

The Book Of Revelation Study 53

Revelation 11:5-6 (NKJV)

⁵ *And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.*

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

THEIR POWER

Whether or not the two witnesses are Moses and Elijah, they will have miraculous power similar to those two Old Testament figures.

If they are to have a singular impact on and capture the attention of the world during the terrifying events of the second half of the Tribulation, they will need to be capable of miraculous deeds.

Like Noah before the Flood and Moses before the plagues on Egypt, the two witnesses will fearlessly proclaim God's judgment, wrath, vengeance, and the need for repentance.

Because of that they will be universally hated:

Revelation 11:9-10 (NKJV)

⁹ *Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves.*

¹⁰ *And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.*

Many will desire to **harm them** during the days of their preaching.

When that harm is attempted, they will react with miraculous power, **fire will flow out of their mouth and devour their enemies.**

There is no reason to assume that this is not real, literal fire, since God has in the past used fire to incinerate His enemies.

Leviticus 10:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ *Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them.*

² *So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.*

Numbers 11:1 (NKJV)

¹ *Now when the people complained, it displeased the Lord; for the Lord heard it, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the Lord burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp.*

Then about Korah, Dathan and Abiram and their rebellion against Moses.

Numbers 16:35 (NKJV)

³⁵ *And a fire came out from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense.*

Those who wish to **harm** the two preachers **must be killed in this way** because God does not want their preaching stopped until their ministry is complete and will judge with death those who try to halt it.

In both the Old and New Testaments, God often used miracles to authenticate His messengers.

In the tribulation time when the world is overrun by supernatural demonic activity, false religion, murder, sexual perversion, and rampant wickedness, the supernatural signs performed by the two witnesses will mark them as true prophets of God.

The extent of their Great Power will be revealed when they demonstrate **power to shut up the sky, so that it will not rain during the days of their prophesying.**

That will greatly intensify the torment people are experiencing.

The third trumpet judgment resulted in the poisoning of one-third of the earth's fresh water supply

Revelation 8:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water.

Added to that, the three and one half year drought lasting throughout the 1260 days of their preaching brought on by the two witnesses will cause widespread devastation of crops and loss of human and animal life through thirst and starvation.

Further, like Moses the two witnesses will **have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.**

The havoc these two miracle working preachers will wreak all over the earth will cause them to be hated and feared.

People will no doubt search desperately for a way to destroy them, but to no avail. They will be invulnerable and unstoppable for the duration of their ministry.

THEIR DEATH

Revelation 11:7-10 (NKJV)

⁷ When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.

⁸ And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

⁹ Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves.

¹⁰ And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

Sinful men will try desperately and unsuccessfully to get rid of the two witnesses throughout their ministry in a kind of kamikaze effort that results in their own incineration.

God, however, will protect them until **they have finished their testimony**, having achieved His purpose during their time He sovereignly determined for their ministry.

At the end of that time, **the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them.**

This is the first of thirty six references in Revelation to the **beast** and anticipates the more detailed information about him to come in chapters 13 and 17.

He is introduced here with emphasis on his origin. He is said to come **up out of the abyss**, indicating that he is empowered by Satan.

Since Satan is depicted as a dragon;

Revelation 12:3 (NKJV)

³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.

Revelation 12:9 (NKJV)

⁹ So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

This beast is not Satan. The revelation about him in chapter 13 indicates that the **beast** is a world ruler (often called Anti-Christ) who imitates the true Christ and rules over the people of the world, and demands their worship

Revelation 13:1-8 (NKJV)

¹ Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

² Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

⁴ So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

⁵ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.

⁶ Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

⁷ It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

⁸ All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

The **abyss** is the prison for certain demons. Though he is a man, the **beast** is energized by the demonic presence and power coming from the **abyss**.

The great joy and relief of the sinful world, is that the **beast** (Anti-Christ) **will** finally **overcome** the two witnesses **and kill them**.

After their deaths, **their dead bodies will** be contemptuously left to **lie** as rotting corpses **in the streets of the great city** where they ministered and where they were killed.

In the ancient world, exposing an enemy's dead body was the ultimate way of dishonoring and desecrating them,

God actually forbade the Israelites to engage in that practice

Deuteronomy 21:22-23 (NKJV)

²² *"If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree,*
²³ *his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God.*

The great city is Jerusalem, **mystically (or better “spiritually”)** called **Sodom and Egypt** due to its wickedness.

Tragically, the city of Jerusalem that was once God’s city will be so overrun with evil that it will be like the wicked city of **Sodom** and the evil nation of **Egypt**. These words are to show that the once holy city had become no better than places which were known for their hatred of the true God and His Word.

