

# The Revelation of Jesus Christ

## The War Against the Two Witnesses?

### Revelation 11:7-19

#### INTRODUCTION:

The book of Revelation can be very hard to understand. But it is a paradox. The big things are very, very clear. There is no debate as to the great theme of Revelation. The overall message of Revelation is that there is a war between good and evil here on earth, but God is in control and in the end those who serve God will win.

Even the main themes of each of the visions are plain. We know the seven trumpets, in the grand theme of things is about the judgment of God. The problem is that the details are very complex. The who, what, when, and where, or the sequence of things is very difficult at times to understand. It is those details that causes the interpretations to scatter out like the wind.

So, if we are to really understand the book of Revelation, then we have to go beyond the big themes and dive into the details, so we can answer those more minute questions.

You know what that means?

It means we have got work to do. It means we have to dive into the complexities. That is a challenge for me to understand and to relate them properly and simply to you. It is a challenge for you because the detail sometimes, by necessity, is complex. Sometimes there is not a simple explanation to them. Understanding the depth and richness of Revelation requires understanding the details. And understanding the details requires a lot of digging.

Yet the good news is that once we really do begin to see and understand them (as this is a vision), we will see them in such a clear way that it will enable us to receive the blessing that is attached to it as promised in the scriptures. There really are blessings that you will experience when you truly begin to see and understand these things.

All of that is to say that we are going to be looking at a passage concerning the two witnesses. All of us have asked the question. "Who are these two witnesses?" It is part of the puzzle. Two weeks ago we determined that the two witnesses represent the followers of Christ who are filled with the Word.

This morning we are going to see how the world will treat the church as witnesses.

Although we will be finishing chapter 11 this morning, we will only read through verse 14 in our scripture reading.

## All Stand and Read Scripture

Revelation 11:7-14 (NASB)

<sup>7</sup> When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. <sup>8</sup> And their dead bodies *will lie* in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. <sup>9</sup> Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations *will look* at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. <sup>10</sup> And those who dwell on the earth *will rejoice* over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

<sup>11</sup> But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them. <sup>12</sup> And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them. <sup>13</sup> And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

<sup>14</sup> The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

## Prayer

### BODY:

#### I. WAR WITH THE BEAST.

Revelation 11:7-8 (NASB)

<sup>7</sup> When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. <sup>8</sup> And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.

Great City is different in Revelation than Holy City. They are two totally different things. Holy City is consistently used to refer to the **people** of God. It is not a literal city.

Great City, here, is being used to refer to Jerusalem. The reason I know that is because the scriptures say it is the city where our Lord was crucified.

He was crucified in..... **Jerusalem**. We will get to the figurative definitions in a moment. But the Great City is also used six different times to describe Babylon.

For those who are saving money to rebuild the temple in this great city, pay special attention. The only people referred to as "The Great City" are Jerusalem and Babylon.

What is that saying? The Great City is not so holy! Is it? Because the Holy City is the people that belong to God. And neither one of these (Jerusalem or Babylon) belong to God.

The Great City is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt. Sodom archetypically stands for moral degradation. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire because of their immorality. Egypt represents oppression of God's people. God brought plagues upon the

land of Egypt through Moses and destroyed Pharaoh and his army because of his slavery and oppression upon God's people.

So what is Jerusalem being called here? The place where moral degradation and oppression of God's people exists. This also sounds like Babylon doesn't it. Because Babylon is where the Jews, before they rejected Christ as the Messiah, were exiled to as a punishment from God for their disobedience. And Babylon was full of immorality and persecuted God's people.

**Revelation 11:9-10 (NASB)**

9 Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb.

10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

Not permitting a body to be buried is very shameful in an honor shame society.

The world of evil and wickedness had a party. They are dead! How wonderful! They rejoiced at what they had accomplished. But the killing of a follower does not kill a church. The church was not dead. One cannot kill an idea. The principles of the New Testament remained alive.

The power is in the seed. Wherever the seed is planted in open and honest hearts, Christians can be produced. The seed may appear to be dead. But it is dead seed that brings the living organism to life and vitality.

Verse 6 says they have the power to shut up the sky and turn the waters into blood, but it never says that they actually do. They have the power to bring down various plagues, but they never do. It never says they do, does it? It says they have the power to do that.

What is it that tormented the people? Not the plagues, but the message. A message that may go like this.

**Luke 13:34-35a (NASB)**

<sup>34</sup> O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her!* How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen *gathers* her brood under her wings, and you would not *have it!* <sup>35</sup> Behold, your house is left to you *desolate*;  
...

The message told them that Jerusalem was is full of the blood of God's prophets. YOU are the reason that their blood flows through the city.

Even the Messiah. Even the king and priests. Even the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. YOU! You killed them. That message would bother them.

## **II. VICTORY OF THE SAINTS.**

**Revelation 11:11 (NASB)**

11 But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them.

This sounds quite a lot like Jesus. He came back to life after being in the tomb for three days. We are promised a resurrection from the dead also if we remain faithful.

Revelation 11:12 (NASB)

12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them.

Kind of sounds like Jesus. Doesn't it? Remember His ascension?

