

Understanding Revelation – Topic 17

Cosmic invasion

The seventh trumpet

An exposition of Revelation Chapter 11:14-19

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Introduction

Revelation 11:14-19 focuses on the seventh trumpet prophecy. We have already covered six of the seven trumpets but this final trumpet is perhaps the most important because it concerns our generation and the termination of this world's history. The introduction to the prophecy is found in the previous chapter:

But in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets. Revelation 10:7

Here is the angel of the seventh trumpet. *When he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished.* As explained in the exposition of Revelation Chapter 10, the *mystery of God* represents the gospel of Jesus Christ.¹ Thus when the seventh trumpet is about to sound, the preaching of the gospel is to be concluded. The day of salvation is to come to its finale. This will occur by the proclamation of the Three Angels' Messages of Revelation Chapter 14:6-12, which constitute the final message of God to humankind. They have also been aptly described as *the final ultimatum*.

In Revelation Chapter 18:1-4 a fourth angel joins in the proclamation of the three angels' messages and with a mighty voice calls God's people out of Babylon. This event is referred to as the *Loud Cry* because the angel speaks *with a loud voice and the whole earth is lightened with his glory*. Again, this is a description of the gospel's conclusion.

The seventh trumpet prophecy

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

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

"We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come, because You have taken Your great power and reigned. The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth."

Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail. Revelation 11:15-19

¹ A.P. Cooke, *Time No Longer*, 2nd ed. (Sydney: Self-published, 2010),

...there were loud voices in heaven...

This indicates that an important event is about to transpire.

...“The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ and He shall reign forever and ever!” v15

Here is the close of human probation, when Jesus Christ becomes King of kings. Since His ascension Jesus has been Priest/King sharing His Father’s throne. He is of the order of Melchizedek, and when the kingdoms of this world become His, then His priestly work ends and He becomes King of kings and Lord of lords.

Events in heaven

Jesus receives a kingdom

The gospels inform us that Jesus, when he spoke of His return to heaven, often indicated that He was going to receive a kingdom.

A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. Luke 19:12

At His ascension Jesus went to heaven to receive a kingdom, and when He returns it will be after He has received it. So when does Christ receive His kingdom? He receives it during the heavenly judgment that began in 1844 and concludes at the close of probation. This is revealed in Daniel 7 after the rise of the four beasts and the emergence of the *little horn*.

I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire;

A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. Daniel 7:9-10

This is the great heavenly assize which is alluded to in Daniel 8:14 and which commenced in 1844 at the close of the 2300 year period. After the judgment was set Daniel said,

I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Daniel 7:13

In this scene Jesus is depicted coming before the Father as the great Advocate in the heavenly judgment scene. It is significant to notice one of the events that occur in this pre-advent judgment.

Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed. Daniel 7:14.

The kingdom of this world had been usurped by Satan. Christ now receives it back. This is why, during the seventh trumpet, *the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple*. Here we are given a glimpse into the awesome heavenly temple. The ark was in the Holy of Holies. This indicates that the

activities of the Father and the Son are now centered within the inner apartment, the Holy of Holies. It is while the special judgment ministry is in progress that Christ receives His kingdom.

This truth is very clearly stated by the author of the book *Early Writings*. After describing the transfer of Christ from the first to the second apartment of the Temple, Jesus is represented as saying *I am going to my Father to receive the kingdom.*²

A marriage

In the gospels Christ's receiving of the kingdom is likened to a marriage.

Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. Luke 12:35-36

This scenario is based on a custom of Old Testament times. When the oldest son of a reigning monarch came of age the father, the king, could install his son as a co-ruler: it was possible for them to co-reign. In a special ceremony he would marry his son to a leading city of the kingdom. This indicated that the son shared in the rule of the kingdom. So it is with Jesus. In the pre-advent judgment in the heavenly sanctuary, Jesus Christ is married to the New Jerusalem. The Holy City is called His bride.³

The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14.... is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25.... The marriage represents the reception by Christ of His kingdom. The Holy City, the New Jerusalem, which is the capital and representative of the kingdom, is called "the bride, the Lamb's wife"... Said the angel to John: "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife."⁴

There have been different opinions about who the Bride of Christ represents. Some claim she is the church while others declare she is the New Jerusalem. The answer is that there are two brides – a spiritual bride and a literal bride. It is important to understand that in Scripture there are often two representations of the same entity.⁵ (Also see Appendix A). The spiritual bride is the Church. When we accept Christ as our Savior this is likened to a marriage. Christ becomes our husband, we become His bride. When Christ is married to the heavenly Jerusalem, which *is prepared as a bride adorned for her husband* He is married to a literal bride. Again the author of *Early Writings* says

*Christ had received his kingdom... the subjects of the kingdom were made up. The marriage of the Lamb was consummated.*⁶

The subjects of the kingdom are installed at the close of the heavenly judgment - at the close of probation. Then the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of Christ.

² Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, DC.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1882), 55.

³ Revelation 21:5.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, CA.: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1898), 426.

⁵ See Appendix *Examples of Two in Scripture*.

⁶ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, 280.

Rejoicing in heaven

And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: 'We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come because You have taken Your great power and reigned.' v16-17

The reason for such rejoicing is that for more than six thousand years the heavenly hosts have been waiting for the reign of sin and rebellion to end. It has been a long wait for them, because during this time they have witnessed the whole reign of sin and have seen its terrible effects. We see but short portions of it and so are not able to comprehend the magnitude of the tragedy. The heavenly inhabitants have beheld it all.

Thus when the marriage is *consummated*, when the kingdom becomes Christ's, there is tremendous rejoicing. The six thousand years of human woe and wretchedness are to end – God is about to begin the work of restoring this planet to its pristine state.

Events on earth

In the next verse we see five great events occurring on earth during the time period of the seventh trumpet.

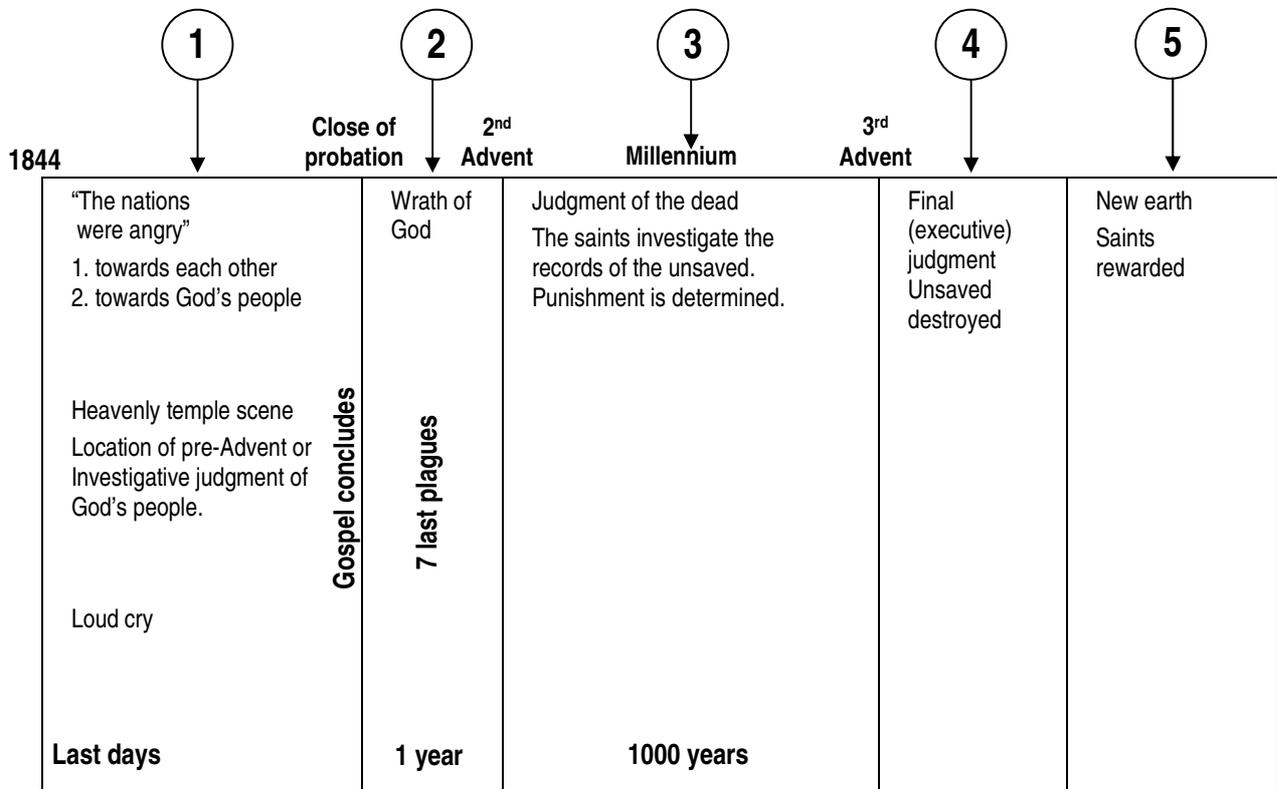
The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth. v18

