

THE BOOK OF REVELATION  
"Two Witnesses in Troublous Times"  
Revelation 11:1-7

Introduction

1. The Book of Revelation concerns a. what things have been seen (1:9 - 18), b. even what things are (2:1 - 3:22), c. what things shall be hereafter (4:1 - 19:21).
2. In these broad sections of the Book, there are parentheses (7:1-17; 10:1 - 11:14). Before the seventh trumpet is sounded (1:15-19), it is evident that God's purpose for the universe is assured (10:1-7). Moreover, John is commanded to prophecy concerning peoples, nations, tongues, and kings (10:8-11).
3. From the standpoint of Biblical prophecy and chronology, an understanding of the events relating to Daniel's "70 weeks", especially the 70th week," is absolutely indispensable (Dan. 9:24 - 27). The "70th week" is elsewhere referred to as the Tribulation which will "try men that dwell on the earth" (Rev. 3:10) after the Rapture. (Refer to study notes provided).
4. So with the Rapture having taken place, the first half of the Tribulation (3-1/2 years) is comparatively "sweet" while the last half (3-1/2 years) is bitter (cf. 10:4, 10).
5. How the Lord takes possession of things on the earth (after the Rapture) is made known here. The flavor is Jewish and through God-appointed witnesses. Here are the details:

1. The PREPARATION for Possession vv. 1, 2

Note: The restoration of Israel considered here was prophesied (Zech. 2:1-13). Since that prediction certain historical developments have surfaced: a. End of Turkish rule, 1917. b. End of British rule, 1948. c. Declared Israel State, 1948. All of these historical events seem to be steps toward the goal (Zech. 2:1-13), but with the expectation of problems (Dan. 9:26).

The "Mighty Angel" (10:1, 2) speaks to John (11:1). He is given (passive) a reed which is like a rod ( ), a symbol of stability. Using a present imperative ( ) the angel instructs John to measure certain items (cf. Ezek. 40; Zech. 2; Rev. 21 for other measurements). Obviously this section is characteristic of a possession. Here what is measured:

a. Place of meeting -- temple

This shows that God is going to deal again with Israel. The 70th week of Daniel is definite (9:27). Here is the sacred place of worship. Christians have no place of worship on earth. This is essentially Jewish. It suggests a Tribulation temple of some sort! Moreover it is a temple "of God" because He owns it.

b. Place of sacrifice -- altar

The brazen altar is indicated. It signifies sacrifices and acceptance of those who in faith draw nigh to it. Nothing but a Jewish concept could be in view here.

c. Place of worship -- them that worship

Right in the middle of the mass unbelief of the Tribulation, there is a true godly remnant. It is this Jewish remnant which is acknowledged here. Wheat and tares will persist in those days. Mercy for the one and judgment for the other.

d. Place of exclusion -- outer court

The court ( ) may include more than that of the "Gentile Court." This must be a reference to the apostates of both Israel and the Gentiles. There is no need to measure this godless profession. They are "without" ( ) and given to the Gentiles (passive, ).

e. Place of subjection -- the Holy City

The verb tread ( ) means to trample as conqueror and with contempt (cf. Luke 21:24). Thus will the Gentiles act over Jerusalem until the times of the Gentiles is over. The time listed, 42 months, is the same as 1260 days or 3-1/2 years. The reference is to the last half of the Tribulation Period.

2. DESIGNATION of Propagation vv. 3-6

God has already sealed 144,000 Jews from the horrors of the Tribulation (Rev. 7:4-8). Here are two more who will be able to cope with the Antichrist and his and God regime. Consider these facts about them:

a. Their Appointment v. 3

1) It is Predetermined It is God Who gives to the two witnesses. "Power" is italicized, hence not in the original text but supplied to give sense to the passage (cf. v. 6 authority, ). The point is clear -- they are emissaries of the Lord.

2) It is Possessed What a wonderful thought that these are My ( ) witnesses. Nothing of self, but representatives of the Lord (cf. Acts 1:8).

3) It is Purposed There is no question about their action. They "shall prophecy" (future tense).

4) It is Numbered The time limitations are the same as given above (v. 2). However, it is in days suggesting the preciousness of time. These days seem to refer to the first half of Daniel's 70th week.

5) It is Described Clothing worn by these witnesses is sackcloth (cf. Luke 10:13).

NOTE: There is considerable discussion about the number of the witnesses. Many hold they may actually be Moses (Ex. 7:20; 9:14) and Elijah (Mal. 4:5, 6) in view of the record about them (cf. v. 6). Both of these men performed miracles. They appeared on the Mt. of Transfiguration (Mt. 17).

b. Their Commitment v. 4

1) For Witness. Two figures are used to connote the witnesses: a) Olive trees. b) Lampstands. The undoubted reference is the O.T. (Zech. 4). The olive tree may speak of witness and the lamps of the light of the Holy Spirit. No matter what, they are "My witnesses."

2) For Testimony. This is standing (perfect) before the face of God (or LORD). That is the only way a witness and testimony can be genuinely given. It is forever standing before "the Lord of the earth."

Note: Their message surely included: a) Christ as Lord of all. b) Human wickedness before God. c) The character and reason for judgment. d) Opposition to the Beast and False Prophet. e) Evidence against spiritually degraded Jerusalem.

c. Their Equipment vv. 5, 6

1) Protection v. 5 Two first class conditions denote that any attempt to hurt the witnesses will fail. In the first instance, fire comes out of their mouths and devours or "eats down" ( ) their enemies. In the second, there is inevitable ( ) death. In this day grace works to save souls, but in that day judgment will clear the earth of Christ-rejecting sinners.

2) Authorization v. 6 The present tense "have" points to the "power" (authority ) the witness hold. It moves in three directions: a) Heavens -- shutting off rain. b) Water -- turning into blood. c) Earth -- smiting it with plagues as often as they will to do it.

Conclusion God has reached the end with man. Patience has run out. Judgment is sure. God's last prophets have spoken. When their ministry is finished, the Beast from the bottomless pit comes (v. 7)! Oh, flee to Jesus Christ today and be saved. Amen.