



Building Wholehearted Disciples of Jesus

The Two Witnesses

Revelation 11

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Series: Apocalypse, The Book of Revelation

The Two Witnesses: Power and Persecution

Introduction:

- In August 2015, Vester Flanagan gunned down a television crew during a live broadcast. Within minutes, he posted chilling videos on Twitter and Facebook of the killing. He wanted everyone to know.
- Only weeks prior to Flanagan's attack, nine African American believers were gunned down at a prayer meeting in Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina.
- Within a few months another young gunman walked onto an Oregon community college and terrorized classrooms full of students and asked people directly, "Are you a Christian?" Those who professed their faith were immediately shot in the head.
- Last week, the First Lady of the United States of America, Melania Trump, read the Lord's Prayer before a rally in Florida and was mercilessly ridiculed by the mainstream press.
- Within two generations, our country has gone from honoring biblical values to despising them.
- David spoke of this in Psalm 2:

*Why are the nations in an uproar
And the peoples devising a vain thing?
The kings of the earth take their stand
And the rulers take counsel together
Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying,
"Let us tear their fetters apart
And cast away their cords from us!"*

- We have watched the slaughter of thousands of Christians in the Middle East from ISIS thugs—all caught on film and posted on Facebook, Twitter and major news networks.
- We are seeing the "birth pangs" of the coming of the Lord.

- As we near the coming of the Lord, we will begin to experience two things simultaneously: Tribulation in the world from earthly governments, but also a tidal wave of Holy Spirit power released from the heavenly courts.
- Did you know that there are more slaves today than at any point in human history? Human trafficking of young children is an epidemic like the world has never known. The pornography industry rakes in \$97 billion each year around the world, with at least \$13 billion coming from the U.S.
- Islam is on the move in an unprecedented way! Joel Rosenberg calls it, "Apocalyptic Islam." He has written, "They want to establish their global Islamic kingdom where everybody has to follow Islam."

Now don't miss this church: God is going to use the growing Ps. 2 Crisis to awaken His true church to prayer and power that will result in the greatest spiritual awakening the world has ever seen.

Rev. 11

- Remember that there were no chapter breaks when John wrote this, so this is happening while these demons are being released upon the earth in chapter 9.
- The Antichrist is bringing about a one world government and is consolidating his power over all nations.
- At the same time, we have these two evangelists that show up on the scene and they are a "burr in his saddle" as they proclaim the majesty and love of Christ to the world.
- CNN and Fox News are there, recording and interviewing these guys and they are both hated and loved all over the earth.
- The Antichrist will not completely control the new rebuilt Temple area.

- There will be a peace treaty brokered by the Antichrist, and the first 3 1/2 years will be peaceful and there will be a kind of revival in Israel and they will rebuild their temple.
- We are in the middle of The Great Tribulation period. Simultaneously, God is moving with a great awakening.

Vs. 1-2

Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. 2 Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months

- I think there has been some kind of “internationalization” of Jerusalem by which the Muslims, Jews and Christians will have a peace treaty, and, during this time, Israel will have the freedom to rebuild the Temple.
- Jesus said this will be the key issue of the Last Days.
- Matthew 24:15
"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand)," NKJV
 - o Jesus is presupposing a temple.
- 2 Thessalonians 2:4
who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. NKJV
- Paul speaks of a temple in the last days, which would have been interesting to Paul who had seen Titus destroy the Temple in 70 AD.
- This temple will be an abomination to God, because the forgiveness of sins cannot come through the blood of goats and sheep.

- Ex. Many are preparing today for the rebuilding of the Temple. At the Temple Institute in Jerusalem, the garments for the priests have already been made for the new Temple. Over 90 of the 100 implements have been made. The harps for the Levitical priesthood have been made.
 - Traditionally, it has been said that the old Temple Mount is under the Dome of the Rock.
 - Some modern researchers have said that the Temple Mount is 100 meters to the north of the Dome of the Rock. So the Dome may not even be destroyed in order to rebuild the new temple and the Dome of the Rock would be the outer court.
- During these 42 months, the Gentiles will trample the city.

Vs. 3

And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”

- New levels of power will be released upon these two witnesses!
 - It will be these men that give courage and faith to the 144,000 Jewish evangelists all over the world.
 - They are wearing sackcloth, like Old Testament style prophets.
 - Look back at Vs. 1: “Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar and those who worship there.”
 - This is where the power is coming from!! Saints in heaven and on earth are worshipping and praying.
 - In Revelation 7, we read about the 144K Jewish evangelist that are preaching the gospel all over the world. The next verse speaks of this massive prayer meeting, this WAR ROOM in heaven, Revelation 7:9-15.

Rev 7:9-15

*After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; **10** and they cry out with a loud voice, saying,*

*“Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” **11** And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God...*

***14** I said to him, “My lord, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. **15** For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them.*

In the latter days, as in Acts, there will be a correlation between great prayer and great power. Greater prayer, greater power! When the water level of prayer rises in the church, the water level of the power of the Holy Spirit rises in the community. Where the water level of the power of the Holy Spirit rises in the community, the water level of the works of the Holy Spirit are manifested throughout a city.

Vs. 5-6

These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. **5** And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. **6** These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

- You better not mess around with these preachers! God has great confidence in these men.
- **The Lord’s Ninjas!**
- **Who are they? All kinds of speculations...Three major views:**

1. **Some say Joshua, son of Josudek, and Zerubbabel**

- o Our passage is making reference to Zech 4.
- o Zechariah sees a vision of two olive trees feeding olive oil to a large lampstand, and as he inquires, and he says these are the two olive branches that stand before God.
- o Are they Joshua and Zerubbabel? I don't think it is.

