***The Seventh Trumpet

RV148-02***

Please open your Bibles to Revelation 11:15-19. Our subject is "The Seventh Trumpet Blows." This is segment number one.

**The Two Witnesses**

The apostle John has observed the dramatic ministry of the two witnesses of God in the city of Jerusalem. We have looked at that in some detail. They have, for three-and-a-half years, proclaimed God's message of His imminent judgment upon the tribulation world, and of His final offer of grace salvation. Their message has been confirmed as true by the power of God to perform miracles in nature: creating drought; turning water into blood; and, a variety of plagues – all reminiscent of the power of Moses when the children of Israel were facing Pharaoh.

The message and the works of the two witnesses will cause millions not to have a good day. New Age religion will be humiliated under their administration. The ministry of the two witnesses will certainly make headlines in the nightly TV news reports. The antichrist himself will try to silence the witnesses by having them killed. However, the Bible tells us that anyone who attempts to kill these two witnesses of God will themselves be killed by fire from the mouths of the witnesses. The plagues and the natural disasters that they turn loose will bring death again to millions of human beings.

Finally, after three-and-a-half years of witnessing and ministry, God allows the two witnesses to be killed by the antichrist, who is empowered, of course, by Satan. The antichrist leaves the dead bodies of the two witnesses lying in the streets of Jerusalem. People worldwide rejoice to see these two men dead, and they celebrate the event by exchanging gifts as if it were Christmastime. The New Age religion of the antichrist at that point in time will seem to have won out after all. However, after three-and-a-half days, John sees that the two witnesses are brought back to life before an observing world. God's voice is then heard all over the world at the same time from heaven, calling the two witnesses to come up to Him. The watching bureau is overwhelmed with an enormous fear as the two witnesses rise up to heaven, and disappear through the clouds.

The final blow of the ministry of the two witnesses is an enormous earthquake in the city of Jerusalem which kills 7,000 inhabitants. People at this point are obviously terrified, but the Bible tells us that, while they will reluctantly express awe toward God, whom they know is causing these events, they do not repent. They do not turn in faith and in obedience to Him. They still hate Him, and they will not bow to His sovereign authority. The New Age gods (human beings who think they are gods) will therefore choose to go forever into the lake of fire rather than bow in the face of this evidence to the Creator God.

**The Book of the Revelation**

At this point, I think it would be helpful for us to have a little review of the structure of the Revelation. And I will try to make this as simple as possible. The book of the revelation progresses chronologically, but at certain points, it stops and inserts parentheses. You have to know what is happening at any certain point in time so that you can follow the story in an orderly fashion. Revelation chapters 6 through 19 deal with the seven-year tribulation era on earth. That's the first thing that we have to observe. All of chapters 6 through 19 deal with the tribulation years. The chronological events during this these seven years is found in chapter 6. Then you have to go to chapters 8-9, and then you have to go to 16. If you could make a Xerox copy of those chapters, and lay them out in order, you would read through the Revelation chronologically: chapter 6; then you have to jump to chapters 8 and 9; and, then you have to jump to 16 to get the story in its orderly time pattern. In between those chapters are these insertions of parentheses which are expanding in detail what is happening.

In these chronological chapters, we have presented three series of divine judgments against tribulation humanity. We have, first of all, judgments under the image of seven seals. That is covered in Revelation chapter 6. That covers the early years of the tribulation era. Then out of the last seal (the seventh seal) comes a new series of judgments in the form of seven trumpets. This is what is covered in Revelation 8 or 9. This takes us past the middle point of the seven-year tribulation period. And when the seventh trumpet blows, there come the final series of judgments, which is seven bowls of the final wrath of God. That segment is described in Revelation 16. So, the seventh seal produces the seventh trumpet judgments, and the seventh trumpet produces the seven bowl judgments. We have been looking at the last three trumpets, which is where we are now. We have now come to the seventh trumpet. These last three trumpets (five, six, and seven) have been described as woes because of their far-reaching destructive effects on all of mankind. When the seventh bowl has been poured out on earth, God's judgment of the antichrist's world is concluded, and Jesus Christ returns to this earth.

