

Testimony Time Revelation 10-11

Every so often in the church where I was saved we would have an old fashioned “testimony time”. Do any of you know what I am talking about? Usually it was on a Sunday evening. Pastor Ingersoll would say, “Were just going to take some time tonight to brag about Jesus. I want you to stand up right where you are and tell us what the Lord Jesus means to you.” One at a time folks would rise to their feet and in a very precious and personal way share how they had come to know Christ as their Savior and what the Lord Jesus had done in their life.

I have been blessed to hear some of the greatest preachers of our day expound the Word of God in revival meetings and bible conferences, and I count that a real privilege. But I have to tell you that no sermon I have ever heard has stirred my heart more than some of the personal testimonies I have heard through the years.

Chapters 10 and 11 of the book of Revelation could be described as Tribulation testimony time. In chapter 10 we see the testimony of the mighty angel. In chapter 11, verses 1 through 14, we see the testimony of the two witnesses. And then beginning in verse 15 of chapter 11 we see the testimony of the twenty-four elders.

Now, I would like to be able to take the time to go verse by verse through both of these chapters this morning in the same manner as we have studied the book of Revelation thus far. However, I really need to pick up the pace if we are going to conclude this series in the next six weeks or so. So I am just going to give you a brief outline of chapter 10 and then we are going to focus our attention on chapter 11 this morning. In Revelation chapter 10 we have...

1. The Testimony of the Mighty Angel (Rev. 10)

In verse 1 through 4 John gives us **the description of the angel**. *“I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them”* (Rev. 10:1-4).

There are some who believe this is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. Certainly the description of this mighty angel is very similar to the description of Christ found elsewhere in the book of Revelation. There are others, myself included, who believe that this is a reference to a literal angel. The key I believe is found in the very first verse where John writes *“I saw another mighty angel.”* The word *“another”* is from the Greek *allos*, meaning another of the same kind. The use of the word is *allos* here would seem to identify this mighty angel as one exactly like the previously mentioned trumpet angels in chapters 8 and 9. If John was in fact referring to Christ here you would have expected him to have used the word *heteros* instead, meaning another of a different kind. Whether you interpret the mighty angel to be the Lord Jesus Christ himself or a literal angel, either way you will be in good company.

Beginning in verse 5 we see **the declaration of the angel**.

“The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets” (Rev. 11:5-7).

The angel declares that the time of God’s final judgment is about to begin. God has been delaying His judgments so that lost sinners will have time to repent. That is why God has delayed His judgment of this world until now. The Bible says in 2 Peter 3:8-9, *“But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”* The declaration of the mighty angel is like the two minute warning in a football game. God’s prophetic time clock is winding down. When the seventh trumpet is sounded the final judgments of God will come in swift succession culminating with the triumphant return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the establishment of His kingdom on earth.

Finally, in verses 8 through 11 we see **the demand of the angel**. Look at verse 8. *“Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, “Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth.” So I went to the angel and said to him, “Give me the little book.” And he said to me, “Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth” (Rev. 11:8-9).*

The mighty angel commands John to take the little book and eat it. A very unusual command, wouldn’t you say? The little book is symbolic of the Word of God. When you read the Bible you find God’s Word compared to bread in Matthew 4:4, to milk in 1 Peter 2:2, to meat 1 Cor. 3:1-2, and honey Psalm 119:103. Good food won’t do you any good if you don’t eat it. In the same way, the Word of God is of little benefit to us until we receive into our lives. We have to get the Word into our minds and hearts and apply it to our lives.

Now look at verse 10. *“Then I took the little book out of the angel’s hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. And he said to me, “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.” (Rev. 10:10-11)*

The message of the Bible is both a blessing to the saved and a curse to the lost. It’s a sweet message of grace and mercy but it’s also a somber message of judgment and wrath.

Now we move from the testimony of the mighty angel in chapter 10 to...

2. The Testimony of the Two Witnesses (Rev. 11:1-14)

Look at verse 1. *“Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, “Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months” (Rev. 11:1-2).*

How many Jewish temples have been built in Jerusalem? According to the Word of God two Jewish temples have been built in the holy city. The first temple was built by King Solomon in the 10th century B.C. and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar around 586 B.C. The second temple was built under the leadership of Zerubbabel in the 6th century B.C. That same temple was later enlarged by King Herod in the 1st century B.C. and destroyed by Titus in 70 A.D. At the time John wrote this letter somewhere around 95 A.D. there was no temple.

What John is describing here in verses 1 and 2 is the third temple that is going to be built in the holy city of Jerusalem. At some point during the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation, the Anti-Christ is going to make a treaty with the nation of Israel. He will allow them to erect a new temple and reinstate their priestly sacrifices. But at the end of this three and one-half year period, at the mid-point of the Tribulation, the Antichrist will break this treaty with Israel. He will desecrate the temple of God, declare himself to be God, and demand the whole world worship him.

During this time of the rebuilding of the temple there will be two special witnesses. Verse 3 says *"And I will give power to my two witnesses."* Now a witness is simply someone who testifies to that which they know to be true. That will be the Lord's assignment for these two individuals. By the way, that is what we are called to do as well. As born again believers in Jesus Christ we are to bear witness to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God who died for our sins and rose again from the dead and that He will save all those who turn from their sins and trust Him as their personal Lord and Savior.

The question is "who are these two witnesses?" Many believe the two witnesses will be Elijah and Moses. There are certainly a number of parallels between the miracles performed by Elijah and Moses and the miraculous powers of these two witnesses. You may also remember that it was Elijah and Moses who appeared together with the Lord Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Others believe these two witnesses will be Elijah and Enoch because neither of them experienced death and the Word of God tells us that it is appointed unto man once to die.

The fact is the bible simply doesn't give us the names of these two special tribulation witnesses. Frankly it really doesn't matter who they are. It's what they are going to do that's important.

