

The 2 witnesses prophesy against the world for 1260 days

**And I will give power to my two witnesses,
and they shall prophesy a thousand two
hundred and sixty days, clothed in
sackcloth. - Rev 11:3**

This Lesson Outline was prepared by John M. Wharton October 22, 2005

Sources -

All bible text, unless otherwise indicated, is the Darby Translation. ASV indicates the American Standard Version, with KJV indicating the King James Version. Quotations are often included from various classic Christian commentaries such as John Gill's Expositor, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures, and others. Greek and Hebrew word definitions are often included from the Strong's Concordance, unless otherwise indicated. All of these sources, both the bible texts, commentaries, and Strong's definition's are taken from the excellent source the e-Sword Bible computer program unless otherwise indicated.

Introduction -

In this chapter we will read about the two witnesses of God who prophecy out against the nations and have the power from God to strike out against them in manner like the prophets of the Old Testament and to defend themselves against anyone who might attack them. They witness of God's judgment from Jerusalem for a space of *a thousand two hundred and sixty days*. After that God will allow the beast to destroy them and the world will actually rejoice and celebrate over their deaths for *three days and a half*. But that festivity will stop abruptly when *the spirit of life from God* re-enters the two witnesses and resurrects them before all who are watching. The peoples will then be full of dread at the prospect of more judgment. But the two witnesses will be called up into the heavens by God. Then we will see a terrible earthquake affecting and destroying a tenth of Jerusalem and killing seven thousand men and causing the rest to worship the true God. Then finally we will see into the heavens and the ark of God's covenant in the temple in His presence in anticipation of what will befall the earth and it's inhabitants next.

Lesson Text - Revelation Chapter 11

And the court which is without the temple cast out, and measure it not; because it has been given up to the nations, and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty-two months

Rev 11:1 And there was given to me a reed like a staff, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship in it.

Rev 11:2 And the court which *is* without the temple cast out, and measure it not; because it has been given *up* to the nations, and **the holy city shall they tread**

under foot forty-two months.

Comments -

the holy city shall they tread under foot forty-two months

The forty two months divided by the twelve months in a year gives us a figure of three and one half years during which the gentiles will be able to move around freely within the Holy City of Jerusalem. It is surely significant to notice that the angel says this in reference to the court area outside the temple and not to any portion of the temple proper where the sacrifices will be performed.

[And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.](#)

Rev 11:3 And I will give *power* to my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.

Rev 11:4 These are the two olive trees and the two lamps which stand before the Lord of the earth;

Comments -

they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and sixty days

Dividing the 1260 days given here by the 360 days in a theoretically perfect 360 day lunar calendar year (as used by the Israelites) we get exactly 3.5 years. That must refer to one half of the last grouping of seven years of the prophecy in Daniel's chapter 9 which has not been fulfilled yet.

Daniel 9:24 **Seventy weeks are apportioned out upon thy people and upon thy holy city**, to close the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make expiation for iniquity, and to bring in the righteousness of the ages, and to seal the vision and prophet, and to anoint the holy of holies.

Daniel 9:25 Know therefore and understand: From the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah, the Prince, **are seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks**. The street and the moat shall be built again, even in troublous times.

26 And **after the sixty-two weeks shall Messiah be cut off**, and shall have nothing; and **the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary**; and the end thereof shall be with an overflow, and unto the end, war, -- the desolations determined.

27 And **he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week**; and **in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease**, and because of the protection of abominations there shall be a desolator, even until that the consumption and what is determined shall be poured out upon the desolate.

Note that the angel said that -

Seventy weeks are apportioned out upon thy people and upon thy holy city to accomplish all of the things mentioned in v. 24. But he also said that there are only seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks accomplish the restoration of Jerusalem and the coming of the Messiah. After that the Messiah was to be cut off (and appear to have nothing for Himself upon this earth). But we Christians do know that His kingdom was not of this world but of heaven. We also know that He promised that He would return just as He left, in the clouds (from heaven). The angel also told Daniel that the world power of the area at that time (which was Rome) would destroy the city of Jerusalem and the temple and they did do this in 70 A.D. But the angel finished out this revelation by saying that the world power in that area would again (at some time) establish a peace accord with the people for a seven year period of time (*one week*). But he would also breach the treaty in the middle of that seven

years. From this last verse we can see several major things that are still to take place during this horrible time of the great tribulation. For one, the temple must be rebuilt for the sacrifices to be offered so that this beastly ruler can invade Israel and stop them. That will be an amazing event because the temple has not existed since the Romans destroyed it in 70 A.D. It will also have to agitate the Islamic peoples in the area incredibly. Yet this beast ruler will be able to control the peoples around Israel and preserve the peace for a short time. This verse also shows that *the many* who he established the accord with must be Israel because the temple can only be on the temple mount in Jerusalem. The fulfillment of these things must be as literal as the other fulfillments that have already transpired. None of these things have happened yet since the temple's destruction and so they must be still future and John talks about the same amounts of time indicating that these fulfillments will be during that time of the great tribulation that John foresaw in the Revelation.

