

BOOK OF REVELATION

Part 18 – Second Parenthesis: The Temple, The Two Witnesses, and the Seventh Trumpet: Chapter 11

I. INTRODUCTION

REVIEW: We are now well into the Tribulation period and now arriving at the middle of the Tribulation. So far in the Tribulation we have witnessed the Seal judgments in Chapter 6, the first parenthetical passage where the 144,000 witnesses are sealed in Chapter 7, and the trumpet judgments in Chapters 8 and 9. The second parenthetical passage began in Chapter 10 and goes through Chapter 11 verse 14. Chapter 10 shows us where the Lord Jesus Christ makes an appearance on earth with a message from God and with a little book for the Apostle John to consume and with that consumption teaches the Apostle John a lesson as well. Chapter 11 dealt with the death of the two witnesses and their subsequent resurrection and ascension back into heaven, the seventh and final trumpet sounding.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE TRIBULATION PERIOD: The middle of the tribulation time period commences with the following sequence of events most likely in the following sequence. We will study all of these events in Chapters 11, 12, and 13:

- (1) After trumpet judgment number six, the war in heaven, and the subsequent loss of the war by Satan and demonic forces and expulsion out of heaven, which we will study in this lesson.
- (2) After Satan arrives back on earth, he resurrects the body of the Antichrist and indwells it.
- (3) Then the resurrected Antichrist, animated by Satan, overcomes and kills the two witnesses and the seventh trumpet judgment following their ascension back into heaven. The end of their ministry is the middle of the tribulation.
- (4) Then the Antichrist will break the treaty with Israel and defiles the rebuilt Jewish temple by entering it and sets up an image of himself and demands worship. This is Abomination Of Desolation spoken of in Daniel 9 and Matthew 24.
- (5) The False Prophet comes on the scene, gives life unto the image of the Beast, and leads the world in worship of the Beast.
- (6) Then the Antichrist will persecute and kill many of the Jewish people.
- (7) Institution of the Mark Of The Beast which without no one on earth can buy or sell.

The third parenthetical passage, like the second parenthetical passage begins with this chapter and goes through Chapter 14.

II. EXEGESIS – THE TEMPLE, THE TWO WITNESSES, AND THE SEVENTH TRUMPET.

A. VERSES 1-2: THE MEASUREMENT OF THE TEMPLE AND THE RULE OF THE GENTILES.

*VERSE 1-2 “(1) 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.
(2) But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.”*

This is a continuation of the vision that the Apostle John had that started in Chapter 10. The Apostle John witnesses an “angel” coming down and standing upon the earth and the sea. This was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ as the description of the “angel” leaves no doubt as to His identity. Remember the word “angel” in the original language carries the meaning of “messenger”. The identity of this “angel” here is reaffirmed a few verses later.

The word “reed” in the original language carries the meaning of “the stem of a plant”. In other words the main stalk or main branch of a plant. The word “reed” is used 22 times in the Old Testament and 11 times in the New Testament. The book of Ezekiel makes reference to a “measuring reed” 16 times of the 22 times used in the Old Testament. A reed was used to make measurements of length and width because it was stiff and had some length to it. It was also used to mock the Lord Jesus Christ as a substitute scepter.

Ezekiel 40:3 And he brought me thither, and, behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; and he stood in the gate.

The Apostle John is specifically commanded to measure the altar and the temple proper but not the court outside the temple. Remember in the early New Testament times, there was the temple itself, a court around the temple, that only the Jews could enter, and then court of the Gentiles, around that court, that non Jews could enter. The Apostle John is commanded to not measure the court of the Gentiles, as it is their place. This is also a prophesy that Jerusalem during this time will be under the control of the Gentiles and specifically is under the rule of the Antichrist because no doubt of his peace treaty with Israel. The Jews of this time period do not mind their land being under the control of Antichrist because they have peace with their neighbors, have rebuilt their temple, and began to do sacrifices again.

B. VERSES 3-14: THE TWO WITNESSES AND THEIR MINISTRY

VERSE 3 "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."

