

# **THE REVELATION**

## **Two Witnesses**

### **LOOK UP! CHRIST IS COMING SOON! HALLELUJAH!**

We have looked into the seven sealed book, the Title Deed to the Earth containing seven seals. As we enter Chapter ten we come to the Interlude of chapters 7 and 8. We read in **Revelation 10:5 (ESV)** <sup>5</sup> *And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. We will see John taking the scroll that is sweet as honey.*

**Read Revelation 10:7-10 (ESV)** <sup>7</sup> *And a cherub stretched out his hand from between the cherubim to the fire that was between the cherubim, and took some of it and put it into the hands of the man clothed in linen, who took it and went out.* <sup>8</sup> *Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, “Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.”* <sup>9</sup> *So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, “Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey.”* <sup>10</sup> *And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter.*

This is not the first time John has been asked to eat a book. Ezekiel was the first and only prophet in the Old Testament asked to eat a book. **Ezekiel 2:8 (ESV)** <sup>8</sup> *“But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Be not rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you.”* **Ezekiel 3:1 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> *And he said to me, “Son of man, eat whatever you find here. Eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.”*

The passage in **Revelation 5:5** tells us that John takes the book.

It is sweet to read about the coming of the Christ when He will set all things right. Victory in Jesus is so sweet but the world’s destiny is bitter indeed. The bitterness began when God’s arch-enemy, Satan, tempted the first man and woman to disobey God’s Word. The bitterness of sin continues into the 21<sup>st</sup> century where it often seems that evil is triumphant. From the beginning, Satan believed that the victory was his. God, however, from the beginning had a plan to defeat Satan.

The next part of our study turns to the ministry of the two witnesses.

**Read Revelation 11:1-6 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> *Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, “Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there,”* <sup>2</sup> *but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given* <sup>3</sup> *And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.”* <sup>4</sup> *These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.* <sup>5</sup> *And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed.* <sup>6</sup>

*They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may 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 kind of plague, as often as they desire.*

John was told to measure the court *and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given.*

John is given a measuring rod and told to go measure the temple of God and the altar, and count those who worship there. To measure a structure or piece of property in Scripture means you claim it for yourself.

What John did was especially significant because the Gentiles had taken over Jerusalem. Antichrist had broken his agreement with Israel and now he was about to use the temple for his own diabolical purposes (**2 Thes. 2:3-4**). All of this will be elaborated in **Revelation 13**. "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles," said Jesus, "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (**Luke 21:24**). The "times of the Gentiles" began in 606 B.C. when Babylon began to devastate Judah and Jerusalem, and it will continue until Jesus Christ returns to deliver the Holy City and redeem Israel (**Zech. 14**).

The two Jewish witnesses will have power and protection. Consider this: *And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes.* This will continue for 1260 days.

This chapter is a most difficult of all the chapters in **Revelation**. However, it is a Jewish chapter. There are references to

The two witnesses are human and everyone loves to speculate who they are. There are three primary theories on the identity of the two witnesses in **Revelation**: (1) Moses and Elijah, (2) Enoch and Elijah, and (3) two unknown believers whom God calls to be His witnesses in the end times. Elisha is another. They are going to say as Elisha said before the people it was not going to rain. Elijah did not experience death. By the way they also had the power to stop rain.

Some folks believe one of the witnesses is Enoch, the man who walked with God but was not. Others think it was Moses. Moses seems to be the most frequently chosen by the commentators. Elijah was caught up to the Lord in a chariot of fire and did not see death.

The two witnesses are a very interesting topic and most of us have drawn our own conclusions especially if we have read any of the Left Behind series. However, the identity of the two witnesses is not an issue Christians should be dogmatic about.

**Read Revelation 11:7-12 (ESV)** <sup>7</sup> *And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them,* <sup>8</sup> *and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.* <sup>9</sup> *For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb,* <sup>10</sup> *and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a*

*torment to those who dwell on the earth.* <sup>11</sup> *But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.* <sup>12</sup> *Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them.*

The ***Book of Revelation*** speaks of two beasts. The first beast arises out of the sea (***Rev. 13:1***), is seven headed, and derives its authority from the dragon (***Rev. 12:3; 13:4***). This beast has several of the characteristics of the four beasts of ***Daniel 7***. The second beast arises out of the earth (***Rev. 13:11***). It serves the first beast by seeking devotees for it and is referred to as the "false prophet" (***Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10***). Both the beast and the false prophet persecute the church but are finally judged by Christ.

***The martyrdom of the witnesses (vv. 7-10)***. This comes only when they have finished their testimony. God's obedient servants are immortal until their work is done. "The beast" (Antichrist) is now in power and wants to take over the temple; but he cannot succeed until the two witnesses are out of the way. God will permit him to slay them.

The witnesses will not even be permitted decent burial. But even this indecency will be used by God to bear witness to mankind. No doubt the TV cameras in Jerusalem will transmit the scene to people around the world, and the news analysts will discuss its significance. The earth-dwellers will rejoice at their enemies' removal and will celebrate a 'satanic Christmas' by sending gifts to one another. It thus would appear that the power of the two witnesses will not be limited to Jerusalem, but that they will be able to cause things to happen in other parts of the world.

These two prophets will definitely have a relationship with Israel; and the world, for the most part, has not approved of the nation Israel. In the middle of the Tribulation, the beast will turn against Israel and begin to persecute the Jews. The two witnesses will not be around to protect the nation and a frightening anti-Semitic movement will ensue.

Jerusalem is called a great city; and from a human viewpoint, this is a true statement. But God looks at men and nations from a *spiritual* viewpoint. To Him, Jerusalem will be considered as polluted and worldly as Sodom and as rebellious and proud as Egypt.

***The resurrection of the witnesses (vv. 11-14)***. Miraculously, the two witnesses are not only raised from the dead, but caught up into heaven! God rescues them from their enemies and gives a solemn witness to the watching world. The world's great joy suddenly becomes great fear. (Note the word *great* in Rev. 11, repeated eight times.)

These days appear to be literal days, just as the forty-two months in ***Revelation 11:2*** are literal months. The Bible does not explain why this length of time was chosen and it is useless for us to speculate.

We will stop here as verse 12 ends. With this great earthquake the second woe is past, and we are told, "Behold, the third woe cometh quickly" (***v. 14***). This third woe is none other than the seventh and last of the trumpets, which ushers in the world kingdom of our God and His Christ. It is a calamity only to His

enemies, but a cause of great rejoicing to all who love His name, in view of creation's deliverance from bondage to sin.