

# The Two Witnesses

📖 Revelation 11:1-14

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Last time we studied the cryptic Revelation 10. This is part of the interlude between the sixth and the seventh trumpet recorded in 10:1-11:14. Nothing here advances the narrative. The next time the narrative will advance is 11:15-17 when the seventh trumpet sounds. And then from 11:18-14:20 there is a very large section that does not advance the narrative. What I mean by not advancing is there is no forward movement in the chronology of the Tribulation. It won't advance until 15:1 when the seventh trumpet is revealed to contain the seven bowls. So what is being given in the interludes is additional information that fills out the scene. Chapter 10 is bothersome because it mentions several things that we either can't learn about or we have a hard time understanding. I believe this is to heighten the anticipation of the sounding of the seventh angel.

To review some of this additional information, in 10:1 John saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven. The previous strong angel was found in 5:2. He asked who was worthy to open the scroll in the Father's palm. This angel is another like him, of the same kind. He is clothed with a cloud, signifying a coming storm, and had a rainbow upon his head, signifying mercy in the midst of the coming storm, and his face was like the sun, signifying no one would escape his searching eyes, and his feet were like pillars of fire, signifying judgment. In 10:2 this strong angel had in his hand a little scroll which was open. This is a different scroll than the earlier seven sealed scroll. The angel then placed his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land signifying the conquering of the planet. In 10:3 his strength is manifest as he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when he had cried out, the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices. In 10:4 when the seven peals of thunder had spoken, John says, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken and do not write them." The seven peals of thunder had uttered seven additional judgments coming, but John was not permitted to write them down so we don't know what they are. As I'll argue, these seven additional judgments, occur during the second half of the Tribulation, and so the seals and first six trumpets are in the first half, then in the second half you have the seven peals of thunder and then the seventh trumpet will sound and the seven bowls will come. But as for the seven peals of thunder judgments, we don't know what those are. Only John knows. In 10:5 the strong angel lifted up his right hand to heaven and in 10:6 he took an oath, swearing by the Eternal Creator, reminding us that all of creation belongs to

Him and He has the right to smash it if He wants. The oath is that there will be delay no longer. In other words, after the seven peals of thunder the seventh trumpet will sound and in it the seven bowl judgments will be the finality of God's judgments and the kingdom will come. As 10:7 says, but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets. The mystery of God, and I've changed my position here, the mystery of God is the revelation about God that is contained in the seven peals of thunder, which we don't know what they are, so in them is held new revelation about God, but whatever it is it is in harmony with what was proclaimed to His servants the prophets. In 10:8 the scene returns to the little scroll and John heard a voice from heaven telling him to take the scroll which is open in the hand of the strong angel. In 10:9 he went to the angel and told him to give him the little scroll and the angel said, "Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." This is a figure of speech that means to take in the word of God and digest it. There are things in it that are sweet, the good and lovely things that accrue to the kingdom, but there are also things that are bitter, the judgment and horror preceding the kingdom. So in 10:10 John took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and in his mouth it was sweet as honey, but when he had eaten it his stomach became bitter. The meaning is that many parts of the Bible we enjoy but there are parts we have to develop a taste for, because they're difficult to stomach. Nevertheless they are true, and we can't be good Christians and at the same time pick and choose what parts of the Bible we want to take in. It's an all-or-nothing proposition. The prophets were made to take it all in. And so John, having now tasted it and digested it, is told in 10:11, you must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings. John may not have wanted to continue, but there was more for him to prophesy; things that related to peoples, nations, languages and kings, global events that were soon to transpire, and since the seven peals of thunder were prohibited from being revealed, then they relate to the rest of the things we have revealed.

Today we come to one of those things in Rev 11. Most commentators consider this to be one of the more difficult, and perhaps the most difficult chapter to interpret. At the same time, it may be the most important chapter for determining the proper chronology of the Revelation. As difficult as people seem to make it, most of the difficulties are those created by non-literal interpreters. And as long as we stick with understanding the temple to be a literal temple, the two witnesses to be two literal individuals, the 1,260 days as literal days, Jerusalem as a literal city, the death of the two witnesses who lay on the streets of Jerusalem as literal and the three and one-half days they lay there as literal, followed by a literal resurrection and literal ascension, our interpretation will be on solid ground, even if some minor disagreements remain. So, I won't spend time arguing for the literal interpretation of these verses but among literalists, there are differences as to the identity of the two witnesses and whether they prophesy during the first or second half of the Tribulation; those issues I will argue for.