Now we see the introduction in the book of the Revelation of the "Two Witnesses". We see here that they are ordained of God to be witnesses. Their time of prophecy is very specific in length: 1260 days. The Jewish calendar each month is 30 days and the Jewish year is 360 days in length. That translates out to be 3 ½ years in length. The scripture tells us that the period of their prophecy will commence when the Antichrist signs the peace treaty with the nation of Israel. Chronologically this occurs in Chapter 6 when the first seal is broken and the rider on a white horse with no arrows appears on the earth. He conquers without violence and rules most if not all the known world.

VERSE 4 "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth."

We see here that the mention here of "the two olive trees" is a reference to the prophecy given in the book of Zechariah Chapter 4. First we see that in Zechariah 4:2-3 the prophecy is given and in verses 12-14 the interpretation of the prophecy is given. Many times in scripture a prophecy will be given and in the following verses the prophecy is interpreted for you to clarify the meaning.

Zechariah 4:2-3 "(2) And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: (3) And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.

Zechariah 4:12-14 "And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? (13) And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. (14) Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

VERSES 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.

Now we see the characteristics of the Two Witnesses.:

- Breathe fire to destroy anyone who would try to harm or kill them.
- Stop rainfall on earth.
- Turn water into blood.
- Bring plagues on the earth.

Theses Two Witnesses will be able to bring down calamity upon the earth, which the majority of the people of the earth will no doubt resent and despise very much. But this majority will not be able to retaliate against them in any way. However there will be no doubt many Jews and Gentiles who will accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour because of their witness. Their witness could be instrumental in witnessing to 144,000 Jewish men who were sealed in Chapter 7, as witnesses on the earth as well. Their ministry however will be more behind the scenes compared to the ministry of these Two Witnesses. The whole earth will know of these men, their power, and testimony.

There has been much speculation about the identity of the Two Witnesses. Many have speculated that they could be Moses and Elijah. The reason they speculate that it Moses and Elijah because of the miracles they performed in their respective ministries:

- **Moses turned the Nile River to blood in Exodus 7, per God's instructions.**
- **Moses brought the plaques of frogs, lice, flies, disease in cattle, boils, and locusts upon Egypt in Exodus 8-10, also per God's instructions.**
- **Moses also announced the judgment of hail and fire mixed in Exodus 9, per God's instructions.**
- **Elijah had caused the rain to cease in 1 Kings 17 per the instruction of God.**
- **Elijah called down fire out of heaven to burn the sacrifice prepared for God in 1 Kings 18 in the challenge to the 450 prophets to prove to them who was really God.**

The only indication given to us in scripture as to who these Two Witnesses might be is the appearance of Moses and Elijah upon the mount where Jesus was transfigured for a short time into his true glorified appearance. Notice who appears with him: Moses and Elijah.

Matthew 17:1-4 “(1) And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, (2) And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. (3) And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him”

Some have speculated that they could be Elijah and Enoch. They state the reason is that Enoch and Elijah are the only men who have never experienced earthly death. Both were translated directly into heaven without experiencing death.

However the book of the Revelation nor the prophecy in Zechariah does not tells us specifically who these Two Witnesses are. Only God knows for sure.

VERSES 7-10: "(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.

At the end of the first 3 1/2 years of the Tribulation, their time of supernatural preservation will come to an end. The Antichrist, after being killed and appearing to rise from the dead at this time, will declare war on the Two Witnesses, overcome, and kill these Two Witnesses. Remember Satan does not have the power to resurrect anyone from the dead, but does have the power to animate a dead body. Satan will animate the body of the Antichrist with himself making it appear that the Antichrist has arisen from the dead. Satan would have the power to overcome the Two Witnesses that the Antichrist, as a mere man influenced by Satan, would not have. The book of Jude tells us that Satan contended with Michael over the body of Moses. We will study this in more detail in Revelation 13.

VERSE 8: "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."

The Antichrist will do the worse offense to a person when they have died. He will not permit their bodies to be buried but allow them to decompose in the street. The streets of what town is referred to here. The passage again interprets itself for you: Jerusalem. Why does the scripture refer to Jerusalem as spiritual Sodom and Gomorrah. Because it was in Jerusalem that the southern tribes of Israel were led in times past in idolatrous worship of false gods by the wicked kings of Judah who did not serve the Lord. Remember this is where the Antichrist will also defile the Jewish temple by entering it and setting up an image of himself which we will study in much more detail in Revelation 13.

