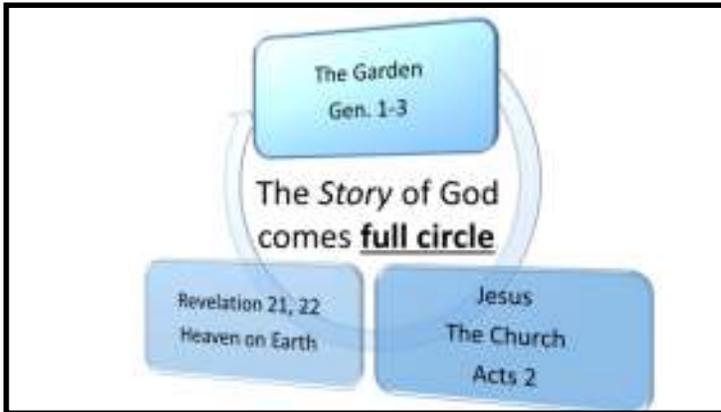


Date: January 31, 2018
 Title: God's Witnesses
 Text: Revelation 10, 11
 Theme:



Introduction:

If Revelation 8 and 9 speak of the Exodus Redux, then Revelation 10 and 11 are the confirming Word from God. Revelation 10 and 11 assure the reader that all God has written will indeed come to pass. God has His witnesses through His Word and His two witnesses that comfort His persecuted audience that all will come to pass.

THEME: God comforts His people by reclaiming what is rightfully His as Creator and Redeemer. As He pushes His **Vision** for creating forward, He is reconstituting the Garden for the joy of His people. God is throwing the squatters out and destroying the invasive species.

“Revelation 11:1-13 shows that the church is sealed in order to bear an enduring and loyal witness to the gospel, which begins to lay a basis for the final judgment of those rejecting their testimony. Ch. 10’s focus on the recommissioning of John for his prophetic calling is now followed by the message he was commissioned to deliver. The message is one of judgment on those who reject the persevering witness of Christians and who persecute them.”¹

“10:1-11:14 interlude: the safety and suffering of God’s City-Sanctuary, His witnessing Church. The vision of the angel with the scroll (10:1-11) reveals John’s authority to prophesy and God’s perfect timing in consummating history.”²

THE BIG PICTURE:

1. This is a revelation of God and His work to reclaim what is His by Creation and Redemption.
2. The “Tribulation” is God reclaiming what is His and reconstituting the Garden for the joy of His people.
3. The cycles of “7” are the telling and retelling of this *Story*.
4. Each cycle speaks to what has been, is, and will be culminating in the final and fullest action of God is setting things straight at His coming [i.e. Armageddon].
5. Instead of reading it all consecutively, we should read it concurrently.
6. There is sequence, but there are pauses that expand on individual elements within the sequence.
7. The Church is in Tribulation.
8. God’s redemptive *Story* is always being retold.
9. God will make good on His promises and fully reclaim all that is His as Creator and Redeemer by reconstituting His Garden for the joy of His people.

Outline:

- I. The First Four Trumpets ([Creation] 8:1-13)
- II. The Fifth Trumpet / 1st woe ([Creatures] 9:1-12 [the bottomless pit])
- III. Sixth trumpet / 2nd woe (9:13-11:14)
 - A. The angel and the little book (10)

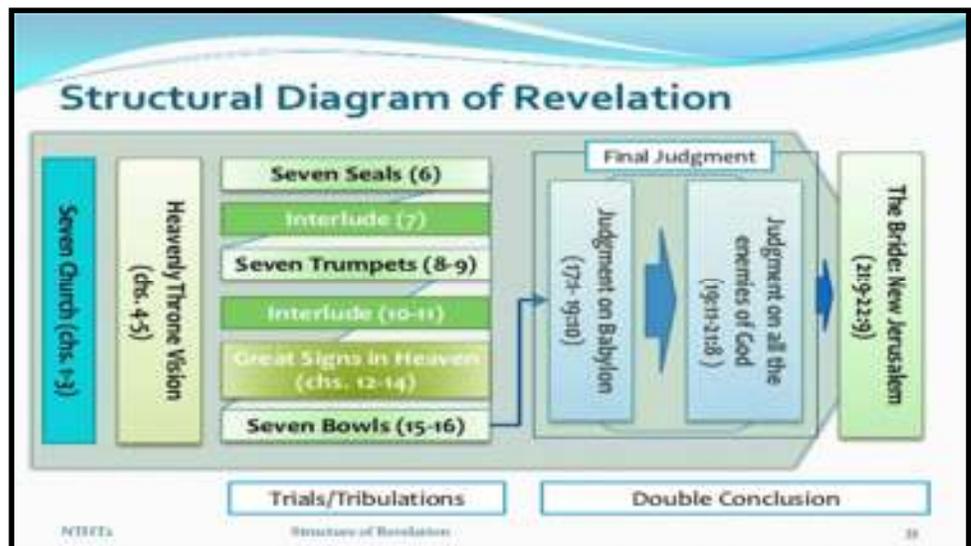
“Beginning with chapter 10 a parenthetical section is introduced which continues through 11:14. Like chapter 7 it does not advance the narrative but presents other facts which contribute to the total prophetic scene.”³

