

Message #28**Revelation 11:3-14**

We know that during the first half of the Great Tribulation billions of people will die as the target of God's wrath. We also know that as the Great Tribulation nears the half-way point things will turn to National Israel. The prophet Jeremiah predicted there would be a time in the Tribulation that is called the time of "Jacob's Trouble."

Jeremiah wrote: "Alas! For that day is great, there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob's distress but he will be saved from it" (Jeremiah 30:7).

At this point in the Great Tribulation, 144,000 Jews have been sealed by God and no one is able to harm them (Revelation 7:3-4). These 144,000 Jewish evangelists will be proclaiming the "Gospel of the Kingdom" worldwide. The Gospel of the Kingdom is a message that Jesus Christ will return to Jerusalem and Israel and establish a Kingdom on this earth.

We learn here in Revelation that God will also raise up two Jewish prophet/witnesses in Jerusalem. They will also testify of what is happening and they will confront the world with Truth. These two prophets will be killed and as the world watches, they will rise from the dead and ascend up into heaven.

When these two ascend, the second woe judgment will be over and the worst woe judgment will soon begin. This will launch the time of Jacob's trouble. This will be the time of the Antichrist. This will be the time of world-wide Jewish persecution and this will be the time of Armageddon.

When these two prophet/witnesses leave and ascend into heaven, things for Israel will become deadly and disastrous.

What we see here is this:

IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION GOD WILL CAUSE TWO PROPHET/WITNESSES TO TESTIFY AND PROPHECY IN JERUSALEM AND THEY WILL BE KILLED AND HE WILL PUBLICLY RAISE THEM UP AND TAKE THEM UP INTO HEAVEN JUST BEFORE THE WORLD IS TURNED OVER TO SATAN AND THE ANTICHRIST.

There are eleven prophetic facts revealed pertaining to these two prophets:

PROPHETIC FACT #1 – These two prophet/witnesses are given authority by God. **11:3a**

The verse begins with the verb "I will grant." This is a future tense, indicative mood, active voice verb. What this means is it is a definite fact (indicative mood) that in the future (future tense) I will actively grant and give power to these two (active voice).

We already saw in Revelation 11:1-2 that the Temple is standing in Jerusalem and these two will play a prominent role in the sovereign plan of God during that time.

PROPHETIC FACT #2 – These two prophet/witnesses are God’s witnesses who will prophesy. **11:3b**

There are two words that describe the ministry of these two:

- 1) They are witnesses (marturia) which means they are verbally witnessing and testifying of the truth pertaining to Jesus Christ and the work of God (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 237).
- 2) They are prophesying which means they are predicting exactly what is going to happen. They are testifying of the future, which includes predictions of the remaining judgments of the Tribulation, the Antichrist, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the Millennium, the Great White Throne Judgment, the New Heaven, New Earth and New Jerusalem.

These two will be proclaiming a Kingdom gospel, not a grace gospel.

So at this point in the Great Tribulation, God has 144,000 Jewish witnesses and then He has these two in Jerusalem.

PROPHETIC FACT #3 – These two prophet/witnesses have a time regulated ministry. **11:3c**

It is specifically stated that the ministry of these two will last for 1,260 days. 1,260 days is 3 ½ years.

Now it is not specifically stated which 3 ½ years or 1,260 days of the seven years will feature these two. If we take the position that Revelation is chronological in its development, we believe it is probably the first 3 ½ year period, just before the Antichrist turns vicious against Israel.

If this is correct, then as the Temple is being rebuilt they will be on the scene predicting and explaining everything. They will be communicating to Israel and the world where the Tribulation is heading and what is yet to occur.

God will have given Israel and the world a 3 ½ year warning of what is going to happen and these two prophets will effectively communicate precisely what is happening.

PROPHETIC FACT #4 – These two prophet/witnesses literally wear humble clothing. **11:3d**

These two prophet/witnesses will literally be “clothed in sackcloth.” This was specifically significant to O.T. Israel. Sackcloth was made of goat or camel’s hair. It was used as a symbol of humility. It was also clothing worn as a symbol of mourning. Now it won’t be that they did not have opportunity to get different clothing. It is that they will choose to wear this clothing.

In Jonah's day, when he preached to Nineveh that God was about to destroy the city and everyone in it, the whole city humbled themselves before God and mourned and they all wore sackcloth as a sign of that fact (Jonah 3:5).