In 11:1 John is once again brought into the vision as an actor. **Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in**

**it. Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.”** The basic picture is of measuring and not measuring; **measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it...** do not measure **the court which is outside the temple.** Now interestingly, for the first time in the Revelation we are notified that there will be a Tribulation **temple.** But this is not the first passage to predict a Tribulation temple. Dan 9:27 said of the anti-Christ, “And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one seven, but in the middle of the seven he will put a stop to sacrifice...” The mention of sacrifice implies a Temple and an altar at the midpoint. Matt 24:15 said, “Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place...then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.” The mention of the holy place is obviously a mention to the Temple and the abomination of desolation, which is a statue of the anti-Christ, will be set up in that space. The holy place was the room outside the most holy place. So we have solid evidence of a Tribulation temple and Rev 11:1 and 2 confirms that evidence. One of the problems foreseeing this happen today is that the Temple Mount has the Muslim Dome of the Rock on top of it. Some archaeologists, like Ernest Martin, have tried to alleviate the problem by arguing that what most people think is the Temple Mount is not really the Temple Mount, but the Antonia Fortress. And the real location of the Temple Mount is to the south over the ancient city of David and the Gihon Spring. But these arguments have not gained much scholarly support, though they are popular with naïve Christians. The reason the arguments are weak is because they are based on flawed interpretations of Josephus rather than real archaeological finds. In my obsession with studying the Temple Mount over the years I have concluded that where the Dome of the Rock is today, covering al Sakhra, the rock, is the location of the Tribulation temple. No orthodox Jew accepts any of the other proposed sites. They want to build right on that site. But how? With Muslims who hate the Jewish people and want to run them into the Mediterranean Sea, and who consider the rock to be the third most holy place in Islam and who have their temple mount police constantly patrolling, how will it ever be built where the Dome of the Rock is? What this passage does is explain the answer by the two witnesses.

But before we look at them and their power, look at what John was told to do. **Get up and measure the temple of God.** Now commentators disagree on the significance of the act of measuring. Some think it means ownership or possession, and thereby the fact that John is told to **measure the temple** is signifying divine ownership, as in the act of measuring your own property, marking out the boundaries. Others think it means favor, so that those who are measured have found divine favor, while everyone else is rejected. I don't find that a very convincing view. It seems to me that it is better to view this as signifying divine ownership. And what is happening is part of **the temple of God** is being taken over by God for a time. It's the two witnesses who will secure that area during that time, while the outer court and the city of Jerusalem will continue to be tread under foot by the Gentiles.

This chapter has renewed a fascination in my mind about these things. One of the things that is bothersome to some is that the Tribulation temple is called **the temple of God**, that is, the **temple** belonging **to God.** Most

don't want to admit that God has anything to do with this future **temple**. But you can't deny that both here and in 2 Thess 2:4 it is referred to as **the temple of God**, and that the entire concept of the anti-Christ setting up an image of himself and it being referred to by God as "an abomination of desolation," implies that it is most certainly a divinely sanctioned temple. And further, that the two witnesses are protecting this temple of God is nothing more than absolute proof that it is divinely sanctioned. What I'm going to say, and I think it is undeniable, is that in Rev 11:1, the ones who are **worshipping** in the Tribulation temple, are Messianic Jews. I don't see how you can get around it. They're not worshipping an idol. They're worshipping the one true God under the protection of the two witnesses. So this is going to be interesting, because I don't understand the purposes of their sacrifices, entirely, yet, but I'm going to figure it out. Right now, I suspect it's a return to the sacrificial purposes under the Mosaic Law, which were not for salvation, but for ceremonial purposes and fellowship, and they are fellowshiping with and worshipping God. Take that for what it's worth, but I find it a very attractive viewpoint.

