

Initial Questions 11:1-14

1. Compare the imagery of vss. 1 and 2 with Zachariah chap. 2:1ff. Discuss.
2. Who are the two witnesses mentioned in vs. 3?
3. Is there any difference in the time during which the holy city shall be trod under foot (42 months), and the prophesying period of the two witnesses (1260 days)?
4. What is the significance of the sack cloth in vs. 3?
5. What was the spiritual condition of Jerusalem as related in vs. 8?
6. What violation of Jewish burial custom do we find in vs. 9?
7. Does this second woe reveal that the havoc which is coming upon the earth is more intense than the first woe?

Further Preparations: Measuring the Temple;
the Testimony of Two Witnesses
Chapter 11:1-14

Verse 1

Abruptly the scene changes. John is commanded to measure the heavenly temple. The real Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. and John is writing a quarter of a century after the destruction. This makes the perspective of *The Revelation* more preceptive as its scenes move back and forth between heaven and earth. John's imagery is taken from Ezekiel 40:3. The measurement of time used in this section of scripture is borrowed from Daniel 7:25 and 12:7. During this period of time God's two witnesses will be prophesying (11:3). The descriptive imagery of the two witnesses comes from Zechariah 4:1-3, 11-14, and 11:5-6. When their period of prophesying is finished they shall fall prey to The Beast. This Beast is described in the second part of *The Revelation* (chp. 12ff). Why was John commanded to measure the Temple? In view of Zechariah 2:1ff it is possible that the measuring was to set it apart from all that is unholy. He was to measure the sanctuary, that is where the holy of holies, etc., was located.

Verse 2

The outside court, or the court of the Gentiles was not to be measured. John further sees that "they will trample the holy

city 42 months. (See appendix at the end of the commentary on *Jerusalem: In History and Symbol!*) For the first time in *The Revelation* a specific time is mentioned. The source of this time symbolism is Daniel 7:25 and 12:7. This same period of time appears in three forms in John's apocalypse - 42 months in this verse, 1260 days in verse 3 and chapter 12:6, and a times, times and half a time in 12:14. Those who are pre-occupied with dating the events of *The Revelation* and the coming again of Christ, apparently know more about God's time table than John did.

Verse 3

God's two faithful witnesses were empowered so that "they will prophesy 1260 days having been clothed (*in* - not in text) sack clothes." The period of their prophesying is the same as the 42 months when "the holy city" will be trampled in verse 2. The symbolism of sackclothes signifies repentance (see Jonah 3:5, Isaiah 22:12, Jeremiah 4:8) who are the two witnesses mentioned in this verse? It is impossible to identify them with certainty.

Verse 4

Some have identified them as Enoch and Elijah; others have identified them as Zerubbabel and Joshua, because of the two olive trees mentioned in Zechariah 4:2-14. The most common interpretation is that they are Elijah and Moses. The present author believes that the most sensible position to take is to admit that we do not know! The teaching of the verse is clear enough regardless of who the witnesses are. In the midst of the persecution there still remains those who faithfully proclaim the Word of God. (For further examination of the two witnesses see Milligan's, *The Revelation of St. John*, pp. 59-69).

Verse 5

God's protection is extended to His faithful witnesses to the extent that "if anyone wishes to harm them, fire proceeds out of their mouth, and devours their enemies; and if anyone should wish to harm them, he must (*dei* - absolute necessity) be killed in the same manner." This verse is written in a first class conditional sentence which assumes the condition (of someone actually doing them harm) to be true to the actual state of affairs. John thus declares that being faithful to God's word (as

he was banned to Patmos) during the most intense stages of persecution will bring death to God's witnesses.

The fire in the witnesses mouth could be the symbol of the Word of God as in Jeremiah 5:14--"I am making my words to become in your mouth a fire, and this people wood, and the fire shall devour them."

Verse 6

It is this verse that some use to identify the two witnesses of verse 3 as Elijah and Moses. John states that "these have power (the Greek word means both power and authority) to shut heaven in order that (*hina* clause or purpose clause) it may not rain during the days of their prophecy, and they have power (same Greek word as above) over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every (kind of) plague as often as they may wish." Elijah had the power to "shut up heaven" so that it did not rain (see I Kings 17:1); and Moses had the "power over the waters to turn them into blood" (see Exodus 7:20). Though we cannot identify the two witnesses with absolute certainty, the identification above is the most feasible of all known to this author. At least we can say that Elijah and Moses were prototypes for the two witnesses.

Verse 7

When the period of their witnesses was finished "the beast coming up out of the abyss will make war with them and will over come (*nikēsei* - future indicative - will as a matter of fact be the victor and the witnesses - the defeated) and will kill them." God's faithful witnesses will not only be defeated, but will be murdered for the crime of being committed to the Living God.