The five great events are listed in the passage as follows:

1. The nations were angry
2. God's wrath is come
3. The dead are judged
4. The saints are rewarded
5. Those who destroy or corrupt the earth are destroyed.

Note that the fourth event mentioned in the scriptural passage – the reward of the saints – in fact does not come to final fruition until after the fifth event mentioned. It will therefore be covered last. The five events are shown chronologically in the diagram overleaf.

Figure 1: Events of the seventh trumpet prophecy - chronologically



The first three events are declared to be separate, distinct and consecutive.

*I saw that the anger of the nations, the wrath of God, and the time to judge the dead, were separate and distinct, one following the other.*⁷

This means that the anger of the nations precedes the judgment of the dead. Let us examine each of these events.

1. The nations were angry

This expression has two applications; the first refers to the nations as we understand the term *nations* today. It refers to the spirit of nationalism that has enveloped the nations of the end time, and which originated with the French Revolution. This spirit began to blossom in 1848 when Europe was shaken by national revolutions. Over 30 kingdoms experienced revolt and the overthrow of their existing order of government.

In 1849 one author wrote that the nations *are now getting angry*⁸ and they were. Great political upheavals hit the nations of Europe. Subsequently there has been a tremendous increase in military conflicts, in both number and in magnitude and destruction. Examples of wars since 1848 include the Crimean war, the Russo-Japanese war, the

⁷ Ibid., 36.

⁸ Ibid.

Chino-Japanese war, the Franco-Prussian war, the Great War (World War I), the Spanish civil war and the Cold War. In fact there has not been a single day of peace since 1918. Added to these there have been numerous local wars in Indonesia, Malaysia, Indo-China, China and other Communist countries, Algeria, Korea, India, Pakistan, the Suez, Palestine, Greece, Turkey, Hungary, Vietnam, Chile, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Inter America, Serbia and Croatia, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, and more.

Conflicts continue to emerge. Today we have conflicts in most parts of the globe with undoubtedly many more to come. We can add to this incomplete list the internecine conflicts, inter-racial slaughters and drug wars that have shocked us all.

Note again that the first three events are separate and consecutive: that is, the anger or war among the nations is separate and distinct from the wrath of God as seen in the seven last plagues.⁹

The truth about the battle of Armageddon

Some commentators believe that the final battle of Armageddon in the sixth plague is connected with the anger of the nations, nation fighting nation, or in other words international war. But the Spirit of Prophecy clearly states that the wrath of God which involves Armageddon in the sixth plague is *separate and distinct* and *follows* the anger of the nations. It appears that in some cases there has been a misreading of the Spirit of Prophecy on this question. Statements which have been used as authority for a military Armageddon, of nation against nation should be interpreted differently. Notice the following.

