Crossroads International Church Dr. Rick Griffith

Title

2 March 2014 Series on Revelation Message 13 of 20

NLT 40 Minutes

**The Grace Witnesses**

***Revelation 10–11***

**Topic:** Grace

**Subject:** How will Christ show grace even in the Tribulation?

**Complement:** Jesus will protect believers and judge unbelievers.

**Purpose:** The listeners will choose Christ’s grace over his judgment (and help others do the same).

**Song:** Only by Grace

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: Christ will show grace to believers even when judging the earth.

#### His grace will be shown to remove believers prior to the Tribulation (“Left Behind” beginning clip).

Left Behind

#### Christ will show his grace by taking believers in the Rapture.

Not Being Left Behind

### Background: The Tribulation will balance grace and wrath.

#### John is in exile in AD 95 but sees an amazing vision in Revelation (1:9).

Patmos

#### He saw grace when he turned to see the risen Christ (1:12).

Turned

#### Then Jesus appeared in all his glory (1:12-16).

Lamps

Door

#### His grace has already been seen beginning in 4:1 when John is invited to see the future.

#### God grants him a glimpse of heaven’s throne (4:6)!

Throne

Seals

#### Then, despite seeing horrendous seal judgments (Rev. 6)…

#### He hears God comfort martyrs in his grace (6:9-11).

Martyrs

144,000

#### Christ will even save 144,000 Jews in this time (7:1-8).

#### Plus millions of Gentiles will trust Christ (7:9ff.).

Nations

Chronology

#### So parenthetical periods of grace intersperse three cycles of judgment (Chronology timeline).

#### The last cycle we saw came through trumpet blasts (8:6–11:19).

Trumps

#### They will unleash horrible judgments on the land, sea, fresh water, and air (Rev. 8–9).

Trumpets

#### But even during that time, angels will minister God’s grace!

Angels

Grace2You

### Need: How do you see Christ’s grace in your life right now?

### Subject: How will Christ show grace even in the Tribulation? At least 3 ways.

Grace • 3

### Preview: Today we will begin “The Great Parenthesis” from Revelation 10–14. It will show three evidences of Christ’s grace during this awful time to remind us of his grace even now.

()

### Text: We’ll focus on chapters 10–11 today and chapter 12 next Sunday.

10 • 12 • 13-14

(The first of the three witnesses of God’s grace is that…)

# I. Jesus will show God’s Word has opposite affects for believers and unbelievers (Rev. 10).

MP

[Christ allows us to accept or reject his Word, but both have consequences.]

## Jesus appears as a conquering angel taking possession of his territory but does not disclose God’s plan in the seven thunders (10:1-7).

### Who is the mighty angel (10:1)? Is he the same one as in 5:2? We don’t know his name, but he will have power over all creation! Wiersbe sees this as Jesus Christ:

5:2 Angel

#### “The fact that the angel’s face is ‘as the sun’ corresponds to the description of Jesus Christ in Revelation 1:16; his feet correspond to the Lord’s description in Revelation 1:15. His voice like a lion suggests Revelation 5:5. This being could well be our Lord Jesus Christ, appearing to John as a kingly angel. Jesus often appeared in the Old Testament as ‘the Angel of the Lord’ (Ex. 3:2; Jud. 2:4; 6:11–12, 21–22; 2 Sam. 24:16). This was a temporary manifestation for a special purpose, not a permanent incarnation.”

Rainbow

#### “Two other characteristics would suggest identifying the angel as Jesus Christ: the book in his hand and the awesome posture that he assumed. The little book contains the rest of the prophetic message that John will deliver. Since our Lord was the only One worthy to take the scroll and break the seals (Rev. 5:5ff), it might well be concluded that He is the only One worthy to give His servant the rest of the message.”

7 thunders (10:4)

2-3

### What is he doing? We don't know what the 7 thunders said!

### What is the significance of him controlling both land and sea (10:2b, 5-7)? Armies didn’t control the air at that time, so it means he controls all of the powers on earth—a comforting truth to the righteous and a frightening truth to the wicked.

5-7

#### We’re calling our series “Jesus Wins!” Wiersbe writes, “The angel’s posture is that of a conqueror taking possession of his territory. He is claiming the whole world (see Josh. 1:1–3). Of course, only the victorious Savior could make such a claim. The Antichrist will soon complete his conquest and force the whole world to submit to his control. But before that happens, the Savior will claim the world for Himself, the inheritance that His Father promised Him (Ps. 2:6–9).

Jesus wins!

#### “Satan roars like a lion to frighten his prey (1 Peter 5:8), but the Lion of Judah roars to announce victory (see Ps. 95:3–5; Isa. 40:12–17).”

Lion  
(2 slides)

## God’s plan shown in the little scroll that John eats includes protection for believers and peril for unbelievers (10:8-11).

Little scroll  
8-11

### What is this small scroll (10: 2, 8) that is sweet in the mouth and bitter in the stomach (10:9-10)? This contains God’s words that bless believers and harm unbelievers.

#### Wiersbe: “God’s Word is compared to food: bread (Matt. 4:4), milk (1 Peter 2:2), meat (1 Cor. 3:1–2), and honey (Ps. 119:103). The Prophets Jeremiah (Jer. 15:16) and Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:9–3:4) knew what it was to “eat” the Word before they could share it with others.”

Meat & honey

Bread & milk

#### “God will not thrust His Word into our mouths and force us to receive it. He hands it to us and we must take it. Nor can He change the effects the Word will have in our lives: there will be both sorrow and joy, bitterness and sweetness. God’s Word contains sweet promises and assurances, but it also contains bitter warnings and prophecies of judgment. The Christian bears witness of both life and death (2 Cor. 2:14–17). The faithful minister will declare all of God’s counsel (Acts 20:27). He will not dilute the message of God simply to please his listeners (2 Tim. 4:1–5).”

9-10

### What does it mean by “God’s mysterious plan will be fulfilled” at the blowing of the seventh trumpet (10:7)? This trumpet sets in order the final series of bowl judgments to end this age (cf. Rev. 16).

Mysterious Plan

#### Walvoord: “This mystery had been previously announced to God’s prophets.

#### “The reference, therefore, is not to hidden truth but to the fulfillment of many Old Testament passages which refer to the glorious return of the Son of God and the establishment of His kingdom of righteousness and peace on the earth.”

### When does this announcement of John prophesying again about Gentiles take place (10:11)?

Prophesy again

#### He has already prophesied about believing Gentiles. Previously John predicted these groups as trusting in Christ (5:9; 7:9). However, after this in the vision it refers to unbelieving Gentiles.

7:9

#### The next time will be 11:9 about the witnesses. Later John will predict judgment on these Gentiles who “identify with Babylon or the beast (so also 11:9; 13:7–8; 14:6ff.; 17:15; from Beale, 555).”

(So Jesus is the first grace witness. The second of the three witnesses of God’s grace is that…)

MPI

# II. Two witnesses will show God’s protection for believers and wrath for unbelievers (11:1-14).

MP

[These two men exemplify God’s grace to believers and judgment of unbelievers.]

## God’s *protection of the righteous* will be seen in two witnesses who prophesy and destroy their foes in the first half of the Tribulation (11:1-10).

### The witnesses minister in conjunction with a temple in verses 1-2.

Temple  
(1-2)

### What temple is this (11:1)? It must be the third temple on temple mount, built during the Tribulation era (cf. Dan. 9:27).

Rebuilt Temple

### Why measure the temple (11:1)? God told him to do and didn’t say why! However, this is likely a sign of God’s favor, as was the measuring of Ezekiel’s temple.

