

So Help Me God

Introduction

As we discussed last week....we are in Revelation Chapter 11....during what turns out to be the last interlude in Revelation. God reminded John last week that he must once again preach the word and that it is Bittersweet. The message of this interlude is that no matter what happens in the Tribulation....God's people must not stop testifying to the truth. As seals, trumpets and bowls are being unleashed on earth....God is using His people to preach the truth to anyone who will listen.

Sometimes during the tribulation those who are followers of Jesus...those sealed with the Holy Spirit....are protected. However, as we get to the Great Tribulation, God's people...the remaining Jewish People who follow Jesus become the hunted. They are persecuted, martyred, and tortured unto death. We are beyond the Gentile period now....the entire focus is on the Jewish Nation.

Despite this, they are still instructed to speak the truth boldly. The Great Tribulation is God's final push to convert Jewish People. Initially the Jews who followed Jesus will be targeted, but once the Antichrist is revealed, anyone Jewish, Messianic Jews, Muslims, Budists...anyone who fails to worship the AntiChrist will be killed.

But now John takes a pause to tell us about the key players of the last half of the tribulation. Those who will become known as The 2 Witnesses, The Antichrist, The False Prophet and the 144 Thousand.

This week we will look primarily at the Two Witnesses and then next week the False Prophet and the Antichrist.

Now to remind everyone of where we left off last week, God has reminded John that even though he is well into his nineties....even though the message is bittersweet....He must again proclaim it....He must be a witness and testify.

Being a witness and testifying.....they are not the same thing. You are a witness because of what you have experienced. Every believer is a witness to the truth of a transformed life. They have experienced the impact of Jesus in their lives. You ARE a Witness.....but what you are called to do with that experience is to testify about it. To tell everyone what you have experienced.

Churches are full of witnesses for Christ...the problem is that most are not testifying.

Recently I have been binge watching some of the Crime TV shows....48 hours, Crime Central, Cold Cases....I am fascinated that people frequently kill other people for what seems to be no reason at all.

But I find myself drawn to the witnesses....there are so many of them...In almost every crime it seems that dozens of people witnessed what happened...but no one will testify. They are afraid of retaliation. Yet their testimony is the only thing that removes the threat

from their lives. I have learned that there is a huge difference between a witness and a witness who will testify.

I have been asking God what He is trying to teach me. These are hard shows to binge on...but for some reason I have been drawn to them.

The violence and disregard for human life is sick. But I began to notice that these witnesses are very similar to the church today. We have seen incredible events...we have discovered the truth...we have been entrusted with the answers...the message given to us literally will destroy the enemies hold on others.....but it is not enough to be a witness. God calls us to something much bolder.

Think of it this way....You are a witness...what you are called to do is to testify. In other words, your life has changed because it has been transformed by Jesus Christ. Those looking in on your life can see the change that has happened to you. You are a person more full of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and self control. People can see that hopefully even if you never open your mouth. You call yourself a follower of Jesus because He has transformed your life....you are the best witness to what God has done in your life....But they will not know about Jesus unless you testify and give glory to God for the change in your life.

God uses your testimony to reach others....Your testimony....your attributing the changes in you to your relationship with Christ is what draws others to Him.

For all they know you just read a great self help book or went to a great meditation class....or finally went to anger management.....if you don't testify....giving glory of the change in your life to God...then those around you will not see the glory of God. You can live a perfect upstanding Christian life and think others should know you are a believer....but they don't. Jesus actually was perfect and He still had to testify about God.

Churches today are full of witnesses....who are not testifying. We complain about what Satan is doing in the world, but we are too fearful to testify. You and I are called to do both...Your witness is the change in your life...your testimony is giving God the credit. It is critical to understand that as we get to the end of times....God expects us to testify no matter what the cost. People will continue to be martyred....they will refuse to be silent.....We meet two people today in our passage who are strong witnesses and who boldly proclaim the truth....let's dive in.

Revelation 11:1 (ESV) — 1 Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, “Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there,

There is some new information....what temple? There is no temple in Jerusalem anymore.. Remember the Romans destroyed the second temple in AD 70. Jesus said the temple would not have one stone standing. Tell the story of the exploding stones.

