

18. The whole truth, nothing but the truth

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I have never stood at the witness stand in a court room to give a witness testimony yet. Some of you had done that before in the past. I know a couple of law enforcement officers in our fellowship do that often because their job require.

When a person lay one's hand on a Bible and swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, that person is obligated by the law of the land to make no deception for any reason. Obviously, that does not mean a whole lot to many people. Because the former president lied through his teeth, yet he didn't go to prison for the perjury and kept his job as the President of United States of America.

Being a witness is not easy. The witness must tell the truth whether it benefits oneself or not. But being a witness for Christ take more. It requires not only time and effort while we give our testimonies to others, but our lives have to be in sync with our verbal testimonies. Otherwise, we will be consider as false witnesses to non-believers.

We are going to study two witnesses of God in Tribulation. They were known not only in Israel, but also around the world by their true testimony and God-given power.

A. THE FOURTH TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM

Revelation 11:1-2 Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. 2 But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.

A measuring instrument in Apostle John's day, a "reed like unto a rod" would probably be approximately ten feet high.

Throughout Scripture the temple plays a key role.

Solomon built the first temple on Jerusalem's Mount Moriah in 1050 B.C. More than four hundred years later, the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and decimated the temple in 586 B.C.

About seventy years after Babylon's first invasion of Israel, Zerubbabel rebuilt the second temple in 536 B.C.

A "third" temple was built in 20 B.C. However, not all scholars consider this the third temple because it was simply an expansion of the old. Wanting to obtain the favor of the Jewish people, King Herod enlarged and expanded the temple – a project that took decades to complete.

But there is a fourth temple, yet to be built. In the Institute of Temple Treasures in Jerusalem, you can see preparations for this fourth temple being made even now. Sixty percent of all instruments needed for temple worship, according to Old Testament regulations, are completed and the pre-fabricated building materials are ready to be assembled. Two 'yeshivas', or schools, are training young men to be Cohen – Cohen meaning "priest" – to sacrifice animals in the temple tradition.

Why? Because the Orthodox Jewish community understands that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin (Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:22). Since they do not believe Jesus is the Messiah who died for their sins, and they think they must make sacrifices for the forgiveness of their sins. Does this mean we will see the temple rebuilt before the Rapture? Not necessarily, because there's a rather large obstacle in the way: A mosque known as the Dome of the Rock.

But in the late 600 A.D., a man named Omar built a mosque on the thirty five acre platform over the rock believed to be the site of the Holy of Holies. This renders a temple rebuilding on this site impossible because the all Muslim nation around Israel would immediately invade Israel if anything happened to the mosque.

But twenty years ago, after spending sixteen years studying the temple mount area, a physicist and archaeologist at Hebrew University named Dr. Asher Kauffman came to some remarkable conclusions. In his landmark article in the March / April 1983 issue of Biblical Archaeological Review, Dr. Kauffman declares that while the Mosque of Omar has been assumed to sit on the Holy of Holies site, the true location is actually one hundred meters north.

What is one hundred meters north of the Dome of the Rock? A small gazebo-like structure, below which is the only other place the original bedrock of the temple is exposed. As opposed to the jagged rock in the Dome of the Rock, however, the stone one hundred meters to the north is flat – providing a much more likely setting for the ark of the covenant within the Holy of Holies.

Not only more logical, this site seems more historical. According to the 'Mishna' – the highly esteemed book of Jewish oral traditions – when the priest stood in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, he could look through the veil, through the door, and see the Eastern Gate directly before him.

The results of a secret excavation in 1970 confirmed that the original Eastern Gate is directly below the present Eastern Gate. This makes Dr. Kauffman's assertion even more intriguing. Because if you stand one hundred meters north of the Dome of the Rock, the Eastern Gate is in plain view.

In addition, when the Muslims built the gazebo-like structure, they gave it two names: The Dome of the Spirit, and the Dome of the Tablets. Even Islam recognized this site as the spot where the tablets (the Ten Commandments within the ark of the covenant) and the Spirit (the 'shekinah', 'chabod', glory of God over the ark of the covenant) had been.

So, according to Dr. Kauffman and most scholars, the temple could be rebuilt and the Dome of the Rock would remain standing. But the Dome of the Rock would be in the outer courtyard of the temple.

During the Six-Day War of 1967, the Israelis launched a preemptive strike against the Arabs and recaptured the city of Jerusalem. General Moshe Dayan could have easily booted the Muslims off the temple mount at this point. But he didn't. In a gesture he himself never fully explained, he let them retain control of the thirty five acre parcel. So, the outer court of the temple remains "given to the Gentiles" to this day.

Orthodox Jews consider that the Messiah will rebuild the temple. However, the man they may initially embrace as their Messiah will be the Antichrist.

John 5:43 I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.

