

# The Two Witnesses of the Tribulation

Revelation 11:1-13

Before we examine our text, I need to set the stage for what we are about to read. First, this chapter reveals the Lord's plan to bring two remarkable personalities to the world stage upon Israel's agreement with the coming man of sin, the antichrist.

These two witnesses will prophecy for a period of 1260 days. You probably recognize that as 3 ½ years, or half of the seven-year tribulation period. During the reign of antichrist, the Lord will NOT be without witness on the earth. Besides the 144,000 special sealed servants of the Lord from the 12 tribes of Israel we met in chapter seven, the Lord will raise up two powerful witnesses who minister from Jerusalem. They will oppose the message of the antichrist as they minister to Israel and the world.

Again, if you will be patient with me, I must say the presence of these two witnesses whom the Lord raises up at this future time is further confirmation the church is not present on the earth as these things unfold. Today we are the Lord's witnesses. The authentic church worldwide is prophesying or preaching to the world today. Millions of believers empowered by the Holy Spirit bear testimony to the truth of God's word and to the truth of the gospel today.

However, post-rapture the Lord turns his full focus to Israel. He is going to fulfill his word spoken by all the prophets, including Daniel. In as much as the church is gone and the Lord's intention is to fulfill his word to Israel, the witness to the world during the coming 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel's prophecy will flow from Israel. Of course, those who refuse the spirit of Antichrist and believe the message of the kingdom preached by the Lord's witnesses in that day, will themselves bear testimony to others even as in most cases they lay down their lives for Christ.

Now let's read from chapter eleven verses 1-13:

*“1And 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.*

*2But 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.*

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

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

*5And 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.*

*6These 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.*

*7And 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.*

*8And 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.*

*9And 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.*

*10And 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.*

*11And 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.*

*12And 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.*

*13And 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.”*

Now look again at verses one and two:

*“1And 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.*

*2But 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.*

These two verses reference the temple existing in Israel during the tribulation period. Three other passages in the Bible indicate Israel will rebuild a temple in Jerusalem which is essential to fulfilling Bible prophecy as it plays out during the tribulation period. I am referring to Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15-16; and 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.

This temple must exist, otherwise the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel, confirmed by Jesus, and described in 2 Thessalonians chapter two cannot occur. In John’s vision, the Holy Spirit revealed to him this future temple. Please

take note of the last part of verse two. This statement teaches the Gentiles shall tread the holy city under foot for 42 months. This occurs during the second half of the tribulation.

Furthermore, this occurs when the antichrist turns on Israel and desecrates the temple by entering it and declaring himself to be God! It is this action that begins the time of Jacob's trouble. Israel will lose control of Jerusalem as the Jews face the greatest onslaught of persecution they have ever known.

But during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation Israel will enjoy a measure of peace and security. It is during those 1260 days the two witnesses spoken of in this chapter appear.

Look again at verse three:

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

Today I am not going to spend time speculating about the identity of these two witnesses. Instead, may we focus solely on their ministry. These two witnesses arise in Israel at the exact time Israel embraces the man of sin. Think about that. What is their purpose? Their purpose is to preach, or prophesy. Their ministry will parallel that of the Old Testament prophets.

Without question, they will cry aloud against sin. They will call Israel to faith in the true Messiah. Without question, they will oppose the spirit of antichrist. These two witnesses will be a thorn in the side of the antichrist. They will expose his lies. However, those loyal to the antichrist will not repent. In fact, the world will hear of these men, and they will seek to stop the witness of these men without success.

Look with me again at verses four and five:

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

*5And 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.*

These two witnesses are indestructible until they complete their mission. Two things come to my mind at this point. First, the Lord has always had a witness to the truth through-out every period of world history. He will have two powerful witnesses strategically placed in the world's hot spot as the tribulation period begins.

And the next thing that comes to mind is obvious. God's people are indestructible until they complete the assignment given to them by the Lord. The world cannot overpower the Lord and the power of darkness cannot frustrate His purposes. While persecution is real, we can rest in the fact the Lord will preserve us through every situation until our race is complete!

Now notice how many of the people rejoiced when the antichrist is allowed to kill these two witnesses. They were indestructible until their ministry was completed. Since they minister for 1260 days corresponding to the first half of the tribulation period, it seems the entry of the antichrist into the Jewish temple declaring himself to be God occurs on the same day he kills these two witnesses.

Perhaps his perceived victory over these two witnesses adds to the deception of the hour as a lost world embraces him as God. As the world rejoices over the dead bodies of these two witnesses lying on a street in Jerusalem suddenly the Lord raises them up and takes them into heaven! As the world watches great fear will fall upon them. Their false security in the antichrist will be further shook by an earthquake that kills 7000 prominent followers of antichrist in the city of Jerusalem.

These are powerful events coming soon to planet earth. The Lord has warned the world and in this hour he is still calling men to repentance. It is time to get ready.