

Measuring the Temple—Two Witnesses.

Rev. 11

9/30/2020

The 11th chapter of Revelation introduces a new section of this prophetic book. Four chapters are placed between the description of the first and last halves of the Tribulation Period. We have repeatedly pointed out that after the Church has run its course in this dispensation, as we learn from the seven churches discussed in Rev. 2 and 3, and the Church is raptured, as chapter 4 tells us, we find a description in Rev. 6-19 of the terrible day of the Lord, called in the Bible “the Tribulation”, “the day of vengeance of our God”, “the day of the Lord”, and “the day of Jacob’s trouble”. It is a period of time corresponding to the unfulfilled seventieth week of Daniel, lasting seven years and ending with the last great battle of history and the coming of Christ and the setting up of His glorious kingdom of peace and righteousness. The day of the Lord, the Tribulation, will begin at the Rapture of the Church and will end with the visible personal return of Christ to the earth with His Church to reign for one thousand years.

In the previous chapters we have been studying the first half of this period, concluding with chapter 10. Then follow four chapters which aid in setting up the information that will help develop the structure of the last half of Tribulation. The Lord Jesus is revealing to John, and through John to us, the events which will occur on the earth after the true Church is gone, pauses at the end of the description of the first half of the Tribulation to introduce us to the principal characters in the last half.

In the drama to follow in the Great Tribulation there are seven chief actors. Chapter 11 tells of two witnesses for the Lord. Chapter 12 speaks of a woman, a man-child, and a dragon. In chapter 13 we find a description of Satan’s two witnesses, the “beast out of the sea” and “the beast out of the land”.

V1. “A reed”: This is used as a measuring device. John is to measure we believe the Temple that is rebuilt during this terrible period of which much is said about the “abomination” which would stand in the Holy Place and declare himself god. II Thess. 2:3-4; Dan. 9:27; Mat. 24:15; Ezek. 40.

V2. “Without”: There is no measurement here because the Gentile population has already been divided in that the saved are in heaven and the lost are still on earth. Many believe this to indicate the God of Order and how He has protected the “Body of Christ” and therefore have them before Him in heaven at this time.

“42 months”: This corresponds to the last half of the Seven year period which is known as the “Great Tribulation”. Rev. 13:5 repeats this 42 month period. This is the last half of the reign of Antichrist here upon this earth. This time period is mentioned in Rev. 12:14 where it is spoken of as time, and times, and half a time which means three and half years. Daniel uses this same language in 7:25 of his prophetic book. In Dan. 12:11, speaking again of this last half of Tribulation we find twelve hundred and ninety days which is three and half years.

V3. "Two witnesses": These two may very well be some combination of Moses, Elijah, or Enoch. There is to be found a lot of material in the effort to discover exactly who they might be. It will be our lot to leave off this matter because it appears to me they are not identified in Scripture therefore we will continue in our journey comparing what is given us and discovering God's truths.

Deut. 17:6 "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall be that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death." Mat. 18:16 "But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established." Scriptures has always required two witnesses to bear testimony to anything before it was to be heard. We can say with confidence that these witnesses are human beings and that there is two of them.

"They shall prophesy": This means their lot is to foretell God's plan and will and by doing so warn all, especially the Jews who have been deceived in believing that the Antichrist was Messiah, of God's complete judgment on all Christ rejecting people. Their work will be down at the site of the temple.

"A thousand two hundred and three score days." This again is 42 months which will be the entirety of the last half of the Tribulation.

"Clothed in sackcloth": Again we are seeing that which the Jewish folk were accustomed to do.

V4. "Two olive trees": Zech. 4 Ref. There the reference is made of insurmountable power given to Joshua and Zerubbabel typified as olive trees.

Zech. 4:6 "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

"Two candlesticks": These two witnesses are lights before the powers of darkness.