Now I want you to notice **the ministry of the witnesses**. Look at verse 3. John says, *"They will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days."* These two witnesses will be prophets. In the Word of God the term prophet can refer to someone who has been called to be a foreteller of God's judgment. In other words, to prophecy of judgment that is coming. But the title prophet can also refer to someone who has been called by God to be a forth teller of God's truth. These two witnesses will be both. They will preach judgment and Jesus.

Notice how they are dressed. Verse 3 tells us they were *"clothed in sackcloth."* These two witnesses will be dressed in sackcloth because they are going to be preaching a message of God's judgment on a wicked world. For three and one-half years their message is going to be "repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ or face the wrath of God." Tragically their message is going to fall on deaf ears. Instead of repenting men will become more and more rebellious toward God.

Look at verse 4. *"These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God*

of the earth. 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. These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire” (Rev. 11:4-6).

These two special witnesses are going to be powerful, Spirit filled prophets of God like Elijah and Moses. Like Elijah, who called down fire from heaven and caused the rains to cease for 3 ½ years, they will be given power to devour their enemies with fire and shut off the rain like you and I turn off a spigot. Like Moses who through the power of God turned the waters of the Nile into blood and called down plague upon plague on the land of Egypt, these powerful prophets will be able to turn the waters into blood and strike the earth with all manner of plagues, as often as they choose.

Next John describes for us **the martyrdom of the witnesses**. John writes in verse 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."* This is the first of 36 references to the beast that we find in the book of Revelation. You will be hearing a great deal more about the beast in the next few weeks. The *"beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit"* is the Anti-Christ. The Anti-Christ will be able to do what no one else can do; he will kill God's mighty messengers.

Now, before we go on want to point out something very important here. Verse 7 tells us that these two witnesses will not be killed until *"they finish their testimony."* They will not die until the ministry God has assigned them has been completed. The same thing is true of every child of God. Listen; if you have given your life to Jesus Christ you have a job to do. You have a race to run and a course to finish. And beloved, you are immortal until God's assignment for you is through.

Look at verse 8. *"And their dead bodies will be in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."* After these two witnesses are killed their bodies will be left on one of the streets of Jerusalem. Their corpses will become a public spectacle to the whole world. Verse 9 says *"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."* Up until a few years ago lot of people scoffed at this verse. How could people of all nations and tribes view dead bodies on a street in Jerusalem? Then along came satellite TV, the personal computer, and streaming video on the internet and no one is laughing any longer. The whole world will look on as the bodies of these two witnesses lie in the street.

Now look at verse 10. *"And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another."* Isn't that something? People will be sending gifts to one another in celebration of the death of these two mighty messengers of God. Now why will these two men be so hated that their death will be celebrated? Look again at verse 10. The death of God's witnesses will be celebrated *"Because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth."* They will be hated simply because they were preaching Jesus. I found out a long time ago that not everybody wants to hear the Gospel.

Dr. James Merritt said, "If you take a stand for the Lord Jesus Christ, you had better duck or pucker because people will either hit you or kiss you. They will either love you or hate you."

These two special messengers of God will be hated and killed because of their bold witness for Christ. But death won't be able to hold them.

In verse 11 we see **the miraculous resurrection of the witnesses**. *“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.”*

Try to picture the scene in your mind. The dead bodies of these two preachers have been lying in the street for 3 ½ days. All the media are there. Reporters from CNN, ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX news, SKY news, you name it, they're all there. Then all of a sudden the lifeless bodies of the two witnesses begin to move. With the eyes of the world watching they begin to stir and stand to their feet. Verse 11 says, *“And great fear fell on those who saw them.”* No wonder! If you thought someone was dead and they came to life before your very eyes it would scare you too.

I heard about a man who worked the night shift at a local factory. He didn't live far from the factory so he usually just walked to work. Now, the shortest way home led through a cemetery, but the idea of walking through a dark cemetery in the middle of the night just didn't appeal to him so he always took the long way around.

Well one night he got out of work and was so tired he decided to get up his courage and take the short cut home through the cemetery. What he didn't know was, someone had left a freshly dug grave open the day before and he fell head first into the west end of that open grave. As soon as he regained his senses he began to frantically dig and climb and struggle to get out of that grave, but he just couldn't do it.

Now unbeknownst to this poor fellow a drunk had been walking in the cemetery earlier that evening and had fallen into the east end of that very same grave. He had tried for hours to get out of the grave himself but finally gave up and fell asleep. With all of the commotion the drunk woke up. In the dark he reached out and tapped the man on the shoulder and said, "Buddy, you will never get out of here." But you know what, he did!

Finally I want you to see **the moving response to the witnesses**. Look at verse 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. In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, (now notice) and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven”* (Rev. 11:12-13).

Does that mean they will be saved? I don't think so. They will acknowledge the existence of God and grudgingly give glory to God but they still won't repent of their sins and turn to God. They will be moved to fear but not to faith.

I have known many people who at one time acknowledged God in their fear but never really turned to Him in faith. I have stood at the bedside of men who were desperately ill or facing a serious surgery, who were afraid they might not live. I have heard them make all kinds of promises. "Pastor Bob, if God will see me through this surgery, if God will heal me from this sickness I will give my life to God. I will be in church every Sunday." I've prayed for them and watched the Lord graciously touch their bodies and heal them. And just as soon as they get well again they forget all about their promises to God and go on about their same, sinful way.

Let me make two final observations about that and then I will close. Number one, the kind of false repentance I have just described won't save anyone. That kind of turning to the Lord in a moment of fear without real faith won't get anyone into heaven. Number two, you don't make bargains with God. We have nothing to offer God anyway, except our sin. We come on God's terms in God's time or we don't come at all.