2. **Some say it is Elijah and Enoch**

- o Many scholars believe this, because these men never died a physical death but were raptured, as we will be.
- o Two men who did not die, will return because of Hebrews that says ...
- o Hebrews 9:27
And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, NKJV
- o So they must come back and die a physical death.
- o Could be! The problem with this is that we don't know that Enoch was a Jew, the Bible says he was a Tishbite.
- o Many in the Bible have died twice:
 - Elisha raised up a widow's son from the dead.
 - Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus.
 - Dorcus was raised up through Peter.
 - There are those who died twice, but that is not the general rule.
- o The general rule is that we will die once and then the judgment.

- o If you don't know Christ today, you will live once but die twice!! You will die physically and you will die spiritually in the second death.
 - o But today you can be born again: you were born once through your physical birth, but you must be born once again spiritually in your inner person, that is eternal, passing into God's presence.
 - o You get one shot at this!
3. **I believe that one of the witnesses is Elijah because of Malachi 4:5**
- o Malachi 4:5
*Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.*
 - o Even John the Baptist was questioned as to whether he was Elijah or not...so even the rabbis during the time of Jesus believed that Elijah would come in the Last Days.
 - o Jesus says to Peter, James and John that Elijah will come again Matt 17:11: *"Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things."*
 - o We look at the four signs and wonders here: two of these speak of Elijah.
 - Elijah, called down fire from heaven.
 - "Shut up heaven:" James 5:7 and Luke 4:24 say that Elijah shut up heaven for three and one-half years where it did not rain.
 - Also, Elijah never saw death, he was taken up into heaven in a chariot.
 - o It seems plain to me who the other one is too.

- o “power over waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earthy with all plagues”
- o Who did that? Not Charlton Heston. Only Moses did that.

This is Moses and Elijah: The Law and the Prophets standing together, prophesying to the nations.

- o These were the two on the Mount of Transfiguration talking to Jesus about his death and resurrection.
- o Jude 9 is this cryptic passage about Michael the Archangel disputing with the devil about the body of Jesus? What’s that? Could it be that the body will be needed again?
- o Luke 24:4
And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. NKJV
- o I believe these two witnesses are Moses and Elijah.

Vs. 7

When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them.

- This is the first time that “the beast” is mentioned in Revelation, the first of 36 references, in detail in chapter 13.
- For 1,260 days, the Antichrist cannot touch them, but only when their witness is finished. The Antichrist will probably know this verse too: his favorite verse will be Rev. 11:7.
- This is really encouraging: Until our testimony is done, we are indestructible!
- Until we have run the course God has set for us, we cannot die.

- o Even Paul talking to the leaders of Ephesus at Miletus, “I have set my heart toward Jerusalem to finish my course...I know that bounds await me.” But he knew he was indestructible until his course was done.
- o That is true for each of you...you will die on time! Until God summons you, you are indestructible.
- These guys had 1,260 days to minister.
- Ex. If the Lord told me that I had 1,260 days left to minister, if I knew that my days were “numbered” this way, I would do some things differently.
- The Lord says, “to number your days.”
- Psalms 90:12
*So teach us to number our days,
That we may gain a heart of wisdom.*
- My prayer life would be more serious; my witness would be more serious; my Bible Study would be more serious; my marriage would be more serious.
- All of us have a course, a number of days, and we will reap eternal rewards.

Vs. 8

And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.

- Egypt was famous for idolatry and Sodom for immorality.
- This is the condition of Jerusalem at this time.
- Their bodies will lie in the streets.

Vs. 9-10

Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow[d] their dead bodies to be put into graves. 10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

- This prophecy could not have been fulfilled until the past 20 years.
- Until we had the telecommunication business with satellites this could not have happened.
 - We saw the first Gulf War in real time, but we could not see Vietnam that way.
 - During the Persian Gulf War, we could stay up and watch every detail of the war, like it was football game, rooting for America.
 - The whole world watched that war.
 - The whole world watched the bombing of the Twin Towers in real time.
 - The whole world watched the second war in Iraq.
 - The whole world will see these two men dead and rejoice.

Vs. 10

- It will be a celebration! The whole world is partying because they tormented the earth with righteousness.
- Everyone will be shopping! With a new kind of greeting cards.
- The entire world is rejoicing, this is the only time the word, “rejoice,” is in Revelation.
- But God knows how to crash a party...

Vs. 11

Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.

- Oh no, they come back to life.
- Phones are ringing all over the world...they've come back to life.
- Everyone's going nuts.
- CNN and Fox News are just freaking out!

Vs. 12-14

And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. 13 In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven. 14 The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

- Camera's are rolling, watching the two witnesses ascend up to heaven.
- Everyone sees this!
- If you don't know Christ, this is the long way around the barn.
- It is after this now that the Antichrist will seat himself as god in the Temple.
- Everyone will see the resurrection, the truth of resurrection.
- Everyone will see the ascension, the truth of ascension.
- Folks, the truth of resurrection and ascension can come alive in your life. Come to Christ.
- You can have the hope of resurrection and ascension today!

- You can have that hope today! Not religion, not talking about church, we are talking about a personal relationship with Christ.

In the Latter Days, as in Acts, there will be a correlation between great prayer and great power. Greater prayer, greater power! When the water level of prayer rises in the church, the water level of the power of the Holy Spirit rises in the community; where the water level of the power of the Holy Spirit rises in the community, the water level of the works of the Holy Spirit are manifested throughout a city.