In the segment of Revelation 10:1 through Revelation 11:14, we have what is called the small parentheses. There is a set of small parentheses in the book of the revelation, and a set of large parentheses. This is the small one. At the point that you get to chapter 10 (after chapters 8 to 9, which is part of the chronological progression), then chapter 9 stops, and it is interrupted by this segment from Revelation 10:1 through Revelation 11:14. This is the set of small parentheses. In this parentheses, we have covered John eating the little sealed book of God's revelation about tribulation events. It covers the Jews' tribulation temple being rebuilt in Jerusalem. It covers the ministry of the two witnesses, Chronologically, Revelation 11:14 follows Revelation 9:21.

Revelation 11:15-19 is a summary of the results of the imminent seven bowl judgments. That's the part we're on now. In Revelation 11:15-17, we begin a summary which is introducing the bowl judgments which are about to take place. This segment is closely connected to Revelation 15:5-8, which introduce the bold judgments. What we are saying is that we go through Revelation 11:15-19, and then we actually have to jump to Revelation 15:5-8 to follow through the account orderly and logically. Thus, Revelation 15:5-8 is actually an introduction to Revelation 16.

The segment from Revelation 11:15 (where we begin now) through Revelation 15:8 is the set of large parentheses in the book of the Revelation. In this large parentheses comes the first bowl judgment being poured out. It covers information about the woman; the red dragon; the male child; Michael; and, the assault on the Jewish people. It covers the antichrist and the false prophet. It covers the praise of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists. It covers the fall of Babylon, which today we know as Iraq. It covers the doom of the worshipers of the antichrist, and it covers the military campaign of Armageddon. It also covers the arrival of the seven angels with the seven bowl judgments of God's wrath. All of that is in the big parentheses from Revelation 11:15 through Revelation 15:8.

Revelation 11:15-19, that we are looking at tonight, is immediately followed chronologically by Revelation 15:8-9. So, what I'm saying is that when you get to Revelation 11:19, if you want to follow the story in its time sequence, you have to go over to Revelation 15, and begin reading at verse 5. If you pasted up your Bible in this order, you would have Revelation verse 11:15-19. When you got to verse 19, you would jump over to Revelation 15:5, and you would find that the thing goes smoothly right through, because at that point, the parentheses has ended. Revelation 15:5 takes up the thought which is dropped in Revelation 11:19. This will take you a little while. You'll have to write that down to think that through, but when you get that sequence in mind, it will help you to understand the book of the Revelation and it won't seem so erratic and jumpy as it does sometimes. The content between Revelation 11:15 and Revelation 15:8 (the big set of parentheses) sets the stage for the latter half of the tribulation period.

**The Seventh Trumpet**

So, now we begin with Revelation 11:15: "And the seventh angel sounded, and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying." Revelation 11:15 announces the end of the tribulation, and the establishment of the millennial reign of Christ on this earth. Finally, we have come to where all of human history is moving. So, at the direction of God, the seventh angel now takes his trumpet; sounds forth; and, sets in motion a series of events. The first thing that happens is that John hears a lot of babbling and mumbling and voices in a rising crescendo. These are the voices of angelic and human beings who are gathered in heaven, and they break out in a joyful proclamation as they see Jesus Christ in heaven, about to return to earth to establish His millennial reign over all nations.

Some of these people are martyrs. Some of these people have been there in heaven for centuries. Some of these people have died under extreme suffering. Some of these people will have gone to heaven during the tribulation era agonies.