Following his re-commissioning to “prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages, and kings” (10:11), John is “given a measuring reed like a rod” (11:1). He is given the equivalent of a

modern yardstick. He is then told to “go and measure God’s sanctuary and the altar, and count those who worship there.

We have seen this before. Ezekiel the prophet had an interaction with an angel

Ezekiel 40:2–4 (ESV) 2 In visions of God he brought me to the land of Israel, and set me down on a very high mountain, on which was a structure like a city to the south. 3 When he brought me there, behold, there was a man whose appearance was like bronze, with a linen cord and a measuring reed in his hand. And he was standing in the gateway. 4 And the man said to me, “Son of man, look with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and set your heart upon all that I shall show you, for you were brought here in order that I might show it to you. Declare all that you see to the house of Israel.”

Then in Ezekiel 41-43 we see the angel measuring every square inch of the temple...the size of every room....the width of almost every stone...the measurement of every court...every gateway to the temple.....the size of the temple...you name it...God had this angel measure it...for example....

Ezekiel 41:2–4 (ESV) 2 And the breadth of the entrance was ten cubits, and the sidewalls of the entrance were five cubits on either side. And he measured the length of the nave, forty cubits, and its breadth, twenty cubits. 3 Then he went into the inner room and measured the jambs of the entrance, two cubits; and the entrance, six cubits; and the sidewalls on either side of the entrance, seven cubits. 4 And he measured the length of the room, twenty cubits, and its breadth, twenty cubits, across the nave. And he said to me, “This is the Most Holy Place.”

These measurements are continued for two full chapters in Ezekiel.

We have seen this kind of measurement in other passages as well....remember nothing really new introduced in Revelation.....The prophet Zechariah saw an angel who was measuring not the temple, but the city of Jerusalem....

Zechariah 2:1–2 (ESV) 1 And I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand! 2 Then I said, “Where are you going?” And he said to me, “To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its width and what is its length.”

Ok, so what is up with the measuring stick? Why is God so focused on getting things measured? He already knows the answer....

Well, it is important that before you remind people of ownership.....you stake out your claim. We see this all the time. When Lots are drawn up in a community....the lot is measured and stakes are placed. That way everyone knows what is being bought and who it belongs to.

If you remember from our series "God's House" the temple is the place where God chose to dwell with His people. As they were wandering through the wilderness...God said this tent, this tabernacle is the place where I will dwell with you. Solomon's temple was the same. The rebuilt temple started with Nehemiah but Jesus abandoned it as the

home of God and tore down the curtain....soon the building itself would be destroyed by Rome.

Measuring the Temple in each circumstance verified two things...First that it was built to the exact specifications God had directed...and second God was reminding people that the temple belonged to Him....In a sense, measure it and remember that it is mine.

So in Ezekiel 40-42 we learn about every measurement of the temple...Once God stakes His claim....He comes to dwell...look at the very next verse...

Ezekiel 43:1-5 (ESV) 1 Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing east. 2 And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory.....and I fell on my face. 4 As the glory of the Lord entered the temple by the gate facing east, 5 the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

OK so here in this verse in Revelation we have another measurement....Why? Well a new temple has been built.....This one by the Jewish People.....under the peace treaty of the Antichrist.....No indication that God was pleased to dwell there.....It is in a sense unclaimed....

At the moment, this new temple built during the first half of the tribulation...was no different than temples we have seen to other little gods throughout history. What made the first two temples in Jerusalem special was that God dwelt there and claimed it as His own.

So we know that soon the Antichrist is going to go into this temple and try to claim it as his. He will walk into the Holy of Holies and declare himself to be God....something that Jesus called the Abomination of Desolation.

So before that moment occurs....God wants to make sure that this Temple....is His. He is letting everyone know...by measuring it that He is claiming ownership of the temple. Though out history, people built temples to false gods and God never claimed ownership or measured them. If God measures something He is claiming ownership.....This temple...God says...is His.

What the Antichrist is going to do in this temple is only an Abomination because God claimed the Holy of Holies and the Temple as His First.

John is told to go and measure the Temple of God and obtain the number who worship there.....

So what is introduced here is the Third Temple of God in Jerusalem. First we had the tabernacle in the wilderness....Then we had the Great Solomon's temple #1. Then the Temple of Jesus' day #2. And now we have the third temple of the the Tribulation. All three measured and claimed by God as His.

