

The Two Witnesses Revelation 11:1-19 (Part 19)

Big idea of chapter 11: God fulfills His promise to His people, the Jews, to protect and save them.

Revelation 11:1-2 *Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, 2 but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.*

Measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there: John is told to measure 3 things that are His. This is showing possession by God.

Matthew 24:15 *So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)*

2 Thessalonians 2:4 *who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.*

Daniel 9:27 *And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."*

❖ The point of this measuring is not to prove that there will be a temple during the tribulation.

Measure: Temple/Holy Place (where God resided), Altar (place of sacrifice), the worshipers (Jewish people)

Do not measure the court outside the temple: John was not to measure outside the temple are where the Gentiles were allowed to be.

❖ John MacArthur: *God is measuring off Israel, symbolized by her temple, for salvation and for His special protection, preservation, and favor. The prophecies yet to be given to John will thus distinguish between God's favor toward Israel and His wrath on the pagan world.*

Point: God's presence, that was in the temple, and His salvation symbolized by the altar, will be among His chosen people in the tribulation even though they have rejected Jesus for 2,000+ years.

❖ The prophecy in Revelation 11 is prophesying the preservation of the Jewish people and their final salvation.

Revelation 11:3-4 *And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.*

Two witnesses: God will give power and authority to 2 men to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah to their Jewish brethren.

Who: 2 witnesses. They seem to be 2 literal men who will preach and prophesy for 3 1/2 years. Not 2 movements in church history or 2 messages from church history.

Why: Prophesy in sackcloth, a rough, heavy, coarse cloth, worn as a sign of repentance, mourning, humility, grief. They mourn the world's sin and call all to repentance.

When: 3 1/2 years. First half lines up with their death being at the mid point of the tribulation. (Second half lines up with the 6th woe is past and the 7th is to come.)

These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands: This is a reference from Zechariah 4 where the high priest, Joshua and the ruler, Zerubbabel are empowered by God to lead the Jews to finish rebuilding the temple. **Zechariah 4:1-14**

❖ These 2 witnesses will accomplish God's will - to preach Jesus and see Israel saved by God's Spirit and power.

❖ Who are the 2 witnesses? Old Testament and New Testament, Law & Prophets, Law & Gospel, Israel & Church, Elijah & Enoch, Zerubbabel & Joshua, Peter & Paul

❖ Elijah & Moses, 2 men in the Spirit of Elijah & Moses **Malachi 4:5-6**

1. God is faithful and true with His promises to His people.

Revelation 11:5-6 *And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed. 6 They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.*

Fire pours from their mouth: They can call down fire to consume their enemies. God will give them the supernatural abilities to protect and defend themselves.

❖ God will give them power to display and confirm the truth of God's Word and the reality of Jesus as the Messiah.

Revelation 11:7-8 *And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, 8 and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.*

When they have finished their testimony: When they have accomplished all that God has appointed them to do they will be killed. God is in control even in their deaths.

The beast that rises from the bottomless pit: Chapter 13 indicates that the beast is a world ruler (often called Antichrist) who imitates the true Christ, rules over the people of the world, and demands their worship (13:1–8).

War, conquer, and kill them: The Antichrist and his followers will be allowed to kill the 2 witnesses.

2. We are alive to serve God and fulfill our purpose.

Revelation 11:9-11 *For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, 10 and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth. 11 But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.*

Dead for 3 1/2 days: The whole world will see and know that the 2 witnesses are dead.

Those who dwell on the earth will rejoice: They will rejoice and be glad for the death of the 2 witnesses.

Breath of life from God entered them: God brings them back to life to once again show His power over death and to end their rejoicing.

Great fear fell on those who saw them: Their rejoicing turns to fear. They are worried they might retaliate or call fire down from heaven.

3. When we serve God we are eternally protected.

Revelation 11:12-14 *Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here!” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. 13 And at 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. 14 The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come.*

They went up to heaven in a cloud: The 2 witnesses are called up to heaven and the ascend into a cloud (Shekinah Glory).

Seven thousand people were killed: Literally “seven thousand names of men.” This indicates that they were possibly import people who were killed, possibly from Antichrist’s regime.

The rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven: This indicates that many people were possibly saved as a result of their death, resurrection and earthquake.

Revelation 11:15 *Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, 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 shall reign forever and ever.”*

❖ When the 7th trumpet blows, though the tribulation has not finished, it is as good as over.

Revelation 11:16-18 *And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying, “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. 18 The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.”*

The 24 elders worship God: The 24 elders represent the Church in heaven and they are worshiping God for redeeming the earth and the fulfillment of reigning over the earth.

The nations raged, but your wrath came: The times of the Gentiles and the rule of Satan through the nations has come to an end. The unjust and unbelievers will be judged.

Revelation 11:19 *Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.*

4. We have hope in the future as Christ followers.

What was in the Ark of the Covenant?

- Ten Commandments, Jar of Manna, Aarons Rod (Exodus 16:33-34, Numbers 17:10-11)
- By the time of Solomon, only the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments were in the Ark. Aaron's rod and the golden pot of manna were no longer there. (1 Kings 8:9)

Where did the Ark of the Covenant end up?

- The Ark is placed in the temple built by Solomon (2 Chronicles 5:2)
- The temple is destroyed by Babylon and its valuables taken to Babylon. (2 Chronicles 36:18-19)
- What is not specifically mentioned is the Ark of the Covenant. For some unstated reason its fate is not recorded.
- The second temple is rebuilt as recorded by Ezra.

Ezra 6:5 Also let the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple which is in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be restored and taken back to the temple which is in Jerusalem, each to its place; and deposit them in the house of God"—

- All those holy articles which were not returned were ordered rebuilt. The one particular article that was not rebuilt was the Ark of the Covenant.
- The Ark Was Represented By The Foundation Stone
- The Second Temple did not contain the Ark of the Covenant, but it was represented by a stone protruding some three fingers high off the ground. This was called "the stone of foundation." The foundation stone is the place where the Ark would have stood, had it existed. On this stone, the High Priest sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on the Great Day of Atonement. The blood had formerly been sprinkled on the Mercy Seat during the days of the Tabernacle and the First Temple.
- The Dome of the Rock shrine claims to house this rock. There is much debate as to whether this is the same rock.

Theories about where the Ark is presently.

❖ Mount Nebo

- There is an ancient tradition that the Ark of the Covenant was taken by the prophet Jeremiah, and hidden in a cave in Moab. Knowing the Babylonians were about to destroy both the city of Jerusalem and the Temple, Jeremiah, it is said, hid the Ark to keep it from being captured. In the Apocryphal book of 2 Maccabees

❖ Ethiopia

- Some claim the ark is in a church in Axum, Ethiopia. This view has been popularized by Graham Hancock's book *The Sign and the Seal: The Quest for the Lost Ark of the Covenant*. There was also a special TV program about this, but there is no proof. If there is, it might be a replica from Elephantine. There is supposed to be a replica of the ark in every Ethiopia church. The real Ark is supposedly in the Sanctuary Chapel in Saint Mary of Zion's Church in Axum, Ethiopia.

❖ Under Golgotha

- Ron Wyatt claims to have found the Ark of the Covenant and gave it to the Jews.
- He claims to have found the Ark in a tunnel in a quarry in Mt. Moriah where Christ was crucified, but there is no proof.

❖ Under the Sacred Temple Mount

- If you ask the Temple Mount faithful, the answer is fairly straightforward: The ark is intact and well, securely protected within the Temple Mount itself.