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The Bible for Life
Series: Reading the Revelation: A Critical/Analytical Review of the Last Book of the Bible in Relation to Current Events
Lesson 11 "THE TWO WITNESSES:
SECOND INTERLUDE BEFORE THE SEVENTH TRUMPTING ANGEL"
Scripture: Revelation 11:1-14
Aaron L. Parker, Facilitator

Scripture – Revelation 11:1-14

- 1 Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Come and
measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, 2 but do
not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to
the nations, and they will trample over the holy city for forty-two months. 3
- And I will grant my two witnesses authority to prophesy for one thousand two
hundred sixty days, wearing sackcloth." 4 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 pours from their mouth and consumes
their foes; anyone who wants to harm them must be killed in this manner. 6 They
have authority to shut the sky, so that no rain may fall during the days of their
prophesying, and they have authority over the waters to turn them into blood
and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.
- 7 When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the
bottomless pit will wage war on them and conquer them and kill them, 8 and
their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that is prophetically called
Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.
- 9 For three and a half days members of the peoples and tribes and languages
and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a
tomb, 10 and the inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and celebrate and
exchange presents, because these two prophets tormented the inhabitants of
the earth.
11 But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God entered the
two witnesses, and they stood on their feet, and those who saw them were
terrified. 12 Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come
up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies watched
them.
- 13 At that moment there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell;
seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified
and gave glory to the God of heaven. 14 The second woe has passed. The third
woe is coming very soon.

Introduction

- Second interlude between the 6th and 7th trumpeting angels.

- This second interlude constitutes the second of three "woes"

Commentary

- Verses 1-2 - [1] Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Come 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 over to the nations, and they will trample over the holy city for forty-two months.
    - Measuring rod
        - Ezekiel chapters 40-43 – The prophet is called to measure a vision of the Jerusalem Temple rebuilt after its destruction; following this, divine glory returns to the temple.
        - I looked up and saw a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then I asked, "Where are you going?" He answered me, "To measure Jerusalem, to see how wide and how long it is." Then the angel who spoke with me came forward, and another angel came forward to meet him and said to him, "Run, say to that young man: Jerusalem shall be inhabited like unwalled villages because of the multitude of people and animals in it. For I will be a wall of fire all around it, says the LORD, and I will be the glory within it." (Zechariah 2:1-5)
    - The Command to Measure
        - What is measured?
            - The Temple of God – the Jerusalem Temple had been destroyed in 70 a. d.
            - The Altar
                - Altar of the Martyrs – "When he broke the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered for the word of God and for the testimony they had given…. (Revelation 6:9)
                - Altar of Incense – "Another angel with a golden censer came and stood at the altar; he was given a great quantity of incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar that is before the throne." (Revelation 8:3)
            - Those who worship at the altar (measure = count) – see 7:9 – "the number no one can number…."
        - Measurement means count – what counts are those who worship at the altar of God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24)
    - The Command Not to Measure
        - The court outside the temple
        - Given to the nations (the world) who will trample over the holy city – they will defame, profane what is holy
        - 42 Months – three and one-half years – symbolic meaning – one half of seven

- Verses 3-4 – "And I will grant my two witnesses authority to prophesy for one thousand two hundred sixty days, wearing sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth."
    - The Two Witnesses
        - "My witnesses" – God's or Christ's
        - "witness" – Greek *martys* – from which we get the word martyr
        - Prophesy – to speak by divine inspiration
        - 1260 days = 42 (30-day) months = three and one-half years
        - Who are these two witnesses?
            - Enoch and Elijah – did not see death (Gen. 5:24; II Kings 2:11)
            - Moses and Elijah – appeared with Jesus on Mt. of Transfiguration
            - Joshua and Caleb
            - Elijah and Jeremiah
            - Peter and Paul
            - James and John – sons of Zebedee; Sons of Thunder
            - John the Baptist and Jesus
            - The Witnessing Church – "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)
        - Two Olive Trees and Two Lampstands
            - Old Testament Background – Zechariah 4:1-6
                - The angel who spoke with me came again and wakened me, as one is wakened from sleep. He said to me, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it; there are seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it.
                - And by it there are two olive trees, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left." I said to the angel who spoke with me, "What are these, my lord?" Then the angel who spoke with me answered me, "Do you not know what these are?" I said, "No, my lord." He said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the LORD of hosts."
            - Old Testament Background – Ezra 3:1-2
                - When the seventh month came and the Israelites were in their towns, the people gathered together as one in Jerusalem. Then Jeshua son of Jozadak with his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel with his kin set out to build the altar of the God of Israel, to

offer burnt offerings on it, as prescribed in the law of Moses the man of God.

- Lampstands – the 7 Church, Revelation 1:20
- Olive Trees – Oil to burn in the lamps
- Matthew 5:14-16
  - "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."
- The two witnesses wear sackcloth – to point out sin or to warn of judgment

- Verses 5-6 – "And if anyone wants to harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes; anyone who wants to harm them must be killed in this manner. They have authority to shut the sky, so that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have authority over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire."
  - Fire from the mouths of the witnesses to consume foes
    - Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty men. He went up to Elijah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, "O man of God, the king says: Come down." But Elijah answered the captain of fifty, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty." Then fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty. (2 Kings 1:9-10)
    - Therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of hosts:
      Because you have spoken this word,
      I am now making my words in your mouth a fire
      and this people wood, and the fire shall devour them. (Jeremiah 5:14)
  - Authority
    - Stop rain – Elijah
    - Turn water into blood and cause plagues – Moses
- Verses 7-8 – "When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the bottomless pit will wage war on them and conquer them and kill them, and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that is prophetically called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified."
  - Beast from the bottomless put – evil, devil, devil's representative
    - Wage war against witnesses
    - Conquer
    - Kill

  - Dead bodies in the street of the great city – Jerusalem
  - Where their (the witnesses' Lord (Jesus) was crucified
  - To leave bodies unburied was the height of indignity
  - Great city called Sodom and Egypt – recipients of God's judgment in the liberation of God's people
- Verses 9-10 – "For three and a half days members of the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, [10] and the inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and celebrate and exchange presents, because these two prophets tormented the inhabitants of the earth."
  - Three and one-half days – symbolic number (three and one-half years earlier)
  - They (the world) gloat over and celebrate the death of the witnesses – the church, gloat (express cheer, gladness, etc.)
  - The two witnesses/prophets tormented the world with their words
- Verses 11-12 – "[11]But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God entered the two witnesses, and they stood on their feet, and those who saw them were terrified. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, 'Come up here!' And they went up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies watched them."
  - The resurrection of the two witnesses after three and one-half days
  - Their return terrifies the people – they defy/defeat/overcome death
  - The witnesses receive an invitation into heaven
  - Their enemies watch the rise
    - The LORD says to my lord,
      "Sit at my right hand
      until I make your enemies your footstool." (Psalms 110:1)

- Verses 13-14 – "At that moment there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe has passed. The third woe is coming very soon."
  - Earthquake – at Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection (Matthew 27 and 28)
  - Earthquake – Paul and Silas in prison and the doors opened and chains fell off (Acts 16)
  - Earthquake in Revelation 6 and 8 – indication of judgment, divine power
  - The second woe – one more to come

<u>Conclusion –</u>

- To what can we, who identify as disciples of Jesus the Christ, bear witness today?