

Can I Get A Witness?

The Two Witnesses



- *What do you think is the greatest need in the world today?*

Revelation 11 illustrates that the greatest need in the world is a witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Politicians, scientists, doctors, and other influential people can make significant contributions to the world, but it is always temporary. Whereas the Gospel of Christ has an eternal life-changing impact on people. It can change society for the better and, most importantly, determine where people will spend eternity.

Chapter 11 describes God providing a witness during the Tribulation period through two extraordinary and powerful witnesses. They will proclaim the Gospel and a warning of things to come. This event is located in **the middle** of the Tribulation (Rev. 10-14) just before **the 7th trumpet** is sounded (11:15-19) and **the 7 bowl judgments** are poured out on the earth (Rev. 15-16). God provides a witness of the Gospel no matter how evil the world becomes.

The Central Lesson:
The World's Greatest Need Is A Witness to the Gospel.

1. The **TIME** of the Two Witnesses (11:1-4)

John is given a measuring stick and told to *"1 ...Go and measure the Temple of God and the altar, and count the number of worshippers. 2 But do not measure the outer courtyard, for it has been turned over to the nations. They will trample the holy city for 42 months. 3 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will be clothed in burlap and will prophesy during those 1,260 days"* (11:1-2). This passage gives us **several important observations**.

- First, the temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt. Jewish people will worship and sacrifice in the temple again, just as they did in the Old Testament.
- Second, Jerusalem and the temple will be dishonored by Gentile powers, more specifically, the Antichrist and the world nations under his control. The Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel, where he promised to protect them and secure their peace with their hostile neighboring countries. He also stops Israel from worshipping and sacrificing in the newly rebuilt temple. He dishonors the temple by walking into the holy place, declaring himself God, and demanding that he be worshipped (Daniel 9:27).
- Third, the purpose of John measuring the temple is symbolic for God reclaiming the temple and Jerusalem. The act of measuring the temple goes back to Ezekiel 40-41 and Zechariah 2. John MacArthur explains: "...John's measuring is better understood as signifying ownership, defining the parameters of God's possessions.... It is best to see it as God's measuring off Israel, symbolized by her temple... The connection between this vision of the two preachers and the previous passage (vs.1-2) should be clear. They are among God's unique witnesses who will proclaim His message of judgment during the final stages of the Gentile trampling on Jerusalem--and will preach the gospel so that the Jewish remnant can believe and enjoy God's protection." (The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Revelation 1-11, pp.293, 298).

2. The **POWER** of the Two Witnesses (11:5-6)

The two witnesses demonstrate God's power. They have the ability to destroy their attackers with fire coming from their mouths (11:5). They also have the power to stop the rain from falling, turn water into blood, and *"strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they wish"* (11:6). Many Bible teachers have speculated that these two witnesses are Moses and Elijah or Enoch and Elijah since they never died but were taken directly to heaven. However, Bible scholar, John F. Walvoord, writes: *"In view of the fact that the Bible does not indicate who they are, it is probably safe to recognize them as two witnesses who will appear in the end time who are not related to any previous historical character."* *Every Prophecy of the Bible*, p.574. **Acts 1:8 states that we, too, have power to be God's witnesses to the Gospel by the Holy Spirit.**

3. The **REACTION** to the Two Witnesses (11:7-10)

Sinful people reject God's Word (see 9:20-21). The two witnesses will be divinely protected until their work is finished (11:7). In the same way, we are protected by God until our work is complete. The beast from the Abyss, the Antichrist, will attack the two witnesses and kill them (11:7). Their bodies will lie in the street of Jerusalem for 3^{1/2} days (11:8-9). The world will see their bodies (11:9). This is possible with today's technology and media. The world will celebrate the death of God's two righteous servants by exchanging gifts (11:10). The Life Application Bible explains: *"The whole world rejoices at the deaths of these two witnesses who have caused trouble by saying what the people didn't want to hear — words about their sin, their need for repentance, and the coming punishment. Sinful people hate those who call attention to their sin and who urge them to repent. They hated Christ, and they hate his followers (1 John 3:13). When you obey Christ and take a stand against sin, be prepared to experience the world's hatred. But remember that the great reward awaiting you in heaven far outweighs any suffering that you face now."* (NIV, p.2316).

4. The **RAPTURE** of the Two Witnesses (11:11-14).

God miraculously resurrects the two witnesses before their watching eyes (11:11). They come back to life, hear a voice from heaven shout, *"Come up here!"* and they ascend to heaven (11:12). At the same time, a severe earthquake destroys a tenth of Jerusalem, and 7,000 people are killed (11:13). Although the world as a whole has rejected God's witness up to this point (see 9:20-21), the survivors are terrified and give glory to God in heaven (11:13).

The Sounding of the Seventh Trumpet - Rev. 11:15-19

We have been waiting since chapter 8 for this *"third woe"* that was previously announced (see 8:13; 9:12; 11:14). The last three trumpet judgments had the extra description of being a first, second, and third **woe**. Chapter 11:15-19 describes the sounding of the 7th trumpet, the third woe. The 7th trumpet announces the last seven bowl judgments, the completion of redemption, and God reclaims the world from sin, Satan, and death. With these last judgments, God and Christ begin reigning on and over the earth (11:15, 17).

Conclusion:

The World's Greatest Need Is A Witness to the Gospel.

Will you dedicate your life to live for Jesus Christ? Will you share the gospel with others as God gives you the opportunity? Will you warn the world of the things to come and the urgency to receive Christ?

Action Steps: ► Receive Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ► Invite someone to next Sunday's Bible study. ► Attend a small group. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.