If you have been to Jerusalem and felt the tension at the Temple Mount then you know that this is a problem. Currently there is a big honking dome smack dab in the outer courts....The Muslims are not eager to see that Dome destroyed and a new Temple built. **(PHOTO 1)**

But remember, this temple is built as part of a peace treaty brought together by the Antichrist. There can be no peace in the Middle East if the Dome of the Rock is destroyed. Now here is the very interesting part and something that once again shows us the sovereignty of God.

When the Romans destroyed the Temple they left nothing really but rocks demolished. Just as Jesus had prophesied. No one knew for sure where the temple was exactly....**PHOTO 2**

The temple Mount is huge. The trapezium shaped platform measures 530 yards along the west, 500 yards along the east, 330 yards along the north and 300 yards along the south, giving a total area of 37 Acres of Land

PHOTO 3 The Dome of the Rock was built where Muslim historians believed that the original temple was built...They wanted to claim the land forever. But recent historical and archeological discoveries suggest that they are too far north. Technically they built their temple in the outer courts of the Gentiles.

The new temple likely would not be built in place of the Dome of the Rock but rather beside it.
PHOTO 4

I believe...just me speaking...that the Antichrist will usher in a peace treaty in Israel by offering a solution to the fight over the temple mount. The Jewish people can build their temple adjacent to the current Dome.....Now I didn't just dream that up...It is based on Scripture....look at the very next verse....what God told John NOT to measure. What God did not claim as His...

Revelation 11:2 (ESV) 2 But do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.

Remember that prophecy is based on the Jewish calendar based on a 360 day year. These numbers are 3.5 years. The outer courtyard is "Given over to the Gentiles...the pagans...the Muslims and all who do not believe in Jesus as God and Savior.

Now during the Great Tribulation no one will be spared. The Gentiles will rule the earth for 3.5 years and believers will be martyred, seized, tortured, beaten and everything else that pagans can think to do to them. The World will be at war against God's people. The Antichrist trying his best to destroy everything and everyone of God.

God claimed the Temple as His....the term "gave over" is one way that God judges. Sometimes he just lets our sin nature go to its ultimate outcome....

Now God in Revelation, by measuring the temple and not the outer Gentile Courts.....is giving over those who reject Jesus to their just punishment. Jesus spoke of this moment when God would allow the Gentiles to trample His people....His followers. No one is spared from the Great Tribulation if they are still on earth. This is the time that God cut short to protect the saints. Look at the warning Jesus gives to believers immediately after talking about the Abomination.

Luke 21:20–24 (ESV) 20 “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. 21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, 22 for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. 23 Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. 24 They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

God says that the city of Jerusalem and His people will be given over to the wrath of the Pagans....but not that God is still in sovereign control. This will occur for only 3.5 years.....

God is Sovereign and He sets limits on this punishment. He is not out of control and His temple mount is not out of control...though it looks like it.

Luke 21:12–19 (ESV) 12 But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name’s sake. 13 This will be your opportunity to bear witness. 14 Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, 15 for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. 16 You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. 17 You will be hated by all for my name’s sake. 18 But not a hair of your head will perish. 19 By your endurance you will gain your lives.

Matthew 24:20–22 (ESV) 20 Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. 22 And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

God's temple is the place where His Word goes out.....Nothing on earth can stop or overcome the Word of God. So God makes sure that those who are near His Temple and His City hear and see the power of the Word of God....

While the Antichrist is given time to bring war upon the remaining believers and for a time claim the Holy of Holies....God makes sure that truth of the Word of God is proclaimed to all.

Revelation 11:3–6 (ESV) 3 And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.” 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. 5 And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed. 6 They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.

The Truth of the Word of God will be proclaimed from the New Temple of God. The Abomination of Desolation will take place at the midpoint of the Tribulation...The Antichrist will claim to be God. But

these two witnesses will proclaim the truth and directly call him out as a fraud and liar. He will hate them almost as much as hates Jesus.

Many have tried to identify these two powerful witnesses for God....But before we get too far into this, we must remember that who they are must not be terribly important, or we would have been told exactly who they are!

With that said I want to look at a few options because it helps us see how we can use Scripture to try to answer questions from Scripture.

The case for Elijah and Moses.

Most say Elijah is clearly one of them....

