

Pastor Mark Mikels - May 31, 2020
DISCOVERING HOPE IN THE REVELATIONS OF
SCRIPTURE
"THE REVELATION OF GOD'S FINAL WITNESSES"
(Revelation 11: 3-12)

Intro ... This morning we step into the part of the Book of Revelation that does not seem to be perfectly sequential. Up until this point, it would seem that the events depicted followed one another in a fairly clear manner.

Beginning with chapter eleven, John receives revelations that might actually overlap one another as far as time goes. As I said last week, it's as if John is looking at the same period of time through different windows or vantage points. You'll see what I mean as we continue on.

Let me give a broad picture of the period that the Book of Revelation describes.

It's a Seven Year Period known as the '**Tribulation**' ...
The Church of Jesus Christ - all born-again believers - have been raptured (caught up to heaven) prior to the beginning of this period.

That seven-year period is divided into two 3 1/2 year periods. John sometimes identifies those periods as 42 months and other times as 1260 days ... either way, it's 3 1/2 years.

We could call them the **First Half** and the **Second Half**.
Some call the first half the '**tribulation**' (small t) and call the second half the '**Great Tribulation**' (capital T).

The **first part** can be considered to be 3 1/2 years of sinful man's rule on earth and the consequences of that while the second part can be considered to be God's Direct Judgment of the earth and the consequences of that.

As we have seen, the Church of Jesus Christ and the witness it bore and the restraint upon evil that it brought has been replaced by 144,000 Jewish Ambassadors for Christ who take the Gospel to the entire world.

Their ministry is primarily during the first half of the Tribulation.

Great persecution comes against those who 'Turn to Christ' ... There will be millions of them - more than can be numbered from every nation, tribe, people and language.

They become, what we have dubbed, 'The Second Chance Saints' - many of them are added to the 'Band of Martyrs.' It will not be an easy time to be a 'Follower of Jesus Christ.'

Sometime during this period of phenomenal ministry, the task of the 144,000 is completed - the last soul to be saved has been saved and it would seem ... all of them are 'caught up to heaven' in that great Palm Sunday type moment that John showed us in Chapter Seven.

So now we are ready to discuss ...

"HOPE-GENERATING REVELATION TWELVE"
- THE REVELATION OF THE TWO WITNESSES -
(Revelation 11: 3-12)

And as we enter into Chapter 11, let me share with you ...

TODAY'S KEY CONCEPT ...
God has **ALWAYS** had and always **WILL** have
a **WITNESS** in this fallen **WORLD** until the **END** of **TIME**.

Just by way of background, consider the Witness of:

ENOCH ... "See, the Lord is coming ... to judge everyone ..." - Jude 14

NOAH ... "A preacher of righteousness" - 2 Peter 2:5

JOSEPH ... "God will give Pharaoh the answer" - Genesis 41:16

MOSES ... "Let my people go" - Exodus 5:1

JONAH ... "In forty days, Nineveh will be overthrown" - Jonah 3:4

DANIEL ... "the Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men"- Daniel 5:21

JOHN the BAPTIST ... "Produce fruit in keeping with righteousness" - Luke 3:8

THE APOSTLES ... "You will be my witnesses ..." - Acts 1:8

Indeed, God has always **had** and always **will have**
a **witness** in this fallen world until the very end of time!

Nearly 2,000 years have passed since Jesus assigned that '*witness task*'
to his Apostles ... That '**Task**' has been passed along to every follower of
Jesus - to every born-again Child of God - from that day until now.

The Apostle Paul told the members of the Philippian Church that they were
to:

*'Hold out the Word of Life in the midst of their crooked
and perverse generation'* (Philippians 2:15-16)...

And on and on, down through all the years, a chain of Witnesses
for the Truths of God has been forged link by link.

The Heart of that witness is contained in **Two Key Verses.**
We all know them both ...

THE HEART OF OUR WITNESS ...

Genesis 1:1:

*"In the Beginning God **CREATED** the heavens and the earth."*

We witness to the fact that:

*'There is a **CREATOR** and we are **ACCOUNTABLE** to Him.'*

John 3:16:

*"**GOD** so loved the world that He **GAVE** His one and only Son,
that whoever **BELIEVES** in him shall not **PERISH**
but have **EVERLASTING** life."*

We witness to the fact that:

*"The **FORGIVENESS** of Sins and the Hope of Heaven
comes through **FAITH** in Jesus Christ."*

These two truths form the '*Heart of our Faith*' and when you share them
ferently with others, they serve to qualify you as one of God's
Witnesses on earth!

Now, as we continue to ready ourselves to jump into the Revelation of the Morning, and perhaps in preparation for a Revelation that God might be planning to give you this morning, let me draw your attention to ...

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION ...

Who is/has been God's **PRIMARY WITNESS** in your life?
(**Who** brought these **key truths** of the Scripture **to you**?)

To whom have **YOU BEEN** a primary witness?
(**To whom** have **you** brought these **key truths** of the Scripture?)

The point is we are '*Still on the Earth*'!
We are still God's Primary Witnesses!
We can make sure that in our corner of the world these **basic truths** of our faith are known by all those who know us!
However, there's coming a day when that will not be the case.
And that day forms ...

TODAY'S KEY FOCUS ...

GOD'S FINAL WITNESSES!

The **LAST** to bear witness for **GOD** upon the Earth.

Let's read their story ... Revelation 11:3-12 (Jesus is speaking to John)

"And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, (3 1/2 years) clothed in sackcloth." They are the two olive trees and the two lampstands, that stand before the Lord of the earth.

If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die.

They have power to shut up the heavens so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.

Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them and overpower and kill them. Their bodies will lie in the public square of the great city—which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt—where also their Lord was crucified.

For three and a half days some from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because

these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth.

But after the three and a half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them.

Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on."

THE KEY POINTS CONCERNING THESE WITNESSES...

*** They represent the 'LORD of the EARTH.'**

- There's no doubt about whose they are.
- They prophesy and testify for the Almighty.

*** They are given GREAT supernatural POWER**

- They can 'spew out fire' to destroy their enemies (and probably do).
 - They can keep rain from falling (and probably do).
 - They can turn the waters into blood (and probably do).
 - They can bring plague upon the earth (and probably do).
 - The people on earth hate them (and for good reason).

*** There's nothing in this passage that indicates SUCCESS**

- No positive response evident

*** They will be KILLED by the 'BEAST from the Abyss**

- This 'Beast' is surely a demonic being.
- The earth's people will rejoice.

*** They will be RESURRECTED and caught up to HEAVEN**

- After lying untended for 3 1/2 days breath re-enters them.
- They ascend to heaven while the world watches.

And so, God's **Final Witnesses** are removed from the earth!

Obviously, there's nothing more God needs to say.

Final Thot ...

TODAY'S REVELATION-GENERATED CAUSE FOR HOPE ...

**FAITHFULNESS not FRUITFULNESS is what counts
when bearing WITNESS for Christ!**