Verse 8

John's readers would immediately understand the imagery of this verse. Burials were the same day of the death in New Testament times (see A. C. Bouquet, *Everyday Life in New Testament Times*, Scribners, New York, 1953, pp. 149). In contrast to Jewish burial custom (and Christian) their corpse *lie* (no verb in the Greek text) on the open street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where indeed their Lord was crucified." The imagery of Sodom reveals iniquity, and Egypt spiritual and possibly physical slavery. Vincent (volume II Word Studies in the New Testament, op cit., see also

Swete, op cit., p. 138) claims that the phrase "the great city" never refers to Jerusalem. But this seems to be improbable in light of the last identifying phrase "where also our Lord was crucified."

Verse 9

The whole world sees "their corpse three and a half days, and they do not allow their corpses to be placed in a tomb." In the first image the singular form of corpse is used, but in the second image the plural is used because each body would require separate burial. The term translated "do not allow" (*aphiousin* - means they were not permitted to bury the corpses.) The beast wanted the whole world to see that he had overcome God's witnesses.

Verse 10

How did the death of God's two witnesses effect mankind? Mankind paid no more heed to the word of God than during the time of Noah and many of the prophets. "The ones dwelling on the earth rejoice (*chairousin* - present tense - they are at present - continually rejoicing) over them, and are glad (*euphrainontai* - present tense - continually making merry), and they will send gifts to one another; because these two prophets tormented (*ebasenisan* - 1st aor. indicative - disturbed their consciences) them that dwelt on the earth." The unChristian majority that dwelt on the earth rejoiced when the source (the two witnesses) of their tortured consciences was taken away. The testimony of the witnesses was unabated until they were killed. Relief came to the sinful hearts of the wicked only when they did not have to listen to the word of God "which is sharper than a two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12).

Verse 11

"The exultation of the pagan world will be shortened." - (Swete, op cit., p. 139). The imagery of the resurrected witnesses probably came from Ezekiel's valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 38:1-14). The ungodly rejoicers got the surprise of their evil lives when "a spirit of life (*zōēs* - this is not merely biological life - as this would require *bios*) from (*ek* - out of - God was the source of life - as He always is) God entered into them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on the ones beholding (or looking on) them." Note the radical contrast

from their making merry, and sending festival gifts to great fear. They thought that God and His faithful preachers were gone forever, but God's purpose will not be thwarted by the most depraved form of evil dwelling in the hearts of men. Paul told young Timothy that the time would come—"Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (II Tim. 3:12, see also I Tim. 4:1ff).

Verse 12

After the resurrection of the witnesses (as Christ's resurrection - following His testimony on Calvary) they were called into the presence of God by way of an ascension (note Christ's crowning victory through His ascension to the right hand of the father). Christ was also taken into glory on a cloud (Acts 1:9). The witnesses now had a divine vantage point from which to see "their enemies."

Verse 13

Even nature bore witness to the translated witnesses, through an earthquake. The ultimate result of its destruction was that—"The rest became terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven." Note the radical change from joy to terror. In fact they were so terrified that they recognized the God of heaven. This is the first time, throughout the entire ordeal of the seals and up to the sixth trumpet, that sinful mankind acknowledged the Lord and gave Him glory! This was probably not conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ but rather action brought on by their extreme degree of fear.

Verse 14

The preaching events brought the close of "the second woe" —"behold the third woe is coming quickly." (Reread 8:13 - for the mentioning of the three woes.) The second woe was disclosed after the sounding of the sixth trumpet. The events revealed in chapter 10:1 - 11:13 are the intervening occurrences before the sounding of the seventh trumpet in 11:15.

SECTION 34

Text 11:15-19

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said,

The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever.

16 And the four and twenty elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces and worshipped God 17 saying,

We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast; because thou hast taken thy great power, and didst reign. 18 And the nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to thy servants the prophets and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth.

19 And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark, of his covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Initial Questions 11:15-19

1. Who announced that the "kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord" - vs. 15?
2. At what other previous point does John mention the 24 elders?
3. How did the nations react to God's intervention - vs. 18? Why?
4. Was the Temple of God mentioned in vs. 19 located in Jerusalem?

The Seventh Trumpet-blast, or The Third Woe
Chapter 11:15-19

Verse 15

In contrast to the silence in heaven which followed the opening of the seventh seal, great voices are speaking as the seventh trumpet is sounded. What were the voices saying? "The kingdom of the world became (*egeneto* - 2nd aor. ind. - became in a single act - now!) the kingdom (this noun not in