those who claim to be following the Lord. We must be in accordance with His will and His word if we are to be acceptable to Him.

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The time period of 42 months is also expressed in Revelation as 3 ½ years, 1260 days and to the Jewish mind would represent the time when Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria defiled the temple. It was a time when the true worship of God was banned and a time of suffering and terror for God’s people. (June 168 – Dec 165 BC)

➡ The ‘outer court’ (Court of the Gentiles) was where the Gentiles who ‘claimed to worship God’ were. It is symbolic of the defiling of true Christianity by the Gentiles, by those who ‘claimed to be Christians’ but tried to introduce their own human teaching into the church. (Remember the warnings to the ‘churches of Asia’ in chapters 2-3 , “Jezebel”, Nicolatians, etc)



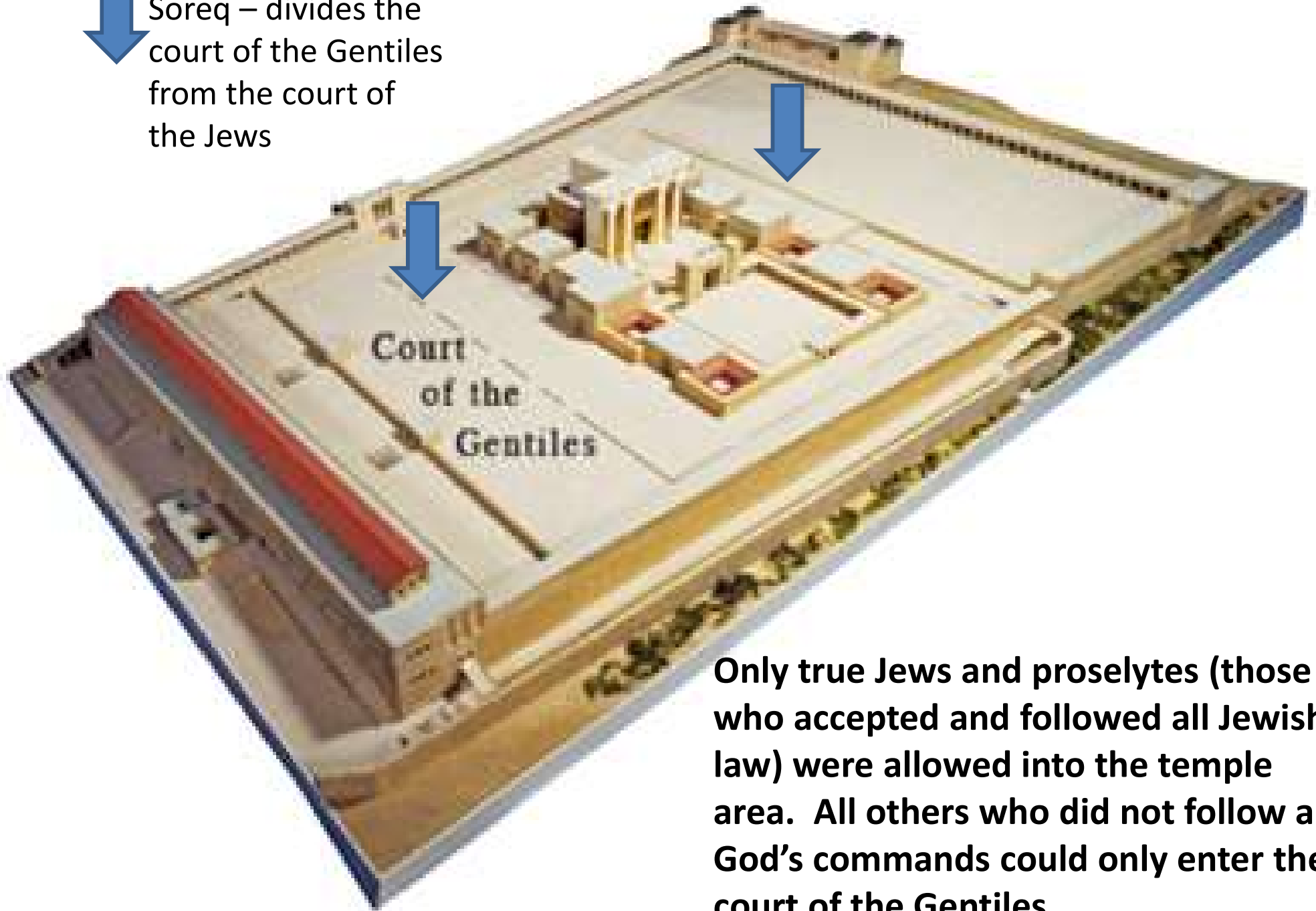
Soreq – divides the court of the Gentiles from the court of the Jews



Court of the Gentiles



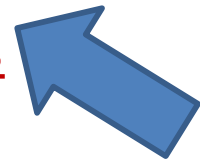
Only true Jews and proselytes (those who accepted and followed all Jewish law) were allowed into the temple area. All others who did not follow all God's commands could only enter the court of the Gentiles.