They are all fed up with the antichrist's world. They're all fed up with humanism. They're all fed up with the New Age philosophy. They're all fed up with the statesmen and the rulers of the world. They're all fed up with the ten horn dictators that have brought misery to human beings. They're all looking forward to the time when Christians do not have to be the butt of everybody's jokes; when Christians do not have to be treated as the garbage of human society; when Christians are not ridiculed as those who are out of touch with the real world; Christians do not have to feel intimidated and apologize for the fact that they really believe the Bible is true; and, when they do not have to stand up to the kind of ridicule you read from TV cable magnate Ted Turner and his snide attacks upon Christianity as being the religion of losers. These voices in heaven are people who have who are fed up, and who are ready to see the righteousness of God established.

They are in heaven (the third heaven) where God dwells with His saints. Heaven is filled with the holy angels, and filled with redeemed people who are obviously aware of what is about to happen. And in their excitement, they begin discussing this. And John hears this crescendo of voices of excited people talking, and saying, "Look there. The Fathers has given the Lord the nod; He's getting up from His throne; He's getting up from His seat next to the Father's throne that He has been sharing all these centuries; He's getting up; and, He's going back!" And they know that when He moves out, they're going to move out with Him, back to earth, for the Son of God to now be seated on His own throne, the throne of His father David as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords in the lineage of the line of David. A world government with justice, peace, and prosperity is finally going to be realized in a perfect environment. And do we ever need that now? If there's anything that this world needs now, it is the return of Jesus Christ to get the environment straightened out.

Communist countries, because of the disincentives built into their socialist system, have been the worst polluters of our planet. You wouldn't believe, in Eastern Europe, what we saw in the spewing out of pollution every time we passed an industrial area; every time we would pass a factory; and, every time we pass a river. I want to tell you that the Blue Danube isn't blue. It's a polluter, and it's a disease-ridden area. All the great rivers through Eastern Europe are all uniformly dangerous to be in. I heard a TV program analyzing the pollution in Eastern European nations. The conclusion at the end was that it would take billions of dollars to clean up what the communists have done to the environment, and it would take at least 25 years to try to get it straightened out. How long can this go on before Jesus Christ comes? And I can assure you that He's going to straighten out that problem immediately.

The anti-biblical economic system of socialism is a doctrine of demons. It came right out of the mind of Satan. When you have that, then you have a society which is trying to hang on, and it can't be bothered about pollution. It is trying to struggle just to survive, and just to exist. You would be depressed to walk through even a department store Eastern European countries (where they do have a little bit of stuff. Mrs. Danish saw an attractive blue denim coat. Ladies were wearing it, and their money buys stuff cheaply. It's the same everywhere in the country. A scoop of ice cream on a cone in Czechoslovakia, for example, costs 4 cents. You get one; two; or, three scoops. We usually went for the works, and spent the whole 12 cents.

We went from one end of Czechoslovakia to the other: east to west; and, north to south. We went to the magnificent rocky mountain areas of Slovakia, and I had to keep reminding myself where I was – that I wasn't in Colorado. Wherever we were, every time we saw the ice cream stand, we would walk up and order an ice cream cone. The price was always the same. The price was always one crown, and the scoops were always the same, and the containers were always the same, with a little bar. The girl would reach in and come across this bar, and you got a flat-bottomed scoop. It was always the same. It was wonderful. In a communist country, everybody is treated equal, and it stinks.

We learned that a government controlled disincentive system doesn't make anybody want to try. The people who were behind the counters to serve didn't care what you did. They didn't care how they served you. When it came to the stores, they had clothing racks. Mrs. Danish goes up and she says, "I'd like to buy one of those." It only cost a few dollars, and it was very attractive on the lady we saw. When she went up to buy one, she discovered that what was on the rack wasn't her size. We went through all that clothing rack in that whole store. Guess what? They only had one size! ... So, we didn't get the attractive blue denim coat, because in a communist country, there isn't the freedom to do what people would like to have done to meet the desires of people. This is a terrible world, and it's a world that's going to get worse until Jesus returns.

So, these people in heaven know all of this stuff. They've been well-informed on what's going on. They've seen the misery and the agony. Now here, finally, they see the Lord standing up. He's about ready to return. At this point in time, things are going to begin to move very, very quickly. There will be the final judgment poured, and the world of righteousness and justice is going to be established.

