



I AM

THE TWO WITNESSES

Revelation 11

The Daily Word from Laura Martin

During the tribulation brought by the first six trumpets, the Lord empowered two witnesses to prophesy for 1,260 days, or three-and-a-half years. As the two witnesses finished their testimony, the beast from the abyss, a presence of Satan, killed them. However, after three-and-a-half days, God's breath of life restored them, and *they were resurrected to heaven*. Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet and loud voices in heaven proclaimed victory: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Messiah, and He will reign forever and ever!" People were terrified *but gave God glory*.

The two witnesses brought a *picture of revival during the tribulation*. They had the power of the Resurrected Savior *in them*. You have this same power of the Resurrected Savior in *you*. You are a treasured vessel to be used for His glory. God gave you authority over darkness, over demons, and over sickness because of His power alive in you. He promises to give you everything you need to be a witness so people will be saved from eternal judgment. Today, *go* and proclaim the good news in the power and authority of the Lord.

"The 24 elders, who were seated before God on their thrones, fell facedown and worshiped God, saying: We thank You, Lord God, the Almighty, who is and who was, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign."

— Revelation 11:16-17

FURTHER SCRIPTURE

- *Luke 9:1* — "Summoning the Twelve, He gave them power and authority over all the demons, and power to heal diseases."
- *Romans 8:11* — "And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, then He who raised Christ from the dead will also bring your mortal bodies to life through His Spirit who lives in you."
- *Revelation 11:6* — "These men have the power to close up the sky so that it does not rain during the days of their prophecy. They also have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every plague whenever they want."



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Teaching Notes

INTRO

As we study through Revelation, our hope is that you are pressing into the Scripture for yourself and allowing the Lord to teach you. Remember, the angel took an oath saying that “there will no longer be an interval of time” when the seventh angel blew his trumpet, but that “God’s hidden plan will be completed” (Revelation 10:6-7). The bride of Christ needs to be ready for His return.

Up to this point, six trumpets have been sounded. Revelation 10 depicts a pause between the sixth and the seventh blasts. It was almost as if God was setting the table for the final act. Revelation 11 begins with a step back in the timeline of the book. Two witnesses will be described who will prophesy for 1,260 days. Some argue that the witnesses prophesying began at the beginning of the seven-year tribulation. Our position is that the witnesses prophesy during the Great Tribulation, the second half of the seven-year period.

TEACHING

Revelation 11:1-3: The sanctuary and the altar John was told to measure could be the third temple. A third temple has to be standing at this time because the Antichrist will reveal himself at the Lord’s temple where sacrifices are being made. John was commanded to not measure the courtyard of the temple “because it is given to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for 42 months” (v. 2). Forty-two months is another way of saying three and a half years.

Throughout the Great Tribulation, Jerusalem will be given to the nations. The Antichrist established a peace agreement during the first three and a half years, so things had been pretty quiet. Daniel prophesied about this time: “He will make a firm covenant with many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and offering. And the abomination of desolation will be on a wing of the temple until the decreed destruction is poured out on the desolator” (Daniel 9:27). One week in Daniel depicted seven years.

Revelation 11:4: At the same time of this shift, God will establish two witnesses to prophesy: “These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth” (v. 4). This was a reference to Zechariah 3-4. MacArthur noted that the oil in the lamps came from olive trees.¹ The olive trees and the lampstands are pictures of revival. Their inclusion sparks a message of repentance.

In Zechariah, Joshua and Zerubbabel were described as the olive trees and the lampstands because they rebuilt the temple. Now, these two new witnesses will do the same thing during the second half of the Tribulation by pointing people to the Lord and warning that His judgment is coming.

Revelation 11:5-6: God will protect the witnesses in miraculous ways. Fire will come out of their mouths to consume anyone who tries to harm them (v. 5). They also are given the power to keep it from raining, to turn the water to blood, “and to strike the earth with every plague whenever they want” (v. 6).

Who are the witnesses? MacArthur listed six reasons why they could be Moses and Elijah:

1. “Like Moses, they will strike the earth with plagues, and like Elijah, they have the power to keep it from raining.”
2. “Jewish tradition expected both Moses and Elijah to return.”
 - According to Deuteronomy 18:15, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.”
 - Malachi 4:5 states, “Look, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome Day of the Lord comes.”
 - John 1:21 states, “‘What then?’ they asked him. ‘Are you Elijah?’ ‘I am not,’ he said. ‘Are you the Prophet?’ ‘No,’ he answered.”
 - The Jewish people were constantly waiting for and expecting Moses and Elijah to return.

¹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), p. 2013.



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3. "Both Moses and Elijah were present at the transfiguration."
4. "Both Moses and Elijah used supernatural means to provoke repentance."
5. "Elijah was taken up into Heaven alive and God buried Moses' body where it would never be found."
6. The length of the drought the two witnesses bring is the same as that brought by Elijah."²

The witnesses will bring a message of judgment but also the gracious possibility of mercy.

Revelation 11:7-10: In verse 7, the phrase, "When they finish their testimony," implies the ending of the three and a half years. The beast, which represents the presence of Satan, "comes up out of the abyss" and "will make war with them, conquer them, and kill them" (v. 7). Some believe that this occurs at the ending of the first three and a half years, while others hold that this occurs later. The critical detail is the timing of the beast coming up out of the abyss. It is difficult to determine with certainty the exact placement of this event on the timeline.³

After the beast killed the witnesses, he left their bodies to rot "in the public square of the great city, which is prophetically called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified" (v. 8). That city was Jerusalem. People would come by to see the bodies for three and a half days. No one would be permitted to bury them during this time. The world will rejoice over the death of the witnesses and will "send gifts to one another because these two prophets brought judgment to those who live on the earth" (v. 10).

Revelation 11:11-14: After three and a half days, God raised them from the dead (v. 11). God called the witnesses to heaven in a cloud "while their enemies watched them" (v. 12). As this happened, an earthquake struck the city and "a tenth of the city fell, and 7,000 people were killed in the earthquake" (v. 13). Those remaining "were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven" (v. 13). Now, "the second woe has passed" (v. 14). We have still been in the interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpet.

Revelation 11:15-19: Now, the seventh trumpet was blown and voices in heaven proclaimed the victory and everlasting kingdom of the Messiah (v. 15). The 24 elders worshipped God (vv. 17-18).

CLOSING

God's faithfulness, power, and wrath are going to be revealed. God's mercy and faithfulness will also be revealed as the seventh trumpet leads into the seven bowls of God's wrath. This was all started by the work of the two witnesses.

² MacArthur, p. 2013.

³ MacArthur, p. 2013.



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Reading Guide Questions

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1. What did God command John to do at the beginning of Revelation 11? Why was he to exclude the courtyard outside the temple? To what temple did the angel refer? (Daniel 9:27; Luke 21:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:4)
 2. How long will two witnesses prophesy? How were they described? What kind of authority will they have?
 3. How were the two witnesses similar to Elijah and Moses? (Exodus 7–11; 1 Kings 17; Malachi 4:5; James 5:16b– 18; Revelation 11:5-6)
 4. How will the two witnesses be killed? How long will they be dead? What will the people's reaction be when they die? What will their reaction be after the witnesses have risen?
 5. The most reliable Greek manuscripts omit the phrase "Who is to come," in Revelation 11:17. Why is that phrase not needed? (Revelation 1:4, 8; 4:8)
 6. What did the Holy Spirit highlight to you in Revelation 11 through the reading or the teaching?