#### Walvoord, BKC: “Measurement is usually taken of one’s possessions, and the temple belonged to God. In a similar way the temple of Ezekiel 40 was measured and the New Jerusalem was measured (Rev. 21:15-17). The temple here will be constructed so that orthodox Jews can offer sacrifices according to the Mosaic Law in the period in the first half of the seven-year period known as Daniel’s 70th week. At the beginning of the 42-month Great Tribulation, however, the sacrifices will stop and the temple will be desecrated and become a shrine for the world ruler of the Great Tribulation who will put an idol in it and proclaim himself to be God (cf. Dan. 9:27; 12:11; 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 13:14-15).”

Chronology of 70th wk

#### Wiersbe: “The ministry of the witnesses (11:1–6). The place is Jerusalem and the time is the first half of the Tribulation. Israel is worshiping again at its restored temple, built under the protection of the Antichrist, whose true character has not yet been revealed. To spiritualize Revelation 11:1–2 and make the temple refer to the church creates a number of serious problems. For one thing, how could John measure an invisible body of people, even if the church were still on earth? If the temple is the church, then who are the worshipers and what is the altar? And since the church unites Jews and Gentiles in one body (Eph. 2:11ff), why are the Gentiles segregated in this temple? It seems wisest to interpret this temple as an actual building in the holy city of Jerusalem (Neh. 11:1, 18; Dan. 9:24).

11 Slides Spiritualize

Don't Spiritualize

Heavenly or Earthly?

### Who are these two witnesses (11:3a)?

Two Witnesses

#### They are not named, so some say they allude to Moses and Elijah due to the turning rivers into blood (Moses) and drought for 3.5 years (Elijah).

Moses & Elijah?

#### But Moses isn’t resurrected yet and won’t be until after the Tribulation.

### How does being two olive trees or two lampstands help identify the two witnesses (11:4)?

Two Olive Trees

#### Zechariah 4:2-14 notes both of these as alluding to Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor.

Zech. 4

#### The point is that they will be empowered by the Spirit.

### How is it significant that they can protect themselves by fire and drought and causing plagues (11:5-6, 10)?

“Don’t mess!”

#### So many will want to kill them that they must have some way to protect themselves.

#### Fire is often a means of judgment, as are plagues.

#### These witnesses will testify that the earth was still rebelling against God, so God would make things difficult by withholding man’s main necessity—water!

Beast Attacks

### Will they literally be killed and why (11:7-8)?

#### This should be taken in its normal sense. The Antichrist and Satan will hate them and want to get rid of them.

Killed   
(8-9)

#### How nice to know that God won’t allow us to be killed until our job is done!

#### Others spiritualize these as Babylon and a prophetical call.

Spiritualize (2 slides)

## God’s *wrath on unbelievers* will be seen when he publicly resurrects the witnesses and kills 7000 enemies in an earthquake (11:11-14).

### Will they literally rise to life and why (11:11)?

Raised   
(11)

#### This will show all people that they were actually prophets of God.

#### All will likely see this on TV to give all people another chance to repent.

• Ascend  
(12)

### Will they literally ascend to heaven and why (11:12)?

#### Here they identify with Christ, who ascended to heaven once his ministry had finished.

#### This will also be similar to the Rapture when believers also rose to heaven before the Tribulation began (1 Thess. 4:17)!

Like Rapture

MPII

MPI

(The last of the three witnesses of God’s grace is that…)

# III. Heaven’s elders will praise God for his gracious presence (11:15-19).

MP

[This seventh trumpet (woe #3) introduces the seven bowl judgments (Rev. 16).]

15

## Elders praise God that Christ rules supremely (11:15-17).

16-17

## Elders praise God that Christ judges righteously (11:18a, 18c).

18

## Elders praise God that Christ rewards graciously (11:18b).

## God powerfully assures of his faithful presence (11:19).

19  
(3 slides)

(So how will Christ show his grace even in the Tribulation?)

Subject

# Conclusion

### Jesus will protect believers and judge unbelievers (MI).

MI

### Who are the witnesses that teach grace over judgment (MPs)?

#### Jesus will show God’s Word has opposite affects for believers and unbelievers (Rev. 10).

MPI

#### Two witnesses will show God’s protection for believers and wrath for unbelievers (11:1-14)

MPIII

MPII

#### Heaven’s elders will praise God for his gracious presence (11:15-19)

### Will you choose Christ’s grace over his judgment?

Decision Time 1

### Who can you help do the same?

• Decision Time 2

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### We have just finished six of the seven trumpet blasts. The seventh trumpet will not sound until 11:14-19.

### This makes 10:1–11:13 parenthetical to the narrative. However, in this message, we will consider chapters 10–11 as a unit.

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### In the midst of many judgments, chapters 10–11 give a word of comfort to God’s people that they will find his protection.

### As Revelation 6–7 balance judgments (seals in Rev. 6) with grace (saved people of Rev. 7), so these Revelation 8–11 gives the same balance: trumpet judgments (Rev. 8–9) are balanced with God’s protection (Rev. 10–11).

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### The angel of Revelation 10 held sway over land and sea—an important point for the Roman Empire that though it controlled the Mediterranean and the land surrounding it!

### The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed some 25 years earlier, so in chapter 11 John must be thrown into the future with a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem.

# Questions

### Who is the mighty angel (10:1)? We don’t know his name, but he will have power over all creation! Wiersbe sees this as Jesus Christ:

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##### “The fact that the angel’s face is ‘as the sun’ corresponds to the description of Jesus Christ in Revelation 1:16; his feet correspond to the Lord’s description in Revelation 1:15. His voice like a lion suggests Revelation 5:5. This being could well be our Lord Jesus Christ, appearing to John as a kingly angel. Jesus often appeared in the Old Testament as ‘the Angel of the Lord’ (Ex. 3:2; Jud. 2:4; 6:11–12, 21–22; 2 Sam. 24:16). This was a temporary manifestation for a special purpose, not a permanent incarnation.

##### “Two other characteristics would suggest identifying the angel as Jesus Christ: the book in his hand and the awesome posture that he assumed. The little book contains the rest of the prophetic message that John will deliver. Since our Lord was the only One worthy to take the scroll and break the seals (Rev. 5:5ff), it might well be concluded that He is the only One worthy to give His servant the rest of the message.”

##### “The angel’s posture is that of a conqueror taking possession of his territory. He is claiming the whole world (see Josh. 1:1–3). Of course, only the victorious Savior could make such a claim. The Antichrist will soon complete his conquest and force the whole world to submit to his control. But before that happens, the Savior will claim the world for Himself, the inheritance that His Father promised Him (Ps. 2:6–9). Satan roars like a lion to frighten his prey (1 Peter 5:8), but the Lion of Judah roars to announce victory (see Ps. 95:3–5; Isa. 40:12–17).”

#### Walvoord sees this as another angel—probably Michael:

##### “Some believe this angel was Christ, pointing to the angel mentioned in 8:3 as also probably a representation of Christ as a priest. But though Christ appeared frequently as the Angel of Jehovah in the Old Testament (e.g., Gen. 16:13; 24:7; 31:11, 13; Jud. 6:22), there is no evidence that this person was other than a mighty angel (cf. Rev. 5:2), perhaps Michael the archangel.”

##### If this were Christ, would not this then be the Second Coming?

##### Why would Christ make an oath in the name of the one who lives forever?

##### The parallel to the feet of an angel in Daniel 10 and 12 is that the angel there was a mighty angel.

##### We have no designation of “the Angel of the Lord” in the NT after the incarnation.

### What is this small scroll (10: 2, 8) that is sweet in the mouth and bitter in the stomach (10:9-10)? This contains God’s words that bless believers and harm unbelievers.