VERSE 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."

In the time that the Apostle John received the visions that comprise the Book of the Revelation it would have been inconceivable for the nations of the earth to see their dead bodies right after they were killed. At that time, that news would have taken weeks or months to travel. Thanks to the progress of modern technology, which is governed by principles first discovered by Christian scientist in recent centuries, the whole earth will be able to view the dead bodies of the Two Witnesses in the streets of Jerusalem. Television, internet, and social media will make this possible and very practical.

VERSE 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."

The majority of the people of the earth will be so happy at the death of the Two Witnesses, who have no doubt tormented many of them who probably tried to harm them. In their time of witnesses they will have plagued the earth as part of their ministry. The only ones on earth who will be saddened and perhaps discouraged will be the 144,000 Jewish witnesses and the massive number of tribulation saints. They would have to be careful during this time or face persecution for not going along with the "worldwide party".

VERSES 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."

The party comes to an abrupt end. After 3 1/2 days, the Two Witnesses are brought back to life by God himself, leaving the Antichrist helpless to intervene. The fear that came upon the world had to be unimaginable, as they viewed this no doubt on television, internet, or social media.

VERSE 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 if their resurrection was not enough, God finally has "the final say" by bringing these witnesses home when their ministry is complete. They are taken up into heaven in a manner similar to the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ as described in Acts 1.

VERSE 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."

Then the final judgment of God falls for the slaying of his Two Witnesses. One tenth of the city of Jerusalem is destroyed and 7000 men die in the same earthquake. What is different here. Unlike most of the judgment, where men continue in their sin unrepentant, the surviving Jews and even Gentiles here glorified God in heaven, no doubt angering the Antichrist who could not stop this judgment from God.

VERSE 14 "The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly."

Now we see the complete end of trumpet judgment number six. The great earthquake in Jerusalem and the death of 7000 is the final part of trumpet judgment number six. Trumpet number six is the second woe is now complete. The seventh trumpet judgment, the third woe, is about to commence. But it is not what you might expect.

C. VERSES 15-19: THE SEVENTH TRUMPET AND WORSHIP OF GOD.

VERSE 15: "And the seventh angel 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; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

Now we see the seventh and final trumpet sounding with simply voices from heaven with a message from God. The kingdoms of the world belong to the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ and he will rule forever. This is a "slap in the face" to the Satan animated Antichrist, who does not have the power to stop these divine judgments. This is again evidence of the mercy of God, giving mankind another chance to repent and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, even now.

*VERSES 16-18: "(16) And the four and twenty elders,
which sat before God on their seats,
fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,
(17) Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty,
which art, and wast, and art to come;
because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.
(18) 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 reward unto thy servants the prophets,
and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great;
and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth."*

Notice here the praise of the 24 elders. They remind us that God has always been and is without beginning or end. Also he does not abdicate His great power but rules the universe and everything in the book of the Revelation in unfolding according to His plan. They also remind us here that the time of judgment of the lost is coming shortly even though they are still angry at God for resurrecting the Two Witnesses who had tormented them. However they also remind us that the saints who serve God are to be given reward for their service.

*VERSE 19: "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 thunderings,
and an earthquake, and great hail."*

The view before the throne of God is now different. We see instead of God being constantly praised, or silence in heaven as was between the seal judgments and trumpet judgments. The war in heaven is about to commence and is described in the next chapter. Could this verse be the scene of preparation for that war before the throne of God? Could this be the call to arms? Only God knows for sure.

III. APPLICATIONS

- **The church age believer will not go through the Tribulation or Great Tribulation.**
- **God always has His witnesses in every generation and even during this time of judgment.**
- **The time for witnesses to work is the present. Our time for witnessing is limited just like the ministry of the Two Witnesses is limited.**
- **We must be about "The Master's Business"**
- **It may seem like that Satan, his demons, and human followers will have victory.**
- **However, God will have the final victory and win the war.**
- **The believer is already on the winning side. PRAISE GOD!!**