After studying last week the 6th Trumpet Judgment and before coming to the 7th, we have another “parenthetical” interlude - this one scribing the massive angel who holds a small book and then the two mighty witnesses during the last half of the Tribulation. We have now passed into the second half of the Tribulation - what is commonly called THE GREAT TRIBULATION (final 3 ½ years). We continue:

Rev. 10:1-11

And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: [2] And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, [3] And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. [4] And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. [5] And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, [6] And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: [7] But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. [8] And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. [9] And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. [10] And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. [11] And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

Who is this mighty angel? It is not Jesus. Our Lord does not appear in Revelation as an angel. No, this “mighty angel” is exactly that - a mighty angel! Angels appear in the
book of Revelation 56 times. I suspect we would have a heart attack if one of these
great angels manifested himself to us. Consider carefully John’s description of this
particularly angel...“robed or clothed in a cloud...a rainbow over his head...his face bright
as the sun...and his feet like fiery pillars.”

This angel holds in his hand “a little scroll” or “book.” When John describes the angel as
“standing on the sea and earth,” he means this angel has authority over the entire planet.
The angel “cries with a loud voice,” which is the signal for seven more thundering voices.
My friend, if you are in the Tribulation time, and you hear those voices, prepare to be
severely shaken!

We do not know what those seven voices are saying for John is not allowed to reveal it.
(Verse 4: “Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down.”) I take
this to mean seven horrific declarations come thundering from God’s throne but we at this
point in life could not handle their meaning.

Verse 6 reveals that “time will be no longer.” No more delay, no more opportunity for
repentance. God’s fury will not strike the Earth in all its dimension.

Now John is told to take the little scroll and eat it - or digest it. Simple explanation
here: the little scroll contains the information of what God is about to do and it’s
horrible. John is given the message and told to eat it - or digest it. This word age has
been given us before in Scripture: Jeremiah 15:16 Thy words were found, and I
did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I
am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts. Ezekiel 3:1-3 Moreover he said
unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the
house of Israel. [2] So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. [3]
And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with
this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for
sweetness. This is a great verse for any teacher or preacher of the Word: before you
can expound upon it to others, you had better know it for yourself. Today many of
God’s people do not want to “digest the Word,” they just want to snack on it at their
leisure.

John will experience that “eating experience” as both bitter and sweet - sweet in that it
leads to the return of Jesus to the Earth and bitter because of the awfulness of the coming
judgements.

THE TWO SUPER WITNESSES
The “parenthesis” continues for several more chapters in Revelation. Chapter eleven deals with the spiritual life in Israel and chapter 12 concerns the coming persecution of Israel.

Rev. 11:1-14 [The Message]

I was given a stick for a measuring rod and told, "Get up and measure God's Temple and Altar and everyone worshiping in it. [2] Exclude the outside court; don't measure it. It's been handed over to non-Jewish outsiders. They'll desecrate the Holy City for forty-two months.

[3] "Meanwhile, I'll provide my two Witnesses. Dressed in sackcloth, they'll prophesy for one thousand two hundred sixty days. [4] These are the two Olive Trees, the two Lampstands, standing at attention before God on earth. [5] If anyone tries to hurt them, a blast of fire from their mouths will incinerate them—burn them to a crisp just like that. [6] They'll have power to seal the sky so that it doesn't rain for the time of their prophesying, power to turn rivers and springs to blood, power to hit earth with any and every disaster as often as they want.

[7] "When they've completed their witness, the Beast from the Abyss will emerge and fight them, conquer and kill them, [8] leaving their corpses exposed on the street of the Great City spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, the same City where their Master was crucified. [9] For three and a half days they'll be there—exposed, prevented from getting a decent burial, stared at by the curious from all over the world. [10] Those people will cheer at the spectacle, shouting 'Good riddance!' and calling for a celebration, for these two prophets pricked the conscience of all the people on earth, made it impossible for them to enjoy their sins.

[11] "Then, after three and a half days, the Living Spirit of God will enter them—they're on their feet!—and all those gloating spectators will be scared to death."

[12] I heard a strong voice out of Heaven calling, "Come up here!" and up they went to Heaven, wrapped in a cloud, their enemies watching it all. [13] At that moment there was a gigantic earthquake—a tenth of the city fell to ruin, seven thousand perished in the earthquake, the rest frightened to the core of their being, frightened into giving honor to the God of Heaven.

[14] The second doom is past, the third doom coming right on its heels.

So who in the world are these “two witnesses?” Most Bible experts will say Moses and Elijah. Those two Old Testament patriarchs would get my vote as well. They are most impressive figures! John describes them as two olive trees and two lampstands before the Lord of All. What is their work? To proclaim God's message of judgment during the final stages of the Gentile trampling on Jerusalem (as the Tribulation begins to draw to a close) and who will preach the Gospel so that the Jewish remnant can believe
and enjoy God's protection.

THEY WILL PROPHECY

This does not mean to tell the future. It means "to speak forth," to "proclaim," or "to preach." We hear a lot of people today calling themselves prophets and telling their listeners about the future - both private and in general. I have heard some of the most nonsensical utterances come from some of these "prophets." The TWO WITNESSES will prophesy - do what? They will proclaim to the world that the disasters occurring during the coming last half of the Tribulation are the judgments of God. They will warn that God's final outpouring of judgment and eternal hell will follow. But at the same time they will proclaim the Gospel, calling people to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

Their ministry will last for twelve hundred and sixty days - the final three and a half years of the Tribulation. During this time Jerusalem will under savage attack and many Jews will have fled for their very lives into the wilderness. (Some believe this "safe area" could be around Petra in the country of Jordan.)