*Events are changing to bring about the day of God, which hastens greatly. Only a moment of time, as it were, yet remains. But while already nation is rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, there is not now a general engagement. As yet the four winds are held until the servants of God shall be sealed in their foreheads. Then the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle.*¹⁰

Does the term *a general engagement* mean that there will be a military battle in which all nations will fight against one another during Armageddon? The word *Armageddon* is not used in the above quotation although later the author says *the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle* and this is certainly referring to Armageddon. What is meant then by the expression *a general engagement*? Does that mean an engagement of nation against nation, or could it mean something else? Is it a world war or could it refer to the attempt by the united powers of evil to destroy the church of God? The statement says that this *general engagement* is held back until the sealing is completed, and *then the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle*.

The sealing is completed at the close of probation, at which point the seven last plagues commence.¹¹ The plagues are separate and distinct from, and follow, the anger of the

⁹ Ibid., 36.

¹⁰ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1948), 6:14

¹¹ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, 279.

Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church*, 5:213.

Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington DC: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc, 1958), 1:66.

nations. Therefore we need to understand how *the powers of earth marshal their forces for the last great battle* after the close of probation, whether it will be against each other or whether it will be in union against God's people. The Spirit of Prophecy provides the answer.

*The nations of the world are eager for conflict; but they are held in check by the angels. When this restraining power is removed, there will come a time of trouble and anguish.... All who have not the spirit of truth will unite under the leadership of satanic agencies. But they are to be kept under control till the time shall come for the great battle of Armageddon.*¹²

When we analyse this statement, we find it says *the nations of the world are eager for conflict*. This is not the case at present. The nations are afraid of conflict, they are afraid of nuclear war, and they are afraid of universal destruction. They have learned that war is waste. We need to understand which conflict the Spirit of Prophecy is referring to here when it says, *all who do not have the spirit of truth will unite under the leadership of Satanic agencies and they are to be kept under control till...the great battle of Armageddon*.

In fact this statement refers to the conflict between God and Babylon. Notice how the following statement confirms this.

*A terrible conflict is before us. We are nearing the battle of the great day of God Almighty. That which has been held in control is to be let loose. The angel of mercy is folding her wings, preparing to step down from the throne and leave the world to the control of Satan. The principalities and powers of earth are in bitter revolt against the God of heaven. They are filled with hatred against those who serve Him, and soon, very soon, will be fought the last great battle between good and evil. The earth is to be the battle field - the scene of the final contest and the final victory. Here, where for so long Satan has led men against God, rebellion is to be forever suppressed.*¹³

This is a tremendous statement. Further confirmation is given in another statement:

*The world is filled with storm and war and variance. Yet under one head - the papal power - the people will unite to oppose God in the person of His witnesses.*¹⁴

The anger of the nations is separate and distinct from Armageddon. Armageddon does not involve nation against nation – it is all nations united under Babylon in a general engagement against God's people.

F.D.Nichol, ed. *The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed. F.D.Nichol (Washington DC: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1957), 7:968.

¹² Letter 79, 1900, in Manuscript Releases, Volume 1 (Nos. 19-96, 1941-1957).

¹³ Ellen G. White, "Let the Trumpet Give a Certain Sound," *The Review and Herald*, (December 13, 1892), Vol. 79, No 11, p162.

¹⁴ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church*, 7:182.

Meaning of *nations*

The second application of the anger of the nations concerns the meaning of the word *nations*. In the Greek language the word is *ethnos*, from which *ethnic* is derived. It means Gentiles or non-Israelites. Sometimes it is translated as *heathen*. This is a term used to describe those who are not God's people – that is, the unsaved. Thus when Scripture speaks of the anger of the nations it could correctly be translated, *the anger of the unsaved*, for they will all be united in rebellion against God and his people.

The Greek word for *angry* may also be translated as *wrath*. So the sentence could be translated *the unsaved were wrath*. This leads us to question what it is that leads the nations (unsaved) to become angry or wrathful. The answer is found in Revelation 18.

And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!" For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury. Revelation 18:2-3.

