

Revelation A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #23

1/3/2007

The Judgment of God, The Great Tribulation, The Great Day of God's Wrath Chapter Ten Through Chapter Eleven, Verse Thirteen Explanatory Interlude Between the Sixth and Seventh Trumpet Judgments

Chapter ten through chapter eleven, verse thirteen presents an explanatory interlude as our Lord explains some of the matters happening in addition to the Trumpet Judgments.

First, He presents to us the **“mighty angel,”** the special representative of Christ, who has in his hand “a little open book.”

Second, in chapter eleven, we are told about the **“two witnesses.”**

Revelation 10:1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

There is considerable disagreement among good, conservative Bible scholars over the identification of this **“mighty angel.”** Some, such as Godet, Vincent, DeHaan, Ironside, Walter Scott and Henry Morris identify the angel as Christ. Generally they do this on the basis of his appearance, how he is presented. Others, such as Newell, John Walford and Vernon McGee see this angel as just another angel, a messenger of Christ. I agree with the latter group.

There are several reasons why this being should be seen as an angel and not as Christ.

First, Christ does not appear in Revelation as an angel. While it is true that, in the Old Testament, He presented Himself as an angel, such as to Abraham in Genesis 18 and to Joshua in Joshua 5:13-15, in the book of Revelation, Christ shows Himself in His glory. In Revelation 5 Christ shows Himself as the Lamb **“as it had been slain,”** but even there He is seen in His glory. Also, in Revelation 5:2 is the other place where a **“strong angel”** is seen. He is certainly not Christ for he is holding **“the book sealed with seven seals”** which Christ takes out of his hand. All through the Revelation Christ uses angels as His messengers, but He does not present Himself in that form.

Second, the adornment of the angel reflects the appearance of Christ because he represents Him. The angel is clothed with a cloud, not clouds of glory which shall accompany our Lord in His Second Coming. The **“cloud”** that clothes the angel simply indicates that he is from heaven. Christ placed **“a rainbow upon the head of the angel”** to remind us that He will not again destroy the world with water, that He made a covenant with man which He will not break. The **“face of the angel was as it were the sun”** because he, like Moses, had been in the presence of the Lord and reflected His glory. His feet being as **“pillars of fire”** were appropriate because, under the authority of Christ, he had come to make a special and solemn announcement of coming judgment.

Third, the word **“another;”** *allos*²⁴³, means **another angel of the same kind of servant-angels Christ has used previously**, not different in nature. Had Christ intended to indicate that this angel was not like the prior ones He would have used the other Greek word for **“another;”** which is *heteros*²⁰⁸⁷.

Fourth, when the angel lifts up his hand and swears (verse six) he **“sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are...”** The angel swears by the authority of the One Who has sent him. Christ would not have needed to swear to the truth at all.

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Revelation 10:2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

The **"little book"** that was opened in his hand is a diminutive form of the opened title deed to all of creation that was introduced to us in chapter five. Christ has removed the seals and has been asserting His authority to hold His creation to accountability and has been judging Christ-rejecting mankind. Because the intensity and severity of that judgment is about to increase, He reaffirms His authority and has the angel to plant his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the earth to show that all of creation is under His authority. In His holy Word, over and over again, He has asserted His ownership of all of creation. In Leviticus 25:23 He said, **"The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me."** In Psalm 24:1-2 and Psalm 8:6-8 David wrote, **"The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas."** It's all His and He again asserts that authority of ownership and His right to judge all who live in His creation.

