



Witnesses, Warfare and Worshipers: Part 2

Revelation 11:7-15

BIBLE PASSAGE

[Rev 11:7-19 NKJV] 7 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. 11 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. 14 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!"

1 The Temples

THE TEMPLES

We see the interesting parallel of this chapter opening with a temple on the earth and closing with the temple in heaven. The temple is a fascinating study within itself because it speaks so powerfully of God's presence among His people and His holiness. When it comes to expressions of the temple, we see many throughout the story of history.

- **Temple 1:** Garden of Eden - God's holiness was in perfect and unrestricted fellowship with man. When sin entered into the world, we saw the first separation from the place of God's presence, now guarded by an angel, and man.
- **Temple 2:** Wilderness Tabernacle - It moved with God's people until they entered the promised land.
- **Temple 3:** Solomon's temple - built by Israel's wisest King, gave a permanent place where God established His name forever.
- **Temple 4:** Post-Exilic Temple - Built by Joshua and Zerubbabel after the Babylonian exile. This was the temple beautified by Herod the Great that Jesus would have taught and worshiped in.
- **Temple 5:** The Spiritual temple - this is you and I. When Jesus died on the cross, the veil in the temple that separated the Holy of Holies from everyone outside was torn from top to bottom, God expressing that through Jesus Christ, God's presence would move from a temple made of hands into the temple of Human hearts. Now, Paul says, you and I are temples of the Holy Spirit and have direct access to God through Jesus.
- **Temple 6:** The Tribulation Temple - this is a temple that will be built (I believe in short order) in which the Anti-Christ, in the middle of the Tribulation Period, will stand and declare himself to be God. WE talked in significant depth last week about the process already at play in preparation for that temple.
- **Temple 7:** The Millennial Temple - constructed by the Messiah during his 1000-year reign on the earth. It will be the center of worship for all people and nations that come out of the tribulation during Christ's reign.
- **New Jerusalem** - No more temple for the LORD and the Lamb are the temple. Everyone will be in glorified states, there will be no more sin, and we will forever be reconnected to perfect fellowship in the presence of God just as it was in the Garden of Eden.

2 The Witnesses

APPLICATION

These two witnesses

1. Their job description - is to prophesy to the nations (probably regarding judgment, repentance, and faith in God). They are given the authority of God's judgment and receive God's protection against any that seek to harm them. There is a very "Old Testament" flavor to their ministry during these last seven years.
2. Their identity - Moses, Elijah, Enoch, John the Baptist

They ministry on the streets of Jerusalem, but their audience is the whole world. God gives them a message and a mission for 3 1/2 years.

C. THEIR END

7 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. 11 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.

The beast (antichrist or the devil) can finally kill these two witnesses.

- There are two main beasts in Revelation: The antichrist and the false prophet. But noting where this beast comes from, it's also within the realm of possibility that this is Satan or an angelic being. Given that there seems to be a concerted human effort to war against these witnesses and kill them, I think the safest interpretation here is that we are looking at the Antichrist.
- The Antichrist set s off the ultimate anti-Christmas! When the two witnesses are killed, a worldwide celebration ensues, giving of gifts and merry hearts.

The dead bodies of these two witnesses will lie in the same streets through which they carried Jesus' dead body. This city is God's "holy city" - Jerusalem! Yet what strange nicknames for a supposedly holy city. "Sodom" was notorious for immorality and sexual perversion. "Egypt" was the hotbed for idolatry and spiritual perversion... Jerusalem is holy in name only

- People are celebrating the end of these two nuisances that have been wreaking havoc and reigning on their pagan parade.
- The world will gloat to the degree that they don't allow anyone to bury them but rather desecrate their bodies (leads me to believe that these two witnesses are Jewish). They are mocking God and His people.

It's been rightly asked, "How could John envision people of every tribe, tongue, and nation see these bodies lying in Jerusalem?" Well, with our current technology, it's not difficult for us to imagine that today. We can see things happening live anywhere in the world whenever we want. **You could imagine videos and images of the deaths of these two and their corpses being blasted on every live-stream social media platform and every news network.**

- For 3 1/2 days, the world sees themselves as having triumphed over God, triumphed over Jesus... they have finally accomplished their age-long pursuit of annihilating Christendom from the face of the earth.

This has always been the spirit of antichrist:

The French Philosopher Voltaire, an ardent enemy of Christianity, predicted in 1776, "One hundred years from my day, there will not be a Bible on earth except one that is looked upon by an antiquarian curiosity-seeker." Within 50 years of his death, the house he used to write in was a storehouse for Bibles.

Well, the world rejoices for 3 1/2 days, then God shows up and proves that in the end, He still wins.

Today, people are still convinced that science will snuff out Christianity, secularism will snuff out Christianity, and modernism will snuff out Christianity. But you can't snuff out Christianity

because truth never goes away.

