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1 THE TITLE of SECTION III

GOD'S TRUMPET JUDGEMENTS PUNISH AND WARN WITH A VIEW TO REPENTANCE

***“WILL GOD NOT BRING ABOUT JUSTICE FOR HIS CHOSEN ONES,
WHO CRY OUT TO HIM DAY AND NIGHT?” (LUKE 18:7)***

Again and again throughout the whole New Testament period God's judgements are sounded to punish and to warn the world to repent. Yet many continue to harden their hearts.

2 THE DIVISION of SECTION III

The visions in the book of Revelation depict what happens between Christ's first coming and Christ's second coming in seven parallel sections. Each of the seven sections *begins* with Christ's first coming, is characterised by *a long main period*, is followed by *a short period* of violent persecution and *ends* with the final judgement day (Christ's second coming). In the third section of the book the passages: Revelation 8:2 – 9:21, Revelation 10:1-11 and Revelation 11:1-16 are not linear consecutive, but parallel.

a. The beginning of the New Testament period (7:1-8; 8:2; 11:1-2a)

Revelation 7:1-8 belongs to section 2 and section 3. The New Testament period begins by sealing the Christians (God's servants) before the seals of oppression, persecution and affliction are broken and before the trumpets of judgement are sounded. Their sealing is a sign that Christians belong to him and are protected from eternal damnation (John 10:28; 17:12).

In Revelation 8:3-5 the New Testament period begins with Christ's reign in heaven. He activates seven angels with seven trumpets (8:2) and mediates the prayers of Christians to God (8:3-5; cf. Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1-2).

In Revelation 11:1-2 the New Testament period begins by measuring the temple, which represents the setting apart and the protection of the true Church. The measuring of its worshippers represents the setting apart and protection of the true Christians from the nominal Christians and the non-Christians. The temple and its worshippers are a symbol of the Militant Church with its true Christians. The outer court of the temple is a symbol for the nominal Christians. They only belong outwardly to the temple. And Jerusalem, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt for its degeneration and persecution, is a symbol for the godless and wicked non-Christian world with their false and antichristian religions.

b. The long main period (8:3 to 9:21; 10:1-11; 11:2b-6)

In Revelation 8:3-5 the long main period consists of God responding to the prayers of Christians by hurling fire onto the earth right up to Christ's second coming. In Revelation 8:6 to 9:19 the long main period consists of God responding to the oppression and persecution of the Church in the world by his trumpet judgements. These trumpet judgements symbolise God's warnings to repent and punishments as an inducement to repent right up to the final judgement day. Yet many people will remain unrepentant (9:20-21). The first four trumpets of God's warning judgements affect the earth, the sea, the water sources and the heavenly bodies (8:6-13). The fifth trumpet of God's warning judgement consists of the destructive work of demons that harm and spiritually torture unbelievers. This calls for the spiritual warfare of believers (9:1-12). The sixth trumpet of God's warning judgement consists of the destructive work of terrible wars throughout the New Testament period, which culminates in the final battle of Armageddon (cf. 16:12-16).

The interval between the sixth and seventh trumpet is not chronological, but describes the present New Testament period from the viewpoint of comfort: the Militant Church has the task to proclaim the gospel and that task is sweet as honey. Nevertheless, the consequences are bitter, due to the increasing impenitence of people (10:1-11).

In Revelation 10:1-4 the seven thunders symbolise other principles and powers involved in the execution of God's eternal plan with the world that have not been revealed to man. They may be a part of the unfathomable phenomenon of delay or of slowing down the movement of history towards the end (8:1). The proclamation of God's plan in the world is at one and the same time a sweet and a bitter experience for Christians (10:8-11).

In Revelation 11:2b-6 the long main period consists of the outer court of the temple that is given over to the Gentiles while the two witnesses proclaim God's message to the world. The Gentiles are a symbol of the godless and wicked anti-Christian nations and their leaders, who trample on nominal Christianity and the other religions throughout the whole New Testament period, symbolised by the number 42 months. Compare the enemy sowing weeds in the field (Matthew 13:24-30,36-43). The two witnesses are a symbol for the Church as God's authoritative institute for proclaiming the gospel throughout the whole New Testament period, symbolised by the number 1260 days. The Church will be opposed and persecuted.

c. The short period (9:13-16); 11:7-10)

Although wars throughout the long main period affect unbelievers and believers in the world alike (fourth seal, 6:7-8; Matthew 24:6-9) and are a means of God to warn unbelievers and punish them for their godlessness, wickedness and impenitence (9:20-21), the sixth trumpet particularly releases the four evil angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates and are kept ready for this very moment (9:13-16). The wars throughout the whole New Testament period peak in the great tribulation and the final battle of Armageddon (16:12-16; 19:19; 20:7-9). Throughout the Old Testament period the river Euphrates was the region from where the evil world powers of Assyria and Babylon attacked God's Old Testament people (cf. Isaiah 8:7-8) and this became a symbol of the evil kingdom of the world attacking God's New Testament people.