Rev 11:5 and if any one wills to injure them, fire goes out of their mouth, and devours their enemies. And if any one wills to injure them, thus must he be killed.

Rev 11:6 These have power to shut the heaven that no rain may fall during the days of their prophecy; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth as often as they will with every plague.

Comments -

...fire goes out of their mouth, and devours their enemies

Very similar to some of the things that the Old Testament prophets of God did. Elijah called fire down from heaven to consume two different groups of fifty soldiers with their leaders when they demanded that he come down and surrender himself at the sinful King of Israel's beckoning.

2Ki 1:9 And he sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him, and behold, he sat on the top of the mount. And he spoke to him: **Man of God, the king says, Come down!**

2Ki 1:10 And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, **And if I be a man of God, let fire come down from the heavens and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from the heavens, and consumed him and his fifty.**

The third commander was wiser and noticed what had happened to the others and humbly begged the prophet to spare him which God had Elijah do.

Rev 11:7 And when they shall have completed their testimony, the beast who comes up out of the abyss shall make war with them, and shall conquer them, and shall kill them:

Comments -

...the beast....shall conquer them, and shall kill them

This has caused some to wonder if these might be two Old Testament prophets who perhaps were special in some respect and that was why God allowed them to be killed after their ministry was completed. Elijah was taken into heaven by a whirlwind from God. Some see that as meaning that Elijah did not die as is appointed unto man to do. If so, then could one of these two prophets that John saw be Elijah back to complete his ministry from God and then to die and re-enter His presence?

2Ki 2:9 And it came to pass when they had gone over, that Elijah said to Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I am taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

2Ki 2:10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: if thou see me when I am taken from

thee, it shall be so to thee; but if not, it shall not be so .

2Ki 2:11And it came to pass as they went on, and talked, that **behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire; and they parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into the heavens.**

2Ki 2:12And Elisha saw *it* , and he cried, **My father, my father! the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!**And he saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own garments and rent them in two pieces.

2Ki 2:13And he took up the mantle of Elijah which fell from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan;

Some have wondered if the other prophet might be Moses. Though Moses did die, no one on earth witnessed his death nor saw the burial site. In the New Testament it is recorded in the short epistle of Jude that Satan argued with the Archangel Michael concerning the disposition of Moses body at some point in time afterward. Jamieson, Fausset and Brown believe the argument was Satan's attempt to prevent the resurrection of Moses body at that time because of his failure at Meribah. They comment that in every dispensation there is an earnest or forerunner of something that will be more numerous in the following dispensation. We as Christians are promised that we will experience the resurrection of our bodies.

Jud 1:9But Michael the archangel, **when disputing with the devil he reasoned about the body of Moses**, did not dare to bring a railing judgment against *him* , but said, *The Lord rebuke thee.*

And Moses and Elijah did appear with Jesus as He was transfigured. Peter, James and John were with Christ at that time and were awed and didn't know how to react to the glory that they saw, but interestingly they did know (someway) that it was them, Moses and Elijah, who were there with the Lord.

Mat 17:1And after six days Jesus takes with *him* Peter, and James, and John his brother, and brings them up into a high mountain apart.

Mat 17:2before them. **And his face shone as the sun, and his garments became white as the light;**

Mat 17:3, **Moses and Elias appeared to them talking with him.**

Mat 17:4And Peter answering said to Jesus, Lord, it is good we should be here. If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles: for thee one, and for Moses one, and one for Elias.

Mat 17:5While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and lo, a voice out of the cloud, saying, **This** is my beloved Son, in whom I have found delight: hear him.

Mat 17:6And the disciples hearing *it* fell upon their faces, and were greatly terrified.

Note that Elias is the Greek form of the name Elijah used in the Old Testament. John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible indicates that some of the early church fathers thought these two witnesses in Revelation 11 were Enoch and Elijah. The reasoning must have been that neither had actually suffered death as other men did.

Gen 5:23And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years.

Gen 5:24And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

It is interesting that the other men listed in the lineage in Genesis 5, both before and after Enoch, are all said to have died. It does not, though, say that of Enoch but only that he was *not*, apparently meaning that he was not anywhere such that the people of his generation and family could know further of his continued existence after God had taken him.

Rev 11:8 and their body *shall be* on the street of the great city, which is called spiritually Sodom and Egypt, **where also their Lord was crucified.**

Comments -

..where also their Lord was crucified suffer death in Jerusalem. It appears then that their ministry is centered in and around the city of Jerusalem itself.

Rev 11:9 And *men* of the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations see their body three days and a half, and they do not suffer their bodies to be put into a sepulchre.

Rev 11:10 And they that dwell upon the earth rejoice over them, and are full of delight, and shall send gifts one to another, because these, the two prophets, tormented them that dwell upon the earth.

