

The Book of Revelation

By

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE TWO WITNESSES

"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod; and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein" (vs. 1).

Some have misunderstood the Battle of Armageddon and think it is a battle between two earthly armies, with GOD helping one side. They are sometimes led astray by hearing a message on Ezekiel thirty-eight and thirty-nine, where two earthly armies are in a struggle.

In these chapters, Russia and Germany are to unite and come down upon Palestine. This great hoard will bring a confederacy of nations against it which will probably resolve itself into the full manifestation of the Roman Empire. In this great battle, which will be fought before the battle of Armageddon, GOD does step in and turn them back leaving "**but the sixth part.**"

If six million men come down, only one million will return.

Armageddon

But that is not Armageddon for Armageddon is the armies of the entire world gathered to consciously "**make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army**" (Revelation 19:19). It is CHRIST Himself that they hate, so GOD "**will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle... Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations**" (Zechariah 14:2, 3; Joel 3:2).

It used to be a great question in my mind what could bring ALL the nations of the world against Jerusalem when a few aeroplanes could wipe it out of existence. But here in chapter eleven we have our clue.

CHRIST purchased the earth on the Cross but will not take possession until all the church is in. He will then be opposed by Satan and must take steps to force possession. He snaps the seals, opens the title deed and comes down from Heaven; plants one foot on sea and one on land and swears delay shall be no longer. Satan has been terribly opposing CHRIST and fighting Him through His people. No one who pledges loyalty to the GOD of Heaven is safe on the earth, for "**all that dwell upon the earth shall worship**" Satan's superman (Revelation 13:8).

A Plot of Ground

CHRIST now measures off a small portion of ground in Jerusalem and keeps it by supernatural power, permitting the Gentiles to still tread "**the holy city**" under foot for 42 months (vs. 2). Anything that can oppose the anti-christ will draw the attention of the entire world and bring their armies to fight against it.

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth" (vs. 3).

Not only does GOD measure off a plot of ground in Jerusalem and keep it by supernatural power, but two men appear upon the earth and witness to the God of Heaven. The measuring is for forty-two months and these two men witness for twelve hundred sixty days. It is the same length of time and corresponds to the last half of Daniel's seventieth week; a time, times, and half a time; three and one-half years, or the period of time usually called the great Tribulation.

These men are clothed in sackcloth. Their very clothes speak of judgment and sorrow.

Just who these two men will be, we are not told. In the last verses of the Old Testament, GOD promises to "**send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord**" (Malachi 4:5).

John not Elijah

Elijah was taken to Heaven without dying. These two witnesses are finally killed, so some think Elijah will return to earth and yet pass through that experience.

When CHRIST sent His messenger, John the Baptist, before His face, people were expecting the messenger to be Elijah. But the people asked him, "**Art thou Elias? and he saith, I am not**" (John 1:21). Whatever else might be written, it cannot contradict this plain statement - John the Baptist is not Elijah.

The disciples asked concerning Elijah, and CHRIST said "**Elias truly shall first come... But I say unto you, That Elias is come already... Then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist**" (Matthew 17:11-13). The latter part of this verse does not make void the former that "**Elias**" shall come first.

GOD has promised to send Elijah before the dreadful day of the Lord comes. At the first coming of CHRIST, GOD, knowing the Jews would reject their king, sent John the Baptist in the spirit and power of Elijah. CHRIST said, "**If ye will receive it (the kingdom), this is Elias, which was for to come**" (Matthew 11:14). That is, GOD knows all things ahead of time, and had the Jews accepted CHRIST at His first coming, Elijah would have been sent then.

Enoch or Moses

Enoch was another to leave this earth without dying. Some think he will return as one of the witnesses and be killed.

When Moses died, GOD buried him and for some reason Satan desired the body and Michael had to guard it (Jude). At the mount of transfiguration it was Moses and Elijah who appeared and some think they are the two witnesses of this chapter.

Death to Enemies

"And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies" (vs. 5).

Those who preach the gospel of grace have enemies but suppose they were permitted to execute them on the spot. This is a death struggle and if GOD is to have any witnesses on the earth at all, it must be by supernatural power. Elijah brought fire from Heaven and destroyed the captain and his fifty. Let a man seek to hurt these two men of GOD and lightning will flash from their mouth and the enemy will fall dead.

What a time of anger and fierce wrath it will be. It has been so easy to destroy GOD's people, but here are two that can withstand any attack upon their life and even strike back with death dealing blows, turn water to blood and **"smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will"** (vs. 6).

Imagine if we can, the mad desire of the antichrist to rid the earth of these two tormenters. Radios will announce their activities to the world; great headlines will promise wealth and honor to the man or woman who can outwit them and put them to death. They will be the talk of the day and blaspheming humanity will seek in vain for their life.