In Revelation 11:7-10 the short period consists of the final antichrist who will reign in the period of the great tribulation. He will make war against the Church and conquer her (kill the two witnesses) (cf. 13:7; 16:14; 17:14; 19:19; 20:8; cf. Matthew 24:14-25,29a). The Church as God's institute for proclaiming the gospel will remain destroyed for a short period, symbolised by the number 3½ days (11:9).

d. The end of the New Testament period (10:5-7; 11:11-14,18-19)

In Revelation 10:5-7 the New Testament period ends at the sounding of the seventh trumpet (11:15a). At the sounding of the seventh trumpet the mystery of God, that is, God's decrees with regard to salvation and judgement in the history of the world, including the proclamation of the gospel will be fully accomplished (10:7).

In Revelation 11 the New Testament period ends at Christ's second coming (cf. the signs of Christ's second coming in 11:19 and 16:18). Then all true Christians (the Militant Church on earth) will be resurrected from physical death (11:11-12), the kingdom of the world will collapse and this present earth will be destroyed (11:13-14). The final judgement will take place in which the destroyers of the earth will be destroyed and the God's servants will be rewarded (11:18) and the kingdom of God in its final perfect phase will become a reality (11:15; cf. Matthew 25:34; 1 Corinthians 15:23-26).

e. The eternal state (11:15-17)

In Revelation 11:15-17 God is no longer the One who is to come, because he has come and has begun to reign in the final perfect phase of his kingdom! In the eternal state God in Christ will reign forever (2 Peter 1:11) and will be worshipped forever.

Conclusion

During the whole New Testament period The long period of witnessing by the Militant Church on earth is followed by a short period of severe persecution shortly before the resurrection from the dead, the final judgement day and the final phase of the kingdom of God (Christ's second coming).

The third section of the book of Revelation consists of Revelation chapters 8 to 11 and covers the whole New Testament period from Christ's first coming to Christ's second coming. It gives insight into the eternal state beyond Christ's second coming.

3 THE STRUCTURE of SECTION III

The breaking of the seventh seal reveals the silence in heaven (8:1).

The effect of the prayers of the saints (8:2-5).

The sounding of the first six trumpets reveals God's provisional judgements and warning to repent (chapter 8 and 9).

Christ's final appeal to the world to repent (10:1 to 11:6).

The final revelation of the evil kingdom of the world (11:7-10).

The sounding of the seventh trumpet reveals the final salvation and final judgement (11:11-19).

4 THE MESSAGE of SECTION III

a. The prayers of Christians have great influence (8:3-5)

God involves Christians in the events of world history by their prayers! Our prayers have a great effect (8:3-5; cf. James 5:16)! The incense of Christ's perfect work of salvation and his perfect prayers for us make our imperfect prayers on earth perfect and completely acceptable in heaven!

b. The reason for God's trumpet judgements (chapters 8 and 9)

The seven trumpets symbolise the present judgements of God. Their introduction makes a deep impression on those who dwell in heaven (8:1-2). The trumpet judgements are executed as a response to the prayers of believers (8:3-5).

The early Christians, including John, experienced much opposition and persecution (1:9). In Revelation 6:9-11 Christians who possess the Word of God and the Testimony of Christ (the Bible) are martyred. Therefore God's punishing and warning judgements come over these persecutors (8:1 to 9:21).

Notice the order of events in the Old Testament and New Testament: First the believers are sealed (Ezekiel 9:3-4; Revelation 7:1-8) and then the wicked are judged. (Ezekiel 10:2; 9:5-6; Revelation 8:5).

c. The final appeal of Christ to the world to repent (10:1 to 11:6)

Throughout the whole New Testament period Christ makes his appeal to the world to repent. For every person in his own lifetime this is Christ's final appeal. This will continue until the last days.

d. The final uncovering of the kingdom of the world (11:7-10)

Throughout world history man accomplished so much in this world. But towards the end, man's ship will break loose from its moorings. Man's values and morals that kept man within safe boundaries for ages will become powerless. Man's conscience that had accused his wrongdoing and acquitted his right doing will become seared. Man will believe that there are no longer laws and norms and that he may do what he likes (cf. Isaiah 5:8,11,18,20-23). Man will fall into meaningless chaos, behave like an animal and lose whatever civilization he possessed. During the last days the world will be characterised as corrupt and decadent (2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 Peter 4:4-5; 2 Peter 1:4b; 1 John 2:15-17). And the period of the great apostasy will arrive (2 Thessalonians 2:3a).

e. The final salvation and the final judgement (11:11-19)

Christ's second coming will be the final salvation of all Christians: their bodies will be resurrected and reunited to their spirits (souls) and they will be rewarded. It will also be the final judgement for all non-Christians: their bodies and their spirits (souls) will be destroyed in hell (Matthew 10:28; Revelation 21:8).