After 3 1/2 days, we see a picture we are familiar with when it comes to God, a picture of resurrection. Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Death is never final for those who trust in the one who conquered death.

After everyone watches the resurrected witnesses called and drawn up to heaven, ascending from their site, immediately it's followed by a sign of judgment. A great earthquake rocks Jerusalem and kills 7000 people in the affected area.

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.

Whether this means the rest of the world finally gave glory to God or just those in Israel, I'm not sure.

- This could be the turning point for Israel as a nation. The Jews might finally recognize at this point the error of their trust in the false messiah, the antichrist. They could finally recognize God's hand in all of this and turn again to the Lord, finally resulting in their acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah. In the end, Paul tells us in Romans that "all Israel will be saved."

BIBLE PASSAGE

14 The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

The three woes refer to the final three trumpets, which were worse than the first four trumpets. The final woe is contained within the series of judgments that come along with the seventh trumpet being sounded.

BIBLE PASSAGE

15 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven (*angelic hosts, elders, the creatures, the saints*), saying, "The kingdoms (*singular in some manuscripts*) 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 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 they should be judged, and that 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."

PSALM 2

Before we dissect this passage, I think we need to note the obvious OT prophetic image being fulfilled here. This statement made in heaven, followed by this declaration of worship, reveals the fulfillment of David's words in Psalm 2.

[Psa 2:1-12 NKJV] 1 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us." 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. 5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." 7 "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 8 Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' " 10 Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. 11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

APPLICATION

There are those within Replacement Theology, Dominion Theology, and Covenant Theology, who claim that the Church is the fulfillment of the Kingdom prophecies of the Old Testament; that every physical promise given to Israel about the Messiah reigning over the entire earth is metaphorically describing the reign of Christ's kingdom in His church. But after you read all the passages that prophecy the Messiah's Kingdom, you realize how far

you have to stretch to ignore the image God put forth of a physical kingdom that rules over every nation. It's safe to say that it's impossible for the church to have fulfilled the prophecies given.

- You see, the church is the mystery that was hidden in the OT, but that doesn't mean the church is the fulfillment of every kingdom prophecy. We might best say it like this: ***What we now know spiritually in our hearts, God intends to bring about physically on the earth.***

The coming Kingdom: Is universal and includes all people subjected to Christ:

- **All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He rules over the nations. (Psalm 22:27-28)**

The coming Kingdom: stems from Jerusalem and the throne of David:

- **Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. (Isaiah 9:7)**

The coming Kingdom: Will not suffer persecution or defeat:

- **Daniel 7:14 - Then to Him (Son of Man) was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.**

Luke 1:32-33 - He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.

KINGDOMS OR KINGDOM OF THIS WORLD

Both are correct, for while there are many kingdoms divided by borders, cultures, and languages, spiritually, there is one kingdom of the earth, currently under the temporary control of Satan, and the Kingdom of Heaven, living in the hearts of people now and will be physically manifested one day yet future. That's what this chapter is mainly overviewing and what we will study for the next ten chapters, the transfer of power on this earth from Satan to Christ.

Satan as the temporary god of this age and ruler over the unbelieving world:

[Mat 4:8-9 NKJV] 8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

- Satan tries to bypass the rightful process of God. He offers Jesus what seems to be an easy path to fulfilling the messianic prophecies of old. But the transfer of power was not through compromise and bowing to Satan but through sacrifice and bowing to the will of the Father. Through the cross, resurrection, and His future return, He will take ALL authority and power from Satan in this world, and at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that HE is Lord.

[Jhn 12:31 NKJV] 31 "Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

- Now IS the judgment (present tense) - Jesus came, died, and rose again, and those who reject Him as Lord, Savior, and King are under judgment.
- The Ruler of this World WILL BE cast out (GREEK - future tense) - this is still yet a future event when Satan's authority will be completely taken from him.
- And that's not to suggest (even in the slightest) that God isn't in control now, only that He has a timeline and prophetic events that will first come to pass regarding judgment before He asserts His full authority over the earth and all those who dwell in it.

In Revelation 11, the seventh trumpet, revealing the seven bowls of final judgment, culminate in the answer to Jesus' prayer in Matthew 6:10:

[Mat 6:10 NKJV] 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

When we pray that, we are praying a twofold prayer:

1. That God's kingdom would come here and now, fully ruling in our hearts and being manifest through the gospel.
2. That Jesus would physically return and bring Heaven's rule and reign to this earth.

DEFINITION

Have become the kingdom of our LORD and His Christ - Proleptic aorist tense

prolepsis - The representation or assumption of a future act or development as if presently existing or accomplished.

EXAMPLE: If I observe a conversation between you and your wife after church that didn't go so well for you, I come up and say, "You're in the doghouse." That's proleptic - You currently are standing in the foyer, but tonight you'll be sleeping on the couch.