By these two prophet/witnesses wearing this kind of clothing we may draw the following conclusions:

- 1) They will stand out as not fitting in with the majority of the world.
- 2) They will have humble ministry with no glitz or glamour.
- 3) They will signal to the world that major destruction from God is on the way.
- 4) They will signal to Israel that her worst time of mourning is about to occur.

PROPHETIC FACT #5 – These two prophet/witnesses stand tall and shine bright for God.
11:4

When the book of Revelation opened, during the Church Age, the churches were the lampstands (Rev. 1:20). But at this point in the Great Tribulation, the Church is gone and these two prophets will be the lampstands.

They will be the two who will shine forth the truth of God. They will be the two who will stand up tall for the word of God. The world will hate them, but God is honored by them.

Now this imagery of lampstands and olive trees comes from Zechariah 4:2-3. It is imagery that refers to two who are empowered by God's Spirit to represent God in this world (4:4-6, 12-14). These two were critical to encouraging the people to rebuild the Temple on the foundation that had been laid by Zerubbabel in 536 BC (4:9). **Now the two prophets who actually were used by God to get the Temple rebuilt were Haggai and Zechariah.** They were the ones who motivated Zerubbabel the governor of Judah and Joshua the high priest to get the job done (Haggai 2:2). **They are the prototype of the two prophets in Revelation.**

Before we move on, we want to make one more observation. These two prophets are empowered to communicate God's word and to shine forth the truth of God in the dark days of the Tribulation. They will be hated by almost everyone in the world.

PROPHETIC FACT #6 – These two prophet/witnesses have power to kill people. **11:5**

God will give these two prophet/witnesses specific power to execute and kill people. They will be able to pronounce an instant death penalty on any they desire to execute.

They are able to speak judgment against those who want to harm them or stop their ministry and the person will be killed.

This is another major difference between this dispensation and the Grace Age. In the Grace Age we are to turn the other cheek mentality. But here these prophets will have an immediate vengeance kind of ministry. Many believers will die in the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation but not these two. If people try to harm them, they will die.

PROPHETIC FACT #7 – These two prophet/witnesses have power over nature. **11:6**

The Apostle John, who is writing this, knew what it was like to have a special Divine power to be able to have authority over demons and diseases (Luke 9:1-2). So he is certainly one who would recognize the God-given power these two have.

During the Tribulation, these two will be able to do things with nature, proving they are prophets of God. They will be able to shut up the sky so it will not rain and they will be able to turn water into blood and they will be able to strike or hit the earth with various plagues.

They will be able to do this “as often as they desire.” God will grant these two this special dispensation of power “during the days of their prophesying.”

These prophetic signs will prove and support their prophetic predictions of what is going to happen. If we keep in mind that the Antichrist entered into some peace treaty with Israel, these two will be predicting just exactly what he is going to do. These signs will show they are telling the truth and they do have the power of God.

They will be testifying of some amazing future things and the signs will back them up.

PROPHETIC FACT #8 – These two prophet/witnesses will be killed by the Antichrist. **11:7**

Verse 7 makes it clear that when they have finished their testimony and ministry, a beast will surface who will kill them. This signals the true nature of the Antichrist in regard to Israel.

We are introduced to a person who is identified as “the beast” (to qhrion). This is not “a beast”; this is “the beast.” Daniel spoke of this beast as being the most ferocious, dreadful, terrifying political beast to ever exist (Dan. 7:7, 19) who would be the law and dictator of the world for 3 ½ years or 1,260 days (Dan. 7:25). Daniel says he will surface as this vicious beast to Israel in the middle of the Tribulation (Dan. 9:27). We are introduced to this Antichrist right here in Revelation.

He is identified as “the beast” which is a word that means he is a vicious, cunning, violent person who has an appetite to rip people to shreds. We will learn more of him in the Tribulation in Revelation 13.

He comes out of the abyss, which means he is a special satanic and demonic person who is empowered by forces coming out of hell, where demons exist (Luke 8:31). At this point in the Great Tribulation a very unusual Satanic and demonic power will be released and take up residency in this beast and when this happens, there will be three results:

Result #1 - He will make war with the two prophets.

Result #2 - He will overcome the two prophets

Result #3 - He will kill the two prophets.

What he doesn't realize is that this is all part of the sovereign plan of God. God does not permit him to touch them until they have completed their witnessing job.

