

The Revelation of Jesus Christ – Message #10
Revelation 11:1-14 – The Two Witnesses
(9/13/09 PM)

Revelation is not necessarily in chronological order. The judgments appear to advance the narrative. (Refer to overview handout)

Last week we saw the opening of the 7th Seal in chapter 8. The trumpets do not follow the seventh seal they are the seventh seal. This seal contains all of the trumpet and bowl judgments. It seems best to see them as telescoping out in consecutive order. The seventh seal contains all of God's final judgments to be visited upon earth in the Tribulation Period. These judgments will most likely occur in the 2nd half of the Tribulation. (Outline Map of the Tribulation).

(10:1-11:14) is parenthetical. (10:1) "I saw" marks again the beginning of a new vision. Earlier we saw that there was an interlude between the 6th and 7th Seal Judgments.

1. The Times of the Gentiles (1-2)

Literal vs. Allegorical Interpretation

How one interprets this section reveals their approach to the entire book and to prophecy in general. Some try to apply this to the church and God's people in general. The literal interpretation is the only one that makes sense.

John was given a reed and commanded to measure the temple. The reed was a plant that grew in the Jordan Valley as high as 15 feet. They were commonly used as measuring rods.

• **This is a literal rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem**

Daniel and Jesus prophesied of the Temple's desecration in the middle of the Tribulation.

Daniel 9:27, "Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate."

Matthew 24:15, "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place"

Possibly the peace treaty with the Antichrist is what will make this possible. The word "temple" is *naos* indicating the inner temple. This was the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The "altar" is probably referring the Brazen Altar in the courtyard.

Measuring Indicates Possession

It seems to indicate God's preparation for the salvation of Israel "and those who worship there". Zechariah 13:9, "I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; and each one will say, 'The Lord is my God.'"

• **Distinguishes between Jew and Gentile**

This is a reference to the Court of the Gentiles. Only a Jewish man could enter the Temple courtyard where the Brazen Altar stood. John is told not to measure it because "they (the Gentiles) will tread the holy city (Jerusalem) underfoot for forty-two months" (3 1/2 years). During this time God will shelter many Jews in a place He has prepared for them. Revelation 12:6, "Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days." Some identify this place as Petra. Jesus connected this

event to the middle of the Tribulation. Luke 21:21-23, “Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people.”

Those who remain in Jerusalem will be severely persecuted.

This will bring this period to an end as Jesus prophesied.

Luke 21:24, “And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

This time began when Nebuchadnezzar captured the city of Jerusalem. It will end with the Second Coming of Christ.

The Forty-Two Months Represent the Great Tribulation

This is the 2nd half of the Tribulation Period.

Matthew 24:21-22, , “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. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.”

2. **The Two Witnesses (3-14)**

Their Title Comes from the Word Martyr

“Witnesses” is a plural form of the word *martus*. Many of the early Christians gave their lives for Christ so that witnesses became synonymous with martyrs.

- **Their ministry will be to preach (3)**

The word “**prophecy**” in the New Testament often does not involve predicting the future. It means to tell forth or to proclaim. These two will boldly proclaim to the world that these judgments are from God. The fact that they are dressed in sackcloth expresses the attitude of their preaching. Sackcloth was a symbol of mourning and humility. They will certainly preach the Gospel calling people to repentance and faith in Christ. Their ministry will last “**one thousand two hundred and sixty days**” or 3 ½ years.

Their Actual Identity Is Not Revealed

- **Their ministry will focus upon Israel (4)**

Their ministry will have a world-wide impact but the focus is to the Jewish people. This is seen in God’s description of them as “**two olive trees and the two lampstands**”. This is taken from **Zechariah 4:1-14**, the vision of the golden lampstand. The book of Zechariah contains more prophecies about Jesus than any other prophet except Isaiah. The lampstand represents Israel in Zechariah’s vision. The olive trees were connected to the lampstand via a series of seven pipes. It depicted the continual flow of the Holy Spirit. It was a promise to Zerubbabel, the political leader and to Joshua, the religious leader that the temple would be rebuilt.

These Two Preachers Will Be Empowered by God to Lead a Spiritual Revival in Israel

- **Their ministry will include miraculous powers (5-6)**

Some believe that these two men are actually Moses and Elijah because of the powers they are given. The early church thought them to be Enoch and Elijah. Because of their powerful preaching they will be hated by the earth dwellers. Also the fact that

they withhold rain only adds to the misery of the people of earth. They will be indestructible until their ministry is fulfilled.

God Always Has His Witness upon the Earth

- **God will allow the Antichrist to have them killed**

(7-10)

“When they finish their testimony” shows that they have fulfilled God’s purpose for them. “The beast” is a descriptive name for the Antichrist. This is not Satan who is described in Revelation as a dragon. That he comes from the abyss “bottomless pit” indicates that he is energized by Satan. The city of their death indicates again their special ministry to Israel. “Where also our Lord was crucified” is without a doubt Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be the seat of Antichrist’s rule for the last 3 1/2 years after he sets up his own image in the Temple. This is the “abomination of desolation”, Matthew 24:15. Paul also describes this event. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

The earth dweller from around the world “the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations” will rejoice over their death. This is the only mention in Revelation of rejoicing.

Their Rejoicing Indicates Their Rejection of the Gospel

- **God will resurrect and rapture them to heaven**

(11-14)

For the believer sorrow is turned to rejoicing. For the unsaved rejoicing is turned to fear. The earth dwellers defile their dead bodies by leaving them unburied. Their going into heaven is reminiscent of Christ’s ascension. This will be witnessed by the entire world. It seems likely the world also hears the “loud voice from heaven”. This will remind the earth dwellers that rapture was also an act of God. At that moment God strikes the city of Jerusalem with a great earthquake. “Seven thousand people were killed”. The word “people” is literally “names of men”. Some suggest that these will be prominent leaders in the world government of Antichrist. “The rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven”. That phrase is used to describe true repentance. This could be a reference to primarily Jewish people who come to faith in Jesus at this time. The announcement is made that “The second woe is past. Behold the third woe is coming quickly.” The word “quickly” means soon.

The Seventh Trumpet Is About to Sound