The triumphant church is invited to come to heaven, the dwelling place of God. The party suddenly ended. The enemies thought they had killed the church. Now, the church is having the victory party, an eternal celebration of victory.

Revelation 11:13 (NASB)

13 And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

7,000. A complete number of people were killed. The rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of Heaven. The only time in the entire book of Revelation where we ever see repentance from evil. And what does it follow?

When the testimony of Jesus Christ is lived out, even to the point whenever Christians are willing to die, even to the point whenever Christians are willing to be crucified, even whenever Christians are willing to be put to death by the kingdoms of the world. It is THAT testimony that leads to repentance.

Why? Because we, like Jesus, will raise again and people will see that power. We like Jesus, will go to God and be with Him and they will see that power. When they see these things happen, they will finally realize that they had been wrong about God. And when they do, repentance, or **giving glory to the God they do not know**, is the only reaction that makes any sense.

That is how Jesus completed His exaltation to the Jews in Luke 13.

Luke 13:34-35 (NASB)

<sup>34</sup> O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her!* How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen *gathers* her brood under her wings, and you would not *have it!* <sup>35</sup> Behold, your house is left to you *desolate*; **and I say to you, you will not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'**"

What is the message of the trumpets according to the interlude here in chapters 10 & 11?

What is He saying to the churches? He is saying the seals say we are spiritually secure. So get out there and witness. It doesn't matter if you die, because, like Jesus, you will resurrect one day. It is your witness I desire. Come what may. Even if they kill you and leave you in the streets your job is to die for the Gospel. He says you know you are

spiritually secure, so physically sacrifice yourself as the Lord did so other people can come to a saving grace in Jesus. He says to get out there and witness. Church!

As Sardis is wiping the sleep from their eyes, they will ask "What did you say?"

And Smyrna is sitting in the back saying "I know what that is like. And He told me we have more persecution coming. Awesome!"

Philadelphia says "Hey friends, we are right along with you. We get it."

Laodicea says "We can take care of ourselves. We don't need anything. We don't really have to witness. We are spiritually secure, and we are also pretty comfortable. It is a WIN-WIN. We are doubly blessed."

REALLY?.....REALLY?

The message of the witnesses are very clear. **Be like Jesus!** These scriptures kind of look like Jesus, but it should also look like you and if it doesn't, well, He rebukes and disciplines those He loves.

Remember how the saints were able to overcome Satan? It is found in Rev. 12:11.

Revelation 12:11 (NASB)

<sup>11</sup> And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb (It is only through Jesus by which we can be saved) and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

This is the message of the witnesses!

### III. THE REIGN OF CHRIST.

Revelation 11:14-19 (NASB)

<sup>14</sup> The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

<sup>15</sup> Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying,

"The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever." <sup>16</sup> And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, <sup>17</sup> saying,

"We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, (Notice the phrase "and Who is to come" is missing. Jesus is HERE! The second coming has occurred.) because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. <sup>18</sup> And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time *came* for the dead to be judged, (This is Gd answering Revelation chapter 6, the fifth seal where the saints asked "How long oh Lord until you avenge our blood?") and *the time* to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth."

<sup>19</sup> And the temple of God **which is in heaven was opened**; and the ark of His covenant appeared in **His** temple, (That is interesting to me. The reason **why** is this. According to Josephus, in 63 BC a Roman general by the name of Pompeii came into Judea and entered into the temple and walked into the Holy of Holies, and what does he find?

Nothing. That would mean that ever since the temple had been rebuilt, the high priest had entered the Holy of Holies year after year and he knew there was no presence of God there. But he told no one. Which is one of the reasons that the veil was torn from top to bottom in the temple when Jesus died on the cross. It was to show everyone that was around that there was nothing there. God doesn't live in there anymore. Where is He? He is in His people. Where is the ark of the covenant? Where is the presence of God that exists on earth? It is in heaven. Does that mean He has no presence on earth? No! **We** are His presence! We are the light to the world. We are the kingdom and priests. We are His Holy of Holies.)

and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

We will see these phrases referring to the final judgment four times in Revelation.

- 4:5 "Lightnings, sounds, and thunders".
- 8:5 "Thunders, sounds, lightnings , and quaking".
- 11:19 "Lightnings, sounds, thunders, quaking, and great hail".
- 16:18-21 "Lightnings, sounds, thunders, great earthquake, and huge hail".

These events point to an increasing severity of each series of judgments. When God hears our prayers He unleashes a power that we can't even begin to imagine.

In Revelation, prayer and worship is an act of war.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Here is the picture that I want to leave with you. It is a picture of a war that we are fighting against Satan. It is a war that we would have no clue how to fight were it not for the Word of God and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within us. God provided His Son to be sacrificed on the cross for our sins. And we are promised spiritual protection which enables you to be able to stand before God in judgment and be rewarded with eternal life in His presence in His heavenly temple.

There is only one way by which one can enter into the presence of God. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. It is only through Him that you can have to have your sins forgiven. It is only when your sins are forgiven that you can enter into this most holy place. It is not because of what you have done or whether you lived a better life than your neighbor, it is because of what God has done for you by covering your sins with mercy. We did nothing to deserve that blessing. It is a gift from God. **His desire is that we worship Him for His mercy by sharing this promise with others.**

**This is the Day!**