

Chapter 11

The Two Witnesses

Alfor said, 'This chapter is undoubtedly one of the most significant in all the Apocalypse'.

- God is about to take possession of that which actually belongs to Him. **Note:** The devil has been the 'prince of the power of the air' since it was yielded to him by Adam in the Garden, meaning that the land and sea have been under the control (in a sense) of the Lord's enemies for these past 6000 years. But all of that is about to come to a close. Jesus is the rightful Sovereign of both land and sea. 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof' (Ps.24:1a).

- Daniel's 70th Week' (Tribulation) is a prophecy directed primarily to the nation of Israel, to be fulfilled when they are back in their own land, worshipping in their own temple (Dan.9:27).

Note: Even though there is no Jewish temple at present, it will be built before the final three and a half years of the tribulation.

- 'This chapter has to do with events during that time, and is called 'great tribulation'. Jerusalem will be trodden down, two witnesses will minister, Antichrist will rule, and Jews will flee for their lives before Antichrist, hiding in the wilderness and wherever possible' (Rice).

I. John is brought into the picture. He says, 'And there was given me a reed like unto a rod' (v.1).

It was a measuring stick, some 10-12 feet long. 'Measuring is a judicial act, the laying down of lines and borders which are to mark and determine dimensions and boundaries' (Seiss). Too, the 'reed' is 'like a rod'; and a rod in the Apocalypse always denotes an instrument of chastisement.

- A. John was to 'measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein'. At this time, the Temple will have been rebuilt and the ancient worship restored. **Note:** Five Jewish temples are mentioned in Biblical history and prophecy, those of: Solomon, Zerubbabel, Herod, Tribulation, and Millennial. The one mentioned here in v.1 is the temple that will be in existence during the Tribulation when Antichrist reigns.
- Peter said, 'Judgment must begin at the house of God' (I Pet.4:17). **Note:** This speaks of God measuring the spiritual condition of the Jewish people.
 - a) 'altar'. Refers to the golden altar of prayer (incense), inasmuch as the brazen altar of burnt sacrifice was not in the temple proper, but in the court.
 - b) 'them that worship therein'. Jews, today, are anxious for the Temple to be rebuilt so that they might once again offer sacrifices and worship as in days of old. **Note:** It's believed that this is the receiving again of the Jews, their re-grafting into the native olive tree, and their re-establishment as the chosen of God among the nations of the earth (Rom.11:21-25).
 - c) To leave out the court which is without the Temple (v.2). The court is given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city under foot for 42 months (3 1/2 years).
- 'This is the diminishing, cutting off, and casting of the Gentiles from their present rank and privileges' (Seiss). 'The times of the Gentiles did not end in 1843-44, 1914-18, 1924, 1948, nor any other date set by man thus far' (Dake).
- The 'times of the Gentiles' began with captivity of Judah under leadership of Nebuchadnezzar, and will come to an end when Jesus returns to earth in power and great glory, when He destroys Antichrist and his armies at Armageddon.

II. The Two Witnesses (vs.3-12). **Note:** Both the Law and the Gospel calls for 'two witnesses' to establish important truth (Deut.17:6; Matt.18:16). **Example:** Two angels appeared to Mary in the tomb of Jesus the morning of His resurrection (Jn.20:12). Two men (angels) appeared to disciples at Lord's ascension (Acts 1:10). The seventy were sent out two by two (Lu.10:1).

- A. Some believe these two witnesses represent the Old and New Testaments, or churches, or systems of government, or possibly something other than two men. But that cannot be. They prophesy and are clothed in sackcloth, neither of which can be said of any other than persons.
- B. They are to prophesy 1260 days (3 1/2 years).
- C. The question is raised: Who are these witnesses? And many names have been suggested as to their identity.
 - a) John the Baptist. 'Since he was the 'fore-runner' of Christ at Christ's first coming, and he came in the spirit and power of Elijah, he will be the New Testament witness while Elijah is to be the Old Testament witness' (McGee). 'John, as the forerunner of Christ in the first advent, was Elias: that is, he filled the Elijah place, operated in the Elijah spirit and energy, did for the occasion the Elijah work, and so far fulfilled the Elijah promise' (Seiss). **Note:** Christ called John Elias because he performed the same office as Elias.
 - b) John, the Apostle. Some believe Peter's statement in Jn.21:21,22: 'Peter seeing him (John) saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me', to mean that John would never die. Therefore, he would be one of the two witnesses.
 - c) Moses. 'The witnesses will have power over 'waters' to turn them to blood, and, to smite the earth with plagues as often as they will. Moses had this power when delivering Israelites from Egypt. Too, Moses was with Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration' (Larkin).
 - d) Enoch and Elijah:
 - Will be given power when they come to earth to witness. This does not mean the witnesses will be men who had already exercised such power.
 - Are symbolized by Two Olive Trees and Two Candlesticks which stand before God (Zech.4:2,3).
 - Were in heaven when Zechariah prophesied (some 500 years before Christ). This excludes anyone who lived afterwards.
 - **Note:** 'It is appointed unto man once to die, and after that the judgment' (Heb.9:27). These two witnesses have never died, making it possible for them to be slain by the Antichrist in the future. Therefore, this excludes Moses, or any other man who has already died. Only Enoch and Elijah answer to all of these. **Note:** If either Enoch or Elijah had been translated (caught out) in immortal glorified bodies they would have been the 'first-fruits of the first resurrection' rather than Jesus (I Cor.15:20).
 - Therefore, it seems the only two men in the Bible who could possibly fulfill these facts concerning the two witnesses are Enoch and Elijah.
- D. When their ministry is completed, they will be killed by the beast (Antichrist) that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit. **Note:** This 'beast' is undoubtedly the 'Prince of Greece', and definitely not the human spirit of some dead man. Remember: God determines the rise and fall of kingdoms, and Satan is always there trying to disrupt God's plan. 'In Dan.10:12-21; 12:1, we are introduced to the satanic prince of Persia, the prince of Grecia, Michael (Israel's prince), and other angelic rulers' (Dake). **Note:** We will have much more to say about the 'prince of Grecia' later.
 - a) We are not told the form of death they will suffer, but they will be killed in Jerusalem.
 - b) Their dead bodies will lie in the street for 3 1/2 days. Even the vilest criminals were granted burial on the same day of their execution, but not for these men. All decency is set aside.