“Verses 10:1 - 11:14: These verses serve as an interlude between the sixth trumpet and seventh trumpet (11:15). The seals and the bowls also have a brief interlude between their sixth and seventh judgments (7:1-17; 16:15). God’s intention is to encourage and comfort His people in the midst of the fury and to remind them that He is still sovereign, that He remembers His people, and that they will ultimately be victorious.”⁴

Who is/are this/these angel(s)?

“He sees *another* angel (10:1) in addition to the four who had released the terrible invading cavalry from the east (9:14-15). This angel is distinguished from those four, and from most angels in John's visions, by being called *mighty*, or strong. The only "mighty angel" we have met before is the one John had seen in heaven "proclaiming with a loud voice, `Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?'" (5:2). The mighty angel in the present scene also has "a loud voice" (NASB) *like the roar of a lion* (v. 3). Moreover, the *rainbow above his head* (v. 1) recalls the rainbow encircling the throne of God in John's first glimpse of heaven (4:3), while the comparison of his face to *the sun* recalls the angel in John's introductory vision (1:16) who identified himself as the risen one (1:17-18).

In short, this *mighty angel* has an aura of divinity about him that prompted some older commentators to see him as none other than Jesus Christ himself. This is highly unlikely, yet the angel does represent God, or the power of God, in a way that most other angelic figures do not.



He stands astride land and sea as one who is sovereign over both (v. 2; compare God's judgment on the land and the sea in connection with the first two trumpets). Although he is not Christ in person, he can be viewed as a divine agent acting on behalf of God and the Lamb. That Jesus uses certain angels to represent him in John's visions will become explicit in 22:16: "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches."⁵

"The appearance of the angel invokes not only the Lord leading the people by the pillar of cloud and flame after the exodus, but also the salvation of Noah: the angel has a rainbow over his head (v. 1)."⁶

Emphasis sits on the Word of/from God. This word brings news of judgment. Hearing from heaven is sweet. The content of judgment is not. Judgment for the believing is sweet; for the unbeliever it is bitter.

"This little scroll links chapters 10 and 11. Its content seems to be the gospel that the church proclaims to the world (11:3-7). The task of the two witnesses, namely the church, is to proclaim the message of salvation in a hostile world (11:3)."⁷

1. The Angel's Proclamation/Announcement: The Mystery of God is finished (v. 1-[7]).

What is the mystery that is finished? Could the answer be as simple as what is stated in verses 8-11? God is faithful to fulfill His word to the believer and the unbelieving.

2. The Servant's [John's] Prophecy/Authentication: The Word of God is fulfilled (vv. 8-11).

These two statements are one and the same. The revealing from chapters 4 and following is the mystery being fulfilled. **What Daniel seals, Jesus reveals.**

"We must know Ezekiel's story in order to understand what is going on. Ezekiel too was told to eat a scroll and "then go and speak to the house of Israel" (Ezek 3:1). Unlike John, Ezekiel had seen the scroll actually being unrolled. "On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe" (Ezek 2:9). When he ate it, "it tasted as sweet as honey" (Ezek 3:3), suggesting that Ezekiel's message would be sweet to him, though bitter to his hearers. John's experience is more complex. Nothing is said of what is written on the scroll, but the message is *sweet as honey* in John's mouth and *sour* in his stomach (v. 10). Even though John (and his fellow prophets) have the sweet privilege of hearing and delivering God's "good news" (v. 7), their prophecies will inevitably bring them sorrow and suffering. John knows this, for he is already a "brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus." He is on Patmos "because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (1:9)."⁸

"The chief import of chapter 10 seems to be a confirmation of John's prophetic call as v. 11 indicates."⁹

“As Ezekiel ate a scroll and found it sweet as honey in his mouth, so John must do the same, receiving God’s words in his heart before he speaks them (Ezek. 3:1-3, 10).”¹⁰

Notice the sweeping scope of those who are to receive this Word, “You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings” (v. 11). The audience is all-encompassing. This is equally noted by the angel putting one foot on the sea and the other on the land (v. 2).