B. THE TWO WITNESS

Revelation 11:3-6 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. 6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

The character of their ministry is prophetic. They preach and demonstrate repentance by wearing sackcloth. And they have an effective ministry by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The two witnesses are likened to the two olive trees in Zechariah 4 that provide a continual supply of oil and are a representation of the Spirit's anointing in ministry.

In the ancient Greek grammar, all the nouns used to speak of the two witnesses in this passage are in the masculine gender. That means the two witnesses are definitely two men.

According to the Chronological chart of Rev. we gave you, this portion of the scripture is located right before the Abomination of Desolation. It should be separated. v3-6 should be located before the Rapture and v7-13 should be located at the current place due to the length of their ministry time mentioned in v3.

So, who are these two witness? Some say, "They are Elijah and Moses," or "Elijah and Enoch," or they even claim that they themselves will be those two witnesses. And some believe that God will use ordinary Jews to bring forth these testimony and power.

I used to have a really strong opinion about the identity of these witnesses. But I realized that I was insisting nothing more than my own speculation over others. Can anyone of the Bible scholars guarantee who they are? No one can. This is my point of view when it comes to understanding the Bible: Where the Bible is silent, I don't need to dig in and try to find out what the Bible does not say.

Rather than trying to figure out who they are, I'd rather study about what they will do that mentioned in the Bible.

These two men are specifically called prophets, and I take this to mean prophetic ministry in the Old Testament sense, calling the nations to repent and return to the true God of Israel. Not only do these witnesses declare God's words, but they also do God's works and perform miracles of judgment.

C. TWO HELLFIRE AND BRIMSTONE PREACHERS

Revelation 11:7-10 When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill

them. 8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. 9 Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. 10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

Jerusalem is called a "great city" and from a human viewpoint, this is a true statement. To God, Jerusalem will be considered as polluted and worldly as Sodom and as rebellious and proud as Egypt.

Glory to God, we cannot be taken off of this earth until we finish our testimony. The devil does not have power over our lives. We are witnesses of the Lord, and He will protect us until our testimony is finished.

This passage illustrates the difference between being a witness and giving testimony. Witness is not something we do. It is something we are. Giving testimony is what a witness does.

The witnesses will not even be permitted decent burial. But even this indecency will be used by God to bear witness to mankind. No doubt all the left wing liberal CNN, ABC, NBC and the sorry excuse pathetic lying mouth CBS Dan Rather and their TV cameras will be in Jerusalem and transmit the scene to people around the world, and the news analysts will discuss its significance.

The only time people rejoice during the Tribulation is over the death of these two witnesses. The earth dwellers will rejoice at their enemies' death and will celebrate a "satanic Christmas" by sending gifts to one another. Obviously the power of the two witnesses didn't only affect the people in Israel, but also the people around the world.

D. IT IS NOT OVER YET

Revelation 11:11-13 Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. 12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. 13 In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.

I bet this resurrection scared a snot out of everyone on the earth. Miraculously, the two witnesses are not only raised from the dead, but were taken up into heaven! The world's great joy suddenly becomes great fear.

These witnesses are examples of what you can be in the last days in which we live. You're to share the Gospel with people. Yes, you'll be beat up emotionally and verbally, ostracized, left out, not invited to their parties. But you know what will happen? A few days later, you'll rise and you will have a great desire to witness again, because the Holy Spirit will give fresh strength to you. Truly, there is nothing, nothing, nothing like sharing your faith. Even if you're put down, beat up, left out by people, you'll find yourself revived and strengthened by God.

E. THE SEVENTH TRUMPET - THE KINGDOM PROCLAIMED

Revelation 11:14-18 The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly. 15 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" 16 And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because (1) You have taken Your great power and reigned. 18 The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that (2) they should be judged, And that (3) You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth."

The elders left their own thrones and prostrated themselves in worship before God's throne. They gave thanks for three special blessings: that Christ reigns supremely, that He judges righteously, and that He rewards graciously.

Why are the nations angry? Because they want to have their own way. They want to worship and serve the creature instead of the Creator.

There are two Greek words for anger: 'thumos', which means "rage, passionate anger," and 'orge', used here, which means "indignation, a settled attitude of wrath." God's anger is not an outburst of temper. It is holy indignation against sin.

Revelation 11:19 Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

This chapter opened with a temple on earth, but now we see the temple in heaven. The focus of attention is on the ark of God, the symbol of God's presence with His people.

In the Old Testament tabernacle and temple, the ark stood behind the veil, in the holy of holies. But in heaven, the ark is not behind the veil. It can be seen in plain view.

F. APPLICATIONS

1) Being a Christian witness takes more than what we say.

We must live out our testimonies in Christ Jesus, not just words.

2) Share what Jesus has done in your life and how He has changed you with non-believers.

Let your changed life be the true testimony to those who don't believe Jesus as Savior and Lord.