They were treated as nothing more than dead animals. Too, their enemies were not satisfied with them being dead, but gloated over their decaying bodies for 3 1/2 days.

- c) The people rejoice over the death of the witnesses, sending 'gifts' one to another, celebrating the victory of the Antichrist. It's the devil's Hey-day.

Note: Church history tells us that when John Huss was burned at the stake, his enemies held banquets and danced, making merry that he was finally dead. But, remember, the Bible says, 'the triumphing of the wicked is short' (Job 20:5).

- d) 'After three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet' (v.11). Resurrected by the power of God. 'And great fear fell upon them which saw them'. (Probably seen around the world via television.) Having a 'party', and rejoicing over the fact that the witnesses had been slain, soon turned to 'great fear'. 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God' (Heb.10:31).
- e) They heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Come up hither'. No doubt, the same voice that John heard in Rev.4:1, using the same words. **Note:** It's been said: 'When the two witnesses stood up, perhaps their enemies were having a meeting to determine what to do; whether to lock them up, or chop them up. But they never reached a decision, because The Lord God Almighty took them up'.
- f) 'And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud'. **Note:** Some believe the 'rapture' of these two witnesses completes the 'First Resurrection', the resurrection of all the righteous dead before Jesus returns to earth for the Battle of Armageddon, and, to begin his millennial reign of peace and righteousness for one thousand years.

I. The Seventh Trumpet Sounds: (The third Woe)

- The seventh angel, restrained so long from ushering in the final scenes which separate us from the glorious world to come, at length, pours out his wondrous blast' (Seiss).
 - 'This is the 'Last Trumpet'. The sounding of this 'seventh trumpet' includes all that happens down to ch.20:3' (Larkin).
 - The 'seventh trumpet' involves events extending to the return of Christ, including the judgments of the 'seven bowls' (Full Life Study).
- A. Great voices in heaven utter themselves (v.15). We are not told who is doing the speaking. 'The inhabitants of glory have seen too much of earth, its behavior toward God, and God's doings for it not to be excited when the final termination is announced. Their silence breaks, and heaven rings with mighty voices' (Seiss).
- B. 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ'.
- a) The events of this trumpet will bring to an end the wrath of God; and bring in Christ as King of the earth. **Note:** The fulfillment of this statement (or announcement) will come three and one-half years later.
 - b) The casting of Satan from the heavenlies under the 7th trumpet makes it possible for God to take over the governments of this world at the time He has planned to do so – at the second advent (Rev.19:11-21)' (Dake). **Note:** Satan once offered Christ the kingdoms of this world - if Christ would worship him. Here, Christ takes what is rightfully His. The events in the remainder of the Book show 'how' He accomplishes this.
 - c) 'He shall reign for ever and ever'. His will be an eternal reign. This has been prophesied of old, and will surely come to pass.

- C. Twenty-four elders lead in worship around the throne of glory. A 'Victory Celebration'.
- We learned in 'Chapter 4' that these elders are the representatives of the first-born of the resurrection. 'They are the 'seniors' of the celestial congregation of the redeemed' (Seiss).
Note: The Church has prayed: 'Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done'. And here is the answer! His kingdom has come! The Church is jubilant! (And rightfully so.)
- D. The nations are angry (v.18) because power is to be taken out of their hands. 'He will break them with a rod of iron' (Ps.2:9). **Note:** This will take place at Armageddon. Man refuses to surrender to Christ, therefore, he must be defeated. (Man would dethrone God if he could.)
- E. The temple of God was opened in heaven (v.19). This is not the same temple as mentioned in vs.1,2. There is a heavenly temple and heavenly worship, from which the tabernacle and temple of the Jews were copied. God said to Moses: 'Look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount' (Exo.25:40' (Seiss). This temple is in heaven; that of v.2 was in Jerusalem.

Note: It's believed by many that v.19 should not be mentioned here, but belongs with chapter 12.

- a) 'Opened in heaven' - indicates worship and access to God. 'All of this points to the nation Israel, since the Church has no temple (Rev.21:22).
- b) 'Ark of his testament' (Heb.9:11,23,24). This is not the ark of the Old Testament. This speaks of a 'covenant-making' and 'covenant-keeping' God. 'He will make a new covenant with Israel at this time' - Jer.31-34 (McGee). Read: Heb.8:8-13. God will surely keep the covenants He has made, not only with Israel, but with all mankind.