

"The Two Witnesses"

Part 1

Revelation 11:1-14

Introduction: Today in our study of the book of Revelation we have come to what I consider to be one of the most important chapters of the entire letter. This chapter contains a tremendous amount of information about the Tribulation period. In this chapter we shall see that verses 1-14 will continue the interlude which started in chapter 10. Then in verse 15 John takes us back to the Trumpet Judgments and namely the 7th Trumpet Judgment.

This chapter will open in a strange way and the first 3 verses seem to be out of place and they are often skimmed over as people get in a hurry to look at the TWO WITNESSES of this chapter. I want to slow down here and look closely at the opening of this chapter because I believe there is MUCH for us to learn in the first three verses.

Before we step into the chapter let me just remind you that this parenthesis or this interlude which started in chapter 10 and runs through 11:14 is placed here to help us to see that during the devastation of the Tribulation that God is in control of the events which are unfolding.

I. The Measuring

Notice Revelation 11:1

John is given a reed and he is told to measure 3 things.

1. The Temple
2. The Altar
3. The Worshippers

This is very interesting when we slow down and we look closely at what is said here. The TEMPLE that is spoken of here is the TEMPLE that will exist during the Tribulation. In the beginning of the Tribulation there is going to be a TEMPLE built for the Jews in Jerusalem. It will be in this TEMPLE that Israel will bring their sacrifices and offer them upon the Altar.

Daniel 9:27

*²⁷ And he [Anti-Christ] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause **the sacrifice and the oblation to cease**, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.*

Here we see that the Anti-Christ will stop the sacrifices in the middle of the 7 years of Tribulation and I point this out to help you to see that there will be a sacrificial system in operation within a TEMPLE which will be built in Jerusalem.

Now there is something else here which we need to see. In Revelation 11:1 John is told to MEASURE the WORSHIPPERS and the idea here is that he is to MEASURE those who WERE worshipping. That means what John is seeing here is in the FIRST HALF of the Tribulation. Remember that the Anti-Christ will stop the worship and the sacrifices in the middle of the Tribulation when he breaks the Covenant with Israel.

Matthew 24:15-16

¹⁵ When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

¹⁶ Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

When the Anti-Christ breaks the Covenant, Israel is told to flee into the mountains. Here in Revelation 11:1 the Jews are in the Temple worshipping so this must to be in the first half of the Tribulation.

Now just hold onto that thought for a moment because I am going to show you something that is very interesting.

Notice Revelation 11:1-2a

John is now told to NOT measure the outer court because it is given to the Gentiles. The idea here is that John was to CAST OUT the outer court where the Gentiles were.

Now let us remember that this m\MEASURING is taking place in the beginning of the Tribulation. Keep that thought in mind. Then consider that here in these verses God makes a clear distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles.

Now let me show you something from what Paul wrote to the Galatians.

Galatians 3:27-28

²⁷ For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

²⁸ **There is neither Jew nor Greek**, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: **for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.**

Here we see that in the CHURCH there is neither Jew nor Greek for we are all one in CHRIST.

So, this tells me that the CHURCH CANNOT be in the Tribulation!! In the Tribulation God will once again work with the Nation of Israel and the CHURCH will not be here because when the RAPTURE happens the CHURCH will be complete.

Let me show you something else. The MEASURING has a very interesting meaning.

Zechariah 2:1-5

*I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man **with a measuring line in his hand.***

² *Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, **To measure Jerusalem**, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof.*

³ *And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him,*

⁴ *And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein:*

⁵ **For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about**, and will be the glory in the midst of her.

The MEASURING speaks of preservation and protection. In the Tribulation period as God works with the Nation of Israel He will PROTECT and PRESERVE His people as they come under the attack of Satan when he is cast out of heaven.

Revelation 12:7-9, 13

⁷ *And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,*

⁸ *And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.*

⁹ And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

¹³ And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

Notice Revelation 11:2 again.