Up to this point in the book of the Revelation, we have had recorded for us the results of human intelligence operating on humanist principles, and based on satanic religious systems, such as I just described in some detail for you in the previous session. The world at this point, that we are reading about, will have the finest intelligence of man behind it; it will have the arrogant, humanistic principles of a Ted Turner as its foundation; and, it will be based upon satanic religious systems. However, the intelligence and the science of mankind will have brought nothing but worldwide pollution, destruction, suffering, poverty, and death. Satan will have done his best to organize his world into a millennial blessing without Jesus Christ, and he will fail. God, at this point brings all of Satan's creation down around his head with a divine judgment on his followers.

At this point, God will quickly dispose of all opposition with the final seven bowl judgments coming out of the seventh trumpet. The times of the gentiles will now be ended, and they will be replaced by the Kingdom of God on this earth under the authority of Jesus Christ. Upon completion of the seven bowl judgments, the Lord will return to earth from heaven with His church saints, and He will finish off the antichrist and his government. This will be done in the campaign of the several battles of Armageddon. The inhabitants of heaven now rejoice at the prospect of this culmination of history. And the kingdoms of the earth, which Satan has been permitted to rule since Eden, are now to be ruled forevermore by Jesus Christ the Savior.

**The Kingdom**

"The seventh angel sounded, and there arose loud, babbling, excited voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world.'" The Greek word for "kingdom" looks like this in Greek: "basileia." And because God the Holy Spirit has written this Bible by guiding the men who wrote it, we must pay attention to singular and plural words. We must pay attention to grammatical structures. We must pay attention to the very meaning of the words. That's how thoughts are conveyed in writing. And you must notice that this is singular. The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord.

**A One-World Government**

This is referring to an imperial realm on the surface of the earth – an imperial kingdom. It is in the singular in the Greek Bible because it is a one-world government. It is the dream fulfilled at that time of current world rulers of a one-world community. They will have realized their ambition. The international bankers and the industrialists are now promoting a one-world government because that can bring them maximum financial gain. At this point in time that we are reading here in Revelation, after the middle of the tribulation, the antichrist will be the supreme dictator in a world government.

Russia, at this point of time, will have come down, with her Arab allies, to fulfill Saddam Hussein's current ambition. He is very clear. He wants to get Kuwait. ... He wants to move in on Saudi Arabia to control the holy places of Mecca and Medina, and to control the wealth of oil. Then they'll be after Israel. The oil issue in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia is secondary. Don't be deceived by that. This man is another Nasser, who said, upon the first attack upon Israel, "We're going to drive them into the sea." That's exactly what Saddam intends to do. So, we shall see where it's going to go.

The condition will exist that Russia has tried that, and God has destroyed her, and put the Arabs back on their ears. The result will be that now the Jew will be under a protective custody of the antichrist. However, things then will be downhill for the Jewish people. While the antichrist will now become a world dictator (because Russia is out of the way), he will control all the nations of the world, and no one will be able to stand up to him. The result will be that there will be one kingdom. That's why the Bible is so accurate here: "the kingdom of the 'cosmos.'" This is the kingdom of this world system in the Bible. The Greek word for "cosmos" is "kosmos." That is a world which is used to describe the system of life that Satan has imposed upon human society. The word "kosmos" means the structure of organization. And this structure of organization is one single kingdom. It has become the kingdom of our Lord, referring to God the Father, and of His Christ, referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah Savior. The world kingdom of the antichrist will overnight become the kingdom of the Father and of His Christ.

This very thing has been no secret to those who have been students of the Old Testament Scriptures. They weren't able to put it all together to understand where it was going, but it is amazing, from our perspective of the New Testament, to look back in the Old Testament, and realize what the prophets were telling us.

For example, in Daniel 7:17, we have a description of four kingdoms that are to arise upon this earth. They are described as wild beasts. These beasts represent a ruler and his kingdom. These kingdoms, history has demonstrated to us, have been Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and the Roman Empire: "These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth."