#### Wiersbe: “God’s Word is compared to food: bread (Matt. 4:4), milk (1 Peter 2:2), meat (1 Cor. 3:1–2), and honey (Ps. 119:103). The Prophets Jeremiah (Jer. 15:16) and Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:9–3:4) knew what it was to “eat” the Word before they could share it with others.”

#### “God will not thrust His Word into our mouths and force us to receive it. He hands it to us and we must take it. Nor can He change the effects the Word will have in our lives: there will be both sorrow and joy, bitterness and sweetness. God’s Word contains sweet promises and assurances, but it also contains bitter warnings and prophecies of judgment. The Christian bears witness of both life and death (2 Cor. 2:14–17). The faithful minister will declare all of God’s counsel (Acts 20:27). He will not dilute the message of God simply to please his listeners (2 Tim. 4:1–5).”

### What is the significance of him controlling both land and sea (10:2b)? Armies didn’t control the air at that time, so it means he controls all of the powers on earth—a comforting truth to the righteous and a frightening truth to the wicked.

### What does it mean by “God’s mysterious plan will be fulfilled” at the blowing of the seventh trumpet (10:7)? This trumpet sets in order the final series of bowl judgments to end this age (cf. Rev. 16).

#### Walvoord: “This mystery had been previously announced to God’s prophets. The reference, therefore, is not to hidden truth but to the fulfillment of many Old Testament passages which refer to the glorious return of the Son of God and the establishment of His kingdom of righteousness and peace on the earth.”

#### Wiersbe: “In the Bible, a mystery is a “sacred secret,” a truth hidden to those outside but revealed to God’s people by His Word (Matt. 13:10–12). The “mystery of God” has to do with the age-old problem of evil in the world. Why is there both moral and natural evil in the world? Why doesn’t God do something about it? Of course, the Christian knows that God did “do something about it” at Calvary when Jesus Christ was made sin and experienced divine wrath for a sinful world. We also know that God is permitting evil to increase until the world is ripe for judgment (2 Thes. 2:7ff; Rev. 14:14–20). Since God has already paid the price for sin, He is free to delay His judgment, and He cannot be accused of injustice or unconcern.”

### When does this announcement of John prophesying again about Gentiles take place (10:11)? The next time will be 11:9 about the witnesses. Later John will predict judgment on these Gentiles who, as Beale, 555 asserts, “identify with Babylon or the beast (so also 11:9; 13:7–8; 14:6ff.; 17:15).”

### Has he already prophesied about Gentiles and, if so, when (10:11)? Previously John predicted these groups as trusting in Christ (5:9; 7:9). However, after this in the vision it refers to unbelieving Gentiles (see next question).

### Will John prophecy blessing, judgment or both (10:11)? Does it mean “prophesy about” (generally) or “prophesy against” (10:11)?

#### Beale: “Most translations render e˙pi÷ as “about” or “concerning: “prophesy *about* peoples, nations, tongues, and many kings” (so RSV, NIV, JB; NEB has “over” and KJV “before”).227 This suggests that John’s prophetic focus is general and concerns equally those who will suffer judgment because of sin and others who will suffer for their faith and be redeemed. But the accent is on judgment of the unrepentant, as is evident from the immediate context and the use of the same language in other judgment contexts. profhteu/w e˙pi÷ appears in the LXX only twice in Jeremiah, twice in Amos, and twenty-one times in Ezekiel.228 The expression typically refers to a prophecy “against” sinful Israel or some other nation (so eighteen times); only three times, all in Ezekiel, does the phrase refer to a prophecy of blessing. The phrase is appropriate here in the Apocalypse since it is used most by Ezekiel, which has been uppermost in mind in vv 8–10. The translation “prophesy *about*” is not wrong, but “prophesy *against*” is more precise.

#### Beale: “Prophesy against” is also preferable because of the negative manner in which John uses the fourfold phrase “peoples, nations, tongues, and many kings” in the remainder of the book. The same fourfold formula was used differently in a positive way in 5:9 and 7:9 to indicate peoples throughout the earth who were redeemed by the Lamb. The phrase in chs. 5 and 7 and throughout the book (though in different order and varying combinations) is coined on the basis of the same phrase repeated in Daniel, where it is also a universal reference (see on Rev. 5:9). In Dan. 3:4, 7 LXX the formula precedes and follows “the sound of a trumpet,” and here in Rev. 10:11 it is preceded by “the sound of the seventh  [Rev., p. 555] angel when he is about to sound the trumpet” (10:7). John has used the phrase of all who are redeemed (5:9; 7:9), but now and hereafter he uses it of unbelievers, who will be judged because they identify with Babylon or the beast (so also 11:9; 13:7–8; 14:6ff.; 17:15). “Kings” has been inserted into the formula to indicate its negative character, since it anticipates the “kings” in the following visions who will be judged (so 16:12, 14; 17:1–2, 10–12, 15–16, 18; 18:3, 9; 19:18–19).

### What temple is this (11:1)? It must be the third temple on temple mount, built during the Tribulation era (cf. Dan. 9:27).

### Why measure the temple (11:1)? God told him to do and didn’t say why! However, this is likely a sign of God’s favor, as was the measuring of Ezekiel’s temple.

#### Walvoord, BKC: “Measurement is usually taken of one’s possessions, and the temple belonged to God. In a similar way the temple of Ezekiel 40 was measured and the New Jerusalem was measured (Rev. 21:15-17). The temple here will be constructed so that orthodox Jews can offer sacrifices according to the Mosaic Law in the period in the first half of the seven-year period known as Daniel’s 70th week. At the beginning of the 42-month Great Tribulation, however, the sacrifices will stop and the temple will be desecrated and become a shrine for the world ruler of the Great Tribulation who will put an idol in it and proclaim himself to be God (cf. Dan. 9:27; 12:11; 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 13:14-15).”

#### Wiersbe: “The ministry of the witnesses (11:1–6). The place is Jerusalem and the time is the first half of the Tribulation. Israel is worshiping again at its restored temple, built under the protection of the Antichrist, whose true character has not yet been revealed. To spiritualize Revelation 11:1–2 and make the temple refer to the church creates a number of serious problems. For one thing, how could John measure an invisible body of people, even if the church were still on earth? If the temple is the church, then who are the worshipers and what is the altar? And since the church unites Jews and Gentiles in one body (Eph. 2:11ff), why are the Gentiles segregated in this temple? It seems wisest to interpret this temple as an actual building in the holy city of Jerusalem (Neh. 11:1, 18; Dan. 9:24).

#### “John’s measurement of the temple is a symbolic action. To measure something means to claim it for yourself. When we sold our house in Chicago, the new owners brought in an architect to measure various areas and recommend possible changes. Had the architect shown up previous to the buyers’ commitment, we would have thrown him out. The Lord was saying through John, “I own this city and this temple, and I claim both for Myself!” The Old Testament background is found in Ezekiel 40–41 and Zechariah 2:1–3.”

### Why count the number of worshippers (11:1)?

#### Walvoord, BKC: “John was also instructed, however, to count the worshipers who came to the temple. Here the thought seems to be that God will evaluate both the temple and those in it.”

