

48. The Book of Revelation—11:6-10

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(7-28-21)

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Now, as we come to Revelation 11—let's remember that *Israel* is in view not the Church.

The *place* is Jerusalem—the *time* is the first half of the Tribulation Period (Chapters 10-14 are a flashback).

One of the things that makes this passage so exciting is that it confirms that the Temple *will* be rebuilt in Jerusalem—I believe with the help and blessing of the Antichrist when he makes his appearance on the world scene.

Many believe that the 7-year covenant the Antichrist makes with Israel as prophesied in Daniel 9:27 will include a provision allowing them to rebuild their Temple on the Temple Mount.

Daniel 9:27 says that at the mid-point of the 7-year covenant the Antichrist will cause the daily sacrifices and offerings to the God of Israel to cease—implying a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem.

The main obstacle standing in the way of building this Temple is that the Jews believe that the Muslim Dome of the Rock shrine sits on the spot where Solomon's Temple once stood. Because Muslims believe it to be the place from which Muhammad ascended to heaven one night—it is among the most sacred shrines in the Islamic world.

Every Jew knows that if they tamper with one stone of this shrine—it will start a holy war to end all holy wars! So how are the Jewish people going to erect a new Temple on the spot where Solomon's Temple was built—which they believe is now occupied by the Dome of the Rock?

Remember, they believe to be legitimate this new Temple *has* to be built on the same site that Solomon's Temple was located. So how do they build a new Temple without removing the Dome of the Rock and starting WWII?

Well, let me stop and give you an alternative view of where the Temple of Solomon originally stood.

You see, thirty-eight years ago, after spending sixteen years studying the Temple Mount area, a physicist and archaeologist at Hebrew University named Dr. Asher Kauffman came to some remarkable conclusions (also not without controversy).

In his landmark article which appeared in the March/April 1983 issue of *Biblical Archaeological Review*, Dr. Kauffman declared that while the Dome of the Rock has been assumed to sit on the sacred site of the Holy of Holies—the true location is actually one hundred meters to the north.

What is one hundred meters north of the Dome of the Rock?—a small gazebo-like structure that was built by the Muslims in the 10th century A.D.

They gave it two names: the "*Dome of the Spirits*", and the "*Dome of the Tablets*."

Thus, even Islam seems to have recognized this site as the spot where the tablets (the Ten Commandments held within the Ark of the Covenant) and the Spirit (the *Shekinah* glory of God over the Ark of the Covenant) had been. In other words, many believe that the Dome of the Spirits was built on the very spot where the Holy of Holies once sat!

According to Dr. Asher Kauffman and other scholars, the Temple could be rebuilt, and the Dome of the Rock would not have to be moved one inch and could remain standing exactly where it has for the last 1330 years.

And the reason being is that if the new Temple was built 100 meters to the north of the Dome of the Rock—it would put the Dome of the Rock in the ‘*outer courtyard*’ of the new Temple—which is extremely interesting when you continue reading in Revelation 11:

Revelation 11:1-3 (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 Greek is literally—"cast out or throw 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.** ³ **And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."**

As we have already stated in our Revelation study, right after the Rapture takes place there won't be any true believers in Jesus Christ left on the earth—all of them will have been taken to heaven! Since God never leaves Himself *without* a witness—He immediately sends two witnesses to the earth.

Verse 3 tells us—it will be their responsibility to *prophesy*.

We make the mistake of thinking that prophesy is only *foretelling* or predicting the future—and that was certainly *part* of what a prophet did when God sent them to speak on His behalf. But most of what the prophets did when they spoke for God was simply to—*declare* His words to His people.

In other words, most of their ministry consisted not in ‘*foretelling*’ but in ‘forth-telling’—speaking forth, proclaiming, or preaching the Word of God.

These two men are called ‘**prophets**’ in the Old Testament sense—calling primarily the nation of Israel to repent and return to the true and living God—the God of Israel.

The fact that they are wearing ‘**sackcloth**’ (as many O.T. prophets wore when they proclaimed God's Word) tells us that their ministry won't be *joyful* but mournful. You see, they will be hated by most of the people of the world at that time who won't want to hear what they have to say—but will have no choice but to listen to them.

They are also called the “**two witnesses.**”

A witness testifies to something they have seen (hold on to that).