**Ten Nations**

Then, in Daniel 7:23, we have predicted a major conquest on the earth. This fourth beast kingdom which devours all nations on earth (the Roman Empire) is referred to here. Thus he said that the fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms, and it will devour the whole earth, and tread it down, and crush it. Daniel 7:24, predicts that this empire of the fourth beast, this fourth empire (the Roman Empire) will collapse in time into ten separate pieces or kingdoms as portrayed by the ten horns.

**The Antichrist**

Daniel 7:24: "As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom, ten kings will arise, and another will arise (another horn, or another ruler) after them, (He will be different from the previous ones.), and he will subdue three kings." So, out of a ten-nation confederacy, of the old Roman Empire, will rise a king who will be so powerful militarily that he'll knock out three kings, and the other seven will decide to join him. They will form a confederacy with this ruler, the antichrist, as their king.

This horn rises which arises is the same one which is described earlier in Daniel 7:7-8. Daniel says, "After this, I kept looking in the night visions, and, behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying (an extremely strong Roman Empire). And it had large iron teeth. It devoured, and crushed, and trampled down the remainder with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it. And it had ten horns. While I was contemplating the horns, behold another horn, a little horn (the antichrist), came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it. Behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man (because he is a man empowered by Satan), and a mouth uttering great boasts," because he is a braggart and an attacker of the living God.

This last conquering horn is the antichrist of the New Testament Revelation. So, the remaining rulers of these ten submit to him, and they form a confederacy under him. Following the divine defeat of Russian and her Arab allies, then the antichrist will be able to place himself in the position of a world dictator.

That is the kingdom that he rules here in Revelation 11:15. That is why it is singular: "The kingdom of the world;" that is, the kingdom spoken of by Daniel, which has now been brought to fruition in the time of the antichrist, past the middle point of the tribulation.

Furthermore, in Daniel 7:25, we have revealed that this antichrist world ruler is going to attack born-again believers and their God: "And he will speak out against the Most High, and wear down the saints of the Highest One. And he will intend to make alterations in times and in law. And they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and a half-time" This will go on for three-and-a-half years.

There will be a spiteful the attitude toward American society by people who are in powerful positions in our country and in our government, and who are now out to get the Christians. Legal organizations have been conducting seminars for lawyers to explicitly train these lawyers on how to go after churches; how to sue religious organizations; how to bring them down; how to undermine them; and, how to destroy groups which are based upon biblical fundamentalism. In lawyer circles, this is being described as the newest goldmine of lawyers’ fees – learning how to attack Christian organizations.

The kingdom of the world controlled by the antichrist in a world government will become the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and He will reign forever and ever. And John speaks of it as something as if it were already done, even though it will be still future when John is looking at this, but it's a sure thing. The word "reign" in the Greek Bible is "basileuo." "Basileuo" is a word for imperial authority. This is a royal authority. It is in the future tense because it will (at this point in time) still be in the future. It's in the middle of the tribulation. It's coming. It's indicative. It's going to be a sure thing. It's active voice, because God is going to do it. God is going to take over the government of the antichrist. The Father is going to rule the whole earth through Jesus Christ, and He's going to do this forever and ever. So, John hears a great symphony of voices in heaven proclaiming Jesus Christ as King over all the nations.

The Old Testament Scriptures have, as I've indicated, predicted specifically this reign of the Messiah King following the tribulation era, so this is not something that God has kept secret. It is something that has not been clearly understood until further revelation of the New Testament came along. Let me give you a couple of examples of this kind of a kingdom referred to in the Old Testament.