#### The number of worshippers is actually never given.

### Are these worshippers godly (11:1)?

#### God will certainly prefer the Jews to obey the Mosaic Law instead of the outright atheism of many Jews today!

#### However, they will still lack salvation in Christ at this point.

### Why avoid measuring the outer courtyard due to Jerusalem being trampled by Gentiles (11:2)?

#### God will be working among the Jews to draw them to himself, so measuring seems to be a sign of favor.

#### Therefore, not measuring the outer court shows God’ displeasure with the Gentiles persecuting Israel.

### What does it mean that nations will trample Jerusalem (11:2b)?

#### Jews will be persecuted in the latter half of the Tribulation, in contrast to the privilege they will have to rebuild their ancient temple in the first half.

#### Perhaps many will suffer due to trusting in Christ by this time—or maybe God will allow their very suffering to lead them to Christ.

### When will nations trample Jerusalem (11:2b)?

#### Walvoord, BKC: “Some believe that the 42 months refer to the first half of Daniel’s 70th week (Dan. 9:27). While it is not clear, the evidence surrounding this passage in Revelation seems to refer to the final three and one-half years. This also seems to be confirmed by the fact that in the first half of the last seven years the Jews will actually possess the city of Jerusalem and worship in their temple, whereas here the context indicates that this is the period when Gentiles will tread down the Holy City, implying ill treatment of the Jews and desecration of the temple.”

### Shouldn’t Gentiles (nations) trample a godless Jerusalem (11:2)?

#### God apparently sees this rebuilding not as a totally godless activity, but as a step towards Jews once again trusting in Him.

#### Far worse is the outright blasphemy of the nations!

### What is the holy city (11:2b)?

#### Some say this is Rome or Babylon.

#### However, the text says it is where Jesus died, so it must be Jerusalem.

### Is the 42 months the same period as the 1260 days (11:2b-3)?

#### Yes, the Jewish calendar of 30 days per month equates these two.

#### These months and days equal 3.5 years.

### What’s the significance of this 3.5-year period (11:3)?

#### Daniel 9:27 refers to this period as a time following the Antichrist desecrating the temple. John sees it here as a time when Gentiles will “trample on the holy city for 42 months” (11:2 NLT).

#### How will be do it? He will declare himself to be god in the very temple built for the true God!

#### Wiersbe sees this in period in the first half of the Tribulation, though: “Note that the two witnesses minister during the first half of the Tribulation (Rev. 11:3; 1,260 days). Jerusalem is then overrun by the Gentiles for forty-two months, the last half of the Tribulation.”

### When will this 42-month period take place (11:3)?

#### It will be the latter half of the seven-year Tribulation (cf. Dan. 9:27).

#### This time will have persecution of Israel as both God and the Antichrist cannot be worshipped at the same spot!

### Who are these two witnesses (11:3a)?

#### They are not named, so some say they allude to Moses and Elijah due to the turning rivers into blood (Moses) and drought for 3.5 years (Elijah).

#### Wiersbe: “Instead of relating the ministry of the witnesses to Moses and Elijah, the angel who spoke to John connected their ministry with Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest (Zech. 4). These two men helped to reestablish Israel in Palestine and to rebuild the temple. It was a discouraging task, and the Gentiles made it even more difficult; but God provided the special power they needed to get the work done. This truth is an encouragement to God’s servants in all ages, for the work of the Lord is never easy.”

#### Walvoord: “The description of the two witnesses as olive trees and lampstands has an Old Testament background (Zech. 4:2-14). The two witnesses in this passage were Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor. Their connection to the lampstands was that they were empowered by the Holy Spirit, symbolized by the olive oil. In a similar way the two witnesses of Revelation 11 will be empowered by the Holy Spirit.”

### Why are they clothed in burlap (11:3b)?

#### They will seek to model for the nations the repentance God desires.

#### In contrast to worldly leaders who dress nicely in suits or military uniforms, the witnesses will humbly honor God.

### How does being two olive trees or two lampstands help identify the two witnesses (11:4)?

#### Zechariah 4:2-14 notes both of these as alluding to Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor.

#### The point is that they will be empowered by the Spirit.

### What will their role be as witnesses who give testimony (11:3, 7)?

#### They will proclaim (testify) that it is Jesus Christ himself who has caused the seal and trumpet judgments.

#### Once they have said enough, they will be killed.

### In what sense will the witnesses also be prophets (11:4)?

#### They will predict further judgments such as God withholding rain due to the earth’s refusal to believe.

#### Prophets also looked back, though, so they will witness how people should have trusted in the Lord.

### How is it significant that they can protect themselves by fire and drought and causing plagues (11:5-6, 10)?

#### So many will want to kill them that they must have some way to protect themselves.

#### Fire is often a means of judgment, as are plagues.

### Will it not rain during their 3.5 years of prophecy (11:6)?

#### Elijah told Ahab that God was withholding rain due to the nation’s unbelief (1 Kings 17:1).

#### In similar manner, these witnesses will testify that the earth was still rebelling against God, so God would make things difficult by withholding man’s main necessity—water!

### Will they literally be killed and why (11:7-8)?

#### This should be taken in its normal sense. The Antichrist and Satan will hate them and want to get rid of them.

#### How comforting to know that God will not allow us to be killed until our job is done!

### Will they literally rise to life and why (11:11)?

#### This will show all people that they were actually prophets of God.

#### The world will probably see this on TV to give all people another chance to repent.

### Will they literally ascend to heaven and why (11:12)?

#### Here they identify with Christ, who ascended to heaven once his ministry had finished.

#### This will also be similar to the Rapture when believers also rose to heaven before the Tribulation began (1 Thess. 4:17)!

### Will the Jerusalem earthquake that causes people to give glory to God also lead them to repentance (11:13)?

#### Giving glory to God does not necessarily indicate repentance, as Nebuchadnezzar did this in Daniel 4 without repenting.

#### This passage seems to say that either people died or gave glory to God, but we know that everyone else doesn’t repent!

### Will Jesus only begin to reign at this point (11:17)?

#### Wiersbe: “However, we must not incorrectly assume that our Lord is not reigning today, because He is. According to Hebrews 7:1–2, Jesus Christ is “King of righteousness” and “King of peace.” He is enthroned with the Father (Rev. 3:21), and He will reign until He defeats all His foes (1 Cor. 15:25). Today, He rules over a spiritual kingdom; but in that future day, He will reign over the nations of the world and rule with a rod of iron.

#### “No matter how difficult the circumstances might be, or how defeated God’s people may think they are, Jesus Christ is still King of kings and Lord of lords, and He is in control. One day, we shall triumph!

### What is the content of the praise of the elders (11:16-18)?

#### Wiersbe: “An acclamation of praise (vv. 16–18). The elders left their own thrones and prostrated themselves in worship before God’s throne. They gave thanks for three special blessings: that Christ reigns supremely (Rev. 11:17), that He judges righteously (Rev. 11:18), and that He rewards graciously (Rev. 11:18).

#### “In Revelation 4:10–11, the elders praised the Creator; and in Revelation 5:9–14, they worshiped the Redeemer. Here the emphasis is on the Conqueror and the King. Keep in mind that in John’s day the church on earth looked as though it were defeated, for Rome was the conqueror and king. John was reminding the saints that they were “a kingdom of priests” reigning with the Savior (Rev. 1:5–6). It may seem at times that the throne of heaven is empty, but it is not. Jesus Christ has both power and authority—in fact, all authority (Matt. 28:18, where the word power means “authority”). “Thou... hast begun to reign” is a good translation.

### Is there a judgment with the seventh trumpet or only praise in heaven (11:14-19)?

#### This trumpet results in praise, lightning, and thunder—none of which seems to hurt anyone.

#### However, there also is an earthquake and hailstorm—worse still, this final trumpet initiates the terrible bowl judgments of Revelation 16.

