

Faithful and Fearless

Revelation 11:1–19 (NKJV) – Bible passage [my explanatory notes]

James Draper writes, “We are in an interlude. We will get confused if we think that Revelation is chronological in order. It is not an attempt to place events in a time order. At this point, we are between the sounding of the sixth and seventh trumpets. We are somewhere in the first three and one-half years of the tribulation period.”¹

1. The Holy Witnesses (Rev. 11:1-6)

¹ Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, “Rise and measure [measure to “take possession of” or “to show what belongs to Him”] the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there.

- This “Tribulation Temple” will be built in the first half of the Tribulation. In Matthew 24:15 Jesus referred to the “abomination that causes desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel,” indicating that “at the end time, in the middle of the Tribulation period as Daniel predicted, a temple will be desecrated by the Antichrist. In order for this to be fulfilled it must first be rebuilt. Likewise, in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-13 the Apostle Paul predicted that the Antichrist, in the middle of the Tribulation, would defy God by sitting in the Temple of God and presenting himself to the world as God.”² See Daniel 9:27.



Modern picture of the golden “Dome of the Rock” (Muslim site). Below is the “Western Wall” (Jewish site).

² But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. [that which is outside of the Temple will remain in the possession of the Nations (or, Gentiles).] And they will tread the holy city [Jerusalem] underfoot for forty-two months. [3 ½ years]

³ And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy [not predicting future events but proclaiming God’s messages of truth] one thousand two hundred and sixty days [3 ½ years], clothed in sackcloth.” [sackcloth is a symbol of mourning (see Genesis 37:34) and reflects a righteous grief over the spiritual condition of the world.]

⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. [This imagery comes from Zechariah 3-4 and represents how these two witnesses will bring light (lamps) fueled by the “oil” from the trees.]

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 [authority] to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power [authority] over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

- These two witnesses are either literally “Moses” and “Elijah” (representing the Law and the Prophets) or they are individuals who will remind you of their ministries. These two will be located in Jerusalem, while the 144,000 witnesses are located throughout the entire earth (see Revelation 7:9). Their ministry will begin just around the middle of the 7-year tribulation and conclude toward the end of the tribulation.

¹ James Draper, *The Unveiling* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1984), 159.

² Tim LaHaye, *Revelation Unveiled* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 184.

2. The Hostile World (Rev. 11:7-8)

⁷ When they finish their testimony, the beast [the beast is the Antichrist (see Rev. 13) – this title reflects his violence and hostility] 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 [Jerusalem] which spiritually is called Sodom [representing sexual immorality] and Egypt [representing secularism and materialism], where also our Lord was crucified.

- God's witnesses are invincible until their work is through. Then God allows the Antichrist to kill them.
- Missionaries Jim Elliot and Lottie Moon have similarly stated, "You are immortal until your work is done."³

3. The Hardened Will (Rev. 11:9-14)

⁹ Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies [this can easily be done with modern technology] 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 [Dr. Akin called this "Happy Dead Witnesses Day", and Warren Wiersbe called this a "Satanic Christmas"], 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. [this happens at the end of the 7-year tribulation and before the return of Christ]

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. [That doesn't mean they converted. They simply realize that God has done something great. They see this great sign, but it's not enough to lead them to repentance. In this sense, they give glory to God in the same way demons did when Jesus confronted them during His earthly ministry."⁴]

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

4. The Heavenly Worship (Rev. 11:15-19)

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 [expressing how God is eternal.], 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." [The remainder of Revelation in a single verse. The past tense is used by the elders because it is as sure as if it has already happened. The saints will be rewarded. The wicked will be judged.]

¹⁹ Then the temple of God was opened in heaven [Exodus 25:40 says Moses designed the Temple after the pattern God gave him. The earthly Temple is based on the heavenly Temple (see Hebrews 9:23-24).], and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple [the ark is located in the holy of holies, where the presence of God dwelt in the Old Testament. John saw God's glory in heaven.]. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

Applications for Today:

- 1) **Be fearless in the midst of opposition.** Rest in the fact that you, as God's messenger and witness, are immortal until your work is complete.
- 2) **Be faithful in the midst of threats or persecution.** Don't look to the world to define "success." Begin to define "success" as "faithfulness" to what God has called you to do (see 1 Corinthians 4:2).
- 3) **Trust that God is in control, even when it looks dark in your life.** Nothing surprises God. He sees our lives from an eternal perspective, which can help us through the difficulties of today.

³ Daniel L. Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Revelation*, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 203.

⁴ Robert Jeffress, *Final Conquest* (Dallas, TX: Pathway to Victory, 2020), 175.