So we have this measuring. In 11:1 John was given a measuring rod, resembling a reed, a common plant that grows at the Jordan River, and which was light and long, and therefore useful as a measuring device. They didn't have Stanley Tape Measures back then. So, he is given this measuring rod, and told to **measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it**. Those are very specific boundaries because 11:2 tells us, **leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it**. The outside is the outer **court**. For perspective, the **Temple** compound had an outer court, also known as the court of the Gentiles, and there was a fence about 3 feet tall that separated the outer court from the inner court. On the fence, there was a sign that warned Gentiles not to cross the threshold. It was that threshold that Paul was accused of taking the Gentile Trophimus in the Book of Acts, which almost cost Paul his life. So, everything within the outer court is being measured, taken over by God for a time, while everything in the outer court and the rest of Jerusalem is being left to the Gentiles. As verse 2 goes on to say, **for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months**. Jerusalem is referred to as the **holy city** but six verses later, in v 8 it's referred to as Sodom and Egypt. So, the reference to it as **holy** is that is what it is supposed to be, and the reference to it as Sodom and Egypt is what it became.

Now when we are told that the outer court and Jerusalem, **has been given to the nations**, who are the Gentiles, we are being reminded that this is the time of the Gentiles, a description Jesus used in Lk 21:24 where He said, "...for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people;" referring to the people of Israel in AD70, "and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." The times of the Gentiles had already begun, all that is being added here is that Jerusalem would remain under Gentile control until that time was fulfilled. The times of the Gentiles began in 606BC when Nebuchadnezzar made Jerusalem and Judea pay tribute. It is when Gentiles have supremacy or sovereignty over Jerusalem. And from Daniel we learned that there would be four Gentile kingdoms that would have sovereignty over Jerusalem until the times of the

Gentiles are fulfilled; after Babylon it was Medo-Persia, then Greece and finally Rome. And really, Rome comes in two phases, one phase that was present during the 1<sup>st</sup> century and a yet future phase. There was no note about the period of the Church age because that was a mystery. So, we could add during that time the Umayyad Dynasty, the Crusaders, the Turks, the UN, etc... But the point is that in 11:2 **the nations will tread under foot Jerusalem for forty two months**, although during that forty two months God will temporarily take over a portion of the temple. So, this takeover of that small area does not mean it's the end of the times of the Gentiles and the reason is because outside of that area Gentiles are still sovereign. Now, if you're like me, you wonder how will the worshippers get from the outer environs of Jerusalem into the inner area of the temple for sacrifice and worship? Well, if you've been to Jerusalem or you've studied Jerusalem and in particular, the Temple Mount, you know there are secret passages everywhere, dark caverns, scarcely lit, and passages unknown to all but a few, and that is how I think they will make their way.

Now the **forty-two months** is exactly **twelve hundred and sixty days**, as referred to in verse 3 and both are equivalent to half of the Tribulation. But which half? Which half of the tribulation will the inner temple be under the control of God? There are only three options. First, almost all commentators say the second half. John Walvoord, Robert Thomas, Ed Hindson, Mal Couch, Tom Constable, J Vernon McGee, Tony Garland, all second half. They made one argument, repeated over and over, here it is, no protection would be necessary during the first half, so it couldn't be the first half. I think that underestimates the world's opposition to animal sacrifices from the Muslims and Environmentalists, no matter the anti-Christ's thoughts, and besides, he will commonly be fighting military campaigns around the region. And frankly, there are a number of very persuasive reasons it can't be in the second half? For example, who commits the abomination of desolation at the midpoint and has control of the temple for the second half? The anti-Christ. So it has to be the first half when God takes control of the temple and the two witnesses guard the temple. Yet I found very few commentators who hold this is the first half. The ones I did find were Warren Wiersbe, Robert Dean and John Whitcomb. Whitcomb set out the most persuasive arguments why the two witnesses guard this sacred space during the first half, and why it could in no way reconcile with the second half. First, Jewish believers are told to flee Jerusalem at the mid-point when they see the abomination of desolation. Would the two witnesses disobey God and set a bad example by staying in Jerusalem? Second, if the anti-Christ sits in the Temple and makes himself out to be God at the mid-point and sets up the abomination of desolation in the holy place and receives worship there during the second half, how can that reconcile with the two witnesses being in the same place and Jewish sacrifice being made? There is no way that anyone could ever get around that argument. That is an ace of spades argument, but there's more. Third, if the two witnesses minister for a thousand two hundred and sixty days, and that is the second half, and then they are killed, then they are killed on the day of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. And then the world is going to leave their bodies in the streets of Jerusalem and celebrate for three and a half days, after which the two witnesses will be resurrected and ascended. That is an impossible scenario. The world is not going to be celebrating for three and a half days after Christ's second coming. That is another ace of spades argument. And if