### What is this temple in heaven and ark of his covenant (11:19)?

#### Some claim the temple is the church itself, since the church is deemed a spiritual temple in Ephesians 2.

#### Yet nothing in Revelation tells us to see it other than a real temple in heaven—though no temple will be there in the eternal state (cf. 22:22).

#### Wiersbe: “***An assurance of God’s faithfulness (11:19).*** This chapter opened with a temple on earth, but now we see the temple in heaven. The focus of attention is on the ark of God, the symbol of God’s presence with His people.

#### “In the Old Testament tabernacle and temple, the ark stood behind the veil, in the holy of holies. God’s glory rested on the ark, and God’s Law was within the ark, beautifully illustrating that the two must never be separated. He is the holy God and must deal righteously with sin. But He is also the faithful God who keeps His promises to His people. It was the ark of God that led Israel through the Jordan and into their inheritance (Josh. 3:11–17). This vision of the ark would greatly encourage God’s suffering people to whom John sent this book. “God will fulfill His promises!” John was saying to them. “He will reveal His glory! Trust Him!”

#### “Once again, John saw and heard the portents of a storm (see Rev. 4:5; 8:5). Greater judgment is about to fall on the rebellious people of earth! But God’s people need not fear the storms for He is in control. The ark reminds them of His presence and the faithfulness of His promises. And on that ark was the mercy seat on which the blood was sprinkled each Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:15–17). Even in wrath, God remembers His mercy (Hab. 3:2).

#### “The stage is now set for the dramatic appearance of “the beast,” Satan’s masterpiece, the false Christ who will control the world.”

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

Text

# Possible Illustrations

### Text

# Possible Applications

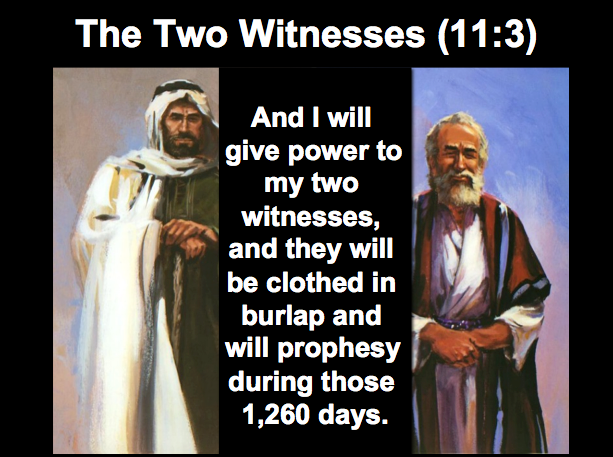
### Text

##### (10:1–11:14) A parenthesis between the sixth and seventh trumpets shows Tribulation believers will experience God's protection while unbelievers receive His wrath.

###### (Ch. 10) An angel reveals to John undisclosed judgments and has him eat a little scroll to signify the sweetness of God's Word to believers protected from judgment and its bitterness to unbelievers experiencing His wrath.

###### (11:1-14) Two witnesses will prophesy and destroy their enemies for three and a half years, be martyred and resurrected before their enemies, and then 7000 enemies will die in an earthquake (see the 2-page study in the introduction on pages 329-330).





March to Jerusalem Story

##### (11:15-19) The seventh trumpet (woe #3) has no specific judgment connected with it as it introduces the seven bowl judgments.

**Warren Wiersbe, *Bible Exposition Commentary***

**The Testimony of the Mighty Angel (Rev. 10:1–11)**

More than sixty references to angels are made in Revelation. They are God’s army sent to accomplish His purposes on earth. Believers today seldom think about these servants (Heb. 1:14), but one day in heaven we shall learn about all they did for us here.

***The description of the angel (10:1–4).*** This angel amazes us, for he has some of the characteristics that belong especially to the Lord Jesus Christ. John had seen and heard a “strong angel” (Rev. 5:2), and the same Greek word is here translated “mighty.” All angels excel in strength (Ps. 103:20), but apparently some have greater power and authority than others.

We first saw the rainbow around the throne of God (Rev. 4:3); now it sits like a crown on the head of this messenger. The rainbow was God’s sign to mankind that He would never again destroy the world with a flood. Even in wrath, God remembers His mercy (Hab. 3:2). Whoever this angel is, he has the authority of God’s throne given to him.

God is often identified with clouds. God led Israel by a glorious cloud (Ex. 16:10), and dark clouds covered Sinai when the Law was given (Ex. 19:9). When God appeared to Moses, it was in a cloud of glory (Ex. 24:15ff; 34:5). “[He] maketh the clouds His chariot” (Ps. 104:3). A cloud received Jesus when He ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9); and, when He returns, it will be with clouds (Rev. 1:7).

The fact that the angel’s face is “as the sun” corresponds to the description of Jesus Christ in Revelation 1:16; his feet correspond to the Lord’s description in Revelation 1:15. His voice like a lion suggests Revelation 5:5. This being could well be our Lord Jesus Christ, appearing to John as a kingly angel. Jesus often appeared in the Old Testament as “the Angel of the Lord” (Ex. 3:2; Jud. 2:4; 6:11–12, 21–22; 2 Sam. 24:16). This was a temporary manifestation for a special purpose, not a permanent incarnation.

Two other characteristics would suggest identifying the angel as Jesus Christ: the book in his hand and the awesome posture that he assumed. The little book contains the rest of the prophetic message that John will deliver. Since our Lord was the only One worthy to take the scroll and break the seals (Rev. 5:5ff), it might well be concluded that He is the only One worthy to give His servant the rest of the message.

The angel’s posture is that of a conqueror taking possession of his territory. He is claiming the whole world (see Josh. 1:1–3). Of course, only the victorious Savior could make such a claim. The Antichrist will soon complete his conquest and force the whole world to submit to his control. But before that happens, the Savior will claim the world for Himself, the inheritance that His Father promised Him (Ps. 2:6–9). Satan roars like a lion to frighten his prey (1 Peter 5:8), but the Lion of Judah roars to announce victory (see Ps. 95:3–5; Isa. 40:12–17).

We are not told why John was forbidden to write what the seven thunders uttered, the only “sealed” thing in an otherwise “unsealed” book (see Dan. 12:9; Rev. 22:10). God’s voice is often compared to thunder (Ps. 29; Job 26:14; 37:5; John 12:28–29). It is useless for us to speculate when God chooses to veil His truth (Deut. 29:29).

***The declaration of the angel (10:5–11).*** This declaration fills us with awe, not only because of what the angel declares, but also because of the way he declares it. It is a solemn scene, with his hand lifted to heaven as though he were under oath.

But if this angel is our Lord Jesus Christ, why would He take an oath? In order to affirm the solemnity and certainty of the words spoken. God put Himself “under oath” when He made His covenant with Abraham (Heb. 6:13–20) and when He declared His Son to be High Priest (Heb. 7:20–22). He also took an oath when He promised David that the Christ would come from his family (Acts 2:29–30).

The emphasis in Revelation 10:6 is on God the Creator. Various judgments have already been felt by the heavens, the earth, and the sea; and more judgments are to come. The word that is translated “time” actually means “delay.” God has been delaying His judgments so that lost sinners will have time to repent (2 Peter 3:1–9); now, however, He will accelerate His judgments and accomplish His purposes.