PROPHETIC FACT #9 – These two prophet/witnesses will not be buried. **11:8-10**

These two prophets will not receive a nice funeral and luncheon in the aftermath of their death. There are four facts revealed about this:

Fact #1 - Their dead bodies will lie in the street of Jerusalem. **11:8**

Jerusalem is often given metaphorical names to describe how sinful and corrupt the city and people were. For example, in Isaiah 1:10, Jerusalem is called Sodom and Gomorrah (Is. 1:1).

In this text, Jerusalem is called Sodom, which refers to immoral perverted sex that is heading to judgment and Egypt, which refers to idolatry and persecution of God's people.

At this point in the Tribulation, Jerusalem is about to be taken over by the Antichrist who will turn it into an immoral, idolatrous headquarters that will specifically target Jews in order to destroy them (Matt. 24:15-22).

It is possible, based on Daniel 11:37 that says the Antichrist will have no regard or desire for women that not only will he persecute and kill women, but that homosexuality will be the specific kind of immorality that would make Jerusalem like Sodom and his attempt to exterminate Jews will make it like Egypt.

Fact #2 - Their dead bodies will be viewed by people all over the world. **11:9a**

For many years this prediction baffled people because they did not know how people from all over the world would be able to see two dead bodies lying in a street of Jerusalem. That is until Satellite TV and internet were developed.

People from all over the world will be able to tune in 24 hours a day to look at the dead bodies of these two prophets lying in a street in Jerusalem.

More than likely the thing that will prompt the world to tune in will be the fact that these two prophets said they would be killed but would rise again. There will be a worldwide interest in this.

Fact #3 - Their dead bodies will be viewed for 3 ½ days. **11:9b**

The fact that they are in the street 3 ½ days is sovereignly time controlled by God and is a prelude to the 3 ½ years about to occur.

During those 3 ½ years, the Antichrist is going to be authorized to kill and destroy Israel just before God intervenes and raises her up again. Why 3 ½ days? Because intense persecution is coming for 3 ½ years.

Fact #4 - Their dead bodies will be cause for worldwide parties. **11:10**

The two prophets who had the power to kill people are dead. The two prophets who had power to control nature are gone. The world will have a party. It will be like a Christmas party in which people will exchange gifts.

J. Vernon McGee called this “the Devil’s Christmas.” This holiday is not designed to honor the birth of Jesus Christ but to honor the death of two prophets who were predicting the return of Jesus Christ.

We get a glimpse here as to the utter depravity that is dominating the Tribulation. The world hates God. The world hates Jesus Christ. The world hates the word of God. The world hates the people of God.

Dr. John Walvoord said, “A righteous prophet is always a torment to a wicked generation.”

As we near the Rapture of the church, we may expect that there will be a hatred for God’s word and the promotion of party paganism even at Christmas time.

PROPHETIC FACT #10 – These two prophet/witnesses will be publicly raised and raptured.
11:11-12

This will be an amazing moment. God is going to breathe life into these two again. These two martyrs will stand up on their feet and the world will be in great fear. Their bodies have been dead for 3 ½ days and they stand up. People will watch this all over the world.

Then a voice from heaven will say “Come up here,” which are the exact same words John heard in Revelation 4:1. When God says “come up here,” up they will go and all their enemies and all people of the world will watch them go.

They will ascend up into the clouds and be taken to heaven.

Now we would logically think that when the world sees them go, they would be even happier. But notice **verse 11**, “great fear fell upon those who were watching them.”

See, those who are watching will realize everything those two prophets predicted will happen. They will know we are about to experience the ultimate wrath of God.

PROPHETIC FACT #11 – The departure of these two prophet/witnesses signals the worst destruction. **11:13-14**

At the same hour that these two went up to heaven, a great earthquake from God shook and it destroyed 1/10th of the city of Jerusalem and will kill 7,000 people. These are very precise numbers here.

This is fascinating because when John wrote Revelation, Jerusalem had been destroyed by Titus in AD 70 and wasn't even standing. Yet John is seeing a rebuilt Jerusalem and Temple.

When these two prophets ascend, there will be some who will give glory to God. This will be some evangelistic impact these two prophets will have made on some of the Jews in Jerusalem. Many in Israel will realize the validity of their message as it relates to Jesus Christ. They will glorify God and they will need to flee the city.

Verse 14 says this will complete the second “woe” judgment and the third and final “woe” judgment is about to hit.