B. The two witnesses (11:1-14)

“Perhaps no passage in Revelation is more controversial than chapter 11. There is a wide diversity of viewpoints regarding the interpretation of this chapter, but most of this occurs because men try to symbolize or spiritualize the city, the temple, and the events that are portrayed here. Once again when the passage is taken in its normal or literal meaning much of the diversity immediately vanishes because the literal method provides a check on the imaginations of men and gives an intelligent understanding of the passage.”¹¹

“Chapter 11 of the Revelation continues the parenthetical section beginning in chapter 10 and extending through chapter 14. With the exception of 11:15-19, introducing the seventh trumpet, the narrative does not advance in these chapters and various topics are presented. **In 11:1-14 there is a continuation of the same subject as in chapter 10.**”¹²

A problem I have in taking anything as symbolic literally is that IT IS SYMBOLIC. Much like a parable, apocalyptic literature was not meant to be taken literally in the picture, but what the picture pointed to.

“11:1-14 the complementary visions of the temple and the witnesses, like those of the 144,000 and the international multitude between seals 6 and 7, **provide reassurance of God’s protection.** Here, however, consistent with the bittersweet message committed to John (10:10-11), the motif of spiritual protection is interwoven with the darker thread of physical suffering.”¹³

Two Witnesses	Second Beast
1. Prophets (11:10)	1. False prophet (16:13; 19:20; 20:10)
2. Perform signs (11:6)	2. Performs signs (13:13, 14; 19:20)
3. Receive authority from God (11:3)	3. Receives authority from the first beast (13:12)
4. Torment the inhabitants of the earth (11:10)	4. Deceives the inhabitants of the earth (13:14)
5. Two olive trees; lamps (11:4)	5. Two horns (13:11)
6. Breath of life from God (11:11)	6. Breathes into the image of the first beast (13:15)

This scene is descriptive of God's path since the garden and the serpent's assault against Him.

1. The setting for the two witnesses (v. 1, 2)

A measuring of the Temple. Natural questions, what is this TEMPLE?

"Is the temple in Revelation 11 an earthly, literal one?"

January 29, 2011

The question whether the temple in Revelation 11 should be understood figuratively, or literally, has been discussed by many scholars.

- At his trial, Jesus was accused of saying, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.' [Mark 14:58] The question whether he meant *this temple* literally, or figuratively, was *crucial*. It led to the cross. Jesus said: 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' John explained, 'But he spake of the temple of his body.' [John 2:19]



- John reported in Revelation 21:22 that he saw no temple in the New Jerusalem, but that 'the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.'
- Paul described the saints as 'built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,' and 'a building fitly framed together' that 'groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.' [Ephesians 2:19-21]
- In Revelation 3:12, Jesus promised to make a person who overcomes 'a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.'
- In Revelation 11:19, the temple of God is in heaven, as is the woman in Revelation 12:1. Both represent the church.

In the book of Revelation, the 7 trumpets constitute the 7th seal. The prophecy of the *Two Witnesses* comes immediately before the seventh trumpet, which corresponds to the resurrection, when the prophets and saints are rewarded, and "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." [Revelation 11:15] At that time, the whole world comes under the power of Christ and the saints. So in Revelation, the seven trumpets are for the church what the seven trumpets at the taking of Jericho was in the history of Israel; in both, the trumpets are the prelude to the people of God taking possession of their promised inheritance.

Comparing the seven trumpets that were blown on seven consecutive days at the taking of Jericho with the seven trumpets of Revelation reveals that the promised land, which the

Israelites inherited afterwards, corresponds to and prefigures the “rest” that is promised to the saints. This is confirmed in Hebrews.

Hebrews 4:8-11 NIV

For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day.