Recall that the martyred saints in heaven were concerned about God’s seeming delay in avenging their deaths (Rev. 6:10–11). “How long, O Lord, how long?” has been the cry of God’s suffering people from age to age. God’s seeming delay in fulfilling His promises has given the scoffers opportunity to deny God’s Word and question His sincerity (see 2 Peter 3). God’s Word is true and His timing, perfect. This means comfort to saints—but judgment to sinners.

In the Bible, a *mystery* is a “sacred secret,” a truth hidden to those outside but revealed to God’s people by His Word (Matt. 13:10–12). The “mystery of God” has to do with the age-old problem of evil in the world. Why is there both moral and natural evil in the world? Why doesn’t God do something about it? Of course, the Christian knows that God did “do something about it” at Calvary when Jesus Christ was made sin and experienced divine wrath for a sinful world. We also know that God is permitting evil to increase until the world is ripe for judgment (2 Thes. 2:7ff; Rev. 14:14–20). Since God has already paid the price for sin, He is free to delay His judgment, and He cannot be accused of injustice or unconcern.

The signal for this mystery’s completion is the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:14–19). The last half of the Tribulation begins when the angels start to pour out the bowls, in which “is filled up [completed] the wrath of God” (Rev. 15:1).

*The directions* that the angel gave to John (Rev. 10:8–11) should remind us of our responsibility to assimilate the Word of God and make it a part of the inner man. It was not enough for John to see the book or even know its contents and purpose. He had to *receive* it into his inner being.

God’s Word is compared to food: bread (Matt. 4:4), milk (1 Peter 2:2), meat (1 Cor. 3:1–2), and honey (Ps. 119:103). The Prophets Jeremiah (Jer. 15:16) and Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:9–3:4) knew what it was to “eat” the Word before they could share it with others. The Word must always “become flesh” (John 1:14) before it can be given to those who need it. Woe unto that preacher or teacher who merely echoes God’s Word and does not incarnate it, making it a living part of his very being.

God will not thrust His Word into our mouths and force us to receive it. He hands it to us and we must take it. Nor can He change the effects the Word will have in our lives: there will be both sorrow and joy, bitterness and sweetness. God’s Word contains sweet promises and assurances, but it also contains bitter warnings and prophecies of judgment. The Christian bears witness of both life and death (2 Cor. 2:14–17). The faithful minister will declare all of God’s counsel (Acts 20:27). He will not dilute the message of God simply to please his listeners (2 Tim. 4:1–5).

The angel commissioned John to prophesy *again;* his work was not yet completed. He must declare God’s prophetic truth concerning (not “before”) many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings (Rev. 5:9). The word *nations* usually refers to the Gentile nations. John will have much to say about the nations of the world as he presents the rest of this prophecy.

**The Testimony of the Two Witnesses (Rev. 11:1–14)**

***The ministry of the witnesses (11:1–6).*** The place is Jerusalem and the time is the first half of the Tribulation. Israel is worshiping again at its restored temple, built under the protection of the Antichrist, whose true character has not yet been revealed. To spiritualize Revelation 11:1–2 and make the temple refer to the church creates a number of serious problems. For one thing, how could John measure an invisible body of people, even if the church were still on earth? If the temple is the church, then who are the worshipers and what is the altar? And since the church unites Jews and Gentiles in one body (Eph. 2:11ff), why are the Gentiles segregated in this temple? It seems wisest to interpret this temple as an actual building in the holy city of Jerusalem (Neh. 11:1, 18; Dan. 9:24).

John’s measurement of the temple is a symbolic action. To measure something means to claim it for yourself. When we sold our house in Chicago, the new owners brought in an architect to measure various areas and recommend possible changes. Had the architect shown up previous to the buyers’ commitment, we would have thrown him out. The Lord was saying through John, “I own this city and this temple, and I claim both for Myself!” The Old Testament background is found in Ezekiel 40–41 and Zechariah 2:1–3.

What John did was especially significant because the Gentiles had taken over Jerusalem. Antichrist had broken his agreement with Israel (Dan. 9:27) and now he was about to use the temple for his own diabolical purposes (2 Thes. 2:3–4). All of this will be elaborated in Revelation 13. “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles,” said Jesus, “until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24). The “times of the Gentiles” began in 606 B.C. when Babylon began to devastate Judah and Jerusalem, and it will continue until Jesus Christ returns to deliver the Holy City and redeem Israel (Zech. 14).

Note that the two witnesses minister during the *first* half of the Tribulation (Rev. 11:3; 1,260 days). Jerusalem is then overrun by the Gentiles for forty-two months, the *last* half of the Tribulation.

Their witness is related to Israel and the temple. How tragic that the power of God and the Word of God will be *outside* the temple and not within as in former ages. Like the temple that Jesus left, this new house will be desolate (see Matt. 23:38). These two men are specifically called prophets (Rev. 11:3, 6), and I take this to mean prophetic ministry in the Old Testament sense, calling the nations to repent and return to the true God of Israel.

Not only do these witnesses declare God’s words, but they also do God’s works and perform miracles of judgment, reminding us of both Moses and Elijah (Ex. 7:14–18; 1 Kings 17:1ff; 2 Kings 1:1–12). Some students cite Malachi 4:5–6 as evidence that one of the witnesses may be Elijah, but Jesus applied that prophecy to John the Baptist (Matt. 17:10–13). John the Baptist, however, denied that he was Elijah returned to earth (John 1:21, 25; see also Luke 1:16–17). This confusion may be explained in part by realizing that throughout Israel’s history, God sent special messengers—“Elijahs”—to call His people to repentance; so in this sense, Malachi’s prophecy will be fulfilled by the witnesses.

Instead of relating the ministry of the witnesses to Moses and Elijah, the angel who spoke to John connected their ministry with Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest (Zech. 4). These two men helped to reestablish Israel in Palestine and to rebuild the temple. It was a discouraging task, and the Gentiles made it even more difficult; but God provided the special power they needed to get the work done. This truth is an encouragement to God’s servants in all ages, for the work of the Lord is never easy.

***The martyrdom of the witnesses (11:7–10).*** This comes only when they have finished their testimony. God’s obedient servants are immortal until their work is done. “The beast” (Antichrist) is now in power and wants to take over the temple; but he cannot succeed until the two witnesses are out of the way. God will permit him to slay them, for no one will be able to make war against “the beast” and win (Rev. 13:4).

The witnesses will not even be permitted decent burial (see Ps. 79:1–3). But even this indecency will be used by God to bear witness to mankind. No doubt the TV cameras in Jerusalem will transmit the scene to people around the world, and the news analysts will discuss its significance. The earth-dwellers will rejoice at their enemies’ removal and will celebrate a “satanic Christmas” by sending gifts to one another. It thus would appear that the power of the two witnesses will not be limited to Jerusalem, but that they will be able to cause things to happen in other parts of the world.

These two prophets will definitely have a relationship with Israel; and the world, for the most part, has not approved of the nation Israel. In the middle of the Tribulation, “the beast” will turn against Israel and begin to persecute the Jews. The two witnesses will not be around to protect the nation and a frightening anti-Semitic movement will ensue.

Jerusalem is called a “great city” (Rev. 11:8); and from a human viewpoint, this is a true statement. But God looks at men and nations from a *spiritual* viewpoint. To Him, Jerusalem will be considered as polluted and worldly as Sodom and as rebellious and proud as Egypt.

***The resurrection of the witnesses (11:11–14).*** Miraculously, the two witnesses are not only raised from the dead, but caught up into heaven! God rescues them from their enemies and gives a solemn witness to the watching world. The world’s great joy suddenly becomes great fear. (Note the word *great* in Rev. 11, repeated eight times.)

