

Chapter 10

Half-Time

**The half-time show occurs.
Then the world attacks Israel.**

The mid-point of the end-time seven years is rich with world-changing events. For example, the final Gentile to become a believer in Christ steps forward—then God immediately raptures the reformed Laodicea Church into heaven. This mid-point rapture removes every Gentile believer from earth. Prior to this rapture, God unveils great mysteries about his very nature. This event is the “seven thunders.” Some mysteries are so intriguing that *even angels long to look into these things*. (1 Peter 1:12) The seven thunders reveal this type of mystery.

There also is a story about two superstar witnesses who preach in Jerusalem. They will be martyred at this middle-point, then be resurrected and raptured into heaven. This rapture occurs with the entire world looking on; television will broadcast this event. (Revelation 11:9) The resurrection of the two witnesses will validate their message, and the message from the seven thunders. God reveals great truths to the world in manners that are infinitely understandable. Given this fresh evidence, the nation of Israel repents and follows Jesus.

Also at this middle-point, Antichrist travels from Rome to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. There he will proclaim himself the Messiah that Israel has sought since ancient times. However, Israel will reject Antichrist and embrace Jesus Christ. Israel’s rejection of Antichrist sets the stage for the persecution of Israel.

TABLE 10-1: THE FINAL SEVEN YEARS

FIRST HALF (42 MONTHS)	HALF-TIME	SECOND HALF (43 MONTHS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 Seals • Philadelphia rapture • 7 Trumpets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>7 Thunders</u> • <u>Resurrection of the Dead</u> • <u>Laodicea rapture</u> • <u>Two Witnesses</u> • <u>Israel rejects Antichrist and accepts Jesus Christ</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Israel Attacked • 7 Bowls • Second Coming

Underlined = covered in this chapter

Seven Thunders

The seven thunders spoke, but John did not write what was said. *Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke. And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, “Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down.”* (Revelation 10:1-4)

Much mystery of “who God is” persists to this day. With the information disclosed in the seven thunders, this *mystery will be over*, this *mystery will be finished*, this *great mystery of God will be accomplished*. Scripture records this event saying, *But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished.* (Revelation 10:7) Similar to the end of an intriguing book, the greatest mystery of all-time will be revealed.

If John had recorded the message spoken by the seven thunders, then today we would already know great mysteries about God’s very nature. However, it is God’s desire that these secrets be disclosed at a very specific point in time.

The Last Trumpet

The seventh trumpet is where the resurrection of God’s people occurs—along with the second, and final, rapture of the Church. A description of this rapture can be found by grouping events between the start of the seventh trumpet and the first bowl of God’s wrath—into one event. This event is the *seventh* and *last* trumpet.

Start with the announcement of the last trumpet. *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 Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.”* (Revelation 11:15) It is not obvious what these people are talking about here.

The statement, *the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord*—is from persons instantaneously raptured from earth into heaven. They are describing their experience by saying something like, “What I saw one moment was (the *kingdom of*) *the world*—then immediately the view changed, became a view of heaven, which is the *kingdom of our Lord*.”

Break ...

The rapture story does not immediately continue in Revelation. John slows the story to insert detail about primary end-time characters. Revelation 12:1 - 14:13 provide information about primary end-time personalities.

TABLE 10-2: BREAK TO DESCRIBE PERSONALITIES

Inserted Material	End-Time Characters
Revelation 12	A Woman, a Dragon, and the Woman’s Offspring
Revelation 13	Beast out of the Sea (v. 1-10) Beast out of the Earth (v. 11-18)
Revelation 14	Jesus and the 144,000 of Israel

First, here is the biggest-ever harvest of God’s people.

Continuing—the Last Trumpet Resurrection and Rapture

God’s people who are alive *will be changed*—given bodies that will survive all eternity—*at the last trumpet*! Our bodies will be transformed—in a flash—into bodies with supernatural, eternal flesh. Paul understood there would be a resurrection of the dead, immediately followed by rapture.

- *Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—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. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:51-53)*
- *For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)*

The phrase *and are left* refers to those left-behind at the first rapture. Believers left-behind the first 42 months, are now raptured.

Two harvests begin at the last trumpet. The first harvest takes even the very last Gentile ever to accept God’s salvation: *I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one ‘like a son of man’ with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, ‘Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.’ So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth and the earth was harvested. (Revelation 14:14-16)*

Gentiles Cut Off

Gentile believers are now in heaven, through either rapture or physical death. The time for Gentiles ends at this halfway marker in the final seven years. Gentiles remaining on earth can no longer accept salvation. Unbelieving Gentiles will have taken the mark of the beast and will be eternally bound to Satan. During the seven thunders, they will have heard the very nature of God, yet still reject God. They respond, “Not now, not ever!” To be fully convicted by the Holy Spirit of the need to accept the Messiah and to reply “not now, not ever” is to consider yourself as being greater than the Holy Spirit. Jesus said such blasphemy would never be forgiven. (Matthew 12:31-32)

Israel Harvested In God's Wrath

However, Israel will respond positively to the seven thunders. Clearly seeing God, Israel will accept Jesus as Messiah. Paul wrote of this situation. *I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved ...* (Romans 11:25-26)

Israel is the vineyard of the last trumpet. *Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine because its grapes are ripe." The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia.* (Revelation 14:17-20) Isaiah identified this vine thousands of years ago: *The vineyard of the Lord Almighty is the house of Israel.* (Isaiah 5:7)

The turning of Israel to God is a separate end-time harvest. Instead of being immediately taken up into heaven this nation, which rejected Jesus for two thousand years, is harvested in God's wrath. The violent nature of the Israeli harvest is because Satan will initiate intense persecution. In response, Israelis will demonstrate an uncompromised allegiance to God.