Revelation 10:3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

Revelation 10:4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

When the angel planted his feet on the seas and on the earth, asserting the authority of the One Who had sent him, he cried with a loud voice, the voice of a lion, the king of all animals and symbolic of authority, and was answered by **"seven thunders"** out of heaven. God's voice is often described as the sound of thunder. In Psalm 29:3 we read **"The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters."** And in Job 37:5 we find that **"God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend."**

The **"thunders"** were audible, intelligent sounds, sounds communicating a message John could hear and understand and, as he had been previously instructed to do, he prepared to write down the message he heard. However, John said, **"I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not."**

The Lord's instructions to John leave us puzzled and ignorant of what he heard. Though John was instructed not to write down the message, some students of the Scriptures have foolishly tried to tell us what he heard. Such are only wild speculations, ridiculous guesses. Had God wanted us to know what John heard He would not have told him not to record the message. As God had told Daniel **"to shut up the words and seal up the book, even to the time of the end"** (Daniel 12:4), He now told John **"Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered and write them not."** God has His reasons to leave us in the dark and thus He has done. We will gladly stay ignorant until He chooses to tell us these things.

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Revelation 10:5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

Revelation 10:6 And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:

The angel makes it clear that he is not Christ since he takes an oath by the eternal Creator. If he were Christ he would swear by Himself, since there is none greater than He. The writer of Hebrews said **"...when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, he swore by Himself"** (Hebrews 6:13). The angel swore by another, not by himself, because he is not God, and therefore, not the Lord Jesus Christ. As a representative of Christ, the angel takes an oath by Christ because he claims all of creation for Christ.

"There should be time no longer" is understood by most scholars to be more properly translated as **"there should no longer be any delay"** communicating to us that God's judgment is to quickly come to a conclusion. While sometimes it seems like the devil's attacks will never end and that truth and righteousness will never triumph, God does have a schedule and here the announcement is that the faithful will not have to wait much longer. Jesus had said in Matthew 24:22 that **"except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."** And in 2 Peter 3:9-10 God's Word tells us that **"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."** And, when we get to chapter twelve we shall read that Satan himself knows that his time is short.

Revelation 10:7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

While we wait impatiently for God to conclude His plans we can know with confidence that everything is on schedule. Here He tells John that when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet (11:15) and pours out his judgments this period of tribulation will come to an end. By this time half of the **Tribulation Period** is finished, and the second half will go quickly. God will finish what He has started and do it His way in His time.

Then, suddenly, John is required to do a very strange thing.

Revelation 10:8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

Revelation 10:9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

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Revelation 10:10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

John did as he was told and the results were bittersweet. Eating the little book meant to receive the Word of God with faith. Today many people squabble over what God tells us in His Word, agreeing with what they like and rejecting what is not pleasing to them.

In Jeremiah 15:16 we read that receiving the Word of God like eating them. **“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.”** Ezekiel (3:1-3) does the same thing: **“Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.”** Again, it is the same way with the Psalmist (119:103): **“How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”** It is the same today. God's Word is sweet to the one who takes them into his heart and obeys them. However, sometimes the message of God's Word is painful and bitter for it contains the pronouncement of judgment. We do not have the option of taking only what we like. To be faithful to God we must accept and proclaim all of it! John would not have the option of proclaiming only what was pleasing. His instructions were clear and demanding from the Lord, and so are ours. Faithfulness is required of us as it was of John.

Revelation 10:11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

Chapter Eleven

As we come to the Eleventh chapter we are first given a look at the last half of the **Tribulation Period**, **“forty-two months,”** during which the Gentiles (unbelievers) will seem to have the upper hand and desecrate the Temple. The reference to the Temple, the altar, and the holy city, is a reminder that the **Tribulation Period** has a very special relationship with the Old Testament, particularly the Jews.

Then, we are introduced to the **“two witnesses”** who testify for **“a thousand two hundred and threescore days,”** or one half of the **Tribulation Period** whose ministry is concluded when Anti-Christ is revealed at the mid-point of the **Tribulation Period**.