Some think Elijah is one of the witnesses because: • His ministry seems like one of these two witnesses • He was carried up to heaven • Enemies of Elijah were destroyed by fire • It is specifically prophesied that Elijah will return before the end of the age • Elijah had a unique “conference” with Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration

At the same time, Moses and Elijah however have been seen hanging out together...where? With Jesus at the transfiguration....Not only did God use him to bring drought, but Elijah was taken up to heaven and never died. He was taken up in a chariot. That leads some to think the other person is not Moses but someone else who escaped death.

They were seen speaking with Jesus....so they have had a role in this story. And Moses and Elijah were the two great prophets of the Old Testament.

Moses was the great prophet through whom God gave the written law and Elijah was known as the great oral prophet who gave God's spoken word.

Some think Moses is one of the witnesses because: • His ministry seems like one of these witnesses • God seems to have a special purpose for the body of Moses that Satan wanted to defeat • The enemies of Moses were destroyed by fire • Moses had a unique “conference” with Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration

There is a hint perhaps of who these two may be. Which prophet was used by God to turn the rain off...remember?...Elijah...up on Mt Carmel. And who did God use to turn water to blood and bring plagues? Moses. So many argue that these two witnesses are Elijah and Moses.

The Case for Joshua and Zerubbabel

But you could make a strong argument that the two witnesses are Zerubbabel and Joshua the High Priest. This comes from Zechariah 4.

Zechariah 4:1–3 (ESV) 1 And the angel who talked with me came again and woke me, like a man who is awakened out of his sleep. 2 And he said to me, “What do you see?” I said, “I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven

lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it. 3 And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left."

Zechariah 4:5–6 (ESV) 5 Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" I said, "No, my lord." 6 Then he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.

The Word of the Lord going forth in the power of the Spirit through Zerubbabel. Then look at the following verses.

Zechariah 4:12–14 (ESV) 12 And a second time I answered and said to him, "What are these two branches of the olive trees, which are beside the two golden pipes from which the golden oil is poured out?" 13 He said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" I said, "No, my lord." 14 Then he said, "These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

That is a strong argument for those two....but most think Elijah and Moses...

The Case for Elijah and Enoch

Remember that Adam and Eve were created by God to live forever. After sin entered the world God graciously limited our years that we must spend in sin. Death is a blessing because it moves us away from having to live in our sinful state. Living in your sinful state for all of eternity is the very definition of Hell....In Genesis 5 we take a walk through the graveyard and are told how long people lived. With each generation the years seem to wind down.....Adam lived 930 years.....Seth 912....until we get to Enoch

Genesis 5:21–24 (ESV) — 21 When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. 22 Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. 23 Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. 24 Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

That's odd.....Enoch doesn't die. Are we sure? Yes....

Hebrews 11:4–5 (ESV) — 5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God.

Since there are only two people in the bible who don't die, some say this has to be Elijah and Enoch because we will see these men are killed by the Antichrist....and since every man born under sin is under the punishment of death....at some point, Elijah and Enoch, being born under the curse of sin, have to die.

Many believe that the two witnesses must be Enoch and Elijah, because neither of them died a natural death and were instead carried to heaven, and Hebrews 9:27 says that it is appointed for men to die once—so Enoch and Elijah must return to die on the earth. This is a misunderstanding of Hebrews 9:27, which is a principle rather than an absolute, immutable law.

For example, Lazarus and others were raised from the dead and apparently died twice—yet this does not disprove Hebrews 9:27. The entire church on earth at the time of the rapture will not die, but be carried to heaven. Hebrews 9:27 stands as a principle, and there are a few notable exceptions which ultimately serve to prove the rule, not deny it. There may be good reasons for considering Enoch and Elijah as the two witnesses, but the principle of Hebrews 9:27 is not among those good reasons.

Others suggested.

Elijah and Elisha James and John Peter and Paul

I go with Moses and Elijah as they seem to be God's A team and they are going to have to go mano y mano with the Antichrist.

Pick any two you want, just thank God that they will be there boldly proclaiming truth in the end... They will drive the Antichrist more crazy if that were possible And we see that God gives them unique power.

I went through that to show you that we have no knowledge of who the two witnesses are...we can speculate...hopefully based on Scripture, but it really doesn't matter. What matters is that they are unstoppable....truth....tellers.

