

THE BOOK OF REVELATION – Chapter 11 Pt.1

God's Message To A Sleeping Church

“THE TEMPLE OF GOD and THE WITNESSES OF GOD”

We saw at the end of the last chapter that John was 'recommissioned' to prophesy again concerning peoples, nations and kings. So, Revelation 11 before us today is a reset. Starting here in chapter 11 we are given a glimpse from the very beginning of the Tribulation again ... this time concerning some key characters that will be big names in the Tribulation period. This chapter has **a number of 'firsts'** for Revelation:

- It is the first mention of the Jewish temple,
- It is the first reference to the earthly Jerusalem,
- It is the first glimpse of 'the beast' and ...
- It is the first sighting of the Ark of the Covenant.
- It is the first that we hear of the 'two witnesses'.

Revelation 11:1-2 (NKJV) ... **“1 Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. 2 But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.”**

In the first two verses of Revelation 11 we were shown that the temple of the Lord, **representing the holy people of God** ... would be spiritually spared and remain safe with God through the coming national judgment. **However, it was not going to go well for those who were not the people of God.**

Please notice ... A distinction is drawn between the area for the Jews and the Gentiles, again showing that this is not the Church age where no such distinction exists (Ephesians 2:14-18). But we are given a little clue here ... our verse says **'don't measure the outer court because it has been given to the Gentiles.'** Verse two tells us that the holy city, Jerusalem, would be trampled by the Gentiles for 42 months (3½ years). This statement parallels Jesus' words in Luke 21:20-24 where Jesus described the destruction of Jerusalem that the Romans would inflict later in 70 AD. Revelation 11 shows us that the physical Jewish nation was about to be judged for its sinfulness. The rest of the imagery continues in verse 3.

Revelation 11:3-6 (NKJV) ... “**3 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.’ 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. 6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.”**

Here is the second 'first' in this chapter ... the first mention of the two special servants of God. Earlier in Revelation we read of 144,000 Jewish evangelists specifically set aside and protected by God. These will likely be throughout the entire world, having an impact on every country. **But here there are two special witnesses with a special assignment for a special city - Jerusalem!**

The Two Witnesses (11:3-6)

God grants authority to his two witnesses to prophesy for 1260 days clothed in sackcloth. As we noted in our last lesson, 1260 days is the same as 42 months and a time, times, and half a time. This time marker reveals that it would give a limited time of tribulation, distress, and persecution. Further, the two witnesses are clothed in sackcloth. Sackcloth was used for times of mourning and distress (Job 16:15; Esther 4:1-3; Genesis 37:34; 2 Samuel 3:31). The witnesses are mourning over the judgment message they are preaching. They are mourning for the sins of the nation and the judgment that will result (Joel 1:8; Amos 8:10).

We want to know who the two witnesses are. The next few verses describe who the two witnesses are. We are told that the two witnesses are, ***“The two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.”*** The word of God is going to be accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit, represented by the two witnesses. Verses 5-6 will give us more clarity about who the two witnesses are.

Verse 5 tells us that recompense will fall upon those who harm the two witnesses. The language is reminiscent of the divine protection God offered to the prophets (2 Kings 1:10; Jeremiah 5:14). When Ahaziah sent his army to take Elijah back to him, Elijah called for fire to come down and the fire consumed the army. The fire pictures judgment against those who resist these two witnesses. Verse 6 reveals who these two witnesses are. The witnesses have the power to ***shut the sky that no rain may fall while they prophesy*** ... and they have the power to ***turn the waters to blood and strike the earth with plague.***

*Well ... The one who was able to shut the sky was **Elijah** (1 Kings 17:1) and the one who brought the plagues was **Moses** (Exodus 7:17-21). To match what we were told in verses 4-5 we must see **Elijah and Moses** representing the Law and the prophets.*

Remember that we saw that the two olive trees and two lampstands represent the word of the Lord being accomplished through the power of the Spirit of God.

The Law and the prophets foretold these events concerning the destruction of the Jewish nation. Moses also prophesied these things would happen in Deuteronomy 28:15-68.

Revelation 11:7-10 (NKJV) ... **“7 When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. 9 Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. 10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.”**

We see that these two witnesses will be bulletproof until their testimony is complete. People will try to literally take them out, but none will get close. That is important to remember. God knows the number of your days as well ... even before you were born, and you too will fulfill the days allotted to you. But when the testimony of these two witnesses is complete, God's hand of invincibility is removed. And so we read that *'the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them and overpower and kill them.'*

The Witnesses Killed

And he will kill the two witnesses. As mentioned, no one could touch them until they had finished their testimony *but then the beast kills them*. People know these are prophets of the Lord and yet the beast overpowers them ... so what would the world think when they see this?

It will only add to the thought of ***'who is like the beast and who is able to make war with him?'*** (Revelation 13:4) And where does this happen? **In Jerusalem - they die where their Lord died.**

Note: ***Scripture notes that the whole world will see it.*** Now that didn't used to be possible and for many years Bible prophecy teachers wondered how this could be.

- ***Today it is easy-peasy!*** We can live stream any city that has cameras setup ... and Jerusalem will be on full live-stream watching these events unfold! And look at the response of the world at the death of God's servants - they are ecstatic!