This is the period of time Jesus referred to as **“the times of the Gentiles”** as recorded in Luke 21:24: **“And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”**

We are told in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 that this is also the time when Anti-Christ is revealed by proclaiming that he is god: **“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”**

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Revelation 11:1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

Revelation 11:2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

As of this time there is no temple in Jerusalem. Somehow, sometime it must be rebuilt. Much has been written about it in the Old Testament (Ezekiel 40-48; Amos 9:11; Micah 4:1; Haggai 2:9; Zechariah 6:12-13). John had seen the Temple and had heard Jesus say that it would be destroyed: **“And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down”** (Matthew 24:1-2). By the time John writes the Revelation he has seen the Temple destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. Thus, he knows also that God must somehow arrange for it to be rebuilt sometime in the future.

The reference to the Temple takes us back to the Old Testament for the only Temple in the New Testament is the spiritual body of Christ (Ephesians 2:21-22). The **“reed like unto a rod”** speaks of a measuring instrument that implied chastisement administered under the authority of God as referenced in Psalm 2:9: **“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”**

The “altar” in verse one refers to the golden altar of prayer since the altar for burnt offering was not in the temple proper but in the outer court. **“Measure them that worship therein”** indicates that God evaluates those who claim to worship Him.

“But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles” is not to be measured because it excludes all that does not belong in the temple proper. The altar of burnt offering would be outside the temple proper and was a picture of the cross of Christ and would seem to imply that the Gospel would still be available though it would mostly be rejected during this time of judgment.

God is going to allow Satan to have his way for **“forty-two months,”** but that is all (Daniel 7 :25; 12:11; Rev. 12:12-14; 2 Thess. 2:3-4). Satan is given a short time period during which he can act like he is king and lord, but his time is limited and he knows it!

God's “two witnesses,” very special witnesses:

Revelation 11:3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

There has probably been more needless and specious speculation about the identity of these “two witnesses” than any other portion of Revelation. Some see them as Elijah and Enoch. Others see them as Moses and John The Baptist and other names are suggested. They may even be two persons not ever known. One thing is sure. If God had wanted us to know who they are, He would have told us. Since He didn't tell us it seems

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fruitless and speculative trying to identify them. Simply put, they are two very powerful, immortal witnesses whom God designated to be His witnesses.

Revelation 11:4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

The reference to **“two olive trees”** takes our mind back to Zechariah's vision in Zechariah four. There the two lampstands are two individuals, Joshua and Zerubbabel who were able to stand against great difficulties. These **“two witnesses”** are bright lights shining in a horrible darkness and exercising miraculous powers because they are filled with the Holy Spirit. They are immortal until the day that God has determined their ministry is completed. In reality it is always true that until God is finished with His servants they are immortal, but none are as clearly immortal as these two.

The time of their ministry is the first half of the Tribulation Period because it is at the unveiling of Anti-Christ that their ministry ends.

Revelation 11:5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

Revelation 11:6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

Revelation 11:7 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.

These **“two witnesses”** are given great authority to do whatever is useful in their ministry, even power over nature and Satan and his followers can do nothing to stop them until they are finished. When they are through, Satan is allowed to kill them. He thinks he has conquered them, but he has only done what God has permitted him to do, yet his self-deceit leads him and his followers to have a great celebration.

Revelation 11:8 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.

Revelation 11:9 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.

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.

While they are still celebrating, a strange thing happens. Though the **“two witnesses”** have been dead for three and one half days, the Spirit of God enters their dead bodies and they suddenly stand up on their feet. It is another obvious demonstration of the power of God, but like all of the other demonstrations of God's power

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and authority, though it produces dread and fear, it results in no repentance. The hardened heart becomes so hard that it seems impossible for it to experience repentance. It is no different this time.

The ministry of the **"two witnesses"** has been completed. They were faithful. Their suffering was limited and brief. God speaks and summons them into His presence. Victory is clear and complete.

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.

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.

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.

Almost as an exclamation point to emphasize God's authority and their victorious ministry upon this earth, God, having spoken in a loud audible voice, then sent a great earthquake that destroyed a tenth of the city and killed seven thousand followers of Satan. Likely the seven thousand were the leaders of the enemy in their attack upon the **"two witnesses."** Indeed, God does have a sense of justice in His hour of victory!