

Lesson Fourteen

Two Witnesses, Trumpet 7, and the Heavenly Temple (11:3-19)

The first two verses of Chapter 11 is a summary of verses 3-13. This chapter describes how Israel will be saved.

The Two Witnesses (11:3-14)

These two witnesses lead in the evangelistic efforts during the 42-month period of the Great Tribulation. They are the instruments God uses to reach the mass number of Jews. Their base of operations is Jerusalem.

11:3. Sackcloth is the normal attire of a prophet. They witness by their message and perform miracles (v.6). They prophesy during the complete time of the Great Tribulation.

11:4. This is a clear reference to the prophecy of Zechariah (4:1-3). In Zechariah, these two represent the two historical personages of Joshua the priest (Zechariah 3:1) and Zerubbabel the governor. (Zechariah 4:6-7). It is clear that these two witnesses are Christian authorities (v.8 – “their Lord was crucified”). We should not understand them as the literal Zechariah and Joshua of the Old Testament. Just as John the Baptist was Elijah (Matthew 17:10-13), these two witnesses incarnate their ministries.

11:5. These witnesses cannot be harmed until their mission is complete. Their words bring immediate judgment and destruction on anyone who seeks to harm them. Fire is regularly used in scripture to describe judgment (II Kings 1:12; Jeremiah 5:14).

11:6. These two witnesses have the same powers of Elijah and Moses. They speak and act with great authority and power.

11:7. Once these two witnesses complete their mission, which means the full number of Jews are saved (measuring of the temple), the beast makes war on them and kills them. The beast comes from the abyss. Evil's power originates from the abyss. This is the first reference to the beast.

11:8. Their dead bodies are publicly displayed. The location is allegorically Sodom and Egypt; John interprets this for us. It is the city where "their Lord was crucified." This is clearly Jerusalem. Both Sodom and Egypt represent hostility against God's people. At this time Jerusalem is the center of the beast's hostile warfare against God's people.

11:9-10. The nations of the world will watch and support the public humiliation of these two deceased witnesses. This period lasts for 3 ½ days. People of the world will celebrate and use this tragedy as a reason to

rejoice. Why? The majority of people are in allegiance with the beast.

11:11-13. The two witnesses resurrect to life and ascend to heaven. God sends an earthquake in Jerusalem, somewhat commensurate to the earthquake that occurred at Jesus' death. Earthquakes are some of the most common events that occur in the End. Seven thousand people die, which represents 10% of the population at this time. While Jerusalem has a great population today (747,600 in 2007), no doubt persecution reduces the number of Jews in Jerusalem just as it did in the first century. The remaining 63,000 people are terrified and give glory to God. This demonstrates genuine repentance. This is the picture of the mass conversion of Jews. There is nothing more powerful than the testimony of resurrection.

11:14. Trumpet judgments five and six are complete. The third is "coming quickly." This is a consistent theme in Revelation.

Trumpet Seven: Christ's Reign Foreseen (11:15-18)

Instead of a plague that befalls earth and its inhabitants, the seventh trumpet foresees the return of Christ. When Christ returns, eternal judgment commences. Yet, the sounds of judgments are not announced. Victorious praise ensues even though Christ's return has not yet occurred. "The kingdom of the world" in singular suggests that the nations of the world have positioned

themselves against the kingdom of Christ. Now both kingdoms have become one. This is a consistent theme in the New Testament that the day will come when all men and nations will bow to Christ. The 24 elders make the same announcement. “Begun to reign” references the literal reign of Christ that is to come on earth and throughout eternity. This is the goal of the history in Revelation.

Vision of the Heavenly Temple (11:19)

This is reminiscent of what we find in Christ’s victory at Calvary. When Jesus died the temple curtain was tore, signifying that man now has access to the presence of God. This spiritual reality awaits the physical reality that is described here. The temple or dwelling place of God in heaven is open. The Ark of the Covenant, another symbol of the presence of God, is within the temple. Nature announces the coming of our Lord.