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THE WITNESS OF MOSES AND ELIJAH

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION
REVELATION 11:7-14
NUMBER 17

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REVELATION 11:7-14 "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. And 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. And 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. And 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. And 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. And 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. And 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. The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly."

Here we have before us the story of the two witnesses, or the two heralds of the Second Coming of Christ. In verses 1 and 2 of this chapter we had the setting for the work of these two witnesses. We also saw the restoration of the Jewish Temple in the Tribulation. That temple was so distorted that no truth could come out of that temple so it was necessary for these two witnesses to come and do their work. The words "measure the temple and the altar" speaks of salvation which had been rejected by most of the Jews in the Tribulation. The temple speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Them that worship" refers to the unbelieving Jews under revived Judaism. The temple will be rebuilt and in the middle of the Tribulation the statue will be put up. Matthew 24:15 tells of this as well as three passages in Daniel. The dictator of the Revived Roman Empire and the dictator of Palestine agrees for this statue to go up. So here we have God's two witnesses bringing their message in the very worst time of all world history. Satan will use his ace trump which is religion and religion will have its greatest thrust in all history. These dictators head up ecumenical religion. So here in chapter 11 we have God's two witnesses. In chapter 12 we have Satan who is behind his two witnesses. In chapter 13 we will see Satan and these two dictators who are Satan's two witnesses. Rev. 13:1-9 is a picture of the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire. Rev. 13:10 is the Beast from the land, the Palestinian dictator. This dictator in Jerusalem sees the opposition around him and he knows that he is not going to last. The Arabs from the South, the Orientals from the East and the Communist block from the North all converge on him. So the only hope for him is to align himself with the King from the West, who is the King of the Revived Roman Empire. He makes a trade-out using the riches of the Dead Sea. The dictator of Palestine agrees for the statue to go up in the temple. The church is removed from the earth and the church, which is the bride of Christ, is prepared to return with Christ and work in his Kingdom.

So we have a seven-year Tribulation period. In the first $3\frac{1}{2}$ years the 144,000 Jewish Evangelists do their great work and win many converts. At the beginning of this period those in Jerusalem are commanded to flee to the mountains. Then in the last $3\frac{1}{2}$ years of the Tribulation those in Jerusalem are told to stand and fight. In this last half of the Tribulation there had to be a means for reaching these people for Christ, so the devil is cast out of Heaven and God sends two special evangelists, Moses and Elijah. Both are resuscitated so they can do their work, and this is the way we get converts in the last half of the Tribulation.

In verse 2 the court of the Gentiles is to be omitted. A great struggle develops over Judaism and legalism and genuine Christianity. This chapter 11 tells of this intense struggle. Zechariah 12 and 14 tells the story of how the converts of Moses and Elijah stand their ground and fight in Jerusalem.

Verse 3 described the ministry of these two witnesses. They are clothed in sackcloth. One, Moses, represents that era before the kingdom was set up and the other one, Elijah, represents that era after the establishment of the kingdom. So for 1260 days these men teach Bible doctrine and proclaim salvation again. The system of spirituality in the Tribulation is the faith rest technique. During the Church Age Christ is seated at the right hand of God, the Holy Spirit is in each individual Christian and the Spirit produces the character of Christ in each individual. The whole idea of being filled with the Spirit is to glorify Christ. Then in the Millennium when Christ is present there will be emotion and estatics for Christ will be present and these things will be safe when he is present.

In verse 4 we have the story of their witness in Jerusalem. They wear sackcloth. However what they wear is not important, the thing that is important was the content of their message. In Zechariah both Zerubbabel and Joshua are pictured as two olive trees. It is the figure of the pipes that takes the olive oil to the lamps and this is a picture of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

In verse 5 we have the story of how the two witnesses were protected. In verse 6 we have the story of the power of these two witnesses. The power of God is adequate to meet the needs in any generation.

REVELATION 11:7-9 "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. And 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. And 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." These three verses bring us to the death of these two witnesses. The reason these two men are not named is this--the important thing is not the man but the message. They finished the work God had for them to do. Please remember this principle--as long as God has a work for you to do no one can get you out of his will. The beast is the super-demon who fills the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire. He led that famous scorpion army we have already studied. Remember that God permitted this to happen.

Verse 8 tells how their dead bodies will lie in the streets of Jerusalem. The word "Sodom" is used to describe the terrible wickedness of the time. The word "Egypt" is used to describe a false religion. These dead men were not buried and evidently their dead bodies were given wide television coverage.