Are we to interpret the three-and-a-half days literally? Or does the phrase simply mean “after a short time”? It seems too specific to mean that. Does it symbolize a longer period, say three-and-a-half years? It is not likely that two dead bodies would be kept lying in a city street for more than three years. Perhaps this is a picture of a rapture of all the saints in the midst of the Tribulation, and the three-and-a-half years covers the first half of the period. If so, then what is symbolized by the *death* of the two witnesses? This interpretation solves one problem only to create another.

These days appear to be literal days, just as the forty-two months in Revelation 11:2 are literal months. The Bible does not explain why this length of time was chosen and it is useless for us to speculate.

Our Lord’s *friends* watched Him ascend to heaven (Acts 1:9–12), but the witnesses’ *enemies* will see them resurrected and will be shaken with fear. Their fear will increase when a great earthquake occurs, killing 7,000 men and destroying a tenth part of Jerusalem. A great earthquake occurred when the sixth seal was opened (Rev. 6:12), and there will be a greater one when the seventh vial is poured out (Rev. 16:18–20).

**The Testimony of the Elders (Rev. 11:15–19)**

We have been waiting since Revelation 8:13 for this third “woe” to arrive and now it is here. When the seventh angel blew the trumpet, three dramatic events occurred.

***An announcement of victory (v. 15).*** These “great voices” were probably the choirs of heaven. The great announcement is that the kingdom (John uses the singular because “the beast” now has the world under his control) of this world belongs to Jesus Christ. Of course, Christ does not *claim* His royal rights until He returns; but the victory has already been won. Satan offered Him the world’s kingdoms, but He refused the offer (Matt. 4:8–9). Instead, He died on the cross, arose, and returned victoriously to heaven; and there the Father gave Him His inheritance (Ps. 2:4–9).

However, we must not incorrectly assume that our Lord is not reigning *today,* because He is. According to Hebrews 7:1–2, Jesus Christ is “King of righteousness” and “King of peace.” He is enthroned with the Father (Rev. 3:21), and He will reign until He defeats all His foes (1 Cor. 15:25). Today, He rules over a spiritual kingdom; but in that future day, He will reign over the nations of the world and rule with a rod of iron.

No matter how difficult the circumstances might be, or how defeated God’s people may think they are, Jesus Christ is still King of kings and Lord of lords, and He is in control. One day, we shall triumph!

***An acclamation of praise (vv. 16–18).*** The elders left their own thrones and prostrated themselves in worship before God’s throne. They gave thanks for three special blessings: that Christ reigns supremely (Rev. 11:17), that He judges righteously (Rev. 11:18), and that He rewards graciously (Rev. 11:18).

In Revelation 4:10–11, the elders praised the Creator; and in Revelation 5:9–14, they worshiped the Redeemer. Here the emphasis is on the Conqueror and the King. Keep in mind that in John’s day the church on earth looked as though it were defeated, for Rome was the conqueror and king. John was reminding the saints that *they* were “a kingdom of priests” reigning with the Savior (Rev. 1:5–6). It may seem at times that the throne of heaven is empty, but it is not. Jesus Christ has both power and authority—in fact, *all* authority (Matt. 28:18, where the word *power* means “authority”). “Thou... hast begun to reign” is a good translation.

Christ not only reigns supremely, but He judges righteously (Rev. 11:18). The Lamb is also the Lion! In Revelation 11:18, we have a “table of contents” for the remainder of the Book of Revelation. These events did not take place the instant the angel blew his trumpet; he simply signaled the beginning of the process, and now these events would take place as planned.

“The nations were angry.” What do the nations have to be angry about? Certainly the Lord has been good and gracious to them. He has provided their needs (Acts 14:15–17; 17:24–31), assigned their territories, and graciously postponed His judgment to give men opportunity to be saved. Even more, He sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. Today, God offers forgiveness to the nations! What more could He do for them?

Then, why are the nations angry? *Because they want to have their own way.* “Why do the heathen [the nations] rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed [Christ], saying, ‘Let us break Their bands asunder, and cast away Their cords from us’ ” (Ps. 2:1–3). They want to worship and serve the creature instead of the Creator (Rom. 1:25). Like adolescent children, the nations want to cast off all restraint; *and God will permit them to do so.* The result will be another “Babylon” (Rev. 17–18), man’s last attempt to build his Utopia, a “heaven on earth.”

Note the change in attitude shown by the nations of the world. In Revelation 11:2, the nations ruthlessly take over Jerusalem. In Revelation 11:9, they rejoice at the death of the two witnesses. But now they are angry; their arrogance and joy did not last very long. This belligerent attitude finally will cause the nations to unite to fight God at the great battle of Armageddon.

“And Thy wrath is come.” The word translated “angry” in Revelation 11:18 is the verb form of the word translated “wrath.” But man’s wrath can never equal the wrath of the Lamb (Rev. 6:16–17). Even Satan’s wrath, as cruel as it is, is no match for God’s wrath (Rev. 12:17). There was intense suffering in the first half of the Tribulation, but only the last half will reveal the wrath of God (Rev. 11:18; 14:10; 16:19; 19:15). There are two Greek words for anger: *thumos*, which means “rage, passionate anger,” and *orge*, used here, which means “indignation, a settled attitude of wrath.” God’s anger is not an outburst of temper; it is holy indignation against sin. Both of these Greek words are used in Revelation to describe God’s anger: *orge* is used only four times; *thumos*, seven (Rev. 14:10, 19; 15:1, 7; 16:1, 19; 19:15). God’s anger is not dispassionate, for He hates sin and loves righteousness and justice; but neither is it temperamental and unpredictable.

“And the time of the dead, that they should be judged” takes us to the very end of God’s prophetic program. In one sense, every day is a “day of the Lord” because God is always judging righteously. God is long-suffering toward lost sinners and often postpones judgment, but there will be a final judgment of sinners and none will escape. This judgment is described in Revelation 20:11–15.

There will also be a judgment of God’s children, known as “the Judgment Seat of Christ” (Rom. 14:10–13; 1 Cor. 3:9–15; 2 Cor. 5:9–11). God will reward His faithful servants (Matt. 25:21) and the sufferings they experienced on earth will be forgotten in the glory of His presence. Though God’s children will not be judged for their sins (that judgment took place on the cross), they will be judged for their works and rewarded generously by the Master.

The Judgment Seat of Christ will take place in heaven after Christ has called His people home. When He returns to earth to establish His kingdom, the saints will be ready to reign with Him, with every blemish of the church removed (Eph. 5:25–27; Rev. 19:7–8). Today, we groan as we serve God, because we know only too well our handicaps and blemishes; but one day, we shall serve Him *perfectly!*

“Them that destroy the earth” refers to the rebellious earth-dwellers who will not submit to God. How ironic that these people live for the earth and its pleasures, yet at the same time are *destroying* the very earth that they worship! When man forgets that God is the Creator and he is the creature, he begins to exploit his God-given resources, and this brings destruction. Man is a steward of creation, not the owner.

As mentioned before, Revelation 11:18 is a summary statement of events yet to come. It is heaven’s song of praise for the Lord’s faithfulness to accomplish His purposes in the world. Again, it appears strange to us that heavenly beings can sing about judgment. Perhaps if we had more of the throne’s perspective, we would be able to join their praises.

***An assurance of God’s faithfulness (11:19).*** This chapter opened with a temple on earth, but now we see the temple in heaven. The focus of attention is on the ark of God, the symbol of God’s presence with His people.