There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.”¹⁴

“And the temple of God was opened in the heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and a great hail. At the beginning of the chapter we noticed the distinction between the two words (naos and hieron) applied to the Temple; the Temple building proper (the naos) was measured off. Now this (naos) Temple is opened, yes, to its very inmost recesses; for not the holy place alone is disclosed, but the holiest, of all, the shrine of shrines, into which the high priest alone – and he only once a year – entered, is opened, as though anew the veil of the Temple had been rent in twain, and there the ark of the covenant of God is seen. The meaning of this, when read by the light of the measuring of the Temple, seems to be that now the secret abode of the safeguarded children of God was revealed. In the hour of apostasies and worldliness the faithful had found their strength and protection in the shadow of the Almighty; they were regarded by God as His true living Temple, and in them He dwelt, as they, too, found their defence in Him. But now that the end has come there is no need that these should be hidden any more. The children of God, who are the Temple of God, are made manifest; and at the same time the secret spot of their shelter in troublous days is made plain, and in it is seen the token of that everlasting covenant which was the sheet-anchor of their hopes in the day of their trouble (Hebrews 6:19).”¹⁵

“Here, again, we find the basis of the vision in the Old Testament. Ezekiel was brought, in vision, to a high mountain, and saw a man with a line of flax (for measuring long distances) and a measuring line (for shorter distances). But, more probably, the vision of Zechariah was in the seer’s mind (Zechariah 2:1-2), for the vision there of the man with the measuring rod to measure Jerusalem is followed, in the fourth chapter (Zechariah 4:1-6), by the vision of the two olive-trees, which are distinctly identified with the two witnesses in the present chapter (see Revelation 11:3-4). The Temple, altar, and worshippers are to be measured. The measuring implies the protecting of, or the token of a resolve to protect, a portion of the sacred enclosure from desecration. The measuring, like the sealing of Revelation 7, is a sign of preservation during impending dangers.”¹⁶

2. The power of the two witnesses (vv. 3-6)

“John’s description tells the churches that God is able to protect his people for the whole of the time he has appointed for them to preach the gospel. And even if their enemies kill them, God can raise the dead. This would encourage persecuted churches to continue to proclaim the gospel.”¹⁷

“It is better to understand John as referring in chapter 11 to the whole Christian community.”¹⁸

“Scripture requires two witnesses to confirm testimony (Deut. 19:15; Matt. 18:16).”¹⁹

The two witnesses testify to the truth of God to His people and against the unbelieving. The “two” refer to the two great personages Moses and Elijah. Why these two? This symbolism speaks of the “two or three witnesses” who testify as to the righteousness of the sentence pronounced against the guilty and the word of hope to His people. God’s judgment is just.

- “And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs” (2 Kings 9:32).
- “But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established” (Matt. 18:16).
- “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20).
- “This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established” (2 Cor. 13:1).
- “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses” (1 Tim. 5:19). {before: or, under}
- “He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses” (Heb. 10:28).

Notice verse 4. If they are people why are they described as two olive trees and two lampstands standing before the Lord of the earth?

“In Zechariah’s vision, the ‘two olive trees’ symbolized ‘two anointed ones’ (Zech. 4:11, 14): a royal leader to rebuild God’s temple (Zech. 4:6-10) and a high priest to lead worship in it (Zech. 3:1-5). Thus the witnesses of Rev. 11:3 aptly represent all whom the Lamb has redeemed to serve as priests and rule as kings (1:6; 5:10).”²⁰

3. The death of the two witnesses (vv. 7-10)

Just as verse 2 speaks of persecution so also here. Revelation is filled with suffering and persecution. It is an interesting contrast between the joy over their death and the sorry over the fall of Babylon (Rev. 17, 18).

4. The resurrection of the two witnesses (vv. 11-14)

Herein lies the victory of God in behalf of His people. This is the continued replaying of John 16:33.

- ³²“Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. ³³ These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world” (John 16:32, 33).

What is the intent of this reference to 3 ½ or 7 years? The intent is to draw us back to the 70 weeks of Daniel. Just as earlier in chapter one the reader was to think, "This is that," so also here. Those who read chapters 12-15 should think, "This is that." What Daniel spoke of is coming to pass right now.

What about Daniel's 70th Week? Why seventy?