The footnote that the two witnesses will be killed in the city **where also their Lord was crucified** makes the identification of Jerusalem unmistakably clear.

That the two witnesses will die in the same city as their Lord suggests that, as it was for Him, that city will be the focal point of their preaching. It also appears that Jerusalem will be the seat of Anti-Christ’s rule.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 (NKJV)

³ *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,*
⁴ *who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

The use of the all inclusive phrase **peoples and tribes and tongues and nations** (5:9; 7:9; 10:11) indicates that people around the world **will look at the dead bodies** of the two witnesses.

In a morbid ghoulish display of contempt and hatred, **for three and a half days the world will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb.**

The unrepentant, sin hardened masses will want to gloat along with their leader, the Anti-Christ, and glorify him for his victory over the two irritating preachers, who brought the drought and proclaimed the hated gospel.

The deaths of the two witnesses will touch off wild celebrations around the world.

Incredibly, **those who dwell on the earth** (technical term for unbelievers), will **rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.**

Ironically, this is the only mention in Revelation of rejoicing. Sinners will be happy because those who declared to them God’s judgments, **tormented** them with miracle power and messages condemning their sin and proclaiming God’s impending judgment (*V 5-7*), and called for them to repent are dead.

This emotional response graphically reflects the finality of their rejection.

THEIR RESURRECTION

Revelation 11:11-12 (NKJV)

¹¹ *Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.*

¹² *And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.*

The partying and gift giving of "Dead Witnesses Day" will be suddenly and dramatically halted by a most shocking event.

After the three and a half days during which their bodies lay in disgrace on a Jerusalem street, **the breath of life from God came into** the two witnesses, **and they stood on their feet.**

Needless to say, **great fear fell upon those who were watching them.**

Panic will seize the unregenerate world as their hated and reviled tormentors suddenly spring to life.

If this is viewed on television, it will be replayed repeatedly.

They no doubt expected the two resurrected witnesses to resume their ministry of preaching and working miracles, but God had other plans.

There came a **loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here"**

This is likely the voice of the Lord, who summoned John to heaven in 4:1

Then the two preachers **went up into heaven in the cloud**, as **their enemies watched them** in awe.

This two man Rapture will no doubt also be replayed endlessly for the entire world to see. It is reminiscent of the ascension of Elijah in 2 Kings 2:11 and the mysterious death and burial of Moses in Duet 34:5-6.

Some may wonder why the two witnesses were not permitted to preach after their resurrection.

Listen, signs and wonders do not make the gospel believable, because *"if unbelievers do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead (Luke 16:31)*

After hearing the teaching and observing the miraculous ministry of the Son of God, unbelievers rejected and killed Him.

Their ministry completed, the two ascended with the whole world watching up to God's glorious presence, where they no doubt heard Him say, *"Well done, good and faithful slave, enter into the joy of your master"* (Matt 25:21)

THEIR IMPACT

Revelation 11:13 (NKJV)

¹³ *In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

Punctuating the resurrection of the two witnesses, **in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake.**

The term **people** in the Greek text is literally “names of men”.

That unusual phrase may indicate that the **seven thousand** who were killed were prominent people, perhaps leader’s in Anti-Christ’s world government.

As a result of the violent earthquake, and the astonishing resurrection of the two witness, **the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.**

The rest must refer to inhabitants of Jerusalem, Jews who will come to faith in Christ.

Supporting that interpretation is the fact that giving **glory to the God of heaven** is a mark of genuine repentance in Revelation and elsewhere in Scripture;

Revelation 19:7 (NKJV)

⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

And then the 10 lepers;

Luke 17:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?"

And then Abraham;

Romans 4:18-20 (NKJV)

¹⁸ who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be."

¹⁹ And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.

²⁰ He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,

This passage, then, describes the reality of the salvation of Jews in Jerusalem, as God fulfills His pledge of blessing for Israel

Romans 11:4-5 (NKJV)

⁴ But what does the divine response say to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal."

⁵ Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

Romans 11:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

On that positive, hopeful note, the interlude ends.

For the unbelieving world, however, it ends with the sobering warning that **the second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly.**

The seventh trumpet (**the third woe 9:12**) will soon sound, bringing with it the final, bowl judgments and the return of Christ in glory to set up His kingdom.

The word **quickly** (*Tachu*) means “soon”

Revelation 2:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ *Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.*

Revelation 3:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ *Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.*

Revelation 22:7 (NKJV)

⁷ *"Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."*

Revelation 22:12 (NKJV)

¹² *"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.*

Revelation 22:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ *He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*

This expresses the immanency of the last **woe**, which is the seven bowl judgments ushered in by the sounding of the seventh trumpet.