



A Systematic Expository Study on the book of REVELATION

STUDY 28: THE SUPERNATURAL MINISTRY OF THE TWO WITNESSES **Revelation 11:1-14**

This passage (Revelation 11:3-13) introduces two witnesses, two evangelist-prophets, who will preach with supernatural signs during the Great Tribulation for 3 and half years. People will have opportunity to hear the gospel from these two men who will have a worldwide ministry. The first fourteen verses of the chapter (Revelation 11:1-14) is a continuation of the interlude, the parenthesis, which began in chapter ten. The first two verses, Revelation 11:1,2, introduces the passage.

“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.” John was to measure the temple. Which temple? The temple in Jerusalem, built by Herod, which John knew, had been destroyed by Titus in 70 A.D., about 26 years before receiving this Revelation. Which temple is he then to measure? This is the Temple to be built after ***“that Prince”***, the Anti-Christ, makes a covenant with the Jewish people at the beginning of the Tribulation (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4). ***“Rise and measure.”*** Why is he to measure the temple? In the Scripture, to measure a place is either for the purpose of destruction or possession (2 Samuel 8:2; Habakkuk 3:5,6; Jeremiah 31:38-40; Zechariah 2:1-5; Revelation 21:15). Here, it is for the purpose of protection, possession and preservation. ***“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 (Jerusalem - Isaiah 52:1; Nehemiah 11:1) shall they tread under foot forty and two months”***(Revelation 11:2). After the measurement, to determine the perimeters of what belongs to God, signifying the place and the people marked for divine ownership, the ministry of God’s two witnesses, during the great Tribulation, is now revealed.

THE DESCRIPTION, POWER AND RESEMBLANCE OF THE TWO WITNESSES

Revelation 11:3-6; Zechariah 4:2,3,11-14; Jeremiah 4:7-9; 1 Kings 17:1; 2 Kings 1:9-12; Numbers 16:28-35; Jeremiah 5:14; Exodus 7:20; Psalms 105:26-29; 78:43,44; Deuteronomy 34:10-12; Malachi 4:1-6

During the great Tribulation there will be two witnesses, preachers, prophets, evangelists who will prophesy, that is, proclaim God’s truth with signs and wonders. ***“And I will give power to My two witnesses.”*** These two witnesses are ***people***, not the Old Testament and the New Testament, or the law and grace. They will be ***prophets***. Some have suggested that they will be Moses and Elijah while others think that they will be Enoch and Elijah. Those who identify them as Enoch and Elijah say that these two men must come back to the world to die so as to fulfill Hebrews 9:27. They claim that everyone who lives on earth must die but there is going to be a whole generation that will never taste death. ***“We shall not all sleep”*** - we shall not all die (1 Corinthians 15:51,52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Their ministry of miracles will be similar to the ministries of Moses and Elijah, but the simple truth is that these future prophets are not identified or named here. We do not know beyond a shadow of doubt who they are but we know that these two witnesses will be ***powerful***. ***“And they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days.”*** The period of their prophetic ministry - 1,260 days, 42 months, 3 1/2 years, (Revelation 11:3; 12:6; 13:5; Daniel 7:25; 12:7) - is the period of the second half of the Tribulation, the period of the great Tribulation. Throughout the period of their ministry they will be ***“clothed in sackcloth”*** - garments for mourning, indicating a time of lamentation, grief and woe on earth.

THE DEATH, PRESERVATION AND RESURRECTION OF THE TWO WITNESSES

Revelation 11:7-12; Jeremiah 1:10,17-19; Revelation 13:1-7; Daniel 8:23,24; Isaiah 1:10-15; Jeremiah 23:14,15; Psalm 79:2,3; Judges 16:23,24; Romans 8:11; Jeremiah 33:9; 2 Kings 2:11; Acts 1:9

“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.” These two witnesses cannot be killed until their testimony is finished, until God gives His permission. Though they are hated by the entire world they are invincible until they have finished their ministry. In the purposes and in the sovereignty of God every minister is invincible until his work on earth is finished. According to the Word of God, our lives are kept in the secure, omnipotent hands of God until our work is done and our task is finished.

“These two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth” (verse 10) during the period of their ministry; **“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”** (verse 5). When they were eventually killed, their dead bodies were not buried; they were put on public display. Their dead bodies will lie in the street of Jerusalem for three and one-half days. Yet they are preserved by God and while the focus of world attention is on their dead bodies, **“the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet.”** **“And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.”** Powerful men, prophetic ministry, peculiar manifestations! Their resurrection and their ascension will be seen by all the people on earth!

THE DESTRUCTION, PUNISHMENT AND REACTION OF THE WICKED

Revelation 11:13,14; Jeremiah 50:10,11; Revelation 6:12,15-17; 16:18,19; Isaiah 13:6-8; Joshua 2:11; Luke 21:26; Revelation 14:7; 15:4; Isaiah 26:16,17

“And the same hour was there a great earthquake,” at the time of the triumph of the two witnesses as they ascend to heaven, there will be a great earthquake. A tenth part of the city will be destroyed and 7,000 men will be killed in the earthquake. The rest of the people will be terrified; fear and alarm will come on all the inhabitants of the earth because of these calamities, which they will recognize as punishment and judgment from God.

“And the remnants were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.” They will stand in awe at what God is doing and acknowledge His power. In their terror, they give glory to the God of heaven but the temporary fear does not result in repentance and conversion. In the next few chapters (13:4-6) these same men worship the Beast who blasphemed the God of heaven. After the terror passes, they return to the old life of rejection.

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