Verse 9 tells that millions will see their dead bodies. I can't see how this will be possible apart from television. Their human spirits had already left these dead bodies but their bodies were not buried.

REVELATION 11:10 "And 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." I call this the Devil's Christmas. These unbelievers are very happy to get rid of Moses and Elijah and they celebrate their death. The message of Moses and Elijah disturbed them too much. This is always true of religion. Christianity always disturbs religion. Religion always hates the truth. These religious leaders are the most inconsistent people in the earth. So here we see the reaction of religion to two of the greatest believers who ever lived. These religious leaders celebrate the death of Moses and Elijah because these men tormented them mentally. So they gave gifts to each other, celebrating the death of Moses and Elijah. We call this the Devil's Christmas.

REVELATION 11:11 "And 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." Now we are going to see the resurrection of Moses and Elijah. We saw them on the Mount of Transfiguration, but at that time they had been resuscitated. For their preaching mission of 3½ years in Jerusalem, they had been resuscitated. But now we are going to see them resurrected. We are going to see their ascension. Their soul and spirit are reunited with their bodies and they ascend. They receive the breath of life which comes from God. These dictators and religious leaders became afraid of what they saw happen to Moses and Elijah, but please notice that fear did not bring them to a faith in Christ. Back in Rev. 6 where we had a short summary of the Tribulation we saw that great men cried for the rocks to fall on them and cover them, yet they did not turn to God in faith. The meaning of that is this--don't ever try to frighten people into the kingdom. Neither are we to try to love them into the kingdom. We are to give them the Word of God. We are to win them by communicating the message to them. The Holy Spirit takes the truth of the Word of God and uses this to bring people to salvation. The world is starving for gospel information.

REVELATION 11:12 "And 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." This is their ascension. Their enemies were utterly astonished at this. They were astonished, yet they didn't believe.

REVELATION 11:13 "And 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." Within the hour Jesus hit Jerusalem with judgment. One-tenth part of the city was slain. Seven thousand men were killed. They were terrified and gave glory to God, but please notice--they did not believe. This same principle is explained in Romans 1:17-19. Everything that man needs to know in order to believe is clearly revealed. This is the principle--they are without excuse. That Roman passage goes on to explain that men are darkened in their spirit because of negative volition. Positive volition creates a vacuum and into this vacuum gospel information is poured. Negative volition creates a vacuum into which religion is poured and because of this, the Holy Spirit in his restraining power is withdrawn. This is the story given in 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2.

Illustration--Many have said that there are no atheists in foxholes, that in war people face death and they come to believe. Nothing is farther from the truth. You can't scare people into the Kingdom of God. If they make decisions under such conditions they are superficial decisions. Decisions must be made on the basis of the Word of God.

REVELATION 11:14 "The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly." The second woe is the 6th trumpet and the aftermath of the work of the two witnesses. The third woe is the baptism of Fire. When Christ returns to the earth he will find believers and unbelievers. The unbelievers are cast off the earth and the believers will go into the Millennium.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE BAPTISM OF FIRE

1. The baptism of Fire is stated in these passages--
MATTHEW 3:11-12 "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

LUKE 3:16-17 "John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable."

2 THESSALONIANS 1:7-9 "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;"

2. The analogy to the Baptism of fire is given in these passages--
MATTHEW 24:37-41 "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left."
3. There are parables concerning the Baptism of Fire. The Wheat and the Tares in Matthew 13, the Good and Bad Fish in Matthew 13, The Good Man of the House in Matthew 24 and the Wise and Foolish Virgins in Matthew 25.
4. The Mechanics of the Baptism of Fire is given in Matthew 25:31-46.
5. The Jews are included in the Baptism of Fire as shown in EZEKIEL 20:32-38
"And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone. As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the Lord." The unbelieving Jews are cast off the earth and the believing Jews will go into the Millennium.
These events will all happen in a ten-day period.

Some Principles To Keep In Mind

1. Every believer should witness for Jesus Christ. This is our daily task. In the Church Age every person who is born again is to witness. In the Tribulation there will be these two special witnesses. The shepherd is to care for the sheep but it is the sheep who give birth to other sheep.
2. As long as God has a purpose for your life in this earth no one can remove you from the earth.
3. Religion distorts and blinds the truth. Religion is your worst enemy. Satan is not after you personally. He has demons to take care of that work for him. Your greatest enemy is religion. Don't be one of those who tries to do things to impress God. The Christian never tries to impress God. The life of the Christian depends on the character of God. If you are sustained, you must be sustained by Bible doctrine.