Ezekiel 37:24-28: "And My servant David will be king over them." This passage is talking about the millennial kingdom. This passage is talking about this kingdom about which Revelation 11:15 says, "Jesus Christ is going to come and take over." Isn't that interesting? "My servant David will be king over them." Jesus Christ will be the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, but there will be many administrators under Him. David will be raised back to life, and he will be established as a king under Jesus Christ, as many of you will indeed be established as administrators and leaders in the government of Jesus Christ. "My servant David will be king over them, and they will have one shepherd, and they will walk in my ordinance and keep my statutes and observe them. And they shall live on the land that I gave to Jacob, my servant, in which your father's lived."

This is after the tribulation. This is in the millennium. Yes, the Jew is going to go back to his own land. Yes, the Arabs are going to be completely removed from the Promised Land: "And they will live on it: they; their sons; and, their sons’ sons, forever and ever. David, my servant, shall be their prince forever. And I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them, and multiply them, and set My sanctuary in their midst forever. My dwelling place also will be with them. I will be their God. They will be My people. And the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel when My sanctuary is in their midst forever." What a great hope! The Jews must long for the fulfillment of this passage in Ezekiel. This is why they talk about the Messiah coming. This is why they want the Messiah to come, because then this is what they hope to see fulfilled.

We had the opportunity to visit the Auschwitz prison camp in Poland. I did not realize until I was there that the Auschwitz prison camp was the hub of the wheel of the Nazi concentration camps. All the spokes of the wheels went out to the peripheral concentration camps, but the death camp came into Auschwitz, and the nearby execution area and staging area was Birkenau. You may have seen the TV series "Remembrance of War," which was based upon a Jewish family fleeing from Hitler's Germany. In the last scene, the man (the scholar – the teacher) and his daughter had been placed on board the train. They were going into Poland, and they're told that they were going to Birkenau. It made my heart leap as we came around the bend of the road, and there I saw that very thing that they had in that documentary, because they shot it there.

This tower rises up with a gable roof, and an arched entranceway, and the railroad track going underneath it. In the TV series, as the train would come in, they reenacted the way it was, with the lights; the guard dogs; the guards standing there with their machine guns; and, an ominous entrance beneath this entranceway into Birkenau. And the people then (as the series demonstrated so effectively) were taken off the train; their gear was stacked; they were taken over to the shower area; their clothes were remove; their spectacles were taken off; they were herded into the room with the door hermetically sealed; and, then the Zyklon B pellets were deployed.

Those were the fertilizer pellets – this rat poison thing that was used to kill rats. It gives off a fume, and when it's contained in an enclosed place, it's a deadly cyanide gas. They would drop the pellets in, and people would realize what was happening as they would gasp for breath. Then, in a model that they recreated of what you saw when you opened the door, there were these bodies piled up in pyramid shape to every ventilator as people struggled to climb over one another to get to where they hoped there would be air, but through which was coming the poison gas.

We saw these huge displays behind glass enclosures with piles of suitcases with Jewish peoples' names on them, with the town they came from. We saw their toothbrushes piled up in mass, and their hairbrushes and their combs. We saw their shoes, and we saw their toys. We saw all of their personal items. We saw all the things that a person would take who really did think that they were moving to the eastern territories to start a new life under the National Socialist state of the Nazi authorities – only to find that they were herded into death chambers, and then over to the crematorium. We stood there and saw these sophisticated furnaces that were specifically designed by the intelligent minds of German industrialists to maximize the burning of these bodies, and what a smooth system they developed. Then they would take the ashes, and dump them into the Vistula River, that grand river that flows through Poland. I stood from our hotel room and looked out upon that very beautiful setting, where we were able to look down on that river, and to realize that on that river bed bottom lie the ashes of the Jews who were praying for a Messiah to come, who has already come. They're looking forward to this day where they're no longer the dog's tail; where they're no longer under everybody's attack; and, where they're no longer threatened for the next breath that they will take.

Now they are again uneasy today. While the Jews, "We're ready," the Jews know that they're dealing with a madman in the Arab world who has 5,000 tanks; who has a million men under arms; who has 1,000 aircraft; and, who has poison gas galore. You just cannot stop the raining of poison gas on a mass population if somebody has the weapons to deliver it. The Jews are not resting easily today.