The unsaved have drunk of the wine of Babylon, the wine of her fornication. That means they have imbibed Babylon's doctrine of illicit union with the world. The result is that they become wrathful. We need to know what kind of wrath this is and against whom it is directed.

And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Revelation 12:17.

Intoxication with Babylon's wine leads the unsaved to become wrathful against those who dissent, those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ - the saints of God. Therefore the expression, *the nations were angry*, in its most Scriptural application, refers to the coming time of persecution of God's people. This will be brought about by the world accepting the teachings of spiritual Babylon and will inspire hatred and wrath against those who refuse to accept the false worship to be enforced by legislation. As one commentator states:

*In the warfare to be waged in the last days there will be united, in opposition to God's people, all the corrupt powers that have apostatized from allegiance to the law of Jehovah.*¹⁵

2. God's wrath has come

God's wrath is evidenced in the seven last plagues.

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them the wrath of God is complete.
Revelation 15:1

In the study of the first six trumpets it was evident that these were God's judgments on apostasy in the Roman Empire. The first four fell on western Rome and the next two fell on eastern Rome.

¹⁵ Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events*, ed. B. Widicker - compilation (Boise ID: Pacific Press Publishing Assoc, 1992), 124.

The seventh trumpet involves judgments, not on the old Roman Empire, but upon the whole world which has again come under Roman control, but this time it is spiritual Rome or spiritual Babylon - the Papacy.

When spiritual Babylon *sits as a queen and is no widow and shall see no sorrow*, when the whole world is united in her support, then comes the outpouring of God's wrath in the seven last plagues which will precede the destruction of the whole world - the empire of spiritual Rome. The cosmic invasion of our planet is graphically portrayed in Revelation 19:

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³ He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵ Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. Revelation 19:11-15.

This is a symbolic picture of the invasion of our planet by Christ. It is the finale of the final conflict. It is Armageddon.¹⁶ Thank God for a message that guarantees protection when that terrible day comes. The following gives a glimpse of the awfulness of the wrath of God which climaxes in the return of Christ.

When he (Jesus) leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed (currently the Spirit of God restrains the unsaved), and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old. The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when He permits. There are forces now ready, and only waiting the divine permission, to spread desolation everywhere.¹⁷

3. The dead are judged

Because the initial three earthly events of the seventh trumpet are *separate and distinct, one following the other*, the *time of the dead that they should be judged* is an event that follows the Second Advent.

Remember that God's people have already been judged. This transpired from 1844 to the close of probation. Revelation 20 reveals that during the millennium the saints will enter with Christ into a further work of judgment.

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus

¹⁶ F.D.Nichol, ed., 7:982

¹⁷ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, 614.

and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. Revelation 20:4

The apostle Paul explains more about this judgment in which the saints are involved during the millennium.

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? 1 Corinthians 6:2-3

One of the occupations of God's people during the millennium will be to investigate the records of the lost. When God's people reach the heavenly kingdom they are going to experience some big surprises. They will find that many will not be there whom they thought would be there, and some will be there whom they thought would have no right to be there.

Jesus said, *The first shall be last and the last shall be first (Matthew 19:20)*. Many who were thought to be true and loyal will not be in God's kingdom. Naturally we will want to know why, because in the kingdom we will not lose our enquiring minds - quite the opposite. Fortunately we will be able to examine the secret record of every one of the unsaved. Then we will understand and appreciate the verdict that heaven has given. It will be a form of investigative judgment of the unsaved. As the psalmist sang:

Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations, and punishments on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the written judgment - this honor have all His saints. Praise the LORD! Psalm 149:5-9

This is significant. In the light of the terrible sufferings of so many of God's people through the ages it is entirely appropriate that they sit in judgment upon their oppressors and decide with Christ what the rightful sentence or degree of punishment should be. Not only will justice be done, but it will also be seen to be done - by the whole universe and especially by every saint of God.