In the Old Testament tabernacle and temple, the ark stood behind the veil, in the holy of holies. God’s glory rested on the ark, and God’s Law was within the ark, beautifully illustrating that the two must never be separated. He is the holy God and must deal righteously with sin. But He is also the faithful God who keeps His promises to His people. It was the ark of God that led Israel through the Jordan and into their inheritance (Josh. 3:11–17). This vision of the ark would greatly encourage God’s suffering people to whom John sent this book. “God will fulfill His promises!” John was saying to them. “He will reveal His glory! Trust Him!”

Once again, John saw and heard the portents of a storm (see Rev. 4:5; 8:5). Greater judgment is about to fall on the rebellious people of earth! But God’s people need not fear the storms for He is in control. The ark reminds them of His presence and the faithfulness of His promises. And on that ark was the mercy seat on which the blood was sprinkled each Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:15–17). Even in wrath, God remembers His mercy (Hab. 3:2).

The stage is now set for the dramatic appearance of “the beast,” Satan’s masterpiece, the false Christ who will control the world.

**The Grace Witnesses**

***Revelation 10–11***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# Prologue (from Wiersbe)

Revelation 10–14 describes the events that will occur at the middle of the seven-year Tribulation. This explains John’s repeated mention of the three-and-a-half-year time segment in one form or another (Rev. 11:2–3; 12:6, 14; 13:5). At the beginning of this period, the Antichrist began to make his conquest by promising to protect the Jews and assist in their rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. But after three-and-a-half-years, he will break his agreement, invade the temple, and begin to persecute the Jewish people.

However depressing the events of this middle segment of the Tribulation may be, God is not without His witness to the world. In Revelation 10–11 are three important testimonies: from a mighty angel (Rev. 10:1–11), from the two special witnesses (Rev. 11:1–14), and from the elders in heaven (Rev. 11:15–19).

# *Exegetical Idea*: The result of the testimony of three witnesses during a parenthesis between the sixth and seventh trumpets is that Tribulation believers will experience God's protection while unbelievers receive His wrath (Rev. 10–11).

# I. The testimony of a mighty angel will show that God’s Word has opposite affects for believers and unbelievers (Rev. 10).

## Jesus appears as a conquering angel taking possession of his territory but does not disclose God’s plan in the seven thunders (10:1-7).

## God’s plan shown in the little scroll that John eats includes protection for believers and peril for unbelievers (10:8-11).

# II. The testimony of two witnesses will show God’s protection for believers and wrath for unbelievers (11:1-14).

## God’s *protection of the righteous* will be seen in two witnesses to prophesy and destroy their enemies for three and a half years (11:1-10).

## God’s *wrath on unbelievers* will be seen when the witnesses are martyred and resurrected before their enemies, and then 7000 enemies will die in an earthquake (11:11-14).

# III. The testimony of heaven’s elders in the seventh trumpet (woe #3) has no specific judgment connected with it as it introduces the seven bowl judgments (11:15-19).

## Elders praise God that Christ reigns supremely (11:15-17).

## Elders praise God that Christ judges righteously (11:18a, 18c).

## Elders praise God that Christ rewards graciously (11:18b).

## God powerfully assures of his faithful presence (11:19).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will choose Christ’s grace over his judgment (and help others do the same).

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: Christ will show grace to believers even when judging the earth.

#### His grace will be shown to remove believers prior to the Tribulation (“Left Behind” beginning clip).

#### His grace has already been seen in Revelation 7 towards those who remain so millions will trust him.

### Need: How do you see Christ’s grace in your life right now?

### Subject: How will Christ show grace even in the Tribulation?

### Background: The Tribulation will balance grace and wrath.

### Preview: Today we will begin “The Great Parenthesis” from Revelation 10–14. It will show three evidences of Christ’s grace during this awful time to remind us of his grace even now.

### Text: We’ll focus on chapters 10–11 today and chapter 12 next Sunday.

# I. Jesus will show God’s Word has opposite affects for believers and unbelievers (Rev. 10).

[Christ allows us to accept or reject his Word, but both have consequences.]

## Jesus appears as a conquering angel taking possession of his territory but does not disclose God’s plan in the seven thunders (10:1-7).

## God’s plan shown in the little scroll that John eats includes protection for believers and peril for unbelievers (10:8-11).

# II. Two witnesses will show God’s protection for believers and wrath for unbelievers (11:1-14).

## God’s *protection of the righteous* will be seen in two witnesses who prophesy and destroy their foes in the first half of the Tribulation (11:1-10).

## God’s *wrath on unbelievers* will be seen when he publicly resurrects the witnesses and kills 7000 enemies in an earthquake (11:11-14).

# III. Heaven’s elders will praise God for his gracious presence (11:15-19).

## Elders praise God that Christ rules supremely (11:15-17).

## Elders praise God that Christ judges righteously (11:18a, 18c).

## Elders praise God that Christ rewards graciously (11:18b).

## God powerfully assures of his faithful presence (11:19).

(So how will Christ show his grace even in the Tribulation?)

# Conclusion

### Jesus will protect believers and judge unbelievers (MI).

### Who are the witnesses that teach grace over judgment (MPs)?

#### Jesus will show God’s Word has opposite affects for believers and unbelievers (Rev. 10).

#### Two witnesses will show God’s protection for believers and wrath for unbelievers (11:1-14)

#### Heaven’s elders will praise God for his gracious presence (11:15-19)

### Will you choose Christ’s grace over his judgment?

### Who can you help do the same?



**Rick Griffith**

2 March 2014

Message 13 of 20

**The Grace Witnesses**

***Revelation 10–11***

# Introduction

### Christ will show grace to believers even when judging the earth.

### “The Great Parenthesis” goes from Revelation 10–14. Chapters 10–11 give three evidences of Christ’s grace during this awful time to remind us of his grace even now.

# I. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will show God’s Word has opposite \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for believers and unbelievers (Rev. 10).

## Jesus appears as a conquering angel taking possession of his territory but does not disclose God’s plan in the seven thunders (10:1-7).

## God’s plan shown in the little scroll that John eats includes protection for believers and peril for unbelievers (10:8-11).

# II. Two \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will show God’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for believers and wrath for unbelievers (11:1-14).

## God’s *protection of the righteous* will be seen in two witnesses who prophesy and destroy their foes in the first half of the Tribulation (11:1-10).

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## Elders praise God that Christ rules supremely (11:15-17).

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## God powerfully assures of his faithful presence (11:19).

(So how will Christ show his grace even in the Tribulation?)

# Conclusion

### Jesus will \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ believers and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ unbelievers (Main Idea).

### Will you choose Christ’s grace over his judgment?

### Who can you help do the same?

**Thought Questions:**

1. Read Revelation 10–11 aloud. Contrast:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Unbelieving Man’s Actions** | **God’s Gracious Actions** |
| Worship OT God (11:1) | Warns of judgment via his Word (10:10) |
| Trample Jerusalem 42 months (11:2) | Allows temple rebuilt (11:1; cf. Dan. 9:27) |
| Try to harm the two witnesses (11:5) | Sends witnesses of his grace |
| Kill the witnesses (11:7) | Preserve witnesses 3.5 years (11:2) |
| Gloat over death of witnesses (11:10) | Raise the witnesses (11:11) |
|  | Reign forever (11:15) |

1. What are the most obvious evidences of God’s grace in your life?

Salvation by grace through faith for a guy like me with no church background

Seven years at Dallas Seminary

God sustaining me for 23 years of ministry at Singapore Bible College

Text

1. Whom has God put in your path who needs to know Christ’s grace and wrath? How?

Bill & Carole Bourton

Sean Gwee