

Midweek Bible Study

The Two Witnesses

Rev. 11:3-14

Introduction

Chapter 10 sets up Chapter 11, which is an interlude between the 6th and 7th trumpets. This parallels the interlude between the 6th and 7th seals.

That interlude gave us a picture of the church sealed, protected, coming through the great tribulation. This interlude will do the same.

This interlude gives us a picture of the church, protected though persecuted (11:1-2) and the witness of the church before the world (11:3-14).

I. The Measuring of the Temple (11:1-2)

We see the Church is the dwelling place of God (Temple). It is the worshiping community.

It is protected with His presence.

Yes, there is opposition and hostility. But God knows those who are in and those who are out. Those who are His and those who are not.

II. The Two Witnesses (11:3-13)

These verses are difficult, but I think if we connect the symbolism, it does become clear that the two witnesses represent the church as a prophetic, but persecuted witness between the first and second advent.

Excursus: 1,260 Days

There are multiple time references in Rev.

An hour: 3:3, 10²; 8:1; 9:15; 11:13; 14:7, 15; 17:12; 18:10, 17, 19

5 Months: 9:5, 10

3 ½ days: 11:9, 11

42 months, 1,260 days, time, times and half a time period.

42 months: 11:2; 13:5

1,260 days: 11:3; 12:6

Where does this time reference come from?

Daniel 9:24-27 (sermon audio, The Vision of the Seventy Sevens, Pts 1 and 2)



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The identity of the two witnesses

1. There are two
2. They prophesy for 1,260 days
3. Clothed in sackcloth
The clothing of mourning and impending judgment (2 Kgs. 19:1-3; 1 Chron. 21:16; Joel 1:8, 13; Amos 8:10) and repentance (Jonah 3:5-8; Matt. 11:21).
4. They are two olive trees and two lampstands
Zech. 4:1-13

The two olive trees – the two anointed ones
Joshua the priest/Zerubbabel the Ruler/Governor

Just as the priest and king there were the key vessels used by the Spirit for the establishment of the temple against opposition, so here the two witnesses are empowered by the Spirit to perform the same role for the inaugurated latter-day temple in 11:1–2.¹

5. They are two lampstands (witnesses, light of the world)
Cf. Rev. 1:12-20
6. They are persecuted by the beast
11:7; cf. 13:7

The two witnesses represent the church who proclaims to the whole world the Gospel of repentance and the coming judgment.

We will dig into the text more in a couple weeks, but for now we need to remember that the worshipping church is also the witnessing church.

¹ G. K. Beale and Sean M McDonough, [“Revelation.”](#) in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 1119.