you want to deny it's the first or the second half, the only other option is to make the thousand two hundred and sixty days a floating period, putting some of it in the first half and some of it in the second half, but that has even more problems, no other usage of the thousand two hundred and sixty days, forty-two months or time, times and half a time is ever used of a floating period. They are all used of either the first or second half. And further, you'd still have the problem of how you could have the two witnesses and the anti-Christ all together in the Temple during a portion of the second half. All of this points their ministry to the first half. And that actually explains how the Dome of the Rock can be removed in the face of Muslim opposition, if they're still around, because these two guys are powerful. It also explains how the Temple can be built in the face of Muslim opposition, if they're still around, because they burn your face off. And it explains how they can offer animal sacrifice in the face of environmentalists. So, these are two awesome dudes. Look at what they do in 11:5, **And if anyone wants to harm them**, they just want to, it's a verb of **want** or desire, and **fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies**. They're going to just melt people. And they are going to protect that whole area so it is sanctioned for sacrifice during the first half of the tribulation. No other idea even makes any plausible sense. Anti-Christ will kill them at the midpoint, enter the temple, commit the abomination of desolation and the world will celebrate three and a half days, then he will be in control for the second half.

Before we race into all of that, 11:3, **And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth**. Who are they? 11:4, **These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth**. Now a question is who is saying this. Verse 1 simply said, **someone said**. But verse 3 helps answer the question because the same **someone said**, **"I will grant authority to my two witnesses**. So it is most likely Jesus Christ. They are witnesses of Him. And what they will do is **prophesy**, they have a prophetic ministry, and this will go on for **twelve hundred and sixty days**, which is half of the tribulation, the equivalent of the **forty two months** in verse 2, and as I've argued, a reference to the first half of the tribulation. And note that they will **prophesy...clothed in sackcloth**. These are garments of mourning and repentance. So their ministry is one of testifying to the nation Israel of the need for repentance, just like when John the Baptizer came at the first coming with a message of repentance. The nation Israel needs to get spiritually prepared.

Now in 11:4 we are told who they are. And it's very interesting, they are not said to be Moses and Elijah or Moses and Enoch. But rather **two olive trees and two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth**. And what the **two lampstands** are is **two** menorahs, the seven branched candelabra that was part of the temple furniture in the holy place. The menorah was a seven-branched lamp that burned continually in the holy place. The fuel it used was pure olive oil, the purest grade oil produced. And this idea of the two witnesses being both the fuel and the lampstands is not without attestation in Zech 4 where Zechariah was awakened and an angel said to him, "What do you see? And I said, "I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold with its bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps on it with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it; <sup>3</sup>also two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left side." There is only one lampstand, whereas

here there are two, but the two olive trees represented Zerubbabel and Joshua, the two men who by means of the Spirit rebuilt the temple around 520BC in the midst of opposition. And what do you know, here are two men, called the two witnesses, also fueled by the Spirit of God, who will stand in the temple and guard it while it is being rebuilt in the midst of opposition and while sacrifice is being offered.

In 11:5, look what they can do, **And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way.** If anyone even **wants to harm them**, even has the desire to, by divine necessity **he must be killed** with this fire flowing out of their mouth. And it's for this reason that some think one of the two witnesses will be Elijah, because Elijah called down fire out of heaven at Mt Carmel and on another occasion called down fire on a band of fifty and then on a band of fifty more, but it really is different because Elijah did not breathe fire as these witnesses will do. But they go on as in verse 6 and point out that **These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying.** And here we know that Elijah actually did shut up the sky during the reign of Ahab and evil queen Jezebel **so that rain** did not **fall**, and perhaps not coincidentally, for exactly three and a half years, the exact time the two witnesses will minister. And something else they can do is stated to be able to **turn waters into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague**, and here they say the other witness must be Moses, because Moses was able to turn the Nile River into blood and strike the earth with every plague. And to these arguments it is added that Elijah did not die and Heb 9:27 says it is appointed unto men once to die, and then to face the judgment," and because Elijah did not die Elijah must come back and die. And of Moses that there is an argument between Michael the archangel and Satan over Moses' bones, and so there is a discrepancy over whether Moses really died, and so perhaps Moses must come back and die. And beyond all this is added that the last two men mentioned in the OT are Moses and Elijah, where it says that Elijah must return before the great and terrible day of the Lord and that he will lead the hearts of the father's back to the children and the hearts of the children back to their fathers and they will obey the Law of Moses, which is what these are doing here, offering sacrifice. And more than this they say even more, that at the transfiguration on the mount, Jesus appeared with Moses and Elijah, and so it is certain that the two are Moses and Elijah. And yet, some think there are holes in this argument, as they point out Moses could not be one of the two because Moses really did die, the dispute is about Moses' bones, not Moses himself, and to that we must agree. And so they propose it is Enoch and Elijah because Enoch did not die, "he walked with God and was not, for God took him." And isn't this fitting because one would then be taken from the world before the Flood and one after the Flood. But even this is not certain because Heb 9:27 "it is appointed to men once to die" does not mean that everyone must die. In fact, at the rapture no one will die, but we will all be translated. And to the claims that Moses and Elijah did similar things during their ministries so it must be them, it must be said that similarities do not mean identities, and what is to stop God from raising up two more men who carry on similar ministries to remind the Jewish people of Moses and Elijah. In fact, we have seen this before with John the Baptist. When John came the leadership asked him if he was Elijah. Why did they ask him that? Because Elijah was slated to come and this

