

Two Witnesses in Tribulation (Message #25)

Revelation 11: 3-14

Tonight we continue with the 3rd and final message dealing with the pause in judgment between the 6th and 7th trumpets. We have dealt with the mighty Angel that came down from heaven and the future Temple in Jerusalem.

This brings us to one of the most fascinating accounts in Revelation. Our text reveals two witnesses who will preach the Gospel and gain the attention of the world. These will be so hated, that at their death, the world will rejoice. Let's see what the Bible reveals about: [Two witnesses in Tribulation](#).

I. The Ministry of the Two Witnesses (3-6) – These two clearly have a heavenly agenda. The Lord identifies them as His witnesses. So, what can we learn about the ministry of these two witnesses? Notice:

A. Their Presentation (3) – [And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth](#). They have come in power from the Lord. Theirs will be a most difficult task, requiring the power of God to endure.

- Any ministry for the Lord is dependent upon His power. Many have developed methods and gimmicks to draw crowds, but without God's power our work is futile.
- They are called [witnesses](#), being sent to bear testimony of God and His redemption plan. It's interesting to note that the word witness comes from the Greek word *martoos*, from which we get our word martyr. The word means "one who bears witness", but in John's day countless Christians gave their lives for their faith. Thus a witness, or *martoos*, became associated with those who died for Christ.
- These have come to bear witness, and they too will die for their faith. They will prophesy for 1,260 days, (3 ½ years). As they preach, they are [clothed in sackcloth](#), a picture of mourning and sorrow. Theirs won't be a message of hope and deliverance, but of judgment and condemnation.
- We don't know exactly what their message will be, but apparently they will preach near the newly rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem. They will likely preach Jesus crucified and resurrected to the Jews who have begun to offer sacrifices again in an effort to atone for sin. They will preach the Gospel message that Jesus saves!

B. Their Purpose (4) – These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. They are described as two olive trees and two golden candlesticks. Once again we are reminded that these are witnesses of Almighty God. They have been sent to fulfill His purpose. The olive tree is the source of olive oil. Pure olive oil was used to light the golden candlestick in the Tabernacle. It is often symbolic of the Holy Spirit. These have been sent anointed and empowered by the Spirit.

- The comparison to the golden candlestick speaks of the Light they will reveal. These have come to share the True Light, Jesus Christ. The Spirit is the source to reveal His light.
- There is a great lesson here for us. Our light cannot shine without the power of the Spirit. We must maintain a close relationship with the Lord if our light is to be effective. When there is no oil and only the wick burns, you get smoke instead of light. The world needs Light rather than smoke!

C. Their Power (5-6) – And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. [6] These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

- The message that they preach won't be received. The world will hate them and try to kill them. Wicked men will be unable to kill them because they are divinely protected of God. These have been sealed to perform the work God sent them to do. All who come against them will die by the fire from their mouths. God is well able to keep those who follow His will!
- We find in [v.6](#) the miraculous works these two will be able to perform. God will allow the heavens to be shut, the waters turned to blood, and plagues sent upon the earth at their command. Sadly, even with these miracles happening before their eyes, men will not believe.
- Now is probably a good time to discuss who these men might be. The Bible doesn't say and there is no way to know for sure. Some believe them to be Moses and Elijah. The miracles they perform are consistent with the miracles of Moses and Elijah. They appeared on the Mt. of Transfiguration. [Mal.4:4-6](#) is an interesting passage in regard to our text. [Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. \[5\] Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: \[6\] And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.](#)
- There are those who believe these to be Enoch and Elijah because they never saw death. I'm not sure who they will be, but one thing is certain, God will have a witness in the Tribulation!

I. The Ministry of the Two Witnesses (3-6)

II. The Martyrdom of the Two Witnesses (7-10) – In these verses we find that the reality of death for many of God's witnesses applies to these as well. These two men will die for the message they preach. Notice:

A. The Description of Their Death (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.* When these have fulfilled the work of prophecy, the beast, or Antichrist, will be allowed to kill them.

- It is a blessing to note that they were preserved until they completed their task. Satan was powerless to remove them until they finished their work. We may face the possibility of death some day for our faith; God is in control!

B. The Celebration at Their Death (8-10) – *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. [9] And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. [10] And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.* As these are martyred on the streets of Jerusalem, no one will mourn their death. Their dead bodies will lie in the street for 3 ½ days as news of their death is broadcast around the world.

- All of the world will see images of their bodies lying in the street, [v.9](#). Not long ago people wondered how this would be possible. In our day of modern communications images are sent around the world with only a few seconds delay. Their deaths will be “breaking news” on all the major networks.

- As news of their death reaches the world, men will rejoice and send gifts in celebration, [v.10](#). Those who preached this Man Jesus and warned of judgment for sin are gone. The world will rejoice because they can return again to sinful lusts without a man of God preaching the Bible to them.

- I thank God for real biblical preaching. I appreciate those who are hungry for the Word of God. Most of the world doesn't want to hear the truth of the Bible. They don't want to hear a man of God open the Bible and preach what thus saith the Lord. They don't want to hear that Jesus is the only way of salvation or messages against sin that bring conviction. The world wants a message of tolerance and acceptance. Can you imagine how much worse it will be when the church is raptured out and gone?

I. The Ministry of the Two Witnesses (3-6)

II. The Martyrdom of the Two Witnesses (7-10)

III. The Miracle of the Two Witnesses (11-14) – The party that the world has thrown won't last long. God does not intend for them to remain in the streets of Jerusalem to rot and decay. Notice what happens next:

A. Their Resurrection (11) – *And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.* I can imagine a news reporter on the scene describing how they've been left for 3 ½ days and suddenly their dead bodies begin to move and come to life. A great fear begins to settle in on those who are watching.

- Men begin to realize that something miraculous is happening. Could it be that the message they preached was true? Were these men really sent of God to bear witness of Him? Is judgment coming as they had said? The rejoicing of the world will cease as they come to life.

B. Their Rapture (12) – *And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.* As the eyes of the world are fixed on TV screens, these two men will ascend into heaven. Here God will reenact the rapture of the church. This will stand as a vivid reminder of the millions who disappeared when the church was called out. The world will stand in awe of Almighty God.

- For many the reality of judgment will begin to set in. They will realize that God is in absolute control. The beast had killed these men of God, but they didn't stay dead! The Lord has called them to the portals of glory before their very eyes. The world's hatred will be powerless to stop their heavenward journey.

C. Their Retribution (13) – *And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.* As the world is still in a frenzy talking about the miracle that has taken place, Jerusalem will be shaken with a great earthquake. In its wake one tenth of the city will crumble to the ground and 7,000 people will lay dead.

- Sadly for these there will be no miraculous resurrection; they have died in their sins. It does appear, however, that a remnant will believe as these events unfold. They will give glory to the God of heaven. This is probably some of the Jews who heard the preaching of the two witnesses and have now believed. God will get glory to Himself even in the midst of Tribulation!

As we close we are reminded that God's judgment isn't over, [v.14 – The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly](#). The 2nd woe is over, but the 3rd is quickly coming. I'm glad to know that I have been saved. I am confident in the blood of Jesus to provide my redemption.

Our world grows darker each day, but the wickedness we see doesn't compare to what will come upon the earth in Tribulation. Do you know for sure that you've been saved? Was there a definite time in your past that you saw your need of salvation, realizing you were lost, and called on the Lord to save your soul? If not you can be saved today. Jesus died for you and He doesn't want you to face eternal judgment and condemnation. Won't you come while there is still time?