THE HATRED OF GOD

It is strange to think of the utter joy the world will get when the two witnesses from God are killed. *Why such pleasure when truth is struck down in the street?* But we see it in our own day. **Christianity, which was the foundation of much of the Western world, is becoming despised today.** Many beliefs that are core to a Christian's faith are not only disliked but bordering on being banned or prosecuted. Consider just a few beliefs common and straightforward to a Christian:

- That salvation is found in Jesus alone and He is the only way to God
- That God only created two genders, male and female
- That human life is precious, starting right from the womb
- That God created marriage and that is to be between a man and a woman

These things are now seen as hate-speech in some circles. Ultimately, they come from a hatred of God and His authority over all lives. So when God sends two men to witness to the truth in the tribulation ... they will be hated, despised and killed! And their death will cause jubilant celebration world-wide ... **until God vindicates their message, His name, and indirectly, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 3 days later!**

NEXT ... REVELATION CHAPTER 11 Pt. 2 ...

REVELATION 11

THE TWO WITNESSES AND THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

A PROPHETIC PICTURE OF WITNESS, SUFFERING, AND VICTORY

I. THE TWO WITNESSES (11:1-6)



Measured Temple and Altar (v.1-2)
God is concerned for His people and His worship.
The outer court is given to the nations – a time of Gentile trampling.



The Two Witnesses (v.3)
Two olive trees and two lampstands standing before the Lord.
They represent empowered, Spirit-filled witness in the last days.



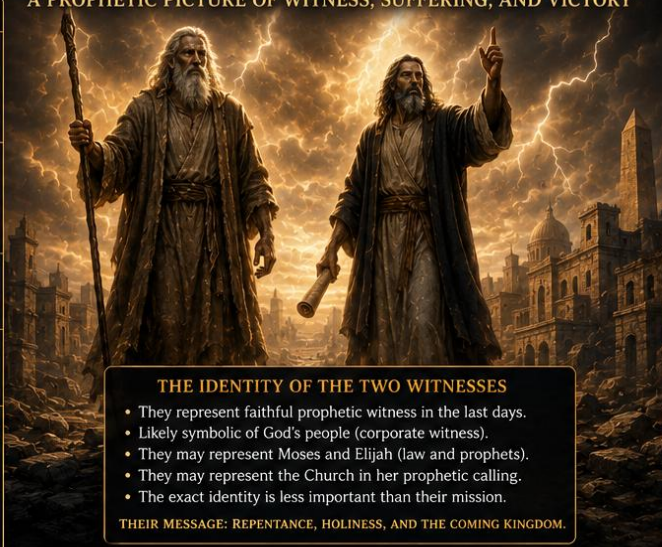
Power to Shut Heaven (v.4a)
They have authority to stop rain – symbolizing judgment.



Power over Waters (v.4b)
They can turn waters to blood – symbolizing plagues.



Power to Strike the Earth (v.5-6)
They have power to bring plagues as often as they desire.
Clothed in sackcloth – in mourning for a lost world.
They prophesy 1,260 days – the same period as the Beast's authority.



THE IDENTITY OF THE TWO WITNESSES

- They represent faithful prophetic witness in the last days.
- Likely symbolic of God's people (corporate witness).
- They may represent Moses and Elijah (law and prophets).
- They may represent the Church in her prophetic calling.
- The exact identity is less important than their mission.

THEIR MESSAGE: REPENTANCE, HOLINESS, AND THE COMING KINGDOM.

II. THE OPPOSITION AND DEATH OF THE WITNESSES (11:7-10)



The Beast from the Bottomless Pit (v.7)
When the witnesses finish their testimony, the Beast makes war on them and overcomes them.



Their Dead Bodies (v.8-9)
They lie in the street of the great city (spiritually called Sodom and Egypt).
The world celebrates their death for 3½ days.



People Rejoice (v.10)
The world hates true prophetic witness.
Those who dwell on the earth make merry and exchange gifts.

III. THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF THE WITNESSES (11:11-12)

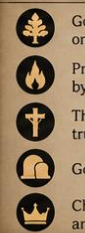


God Raises Them Up (v.11)
The breath of life from God enters them, they stand on their feet, and great fear falls on those who see them.



They Ascend to Heaven (v.12)
A cloud receives them, and they ascend to heaven. Their enemies watch – a public vindication.

KEY SYMBOLIC TRUTHS



- God always preserves a witness on the earth (Isaiah 6:13).
- Prophetic witness will be empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- The world will hate and persecute true witnesses.
- God will vindicate His servants.
- Christ's kingdom is certain and unshakable.

IV. THE SEVENTH TRUMPET SOUNDS (11:15-19)



Loud Voices in Heaven (v.15)
The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.
God's sovereignty is declared.



Judgment on the Nations (v.18)
God's wrath has come, the time to judge the dead, to give reward to the saints, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.



The Temple of God Opened (v.19a)
God's presence is revealed in the temple in heaven.



Signs, Voices, Thunder, Earthquake, Hail (v.19b)
Creation responds as the final trumpet ushers in God's ultimate plan.

THE POINT

Revelation 11 assures us that faithful witness may suffer, but it will never be silenced. God vindicates His servants, judges evil, rewards the faithful, and establishes His eternal kingdom.

APPLICATION FOR TODAY



- Be faithful in your witness, regardless of opposition.
- Our calling is to testify of Christ until He returns.
- Do not fear the world; God is on the throne.
- Keep your eyes on the coming Kingdom.
- The time is short – be ready and be holy.

"And the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." – Revelation 11:15

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