John ate, drank and dressed like Elijah and ministered in the same area Elijah was last seen. And Jesus even said that if the Jewish people would have received Him, John would have been Elijah. But John himself said he was not Elijah and Jesus concluded the whole matter saying John came in the spirit and power of Elijah but Elijah is still to come. And so Elijah is still going to come, but why does one of the two witnesses have to be Elijah? Why can't they be two additional men besides Elijah? Elijah, it is predicted, will come before the great and terrible day of the Lord. And when you see the phrase day of the Lord modified by great and terrible, it is a reference to the exact day of the Second Coming. So he only has to come before the Second Coming, and these two come before, but much earlier, at the beginning of the first half, and this would seem to argue against one of the two being Elijah. And so, if you ask me who the two witnesses are, I think they are two new men whose ministries resemble closely that of Moses and Elijah. They come in the spirit and power of Moses and Elijah and they will remind the nation Israel of Moses and Elijah but they are not Moses and Elijah. And Elijah will come, but he is an additional personage to these two and not one of the two. And so what they will do is minister in the first half, enabling the removal of the Dome of the Rock, the construction of the Temple, the sacrifices to be offered by Messianic Jews in the temple environs and they will prophesy in sackcloth to try to get the nation Israel to repent and they will utterly breathe fire and disintegrate people who want to harm them and they will be able to turn water into blood and strike the earth with plagues and all this will be a divine sign to heed their message, they are true prophets of God.

Now in 11:7, **When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them.** Now this is interesting, not so much that they are killed, but that the one who kills them is referred to as **the beast that comes up out of the abyss.** In the Revelation, this beast is mentioned three times. This is the first reference to a beast. The other two references are in Rev 17:8 and 11. We can't tell for sure who this individual is but in Rev 17:8 says, "The beast that you saw was, and is not and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction." This is describing a persona who has two careers; he was, a past career, he is not, he was killed, he is about to come up out of the abyss, a future career. And it's a description of the anti-Christ. The anti-Christ has two careers. His first career is as a mere human, I call this his natural career. That career will take you to the midpoint when he is killed, possibly by one of the two witnesses, and then he'll be raised to life, a second career, supernatural in nature as he will be indwelt by Satan personally, which is why he is called the beast of the abyss. I'm not sure I'm articulating this very well, but the anti-Christ in his supernatural career will **make war with** the two witnesses, **and overcome them and kill them.** So this can't happen on the last day of the second half of the tribulation because that's the day when the anti-Christ is leading the final assault against Jerusalem and on that day he'll be killed by Christ. But this is at the midpoint. So again, the evidence is in strong favor of a ministry of the two witnesses during the first half of the Tribulation, after a thousand two hundred and sixty days they will be killed at the exact midpoint. 11:8 says **And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt.** And if we don't know what city the mystical city of Sodom and Egypt is, the rest of the verse tells us, **where also their**



**Lord was crucified.** So, Jerusalem, the same city referred to in verse 2 as the **holy city** is described in verse 8 as **Sodom and Egypt**. Jerusalem is to be a **holy city** but it has become **Sodom and Egypt**.