The Two Witnesses will conduct their ministry during the *first* half of the Tribulation Period and will proclaim to the world that the disasters occurring during that time are in fact the judgments of God. (Explain from Revelation 6:17)

They will warn the people of the world at that time that the most severe judgments are yet future (second half of the Tribulation Period known as “the Great Tribulation”) and that what they have been experiencing up until that point are only the “*beginning of sorrows.*”

That the worst is yet to come so they need to repent immediately before it's too late! In other words, their ministry will primarily be evangelistic in nature as they preach the gospel, calling people to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—and at least 144,000 Jews will be converted (Chapter 7)—no doubt millions more.

“My two witnesses” (verse 3) is very strong in the Greek and can be translated—**“The two witnesses of Mine”** indicating they have been used by God before.

Let me just say again—when the Rapture takes place (before the 70th Week of Daniel and the final 7-years begins on the earth) the Church will be gone—so therefore who will bring the light of the gospel to the world?

God never leaves Himself without a witness, so He *recalls* **“The Two”** for special service during the first half of the 70th Week of Daniel to preach the gospel to Israel and to the world.

They will preach a message of repentance clothed in sackcloth the same way the Old Testament prophets would preach when they were mourning the sin of God's people. Here they are mourning how the Jews are following a false Messiah thinking he's their true Messiah—even as Jesus warned the leaders of Israel who had rejected Him—

“I came in My Father's name, and you did not receive Me, another will come in his own name and him you will receive.”

The message of the Two Witnesses will be to call people to repentance before it's too late—before the judgments of God wipes them out.

Of course, this message will be completely out of step with the message of the Antichrist and his followers (including the liberal apostate church which will be left on the earth after the Rapture) have been proclaiming to the world.

Their message will be a very positive one of world peace and unity—and for a while, the Antichrist will seem to have brought the earth into a new age of peace and prosperity—utopia!

But as the apostle Paul warned—

1 Thessalonians 5:3 (NKJV)

³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

Revelation 11:5 (NKJV)

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.

For the first 1260 days of the 70th Week of Daniel—these two witnesses will be *indestructible*.

It is impossible to be dogmatic about the specific identity of these two prophet/preachers—we know that they have served God in the past (*“The two witnesses of Mine”*).

Who are they?

It's important that we properly identify these two witnesses if we're going to properly interpret the passage—

Revelation 11:5-6 (NKJV)

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.**

Most conservative scholars believe one of the Two Witnesses is going to be **Elijah**—why?

John 1:19-21 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." ²¹ And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."

Why would they ask John if he was Elijah?—because God had promised He would send Elijah in the last days:

Malachi 4:5 (NKJV)

⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD [*before the beginning of the second half of the Tribulation Period*].

That's why I believe these Two Witnesses will conduct their ministries during the *first half* of the 7-year Tribulation Period.

Even today orthodox Jews still set an extra seat at the Passover table for Elijah because of the prophecy in Malachi—they know that if Elijah comes their Messiah won't be far behind!

(At one point in the Passover seder, the youngest is told to run to the front door and open it—as the family is hoping to see Elijah standing there!)

John the Baptist came in the "*spirit and power*" of Elijah—but he wasn't Elijah nor the fulfillment of Malachi 4:5-6.

Furthermore, based on the description of *one* of these two witnesses—he has power to:

1. *Shut up heaven so no rain falls for 3 ½ years*
2. *Power to call fire down from heaven to destroy their enemies*

Elijah called down fire from heaven (2 Kings 1:10, 12) and was used by God to bring a three-and-one-half-year drought on the land (James 5:17)—the same length of time as the drought brought by one of the Two Witnesses (Revelation 11:6).

So based on all of this, most conservative scholars believe that one of the Two Witnesses is going to be Elijah.

The real problem is in identifying who the other Witness is going to be. Many conservative scholars believe that he is going to be **Enoch**—primarily because Enoch, like Elijah, never died but was 'raptured' to heaven without tasting death.

However, I don't believe that one of the two witnesses is going to be Enoch, because Enoch is a type of the Church—and the Church will be in heaven before the last 7 years begins.

Just like Enoch was ‘raptured’ to heaven before the first worldwide judgment came upon the earth (the Flood)—so too the Church will be raptured to heaven before the second worldwide judgment comes upon the earth (Revelation 6-19).

Now, there are those who want to say that these Two Witnesses *both* represent the Church.

That is wrong for a lot of reasons—two of them are:

1. *As Christians we are to be harmless as doves in bringing the gospel in love to the people of this world. Remember when James and John wanted to call fire down from heaven to consume their enemies like Elijah did and Jesus told them, “You don’t know what Spirit you are of...”*

So, these 2 Witnesses are not acting like Jesus to the people they are witnessing to—and therefore I don’t believe they represent the Church.