In this passage in Ezekiel, the prophet has told them that the time is going to come when all will be well with them. David will be their ruler. They will dwell in peace, and God will be with them as their God. That's not true today. This has never been true to this day. This has yet to be fulfilled.

In Daniel two, we have this hope again extended to the Jewish people for the time of a millennial peace that the people in heaven, in Revelation 11:15, are so rejoicing in. Daniel 2:35: "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed." These images are representing these four kingdoms: "All at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floor, and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone (Jesus Christ) that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." Jesus Christ and His kingdom finally destroys the times of the gentiles and their kingdoms, and His kingdom fills the whole earth.

Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people. It will crush and put to an end all these kingdoms, but it itself will endure forever." You have to have a strange mentality to read passages like this and say that this applies to heaven. That's what the amillennialist does. That's what all those who resist the idea that Jesus Christ is going to come and rule in the millennial kingdom have to tell us: that all this is in heaven; and, that this is not real. No Jew would have ever dreamed, as he read these passages, that this was talking about heaven. He understood that God was talking about something that was going to happen for them here on this earth.

Daniel 6:26 reinforces this promise: "I make a decree that, in all the dominion of My kingdom, men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel, for He is the living God, and enduring forever. And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, and his dominion will be forever." When Nebuchadnezzar came to his senses and recognized the true God, God put in his mouth these prophetic words about the kingdom of the Jews to come.

Daniel 7:27: "Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One (to the Jewish people of the Highest One), the living God. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him." This is a pure earthly kingdom.

The final conquest of the antichrist's world kingdom is going to be accomplished by God through the seven bowl judgments which are about to be released – these which come out of the blowing of the seventh trumpet. The eternal reign of Jesus Christ over the earth begins with the Millennial Kingdom, and then it continues forever in the new earth after the millennium. First comes the millennium when the eternal reign of Jesus Christ is on this earth. After the millennium is over, this old earth is destroyed; the new earth is created; and, the reign of Christ continues forever. The earth will then never again be under the authority of sinful men once Jesus takes over.

There will be a final attempt by Satan, at the end of the millennium, to take over once more the government of the earth, and to once more recreate the authority that he had. But that attempt is going to end in failure. We read about that in Revelation 20:7-10: "And when 1,000 years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war. The number of them is like the sand of the seashore." Can you believe that there will be that many people in rebellion against the King, Jesus Christ, whom they see ruling on the throne? Can you believe that Satan can rally people from all the nations of the earth to once more resist the King Jesus Christ after they've had a wonderful millennial lifestyle? Well, Adam and Eve didn't mind blowing their wonderful lifestyle.

And they came up on the broad plain of the earth, and surrounded the camp of the saints, and the beloved city." Once more, they are zeroing in on Jerusalem, because that's the capital city where the Savior and King Jesus Christ operates from: "And fire (at that point in time) will come down from heaven and devour them. And the devil who deceived them (this final rebellion of people) was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also, and they will be tormented day and night forever." Will you please notice that the beast and the prophet are in the lake of fire? And will you please remind yourself how long they have been in there at this time, so that the Jehovah's Witnesses don't deceive you?

These two men were put into the lake of fire at the beginning of the millennium. 1,000 years later, they're still kicking and screaming there. They're still in agony, and Satan is put in there to join them. The Jehovah Witnesses are quite wrong when they tell you that there is no eternal hell to face, and that there is no eternal agony. This passage in itself makes it clear that people do not get incinerated in the lake of fire. They just pay the price of their sins that they refused to let Jesus pay for them.

At the completion of the rapture of the church and the seven-year tribulation, Jesus is now ready to return to earth to restore the Davidic earthly kingdom of the Jews. In Acts 1:6, just before Jesus went to heaven, His disciples said, "Are you going to set up the kingdom now?" Those men were smart enough to know that it was an earthly kingdom. They wondered: "Is it going to happen now?" And Jesus said, "No, something else is going to be done now. For at least 2,000 years, I'm going to be drawing together a new body of saints (a new species) called Christians, part of a royal family. They'll be called the church. When I finish with that, I'll come back to you."