The two witnesses will wear sackcloth, a rough heavy, coarse cloth worn in ancient times as a symbol of mourning or distress, or grief.

Jacob: Genesis 37:34  And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son (Joseph) many days.

David (after the murder of general Abner) 2 Samuel 3:31  And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David himself followed the bier.

King Hezekiah when Jerusalem was attacked: 2 Kings 19:1  And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord.

And so the two witnesses of Revelation don sackcloth as an object lesson to express their grief for the wicked and unrepentant world. Despite the fact that the population is now plagued by demon hordes, they will not repent.

WHY MOSES AND ELIJAH?

Why do many of us believe the two faithful witnesses will be Moses and Elijah?

- The miracles they will perform (destroying their enemies withfire, withholding rain, turning water into blood, and striking the earth with plagues) are similar to the judgments inflicted in Exodus by Moses and later in 1 Kings by Elijah. Elijah
called down fire from heaven: 2 Kings 1:10-12 And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. [11] Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. [12] And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

Elijah pronounced a 3 ½ year drought on the land. 1 Kings 17:1 And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. James 5:17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. This is the same length of time as the drought brought by the two witnesses in Rev. 11:7.

Moses turned the waters of the Nile into blood: Exodus 7:17-21 Thus saith the Lord, In this thou shalt know that I am the Lord: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. [18] And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall lothe to drink of the water of the river. [19] And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. [20] And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. [21] And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

It is also important to remember that both the Old and Jewish tradition expected Moses and Elijah to return in the future: Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: Deut. 18:15 The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; 18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.
The Two Witnesses Assassinated

Rev. 11:7-8

And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. [8] And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

This reminds me so much of the assassination of Benito Mussolini in April of 1945. His dead body (he had been shot by a partisan Italian) was hauled into a Milan, Italy, gas station - along with the body of his mistress Clara Petacci. They were strung up by their heels while the populace brutalized the corpses. Mussolini was evil; however the two witnesses were righteous - and still their bodies are allowed to just lie in a street in Jerusalem. For three and a half days, people will stare at their bodies and refuse them burial. Rev. 11:9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

CNN, Fox, ABC, CBS, NBC and all the networks will have a field day with this sight of two hated bodies, just lying in the street. Rev. 11:10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

But then - the unthinkable happens! Rev. 11:11-12 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. [12] And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

I can promise you that will be the lead story on all the newscasts that night! There will be no more taunts of “Fraud, Fake, Etc.” Their coming to life and their ascent into heaven - well out of sight of all people - will be evidence that they truly were men of God.

There will be three groups of people still on the earth:

1. The followers of Antichrist
2. The Tribulation Saints
3. Those still undecided

DESTRUCTION IN JERUSALEM
Rev. 11:13  And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of
the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the
remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

God's wrath on the people who vilified His two witnesses will be revealed as a great
earthquake will hit the Holy City, destroying 10% of it and killing thousands. This may
influence multitudes of those still undecided to commit their lives to God.

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET JUDGMENT

Remember the sixth trumpet brought about the parenthetical chapters we have just
studied, beginning with that haunting silence that fell upon Heaven. Now the seventh
angel is about to sound his trumpet - and it will usher in the final set of judgments - The
Bowl Judgments.

Rev. 11:15-19

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying,
The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ;
and he shall reign for ever and ever. [16] And the four and twenty elders, which sat
before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, [17] Saying,
We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come;
because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. [18] And the
nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they
should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the
prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and
shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. [19] And the temple of God was
opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and
there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great
hail.

It is important to remember that between the three divine judgments - Seals, Trumpets
and Bowls - there is a parenthetical set of happenings. We shall see this happen again in
our subsequent study. But what a sequence of horrors is about to break upon the earth in
following chapters:

1. Terrible Persecution of Christ's Followers
2. Dominance of the Antichrist
3. Arrival and influence of the Unholy Spirit
4. And other sequences that paralyze Earth and its remaining inhabitants
But while the Earth and its population throb with pain, fear and death, in Heaven there is music and joy. Loud voices in Heaven began to proclaim:

THE KINGDOM OF THE WORLD HAS BECOME THE KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND OF HIS CRIST - AND HE WILL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER.

Is this not what Handel wrote in his classic Hallelujah Chorus? The angels in Heaven now proclaim the very last section of the Tribulation and that Satan and his minions are on borrowed time. THE FOUR AND TWENTY ELDERS (that's us, I believe!) begin to sing a song of thanksgiving. Jesus now takes His rightful place of rulership. As a result, the following happens on earth:

1. The nations become furious! Psalm 2:1-12 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? [2] The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, [3] Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. [4] He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. [5] Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. [6] Yea have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. [7] I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. [8] Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. [9] Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. [10] Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. [11] Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. [12] Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

2. Eternity now prepares for the Great White Throne Judgment, lying just head as fulfilled in Rev. 20:11-15 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. [12] And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. [13] And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. [14] And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. [15] And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

3. And, oh, how glorious – GOD'S TEMPLE IN HEAVEN WILL OPEN and what a
sight that's going to be:  Rev. 11:19

And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the
ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an
earthquake, and great hail.

But while there is ceremony and triumph in the City of God....all hell is about to break on
the earth. As we shall see in our next study.