They will do their ministry as two olive trees and two lampstands that represent God on the earth. Olive trees provide oil for lamps. Lamps provide light. They are the bearers of divine light. The Holy Spirit is often represented by Oil and the Truth of God and Jesus are the light. These two witnesses, whoever they are, will be continually powered by the Spirit to Shine the Light of God in the darkest ever places.

They will have the power to kill those who oppose them through fire coming from their mouths. The power of the Word of God. They will be able to halt rain (like Elijah) and Bring plagues (Like Moses)

God tells us they will prophesy for 1,260 days (3½ years) in sackcloth, the garments of grief, humility, mourning, and repentance. So when will they stop?

It is important to pause here and make sure that we note something. No one can touch these witnesses until God allows it. They will stand in the streets of Jerusalem....broadcasting God's truth...their testimony...to the entire world....People will want to kill them....but they can't. They are living bullet proof lives. No one will touch them or be able to touch or harm them until the time of their testimony is done. When they are finished testifying to all that God has called them to...they will go home

The same is true for the global church....The witnesses are protected for the duration of their ministry but die at the end This may provide a way to show that God will preserve his church throughout the age for the sake of their witness, but that as the universal proclamation of the gospel is fulfilled, the world finally appears to crush the church through massive martyrdoms. I believe that the church today is being crushed because we are witnesses who refuse to testify.

You know the same is true for us...right? We are here on earth as witnesses.....God has completely transformed our lives...He wants to use our experiences to reach others. We are here to testify to what we have seen and experienced. We will be here under God's protection until our testimony is done and then we will go home.

Nothing can happen to us unless God allows it. The only reason we are here instead of dead and in heaven is because we still have a mission to accomplish on earth. The mission that is your life. Your witness and your testimony are going to impact the lives of others and bring glory to Christ. You have unique experiences that God is going to use to reach others who need Him. He will send you into their lives...not to hang out...but to SPEAK of His wonders!

If you are not going to testify....If you are not going to give glory to God for what has happened in your life....then your mission has stagnated...and the potential of what planned to do in and through your life is literally muted. You are living your Christian life for yourself. God calls us to testify....that is our mission and duty.

Revelation 11:7–9 (ESV) — 7 And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, 8 and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. 9 For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb,

Again, nothing happens until they have finished their testimony. God in control of every event and every detail.

The Beast from the Bottomless Pit is Satan. The great city is Jerusalem but by this point it is full of corruption and is symbolically called Sodom and Egypt. It is the city where the Antichrist is starting to dominate.

If, during the first three and one-half years, Jerusalem's leadership is in league with the Antichrist, it is easy to see how these titles apply. Any city in love with the Antichrist, or entering into a covenant with him, could be called Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon.

These two are savagely killed by Satan and the Antichrist. Their bodies are gazed upon by the whole world and they are refused burial. The ultimate disgrace for a Middle Eastern person.

Both Jews and Muslims bury people within 24 hours. To not do so is the ultimate disgrace.

Notice that people from all over the world will gaze upon their dead bodies lying in the streets.

If you go back and read Bible commentaries from the old days...1500's....for example...there are some wild speculations about how people from all over the world could see these bodies all at the same time. They didn't know about Smart phones and social media

They will be on the News.....People will be watching their bodies on webcams....they will be doing all kinds of things to their bodies....they are hated....God has been doing horrible things to them....and

now...they have God's chosen prophets...whom they have killed and think they are victorious over. But it gets even worse.

Revelation 11:10 (ESV) — 10 and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.

Peoples, tribes, languages, and nations (note again the all-encompassing fourfold division) will first see their dead bodies left in the street and exposed in shameful humiliation for 3½ days. Second, they will gloat and celebrate and send gifts. A new holiday will be established in order to celebrate the deaths of the two men of God. We can call it "Dead Witnesses Day." What a stunning indictment of human depravity, wickedness, sinfulness, and evil. Remarkably, this is the only mention of rejoicing in the book of Revelation. Men and women will hate God so much that only in the killing of His precious servants are they made happy. They hated Him. They will hate us.

Revelation 11:11–14 (ESV) — 11 But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.

Imagine the slow motion replay of this highlight. They rose and stood on their feet....We're...back.