John now sees in his vision a warning that some of the 'Gentiles' would not follow God's teachings and instead corrupt the truth for a period of time. The truth of God's Word would be denied and replaced with the teachings of men. Paul also warned the Ephesian elders about this in:

Acts 20:28-30

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God,¹ which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.



And that is exactly what we find happened in history. As the power of the Roman emperors declined, the leaders of the congregation in Rome began to assume more and more power. One of the elders in Rome began assuming authority over the other elders and the Roman emperors seeing their power fading by the 300 AD time frame, to gain favor, endorsed the leader of the Roman church as “supreme leader of Christianity” – (pope).

God, knowing what was coming, shows John in his vision the true word of God being ‘killed’, this apostasy from the truth being promoted by the devil.

Revelation 11:3-7

And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.”⁴ They are “the two olive trees” and the two lampstands, and “they stand before the Lord of the earth.”⁵ If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die.⁶ They have power to shut up the heavens so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.⁷ Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them.

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Zechariah 4

Then the angel who talked with me returned and woke me up, like someone awakened from sleep.² He asked me, “What do you see?” I answered, “I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, with seven channels to the lamps.³ Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.”⁴ I asked the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?”⁵ He answered, “Do you not know what these are?” “No, my lord,” I replied.⁶ So he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty.....

11 Then I asked the angel, “What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?” 13 He replied, “Do you not know what these are?”

“No, my lord,” I said.14 So he said, “These are the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth.”

So the lampstand and the two olive trees here symbolize the word of God and those who were anointed to serve the Lord.

In Revelation, the symbolism is the same – the lampstand indicates the light of God’s Word, and the olive trees are the those who speak that word (God’s witnesses)

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The witnesses are dressed in sackcloth – symbolizing a call to repentance during this time. The description seems to indicate Moses –(turning water to blood, and plagues) and Elijah - (fire coming and burning up enemies, and causing it not to rain.) Those two would be symbolic of the Law and the prophets (the Old Testament, God's Word calling the people back to repentance)

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7 Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them.

The 1260 days again is symbolic of a time of trouble and distress while God's word is calling the people back to His Word in repentance. But that call of God is ignored and Satan causes the people reject God's Word – the witnesses of scriptures are 'killed'. (In the time of Jesus, the leaders of the people rejected Jesus as the Messiah even though the scriptures they claimed to follow spoke about him.) Truth was rejected:

Isaiah 59:14 So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter.

John 5:39 You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me,

There will be a period of time when it will seem as though those who try to remain faithful to God's Word seem to be losing to the Devil's lies – as if he was 'killing them' and as if the word of God was being attacked and 'killed'. It is a time of extreme persecution for the true Christians in history. But there was always the 'few who stayed faithful' as many were drawn into apostasy. Remember- Jesus promised to be with his faithful people during this time of extreme trial (Rev 3:10) Also remember Jesus said only a few would be saved, even though many claimed to be following him.

Matthew 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

2 Timothy 4:3

For the time will come when **people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.**

2 Timothy 3

But mark this: **There will be terrible times in the last days.** ² People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

⁶ They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, ⁷ always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. **⁸ Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these teachers oppose the truth.** They are men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected.

Revelation 11:8-14

Their bodies will lie in the public square of the great city—which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt—where also their Lord was crucified. ⁹ For three and a half days some from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. ¹⁰ The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth.

¹¹ But after the three and a half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. ¹² Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on. ¹³ At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

¹⁴ The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.

Revelation 11:8-14

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The ‘great city’ is called by the names Sodom, Egypt, Babylon, and is said to be where their Lord was crucified – which seems to point to Jerusalem, but also is symbolic of Rome (Jerusalem was under the control of the Romans and it was Romans who crucified Jesus, and it was the Romans as well as the Jews who refused to recognize Jesus as Lord.

This 'Great city' is referred to in other passages:

Revelation 16:19

The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath.

Revelation 17:18

The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.

Revelation 18:10

Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry: “Woe! Woe to you, great city, you mighty city of Babylon! In one hour your doom has come!”

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Revelation 18:16, 21

“Woe! Woe to you, great city, dressed in fine linen, purple and scarlet, and glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls!

²¹ Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said: “With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again.

Revelation 11:

⁹ For three and a half days some from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. ¹⁰ The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth.