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Revelation 20:12-13

Questions may be raised about some aspects of this passage. Here judgment is portrayed yet again. However there are not two judgments after the Second Advent. Rather, there are two aspects of judgment – trial and execution. During the millennium the saints with Christ enter into an investigative judgment of the unsaved dead. The close of the millennium initiates the judgment of the unsaved living, after they have been resurrected. This is the time when judgment is executed - the sentence is carried out.

The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Revelation 20:13

4. Those who destroy or corrupt the earth are destroyed

This event has been applied to the use of the atomic bomb and the destruction of at least some of the earth. It may have such an application. However there is another application that is more pertinent.

The word *destroy* in the original Greek can mean either *destroy* or *corrupt*. This is noted in the marginal reading of this verse. Therefore the verse can read *destroy those who corrupt the earth*. In the light of other passages the word *corrupt* is more scriptural. God will finally destroy those who corrupt the earth. The answer to how the earth is corrupted is found in Revelation 19.

After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments, for He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her. Revelation 19:1-2

It is spiritual Babylon who has corrupted the earth and under the seventh trumpet God destroys those who corrupt the earth. This means that He will destroy Babylon and all her supporters. The earth is corrupted religiously and morally by her fornication - the illicit union of church with state.

This passage could also refer to moral corruption. According to the Old Testament, the land can be corrupted by the immorality of its inhabitants.

Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. Leviticus 18:24

Here God is addressing Israel as they are about to enter the Promised Land, which had been inhabited by the immoral sun worshipping Canaanites. Because of their gross immorality God instructed Israel:

Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants. You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you (for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled), lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you. For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit them shall be cut off from among their people. 'Therefore you shall keep My ordinance, so that you do not commit any of these abominable customs which were committed before you, and that you do not defile yourselves by them: I am the LORD your God.' Leviticus 18:24-30

What were the abominations of the Canaanites? Reading onwards from Leviticus 18:5 we find various forms of immorality, including incest, adultery, homosexuality and bestiality – all sexual perversions that we witness in society today and which are becoming more and more widespread. This is corrupting the earth and so in a very real sense, under the seventh trumpet, God will destroy those who corrupt the earth, whether the corruption be religious or moral.

5. The saints receive their final reward

...the time...that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great...v18

This reward is not eternal life. Eternal life is a gift (Romans 6:23) given in a spiritual sense at conversion and given literally at the Second Advent:

...at the last trumpet...when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality... 1 Corinthians 15:52, 54

If eternal life is a gift already received then the rewards mentioned in Revelation 11:18 must be the special favors bestowed upon the saints after they reach the kingdom. Salvation is by grace through faith, but the rewards we will receive will be according to our works. Some will rightly receive greater rewards than others because they have sacrificed more and suffered more for their Savior.

The first rewards will be given at the Second Advent. Other rewards will be given at the Third Advent when the saints inherit the renewed earth. According to Jesus the main rewards will be given at the end of the millennium.

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. Matthew 25:31-32

Today the majority of the nations that have existed through history are no longer on earth. The fulfilment of this promise will therefore be at the Third Advent, for only then will all nations be resurrected from the dead and gathered before him.

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world... Matthew 25:34

The Spirit of Prophecy confirms that this promise of Jesus will be fulfilled in the New Jerusalem after the millennium.

While Satan was rallying his army, the saints were in the city, beholding the beauty and glory of the Paradise of God. Jesus was at their head, leading them. All at once the lovely Savior was gone from our company; but soon we heard His lovely voice, saying, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."¹⁸

What a reward that will be! An eternal home in the New Jerusalem, an estate in the earth made new.

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind... They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. Isaiah 65:17, 21

He will reward *both small and great*. The smallest, the most insignificant of those among us, will receive their due reward and each reward will be something that is very special to the receiver. It will thrill the heart and bring everlasting contentment. What a future awaits the saints of God!

¹⁸ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, 53.

Appendix A – Scriptural entities with two applications

There are two:

Altars

Babylons

Births

Edens

Hells

Intercessors

Israels

Judgments

Lakes of fire

Marriages

Ministrations

Mysteries

Priesthoods

Resurrections

Suppers

Temples

Testaments

Trees of life

Witnesses

Women

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