V5. "If any man": They will be immune to any and all attacks until their mission is completed. We are being given the picture of these "two witnesses". During the entire last half of the Tribulation they will be testifying about Jesus to a Christ rejecting world. Their presence will be "going against the flow" of those who hear them. The result will be people attempting to shut up their words. This is what Satan attempts every time the Child of God shares the Gospel message in that the move from him is to take away the effect of the message at all cost. The difference here is that the "two witnesses" will be a testimony against them with an ability to destroy anyone who attacks them in an attempt to silence their true warnings.

"Fire": In nature fire devours all before it. God uses fire to devour the adversaries of His work. Fire is the mode of judgment from God all through the Bible. We are taught that He will destroy this world by fire. The final judgment will be a "lake of fire".

V6. "Power": These two witnesses are endowed with tremendous power. The Apostles had extra ordinary powers during their time. This was given so the Jews should have been able to understand that Jesus was their Messiah. Imagine what we are being shown that should be the incentive to pray and witness to all around us

today. The 144,000 are preaching the Gospel everywhere to those Jews and also Gentiles who have not been given delusion to believe the lie of Antichrist because they had refused to be saved before the Rapture. Along with that we are seeing these two witnesses declaring the Almighty in great power to them. The ones who attempt to shut them up will discover destruction and misery at their hands. This is a prelude to their eternal state. Water and its benefits are forbidden. Rain will be stopped and the water that is around them will be turned to blood.

“Smite”: This is defined as the action of striking, throwing, driving against, or forcing with the effect being the destroying of life. These two witnesses will take the life of their enemies at will. The methods will be unlimited. We can review the plagues of Egypt and their effects. They will have many more methods through multiple plagues. Remember all of this could have been avoided because God’s mercy had provided “a Lamb” for them which had been rejected.

V7. “Finished their testimony”: What a wonderful truth we find here. Paul was in danger of his life over and over. When he had finished his course it was his time to “be absent from the body and present with the Lord”. Jesus had enemies who wanted to remove his effect from them. It wasn’t until the timing of God allowed it that He was taken to the Cross.

“Shall kill them”: The beast is Antichrist the Man of Sin. His labor, allowed at this time, was to gain complete power. These two witnesses were in the path of that conquest. This is a temporary victory of darkness over light, evil or righteousness, hell over heaven, and Satan over God, because God has loosed Him during this time.

It is interesting to note that the two witnesses live up to their name. Martus is the Greek word for “witness”; we get our English word martyr from that.

V8. “Bodies shall lie”: The contempt for them is shown in that they are treated as unworthy of removal and lie as nothing in the street.

“City”: This is Jerusalem. Isa. 1:10 had declared it as Sodom. This is speaking to the moral decay of it. “Egypt” is referring to the social and political influence upon it from the world’s system.

“Lord was crucified”: The “city of God” responded to the presence of Jesus by removing Him from their land.

V9-10. We find in this statement that the whole world views them in the street. I must confess that when I first began to study this passage it was intriguing to how this could occur. Now with the advancements of technology this is easily understood. Everything is coming in focus now in many ways.

The whole world will apparently be so relieved that the ones who had denounced their sinful ways and been such a torment to them were now “off their backs” that they fixate their eyes on the despised pair. They will use the occasion to “throw a worldwide party”.

Dr. Newell: "Now comes the real revelation of the heart of man: glee, horrid, insane, inhuman, hellish, ghoulisg glee".

J. Vernon McGee: "The death of the two witnesses is an occasion for high carnival on the earth. The world engages in a modern Christmas and Mardi Gras, both rolled into one. The world has adopted the philosophy, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." This is the Devil's Christmas. The modern celebration of Christmas gets farther and farther from the birth of Christ and closer and closer to paganism. The day will come when it will be Anti-Christian—it is almost that now. Here is the celebration of what Antichrist has done instead of the celebration of the coming of Christ to Bethlehem."

V11-12. "Pleasure in sin—a season": The joy is stopped. God's servants are called home. Their resurrection is followed by their ascension. This again takes place during the last half of Tribulation and is being shown to us here during this interval to help us understand the precise plan of God upon Christ haters