You may read on your own the current order of events in Acts 15:13-21. This question of what's going to happen to the Jewish people was a great concern to the apostles in the early church. Let's just take a look at that: "And they said, 'How do all the promises to Abraham and the promises to our people (in the Palestinian Covenant; the Davidic Covenant; and, the New Covenant) fit together with the church?'" They understood that something new had happened, and that the Jews' program was on hold. So, they had this first church conference. All the bigwigs got together. They thought this through. They interceded before the Lord, and the Holy Spirit gave them the information, and James, the pastor of the church in Jerusalem, summarized it:

Acts 15:13: "And after they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, 'Brethren, listen to me. Simeon (that is, Peter) has related how God first concerned Himself about taking, from among the gentiles, a people for His name." This has been seven years after the day of Pentecost, and the event in the house of Cornelius has taken place. Peter was there on hand, and Peter was astounded to see that gentiles were going to be part of the church also. He said, "I saw the baptism of the Holy Spirit hit them just like it hit us." And the evidence in those days was that you could talk in a foreign language of the day. Peter says, "I know it was the same thing that hit us. It was the Spirit of God putting gentiles into the body of Christ as we Jews had been placed there."

"And with this, the words of the prophets agree just as it is written." And James brings in the Old Testament prophets. He says, "Here is the order of events: After these things (after the church age), I will return, and I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has been fallen. I will rebuild the Jewish nation, and I will rebuild its ruins. And I will restore it in order that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord." The Millennial Kingdom will be blessed through the Jews. The gentiles of the Millennial Kingdom will be blessed through the Jews: "'And all the gentiles who are called by My name,' said the Lord, 'who makes these things known from of old.' Therefore, it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the gentiles, but that we write to them that, they abstain from things contaminated by idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled and from blood."

James says, "Let's stop fighting the fact that the gentiles are our brethren in this new organization, the church. They are part of this organism. We are one with them. So, let's accept them, but let's ask them kindly to treat us Jews with a little respect relative to things that the moral Law of Moses in the Mosaic Law imposed upon us. We ask them to respect the fact that we don't eat food which has been placed on an idols offering because that idol represents a demon. Gentiles, please don't do that. And do not be guilty of sexual immorality. That is deeply offensive to a godly Jew, and it is a deep violation of the code of God, and of the channel of divine blessing. Stay away from sexual immorality." And the reason they said that was because this was rampant. This was the lifestyle of the gentile world. This was how you worshiped your God – by sexual immorality. Gentile believers had to make a big change.

"And from what is strangled, and from blood." They said, "Don't eat anything that is strangled. Don't eat any food where they haven't cut the throat and let the blood gush out, because to eat the blood is a violation of the moral code because it's a disease potential practice. It's part of the dietary laws. Don't eat blood. So, don't just strangle your chickens. Cut its head off, and enjoy watching it run around while it gushes out the blood. That's always a lot of fun, and it's the kind of food you should eat.

So, here in the book of Acts, God's current plan was very clear. First there was the church, and its completion, called from all nations. Then God is going to turn back, and regather the Jews in a restored kingdom in Israel in the millennium.

**Handel**

Perhaps you've noticed, in Revelation 11:15, some familiar sounds of these words: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever." That is from Handel's Hallelujah Chorus in "The Messiah." Many of you have resoundingly sung these words many times. That's where Handel got the lyrics for that segment of the Hallelujah chorus, in that grand expression of musical phrase to God.

So, the Lord is coming. The plans are afoot. Mankind is playing into his hand. The people in heaven are waiting for Jesus to stand and to indicate that He's about ready to return to set up His kingdom. When that happens, they're all going to be babbling with excitement, and they're going to recognize that when He comes, and we with Him, it's going to be a forever deal. Aren't you glad that you're part of that setup?

Dr. John E. Danish, 1989

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