After 3½ days, "the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet." The 3½ days recalls the entombment of our Lord. The breath of life harks back to Ezekiel 37 where God revives the valley of dry bones by His Spirit. This is resurrection language! Everyone will know that God raised them from the dead. There will be no doubt. Not surprisingly, "great fear fell on those who saw them" those from among the various "tribes, languages, and nations". This is certainly one of the great understatements of the Bible and the most watched video ever on YouTube until it is censored. But God is just warming up.

Revelation 11:11–14 (ESV) — 12 Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. 13 And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. 14 The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come.

Now no one can doubt who is calling the shots here. Their enemies watch them and then are hit with an earthquake. Seven thousand people are killed. Remember that the sixth seal ended with an earthquake...they cried out for rocks to fall on them. Now the sixth trumpet ends with an earthquake as well.

Then we read a very odd verse....."The rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of the heavens." What does this mean? Are they repentant? Did they just become believers?

We are not really told...We know that during the tribulation there is a great harvest of Jewish people and perhaps this is it. 1/10th of the city died....another 7000 dead from the earthquake...did everyone else repent? John doesn't really answer that question. But if they were at all on the fence....seeing the dead witnesses rise and be called up to heaven should do it....I believe that this is the great harvest of the remaining Jewish people.

Revelation 11:11–14 (ESV) — 14 The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come.

God vindicates His saints who serve Him, and He deals with sinners who reject Him. The first group receives grace and mercy. The second group receives judgment and wrath. Verse 14 sums up the situation: “The second woe [the sixth trumpet] has passed. Take note: The third woe [the seventh trumpet, which contains the seven bowls of Revelation 16] is coming quickly.” For those who were celebrating “Happy Dead Witnesses Day,” The party is over....the seventh trumpet is soon to blow.

Closing

Last week we learned that the gospel message is both sweet and bitter. This week we learn that the gospel message must be proclaimed....Witnesses must testify to the truth that they have experienced.

I am stunned by the power that witnesses have on crime shows. All they have to do is speak and true change is possible. They know what happened and what they know can save others....but they are afraid...so they live their lives as witnesses who never see the transformative power of testifying to the truth. Life on the streets of our inner cities would completely change if all the witnesses decided to testify. If they all pushed through their fears and through the power of their words they could destroyed those who threaten them.

I find myself wondering how they could have witnessed something so powerful...so memorable...so life changing...and then keep it to themselves. How do you watch someone get murdered and then refuse to testify.....that is when it hit me.

We are all witnesses to the greatest murder in all of human history. Because of Jesus our lives have been completely changed. We are witnesses to that truth and the truth that He is alive today. And yet....many refuse to testify...our testimony in the hands of God will change lives....but we stay silent...just like they do..out of fear....

Too often believers are hesitant to testify to others because of their perceived fears regarding consequences. They are afraid that they will offend someone, or be rejected by someone, or be labeled by someone....few of us are truly facing martyrdom at least today in the US. Yet here we are...witnesses that refuse to testify.

The truth about God is offensive to those who reject God. But rejecting God should be offensive to us. We are headed to the end of times. To the darkest of dark. We are here right now for such a time as this. We are here to fight Satan with the power of God's Word.

The two witnesses and those who were martyred in the Great Tribulation knew that God was in sovereign control of their lives. They could not be touched until their mission on earth..their testimony was completed.

I think the same thing holds back the church.

When we examine the two witnesses....I pray that we see ourselves. They didn't just stand around looking holy. The word from their mouth was fire. They boldly proclaimed truth without concerns for what would happen to them. They knew that God had them on a mission to testify

and that no one could touch them until their testimony was complete. Imagine what the Church of Jesus would be like if we all embraced that truth.

Tomorrow we all go back to the daily routines...the Thanksgiving Holiday is over....Christmas is coming. We will interact with dozens of people. Many who are going to hell. Many who are just like we used to be before someone was bold enough to testify to us.

Our lives give witness to the transformational power of Jesus....but do we care about those around us enough to testify to the truth? To actually tell them why we have the hope that we have?

What does your testimony really cost you? What does your silence cost them? Don't be fearful of what Satan can do to you when you testify.....be excited about what God will do through your testimony.

Tomorrow....when the time comes to step up and tell others the truth about Jesus....Do you promise to tell the truth....the Whole truth....So Help You God? Let's pray