APPLICATION

[1Sa 16:1, 12-13 NKJV] 1 Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons." ...13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

The time David was anointed as God's king until the time Saul was actually deposed was a process. In other words, technically, the kingdom of Israel was David's in God's economy, but it had to go through a season of transfer before David assumed the throne. It was done, but it also was still an unfolding process.

APPLICATION

We live in the already, but not yet!

HOW IMPORTANT IT IS FOR US TO KEEP OUR EYES ON THE END OF THE STORY!!!

QUOTE

“...have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!

This one statement is an incredible fulfillment of all of the OT prophetic utterances regarding the messiah's kingdom.

APPLICATION: LOOK AROUND REAL QUICK. Now take an inventory of everything you have. *Does anyone see anything that is going to last forever and ever?*

- One thing I see that will last forever and ever is your soul. It is appointed for man once to die and then the judgment. No one is exempt. At the end of Revelation, we see the souls of those without Christ standing before His great white throne of judgment. Eternity is decided: The lake of fire that burns with eternal torment and despair outside God's perfect and holy world, or eternal life, bliss, and joy in a sinless, perfect heaven.
- The other thing I see that lasts forever and ever is the reign of Christ. That spiritual reign you currently experience in your heart will last forever and ever. Here's my suggestion. *Ensure your ultimate allegiance and loyalty is to the king who will reign over everything forever!*

3 The Worship

BIBLE PASSAGE

16 And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God,

APPLICATION

I believe there is a strong argument that the 24 elders represent the raptured and pre-tribulation church in heaven. They have thrones which indicate a place of authority to rule

and reign with Christ, which is a promise to all believers here and now. Every time you see them, they bow before the throne, engaged in worship to God, declaring His worthiness, holiness, and awesome power. (That's a great posture for every believer!!!)

17 saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, because 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 they should be judged, and that 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."

I could do an entire sermon on this song!

- Here's what strikes me. Those who belong to Christ are praising God for His justice and wrath.
- When it comes time for God to roll up His sleeves and declare His time of judgment upon wickedness, the people of God will rejoice.
- In Judgment, there is weeping. The thought of people we care about being judged by God is one that causes me to tremble and makes me sick.
- But one day, I will see everything without the veil of my humanity. I will see everything and everyone as God sees.
- This means that when God, the Father, and the Son, take the throne, come against the nations that mocked and derided Him, judge the dead in fairness and righteousness, reward those who faithfully followed and served Him, and destroy those who have corrupted the world with sin, violence, immoralities, and destruction, it will be a moment of powerful praise and worship to the justice and righteousness of God.

HYMN

I found a 17th-century hymn that was once a Christmas Carol entitled, "O Fearful Thought of endless Doom."

*1 Fearful thought of endless doom—
Skies are rent, the Judge is come;
Clouds His throne; around Him stand
Angel guards, a countless band.*

*2 Hear the voice from shore to shore,
Tells that time shall be no more;*

*See the dead from dust arise,
Summoned to the great assize.*

*3 On His right are placed the just,
To the left the wicked thrust;
Well to Him are sinners known—
Known, but severed from His own.*

*4 These a blest retreat have won,
Earth's delights who learned to shun;
Chose affliction, pain and loss,
Followed Him who bore the cross.*

*6 Deeper still their shame and dread,
Seeing Him whose blood they shed;
Lord, from sin Thy people keep,
Lest its dreadful fruit they reap.*

*7 Mingling joy with holy fear,
Praise we Him whose day is near;
Bless alike the Father's name,
And the Spirit's praise proclaim.*

BIBLE PASSAGE

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.

APPLICATION

The earthly temple scene opens to the heavenly scene.

- Hebrews tells us that the earthly temple is merely a shadow of heavenly realities.
- In heaven, there is ark of the covenant in His Holiest place.

- Maybe sometime I'll take you guys down a fun rabbit trail about the Ark of the Covenant.
- But for time's sake, we need to see the big picture of what's happening here.

QUOTE

“The appearance of the Ark of His covenant emphasizes that which will be used as the standard for judgment. It is because of man’s willful disobedience and rebellion in the light of the standard of the law that God’s righteous judgment is required. His wrath is measured by the distance between the contents of the written requirements in the ark versus the actions of sinful men.”

APPLICATION

In other words, everyone will be judged according to God's perfect covenant and law. Judgment directly proceeds out of the nature of who God is and what God has said. There will be no partiality.

What about mercy? Doesn't mercy triumph over judgment?

- Yes, and those who come to God now by Christ come under the banner of Christ's righteousness and not their own. They find mercy through sacrifice.
- But those who reject God's mercy in Christ will be judged by the perfect law of God's covenant and will be found guilty according to that perfect standard.

[Heb 10:28-29 NKJV] 28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on [the testimony of] two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