The 3 ½ days are symbolic of an indetermined but limited time of persecution for God's people. Those who opposed Jesus and Christianity were glad to be rid of those who taught the scriptures faithfully and the 'People of the Book' who threatened their power and would not go along with their idol worship (Christians who refuse to follow emperor worship)

Revelation 11:

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The image here is reminiscent of the resurrection of Jesus, the Roman guards at the tomb were filled with terror. The 'coming back to life' is symbolic of God's words being vindicated. The 'come up here' is reminiscent of the ascension of Jesus and which also was a proof that Jesus' words and God's call were true. After a time of persecution of the true Christians, they will be vindicated and proven to be right in their faith, and the persecutors punished.

Revelation 11

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14 The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.

The earthquake (one also occurred at Jesus' death) and the death of the people (at Jesus' death, Holy people came to life for a time – here the opposite happens) Also remember that the 'tenth' and 'seven' in the description numerically symbolize the 'completeness of God's will on the inhabitants of earth' – so the imagery may be applied to the destruction of the city of Rome (and the power of the Roman Emperors) which had caused much persecution and suffering for the Christians .

Revelation happenings in vision

God's prophets speak his word

Prophets are killed

People rejoice over death
the prophets

Prophets rise from dead

Prophets ascend to heaven

**Proves that their words were
from God**

Jesus

Jesus spoke God's Word

Jesus is killed

Jewish leaders rejoice of
over Jesus' death

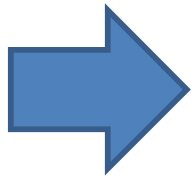
Jesus rises from the dead

Jesus ascends to heaven

**Proves that His words
were from God**

Again note: there is a period of time 3 ½ years , 1260 days, or 42 months – symbolically an undetermined period of time – between the sixth trumpet and the seventh trumpet when the events that occur cause a time of trial and a great persecution of God’s Word and of the Christians. It is during this time period when the true word of God is perverted by those who claim to worship God (the outer courts of the temple given to the Gentiles), those who remain faithful are vindicated after the time of tribulation, and the Roman empire falls (loses its power to persecute the true Christians).

But after that period of time, the final trumpet will sound –



(We are now in that final period of time awaiting the final trumpet)

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

Revelation

Lessons 13,14,15

Chapter 11,12,13

Arlington Church of Christ

Jan 24 7 PM

Revelation describes a period of time 3 ½ years , 1260 days, or 42 months – symbolically an undetermined period of time – between the sixth trumpet and the seventh trumpet when events that occur cause a time of trial and a great persecution (tribulation) of God’s Word and of the Christians.

It is during this time period when the true word of God is perverted by those who claim to worship God (the outer courts of the temple given to the Gentiles), those who remain faithful are vindicated after the time of tribulation, and the Roman empire falls (loses its power to persecute the true Christians).

But after that period of time, the final trumpet will sound –

(We are now in that final period of time awaiting the final trumpet)

Revelation 11:15-19

The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever.” ¹⁶ ***And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God,*** ¹⁷ ***saying:***

“We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. ¹⁸ ***The nations were angry, and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your people who revere your name, both great and small — and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”***

¹⁹ ***Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a severe hailstorm.***

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“We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. ¹⁸ ***The nations were angry, and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your people who revere your name, both great and small — and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”***

The seventh (completing) trumpet sounds and the message is that the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord. The time has come for judging and giving the rewards and punishment (Judgment day)

Revelation 11:

19 Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a severe hailstorm.

At the death of Jesus on the cross, the temple curtain was torn in two, symbolic of God leaving the temple and now dwelling in the hearts of His people. The temple being opened, the ark being seen is symbolic of God's covenant being open to all. The lightning, thunder, etc, are symbolic of the power of God being released as all His promises are being fulfilled to His people.

With the sounding of the seventh trumpet , the revealed plan of God is completed and it is time for judgment day to occur for all people including those who had been persecuting the Christians. The events of Chapters 4-11 have given an overview, a summary of the things God is revealing to his people who are undergoing persecution. The purpose was to give them hope and encouragement to remain faithful throughout the events that were to come – not to reveal every event in the history of the world to them – that would be of no value to those to whom this letter was written.

It was a common practice in Jewish writings to make a statement or describe events, and then go back afterwards and fill in details about the events. This is what is happening at this point in the book. The next few chapters return to the ‘start’ of the revelation and give more information about the events already described.

(Revelation is not a continuing narrative)

This is what was done in the book of Genesis – Chapter 1 gives us an ‘overview’ of the events of creation – then chapter two goes back over those same things giving more details about them. That is what is happening at this point in the book of Revelation – God is about to supply additional information about what was already revealed.