The "TREADING UNDER FOOT" speaks of HAVING AUTHORITY OVER. The Gentiles will have authority over the Holy City of Jerusalem and the Jews will have control over the Temple in the first half of the Tribulation. The Anti-Christ will take over the Temple at the mid-point of the Tribulation but the Gentiles will continue to control the City until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled which we will be when Jesus Christ returns.

Luke 21:24-27

²⁴ And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

²⁵ And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

²⁶ Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

²⁷ And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

The 42 months in Revelation 11:2 refers to the last 3 ½ years of the Great Tribulation.

All this information will be encouraging to the Jews who are going through the Tribulation. You may ask, "How will they know this?" The Word of God will be proclaimed by many in the Tribulation.

Revelation 6:9

⁹ And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

II. The Two Witnesses

Notice Revelation 11:3

Here we are introduced to God's two witnesses. We see in this verse that they will prophecy for 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ years.

a. **The Time of their Ministry**

When we looked at Revelation 7 I had made mention that the 144,000 Jewish men were probably saved through the ministry of these 2 Witnesses. Which means these 2 Witnesses would have their ministry in the first 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ years of the Tribulation. I want to show you 6 reasons why their ministry will be in the first 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ years of the Tribulation. These are borrowed from Garland.

Let us first understand that these 2 Witnesses will be killed at the end of their ministry.

Revelation 11:7-8

⁷ And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

⁸ And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

Now there are many who want to place the ministry of these 2 Witnesses at the end of the Great Tribulation. So, let's consider a few thoughts:

1. It is the Anti-Christ who is destroyed at the end of the Great Tribulation, not the 2 Witnesses.
2. It is more natural to understand the overthrow of the 2 Witnesses as leading to the defilement of the Temple at the mid-point and the Abomination of Desolation to follow. Prior to their overthrow, they are invincible and almost certainly would not allow the beast to sit in the Holy Place to declare that he is God.
3. Why would the two *Jewish* witnesses, who are key in the revival of the Jews during the Tribulation, be found in Jerusalem *after* the Jews have fled elsewhere due to the intense persecution of the dragon which begins at the midpoint of the Tribulation?
4. How could the beast overcome the witnesses at the *end* of the Great Tribulation and the world throw a big celebration at the very time Antichrist is heavily involved with the Battle of Armageddon and Christ arrives?
5. The death of the 2 Witnesses would more naturally contribute to the rise and fame of the Anti-Christ at the mid-point.

6. If Christ returns with the resurrected saints to the earth at the end of the Great Tribulation, why do these 2 resurrected witnesses ascend to heaven?

So, all evidence points to the ministry of these 2 Witnesses being in the first 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ years of the Tribulation.

We will come back to the SACKCLOTH next week.

b. **The Importance of their Ministry**

Notice Revelation 11:4

The Bible calls these 2 Witnesses OLIVE TREES and CANDLESTICKS. This would have taken John's mind right back to the book of Zechariah and 2 visions which were given to Zechariah. The 2 visions are for the purpose of encouraging 2 men who had returned from the Babylonian captivity.

1. **Joshua the High Priest**

Zechariah 3:3-7

³ *Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.*

⁴ *And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.*

⁵ *And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by.*

⁶ *And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying,*

⁷ *Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.*

2. **Zerubbabel**

Zechariah 4:2-6, 14

² *And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof:*

³ And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.

⁴ So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord?

⁵ Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.

⁶ Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

¹⁴ Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the LORD of the whole earth.

These 2 men Joshua and Zerubbabel would be empowered by the Holy Spirit to lead a revival and to see that God's Temple would be rebuilt.

The 2 Witnesses of Revelation 11 will be 2 men whom God will use to bring a tremendous revival among the Nation of Israel during the Tribulation period.

Application/Conclusion:

I wish we had 2 more hours today but we don't so let me get this to an end. These 2 Witnesses will have their ministry after the church has been Raptured. They will get saved after the RAPTURE. They will be the only 2 BELIEVERS on the Earth to share the Gospel. God will use these 2 men to bring about a global revival.

Maybe you are the only believer where you work and you wonder if you can really make a difference? Here is the answer. One person walking in the will of God can be used of God to make a tremendous difference in the corner of the world where God has placed you.

Ephesians 3:20

²⁰ Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,