

Revelation 11:1–14 | Interlude 2 (Part 2): The Two Witnesses

Introduction

Revelation 11:1-4 continues the interlude section in between the 6th and 7th trumpets. Having looked at the little scroll in the first part of the second interlude, this constitutes the second *part* of the *second* interlude.

The little scroll in chapter 10 was a message to the saints that the end of the tribulation was coming soon, but they would suffer as Christians first, and then in verse 12 John is told that he must prophesy again to nations and kings, which feeds right into chapter 11 – the prophetic ministry of the two witnesses. Many consider this section to be the most difficult part of Revelation to interpret.

Verse-By-Verse Notes

Verses 1 & 2

- God's people are repeatedly referenced at the "temple of God" throughout the New Testament (see 1 Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-10) but the temple in Revelation 11 seems to indicate a *literal* temple in Jerusalem.

Verse 3

- Some think the two witnesses are going to be some manifestation of Moses and Elijah, but because we have no example in Scripture where God raised somebody from the dead to preach the gospel (in fact, Jesus teaches just the *opposite* in Luke 16 with the rich man and Lazarus), the two witnesses are more likely *preachers* that God raises up in the *spirit* of Moses & Elijah to be one final warning of coming judgment (similar to John the Baptist who came in the *spirit of Elijah*, see Luke 1:17)

Verse 4

- Oil is symbolic for the Holy Spirit and lampstands are symbolic for light and life, so this likely symbolizes the Spirit-anointed God-sent message the witnesses were preaching.

Verse 5

- "Fire [pouring] from their mouth" refers to them calling down judgment on the wicked and it likely not fire *literally* coming out of their mouth but a representation of their power to pronounce the judgment of God on sin and evil. They represent what we might call "fire-breathing" preachers.

Verse 6

- One reason many believe the two witnesses are Moses and Elijah is because of the similarities their ministries had with this verse's description of their power to proclaim droughts and plagues, but this doesn't *necessitate* the two witnesses being a resurrected Moses & Elijah.

Verse 7

- The two witnesses preach, and *some* are saved, but the *beast* (the *Anti-Christ*) will have them killed. The beast is mentioned *36 times* in the book of Revelation.
- The phrase “when they have finished their testimony” makes it clear that God raises these two men up for a *specific season* and when the window of God’s purpose for them has closed, He brings them home through martyrdom.

Verse 8

- The “great city . . . symbolically called Sodom and Egypt” is Jerusalem. The two witnesses will die in the same city Jesus did.

Verse 9

- Leaving a body unburied signifies *dishonor* for that individual. The world will *hate* these two men for preaching the truth.

Verse 10

- When these two preachers are martyred and their bodies lie in the streets for 3 ½ days, the rest of the world is going to throw a party.
- Another reason many think this is Moses and Elijah is the phrase they “had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth,” because a *similar* phrase was used to describe *Elijah* in 1 Kings 18.
- The phrase “those who dwell on the earth” in the book of Revelation always refers to the wicked. John writes it 7 times in Revelation, and it *always* refers to the wicked.

Verses 11 & 12

- The believers on earth during the tribulation will suffer, but they will be vindicated, which is represented by the two witnesses. God essentially “raptures” His two faithful prophets who were martyred and raises them up to heaven.

Verses 13 & 14

- The phrase “the rest gave glory to God” could mean that the remaining unsaved Jews in Jerusalem came to faith in Christ, BUT, it could also mean they just acknowledged that this was a supernatural event. Many acknowledge the supernatural without actually expressing any kind of real faith in Christ.
- Note that in Scripture, “all” (or “the rest” in verse 13) does not always mean *every single individual*.
- The *second* interlude ends and the *third woe* which is the *seventh trumpet* awaits.

BIG TAKEAWAY: GOD WILL GIVE THE FALLEN WORLD PROPHETS TO WARN THEM OF THE COMING JUDGMENT, BUT THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO THEIR MESSAGE.