Rev 11:11 **And after the three days and a half *the* spirit of life from God came into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon those beholding them.**

Comments -

The world that had hated them so fiercely, because of their preaching against it and their ability from God to level such terrible judgments against it, was ecstatic with joy at their death and the people rejoiced with a celebration like a birthday or a holiday with giving of gifts to each other. The happiness was short lived when God three and a half days later put the spirit back into their bodies and they stood up in front of a staring shocked world! This passage also gives a hint that the fulfillment of it all must be in a future technological time when the peoples from all over the earth are able to see something as short term as the death of these two witnesses and their resurrection only three and one half days later. It was impossible for that to have been fulfilled in any literal sense before this modern age of television and satellite communications.

Rev 11:12 **And I heard a great voice out of the heaven saying to them, Come up here; and they went up to the heaven in the cloud, and their enemies beheld them.**

Comments -

These two prophets are called up from this earth and the judgments to still befall it, just as John was called by a voice like a trumpet to come up into heaven (at the end of the overview of the church ages) to watch what judgments would fall upon this earth after that.

Rev 11:13 **And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth of the city fell, and seven thousand names of men were slain** in the earthquake. And the remnant were filled with fear, and gave glory to the God of the heaven.

Comments -

Then the city of Jerusalem itself will suffer a terrible earthquake with a full tenth of the city leveled and a very specific number of only seven thousand men killed by the quake. Such a specific number and that particular number based on seven and perhaps ten seems to hint strongly at symbolic meanings. I do not mean that that number will not die but only that God must be making a point in this specific number that He chooses to see death

through this event. What are we to make of this seven thousand men?

[And the seventh angel sounded his trumpet: and there were great voices in the heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world of our Lord and of his Christ is come, and he shall reign to the ages of ages.](#)

Rev 11:14 The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe comes quickly.

Comments -

We must remember that we have heard six of the seven trumpets sound thus far. And the last two of those have been the first two of three woes. The last woe, the seventh trumpet, will now sound forth on the earth.

Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel sounded *his* trumpet: and there were great voices in the heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world of our Lord and of his Christ is come, and he shall reign to the ages of ages.

Rev 11:16 And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

Rev 11:17 saying, We give thee thanks, Lord God Almighty, *He* who is, and who was, that thou hast taken thy great power and hast reigned.

Rev 11:18 And the nations have been full of wrath, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead to be judged, and to give the recompense to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to those who fear thy name, small and great; and to destroy those that destroy the earth.

Rev 11:19 And the temple of God in the heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen in his temple: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Comments -

We saw a scene much like this earlier when the last of the seven seals had been opened and an angel was standing by the altar of God in the Temple in Heaven. He filled a censer with fire from that altar and hurled it upon the earth initiating another more serious phase of judgments from God.

Rev 8:3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, that he might give *efficacy* to the prayers of all saints at the golden altar which *was* before the throne.

Rev 8:4 And the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints, out of the hand of the angel before God.

Rev 8:5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it from the fire of the altar, and cast *it* on the earth: and there were voices, and thunders and lightnings, and an earthquake.

These judgments of the fury and wrath of God against the earth and it's inhabitants has been wanting for ages of time. But God has shown patience in redeeming out those who He has desired from the earth. Now He is refining and rebuilding His people of Israel into the stone kingdom that Daniel saw in his vision of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream in which a stone uncut by human hands was hurled at the feet (the final phase) of the evil world empire of Satan and that stone kingdom broke the feet to pieces and brought the entire evil structure down by God's design. God is now destroying that evil world empire that

Satan has designed for so long to thwart God's plans and hinder God's people, both those through faith in Christ's sacrifice and those of His Kingdom of Israel.

Summary -

We have seen in chapter eleven the two great witnesses of God who will cry out against the wickedness of the nations during the time of the Tribulation the Great, and whom God will give the power to strike out with judgments against those nations and to defend themselves against anyone who might attempt to attack them. They will perform this witness from God for *a thousand two hundred and sixty days* which is three and one half years in a lunar calendar as was often used by the middle eastern peoples. Then God will allow the beast to destroy them. The people of the world will be so happy after the judgments they have suffered at the command of the two prophets that they will rejoice and celebrate for *three days and a half*. But then we saw that *that the spirit of life from God* will enter the two witnesses again terrifying all those who have celebrated their death. These two will be called by God into the heavens. After that there will be a terrible earthquake destroying a tenth of Jerusalem and killing seven thousand men and causing the rest to worship the true God. That seems to indicate that the area of operation of these two witnesses is around Jerusalem itself and perhaps even that the people of Jerusalem themselves were not approving of the message of these two men of God. The more things change the more they stay the same. When did the people of God ever accept the prophets of old when they were crying out their message from God? After that we saw into the heavens and the ark of God's covenant in the temple in His presence shown to John in anticipation of what will befall the earth and it's inhabitants next.