If men will not listen to their message, they can **"shut heaven, that it rain not."** During the reign of Ahab, Elijah shut up the heavens for three and one-half years and well did he get the ears of the people by that act.

Satan's Man Triumphs

These two men are immortal until their work is done. Then **"the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them"** (vs. 7).

How strange the activities of evil men. Let true ministers of the gospel preach a heaven-sent message; let them speak of righteousness and offer mercy for sin and men raise up in wrath against them.

Here GOD's offer of mercy is rejected and the world rages against the messengers until they are killed.

Imagine if we can the fearful time of rejoicing as the radios announce their death. For three and one-half years the radios carried a daily announcement of their activities and great offers for their destruction. Suddenly the news goes out - They are dead.

Great Rejoicing

Immediately business will be at a standstill; whistles will blow; bells will ring; great celebrations will be held; special excursions by aeroplane will carry people of all **"kindreds and tongues and nations"** to **"see their dead bodies three days and an half"** for they **"shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves"** (vs. 9).

Special mass meetings will be held to send greetings and congratulations to the beast, and they **"that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them."**

Everywhere will be dancing and drinking and a general let down as earth dwellers make merry over their death. Newspapers will run full page advertisements of Christmas shopping specials as men **"send gifts one to another"** (vs. 10).

Torments and Terrors

But alas! their joy is short, for **"after three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them that saw them"** (vs. 11).

The city of Jerusalem is crowded from end to end - hotels are full, great excursions are bringing tens of thousands of other sightseers from every nation under Heaven. Men mock the dead bodies and kick them about. Suddenly in the midst of their gaiety, their eyes open; they begin to move about and stand upon their feet.

Conscience is a terrible executor. Well do men know that to trample under foot the messenger of GOD is to bring sudden and sure destruction upon themselves. In the midst of this blaspheming orgy of hate and shame a sudden fear falls upon those haters of GOD and His people.

Although unwelcome here, it is not so in Heaven for **"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"** (vs. 12).

The radio will flash to the world a different kind of news that night. An earthquake will tear the city and seven thousand men will die.

Glory to GOD

"The remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven" (vs. 13). They must acknowledge defeat. This does not mean, however, that they are saved. Rather are they compelled, as did the magicians in Egypt, to admit that this is the finger of GOD. Far from repenting, they go from bad to worse until under the vials they blaspheme the GOD of Heaven, even while gnawing their tongues for pain (ch. 16:11).

Forced confession and a religion of fear are never to be trusted. Felix trembled as Paul laid before him the fearful issues of judgment and righteousness. Herod heard John the Baptist gladly. Only release the pressure of a death bed scene and men quickly relapse into sin.

At the preaching of Jonah, Ninevah repented and GOD stayed their judgment. So here, if this were true repentance, judgment would be held up. But the angel with the seventh trumpet stepped forward and **"sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ"** (vs. 15).

The Last Trump

This is the last trump. It is in **"the days"** of this trumpet that redemption is to be finished and the Kingdom Age ushered in (ch. 10:7). The seven vials are included in this trumpet. Here, as at so many other times in this book, our Lord pauses to give the results before the events. This is the last **"woe"** trumpet.

The first woe lasted five months, during which men were tormented by the fearful creatures of the bottomless pit. Under the second woe, one-third of men were killed. This last woe includes the seven vials and other events connected with the closing history of this age.

Rewards

"And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give rewards unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth" (vs. 18).

Here we have a rehearsal of the events that are to happen under this seventh trumpet.

The nations are angry. The two witnesses "torment" them and the vial judgments cause them to suffer, for He who has waited so long in mercy has exhausted His mercy and His **"wrath is come."**

He will give rewards unto His servants. Today Satan is the prince of the world (John 14:30), but a change of government brings a change of officials. The saints are to rule the world. Daniel will yet stand in his lot; Moses will possess his recompense of reward; Abraham will inherit the city which hath foundations. All who have forsaken houses and lands will now inherit a hundred fold. We will be there as friends of the Redeemer, or as prisoners brought forth for execution. What tremendous issues are at stake as we now set the standard for our future existence.

The Ark

"And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thundering, and an earthquake and great hail" (vs. 19).

GOD's people, the Jews must be in the homeland during the Kingdom Age. For centuries, they have been as strangers among the nations, but GOD's covenant with them cannot be broken. Here the ark of the covenant comes into view and brings to our mind the Jew and his future.

There were also **"voices."** We will hear more of these voices as events unfold. There are voices

like many waters and voices like thunder; voices announcing the fall of Babylon; proclaiming the everlasting gospel and voices giving comfort to those persecuted unto death.

~ end of chapter 11 ~

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