"Seventy is often connected with God's administration of the world. After the Flood the world was repopulated through 70 descendants of Noah (Gn. 10); 70 persons went down to Egypt (Gn. 46:27); 70 elders were appointed to help Moses administer Israel in the wilderness (Nu. 11:16); the people of Judah spent 70 years of exile in Babylon (Je. 5:11; 29:10); 70 weeks, 'sevens', were decreed by God as the period in which Messianic redemption was to be accomplished (Dn. 9:24); Jesus sent forth the Seventy (Lk. 10:1); he enjoined forgiveness 'until seventy times seven' (Mt. 18:22)."²¹

The Sabbath

- Once every 7 days = Sabbath Day
- 7 Nationwide feasts a year
- Every 7 years = Sabbath Year
- Every 7 Sabbath Years (49 years) - JUBILEE

"The subject of the sentence is ambiguous. Theod. makes it to be "one week." LXX. "the covenant;" others take it to be the Antichristian prince spoken of in the last verse, an opinion which derives some support from Daniel 7:25. According to this interpretation, the covenant refers to the agreement which the prince makes with the large number of persons who become apostates. But (1) the word "covenant" does not apply to any such agreement, but rather to a covenant with God, and (2) in Daniel 9:26 it is the people of the prince, and not the prince, which is the subject of the sentence. It is therefore more appropriate to take Messiah as the subject. During the last closing week of the long period mentioned, Messiah, though cut off, shall confirm God's covenant (comp. Daniel 11:22; Daniel 11:28; Daniel 11:30; Daniel 11:32) with many, that is, with those who receive Him."²²

"John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, and Isaac Newton all connect the 70th week with the Messiah. When Christ cried 'It is finished,' the priests were officiating in the temple. It was the hour of the evening sacrifice, and as the Passover lamb representing Christ was about to be slain, 'the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake and the rocks rent' (Matthew 27:51)."²³

Thus, the 70th week of Daniel was fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus.

<http://jewsforjudaism.org/knowledge/articles/daniel-9-a-true-biblical-interpretation/>
for a thorough treatment of Daniel 9 from a Jewish perspective the preceding article is a good read. It does not support a Christian reading of Daniel 9.

IV. Seventh trumpet / 3rd woe (11:15ff)

“Leviticus 25:9 calls for the trumpet to be blown on the Day of Atonement in the Year of Jubilee. In language drawn from that passage, Isaiah prophesied that the new exodus would be marked by ‘a great trumpet’ blast (Isa. 27:13). Now John shows the fulfillment of the pattern of the Year of Jubilee and the prophecy of Isaiah as the seventh angel blows his trumpet (Rev. 11:15).”²⁴

Shepherding the Sheep: (What is the NEXT STEP?)

1. Friends, God wins!
2. The entire *Story* tells and retells one *Story* with Jesus at the center.
3. To a suffering Church, Jesus is reclaiming what is rightfully His by vanquishing His enemies and reconstituting His Garden for the joy of His people.

¹ G.K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC, 556.

¹ *ESV Study Bible* on Revelation 10:1-11:14.

¹ John Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 169.

¹ <http://discoverrevelation.com/Revelation%20Chapter%2010.html>

¹ <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/Rev/Angel-Open-Scroll>

¹ *Gospel Transformation Bible*, Revelation 10:1-11.

¹ Simon J. Kistemaker, *Revelation*, NTC, 307.

¹ <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/Rev/Angel-Open-Scroll>

¹ Alan F. Johnson, “Revelation,” in EBC, Vol. 12, p498.

¹ *ESV Study Bible* on Revelation 10:8-11.

¹ <https://bible.org/seriespage/17-temple-two-witnesses-and-seventh-trumpet-rev-11-19>

¹ John Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 175.

¹ *ESV Study Bible* on Revelation 11:1-14.

¹ <https://creationconcept.wordpress.com/2011/01/29/is-the-temple-in-revelation-11-an-earthly-literal-one/>

¹ Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers on Revelation 11:19.

¹ Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers on Revelation 11:1.

¹ *Gospel Transformation Bible*, Revelation 11:1-14.

¹ Alan F. Johnson, “Revelation,” in EBC, Vol. 12, p499.

¹ *ESV Study Bible* on Revelation 11:3-14.

¹ *ESV Study Bible* on Revelation 11:4.

¹ <https://bible.org/question/what-significance-numbers-scripture>

¹ Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers on Daniel 9:27.

¹ http://amazingdiscoveries.org/S-deception_Jesus_70-week_prophecy_Daniel

¹ *Gospel Transformation Bible*, Revelation 11:15-19.