2. *These are overcome by whom? → The Antichrist and Satan. Jesus said that against His Church the gates of hell would not prevail (Matthew 16)*

So, who then is the other Witness?—I believe it’s going to be Moses!

Based on the descriptions here these Two Witnesses have power to:

1. *Shut up heaven so no rain falls for 3 ½ years (Elijah)*
2. *Power to call fire down from heaven to destroy their enemies (Elijah)*
3. *Turn water into blood (Moses)*
4. *Strike the earth with various plagues (Moses)*

Moses turned the waters of the Nile into blood (Exodus 7:17–21) and was used by God to bring the 10 plagues on Egypt as recorded in Exodus Chapters 7–12. Also, both Moses and Elijah (representing the Law and the Prophets) appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:3).

Out of all the Old Testament saints that could have appeared to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration—why Moses and Elijah?

I believe there are two main reasons:

First of all, it seems from this that Moses and Elijah are connected with Jesus’ Second Coming in some way.

We learn from Luke 9:31 that the topic of discussion that Moses and Elijah were talking to Jesus about was “His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.”

“Departure” is from the Greek term from which we get exodus.

“Just as the Exodus out of Egypt under Moses led God’s people out of the bondage of slavery, the “exodus” of Jesus out of the grave would lead believers out of the bondage of sin [and death]”.

I believe that Moses and Elijah are going to play an important role in the time just prior to Jesus’ Second Coming.

Secondly, both left the earth in unusual ways—Elijah never died but was transported to heaven in a fiery chariot (2 Kings 2:11–12), and as far as Moses’ death was concerned—he didn’t die of natural causes and God supernaturally buried Moses’ body in a secret location (Deuteronomy 34:5-7).

We would be inclined to ‘move on’ with regard to Moses’ death if it wasn’t for that cryptic reference about Moses’ body in the book of Jude—

Jude 1:9 (NKJV)

⁹Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

The question is why did Satan and Michael the archangel argue over the body of Moses? Possibly Satan wanted it to prevent his resurrection as the second witness. So, based on this I believe that the Two Witnesses are going to be Moses and Elijah.

As I have already pointed out the phrase in Revelation 11:3, “**My two witnesses**” very strong in the Greek—“**The two witnesses of Mine**” indicating they have been used by God before.

Remember that a witness is someone who testifies to what they have *seen*—but when did Moses and Elijah ever see Jesus?—

Matthew 17:3 (NKJV)

³And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

Revelation 11:7 (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.**

Just like we are indestructible until our ministries are finished—“*Teach us to number our days O Lord...*”

How much would your life change if God said you only had 100 days left to live?

“**The beast**” (Antichrist) is now in power and wants to take over the Temple—but he cannot succeed until the Two Witnesses are out of the way. At this point, God will permit him to slay them.

I believe that Revelation 11:7 coincides with Revelation 13:1-4—the Antichrist after his pseudo ‘resurrection’ and the devil entering into him will then be able to kill the Two Witnesses.

Revelation 11:8 (NKJV)

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.**

Jerusalem, the only city God calls His own, the city over which Jesus wept compassionately, is now likened to Egypt and Sodom because she has rejected her Messiah.

Revelation 11:9-10 (NKJV)

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.

The whole world is able to see their dead bodies lying in the street in Jerusalem. This was scoffed at only a few decades ago until the advent of telecommunications.

Now we routinely watch sporting and news events live from all over the world via satellites (the Olympic Games are happening right now in Tokyo Japan)—what a prophecy when you realize it was written 1900 years ago!

This world leader who finally rids the world of these 2 ‘troublemakers’ by killing them will be looked at by the people of this world as a hero! This is the only time during the Tribulation Period where we read of any celebrating or merriment taking place.

A time when the ‘earth-dwellers’ throw a party, send each other gifts and a new ‘holiday’ is born—a kind of a demonic Christmas—“Dead Prophets Day”!

I believe that after the Antichrist slaughters these Two Witnesses he goes directly to the Temple and sets his image up in the Holy of Holies and demands to be worshipped as God (2Thess.2:4)—

Matthew 24:15, 21 (NKJV)

¹⁵ "Therefore when you see the '*abomination of desolation*,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand)...²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

This will officially mark the beginning of the second half of the 70th Week of Daniel.

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