Now in verse 9 here's the results of the killing of the two witnesses by the anti-Christ. **Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb.** The reason they won't **permit** them to be buried **in a tomb** is because in the ancient world, the most disrespectful thing you could do was not bury the person. It was the greatest insult you could level at someone. Maybe you remember when King Saul died at Mt Gilead, the Philistines took his body and the bodies of his sons and nailed them to a wall in Beth-Shean. They did that so everyone could look at their bodies and gloat. So they'll leave their bodies in the street and verse 10 tells us, **And those who dwell on the earth**, that is, the earthdwellers, those who are persistent unbelievers, this is not just people who live on planet earth, this is the technical phrase for people who are persistent in their unbelief, who are hardening their hearts like Pharaoh. And they will **rejoice over them and celebrate**. For them this is an occasion for a big party; **and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.** They **tormented** them with turning water into blood and shutting up the sky so no rain would fall and so now that they're out of the picture it's cause to celebrate something like Christmas.

But verse 11 tells us that **after three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them.** So they came back to life. Their ministry was a thousand two hundred and sixty days, exactly half of the Tribulation, then they were killed and raised three and a half days later. So again, this has to be the first half, because if it was the second half then they'd be killed on the day Christ returns and then the whole world would celebrate their death while Christ was present on earth and then they'd be raised three and a half days later. That just can't be. So they will be raised three and a half days after the midpoint. And by raised I mean a real resurrection. This is no resuscitation. These men are resurrected, and those who saw feared.

Now in verse twelve 12 **They heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here."** That is the same thing John was told to do in 4:1. But John wasn't in a resurrection body. These men are. So **They went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them.** The language is that of the ascension of Jesus Christ recorded in Acts 1. He too was lifted up into heaven in a cloud as the disciples watched. This is not the language of the rapture. At the rapture the catching up is not something slow that can be observed. It is something instantaneous. So this is not the rapture or symbolic of the rapture. It's the literal bodily ascension of two men three and a half days after the midpoint of the Tribulation.

In verse 13 **In 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.** Now these are some interesting results in connection with their resurrection and ascension. They are similar to the effects when Christ died. There was an **earthquake**. And so there was **a great earthquake**, and that resulted **in a tenth**

**of the city** falling. And **seven thousand people were killed**, and those who remained **gave glory to the God of heaven**. Now whether that means they believed, or not, we're not told, but they certainly recognized that **God** did these things. And so we come to the conclusion of the two witnesses. The note is made in verse 14 that **the second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly**, and all that is to say is that there is going to be a progression in the narrative. We've been dealing with interlude issues, now the narrative is going to progress.

In conclusion, I'd say that what's happening in 11:1-2 is we're being told that for a part of the times of the Gentiles the inner temple area is going to be taken over temporarily by God so that the Tribulation temple can be built and the Messianic Jews can offer sacrifice on the altar. This will take place during the first half of the Tribulation, the outer court and the rest of Jerusalem will remain under Gentile control. During this time verse 3 tells us that the two witnesses will be prophesying for that period of time in the ancient prophetic garb signifying the need for Israel to repent. In verse 4 they are compared to Zerubbabel and Joshua who rebuilt the temple in their day in the face of opposition but enabled by the Holy Spirit and these two will do the same in the face of opposition but enabled by the Spirit. In verse 5, if anyone tries to hurt them, they'll breathe fire out of their mouth and devour them. In verse 6 they'll also be able to inflict painful plagues on the world; no rain, and fresh water into blood. We're not told who these two witnesses will be but they've usually been supposed to be Moses and Elijah, but it's my sense that they will be two different men who resemble Moses and Elijah because they come in the spirit of Moses and Elijah and the nation Israel will recognize them as such and wonder if they are Moses and Elijah. In verse 7, when they finish their ministry at the midpoint, the anti-Christ who has just been killed will come up out of the abyss, resurrected to make war with them and he will kill them. In verse 8 their bodies will lie in the street for three and a half days in Jerusalem and in verse 9 the people of various peoples, tribes, languages and nations will look at them, and not permit them to be buried as a sign of disrespect. And in verse 10 the earthdwellers will have a celebration over their death. But in verse 11 after three and a half days they will be resurrected and those who see will fear. Then in verse 12 they will ascend to heaven in a cloud as their enemies watch them. In verse 13 an earthquake will occur, a tenth of the city will be destroyed and seven thousand killed, whereas the rest will give glory to God.