

25. The Return of the Two Witnesses to Heaven

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why the people in rebellion against God will only rejoice one time during the tribulation. We saw that will happen when the beast out of the bottomless pit kills the two witnesses. In this topic, we will see what God did after these two witnesses have lain in the street of Jerusalem for three-and-a-half days.

In Revelation 11:11-14, we read, “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. 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. 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. The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.” Here, we see that the Lord is the One who has the final word about the ministry of the two witnesses.

After three-and-a-half days of lying in the street, these two bodies will certainly have the smell of death on them. Martha said to Jesus, in John 11:39, “‘Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been *dead* four days.’” However, God will now give the whole earth the opportunity to see the power of God displayed. We see that the breath of life from God entered into them. Genesis 2:7 says, “And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” In the same way that the breath of life gave life to Adam, that breath of life will here give life to the dead bodies of the two witnesses. Then, these two witnesses will stand on their feet. This will cause all those who see them to be filled with a great fear. Suddenly, the entire earth will have visual proof that God is able to raise the dead.

However, what happens next will only increase the fear of the people of the earth. There will suddenly be a loud voice from heaven saying to the two witnesses, “Come up here.” We see that they will immediately ascend into heaven in a cloud as their enemies watch them. Acts 1:9 says, “Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.” Here, we see that the two witnesses will ascend into heaven in the same way that Christ ascended. This will be followed by a great earthquake. Seven thousand people in Jerusalem will be killed. Many of these deaths will probably be among their enemies who saw them.

However, this will have a very different effect on the Jews. We see that the rest of the people in Jerusalem will be afraid and give glory to the God of heaven. These Jews who give glory to God are the beginning of the fulfillment of Zechariah 12:10, which says: “And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only *son*, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.” Then, 1 Corinthians 1:22-24 says, “For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling

block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” This opportunity to see the resurrection and ascension of the two witnesses into heaven will be a great sign to the Jews in the tribulation and we see that many in Jerusalem will give glory to the God of heaven.

We also see that this event means that the second woe is past and that the third woe is going to come quickly. We saw, in Revelation 9:13-21, that one-third of the population will be killed by demons as a part of the second woe. During this time, we also see that the two witnesses will be carrying out their ministry. They will be killed and then rise from the dead and be taken to heaven followed by a great earthquake in the city of Jerusalem. Here, the promise is given that the third woe will come quickly. Revelation 11:16 says, “Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!’” Here, we see that the seventh angel now sounds his trumpet.

We see that the sounding of this trumpet will cause loud voices to be heard in heaven. This is due to the fact that all remaining judgments are a part of the seventh trumpet judgment. In Revelation 12:12, we read, “Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.” Here, we see that Satan will be confined to the earth during most of the period of this third woe. As a result, he will focus his attacks on the nation of Israel, because Christ came from that nation. God will bring judgment on the earth with the seven bowl judgments which are a part of the seventh trumpet judgment. Then, both religious and commercial Babylon will be destroyed. When the remaining judgments are completed, the third woe will also be completed and the reign of Christ on this earth for a thousand years will begin.

This is why these loud voices will be rejoicing in heaven because they can see that Christ will soon rule. That is why they say, “The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” Christ said, in John 12:31, “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.” Satan is the ruler of this world and Christ knew that Satan would soon be defeated. John 16:11 says, “Of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.” The angels, and all of the saints in heaven, will begin to celebrate because they realize the thousand-year reign of Christ is coming and Satan will then have his judgment completed, and then the kingdom of Christ will be eternal.

We see the rejoicing of the saints in heaven in Revelation 11:16-19, where we read: “And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: ‘We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come, because You have taken Your great power and reigned. The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth.’ Then, the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.” In these verses, we see that the saints will fall on their faces and

worship God.

This rejoicing and thanks to God for judging those in rebellion first speaks of who God is. These words remind us that He is the Lord God Almighty. The word “Lord” speaks of the One to whom we belong. God Almighty speaks of the fact that He is the ruler of all. Those who are presently in rebellion against God will soon have their rebellion judged and that rebellion will come to an end. We also see that He is the, “One who is and who was and who is to come.” Revelation 1:7-8 says, “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End,*’ says the Lord, ‘who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’” Here, we see that Christ is the One who is the Eternal One who will rule forever. He has no beginning and no end. He is the One who has taken His great power and is ready to begin His rule in the earthly kingdom very soon and then that kingdom will become the eternal kingdom.

Earlier in Revelation, we saw that the nations were filled with great fear as they experienced some of the earlier judgments. However, this worship of Christ shows that this fear has turned to anger. We see that the reason for this anger is due to the fact that the time of Christ’s wrath against all rebellion has come. This is a reminder of the fact that those in rebellion against Christ will continue to show their anger and rebellion until they are destroyed. Revelation 19:19-21 says, “And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then, the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.” After that, they will face the eternal judgment mentioned in Revelation 20:11-15.

In contrast, the saints can rejoice because Christ is going to reward the prophets and the saints and all those who fear His name. It will not matter whether the prophets and saints have been unknown or had a great influence on many. We will all be rewarded for our works. 1 Corinthians 3:14 says, “If anyone’s work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward.” However, all the rebellious on the earth will be destroyed. At this point, we also see that the temple of God in heaven will be opened. We see that God will reveal the ark of His covenant. The earthly Holy of holies was opened when Christ finished His payment for sin on the cross. Here, the heavenly Holy of holies, containing the ark of His covenant, will be opened, revealing the eternal salvation of those who turned to Christ, provided by His blood of the New Covenant. This is revealed at the same time God is judging those on the earth. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others why it is so important to receive the blessings of the New Covenant while they have the opportunity. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to explain these things to others.