

What is YOUR RESPONSE to God's Two Witnesses?

Thursday, 8/11 at 7 + Sunday, 8/14 at 8:00 & 10:45
9th Sunday after Pentecost / 8th Sunday after Trinity – 2011

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, in chapter 10 we saw John eat the “*little book*,” which was *sweet in his mouth* but *bitter in his stomach*. Regarding the bitter part, Eileen shared a great insight with me last week: Food is sweet when we eat it; however, when it becomes bitter in our stomachs, *it must come out!* That fits in perfectly with chapter 11 – as we read of God’s Word *being proclaimed, coming out* to the world!

1. **God’s Two Witnesses Proclaim the Truth:**

- a. ¹ Then there was given me [John] a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, “Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. ² Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread underfoot the holy city for forty-two months [the NT era]. Some parts are measured, one part is not; within the *visible church* (all who SAY they are Christians) are many who do not know Jesus Christ as Savior! (Becker, pgs. 164, 165)
- b. ³ And I will grant *authority* to **my two witnesses**, and **they will prophesy** [the contents of the little book] for twelve hundred and sixty days [the NT era], clothed in sackcloth [a visible expression of repentance]. ⁴ **These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.** So, WHO or

WHAT are the two witnesses? The two *means* or *channels* through which the H. S. works to ♦ reveal sin and ♦ unite to Christ, namely, *Word and Sacrament!* In today's world, most churches ☹️ pervert the Word or ☹️ deny the power of the Sacraments or ☹️ both!

- c. **5** And if anyone wants to harm **them**, fire flows out of **their** mouth and devours **their** enemies; so if anyone wants to harm **them**, he must [*δεῖ*, *it is necessary*] be killed in this way. **6** **These** have the power [*authority*] to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and **they** have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as **they** desire." Let us understand *the POWER of God's witnesses!*

2. **God's Two Witnesses are Put to Death:**

- a. **7** When **they** have finished their testimony [^{NAU} Matt. 24:14 "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come."], the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with **them**, and overcome **them** and kill **them** [*then evil will reign*]. **8** And **their** dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city [*Jerusalem*] which ~~mystically~~, spiritually[?] is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. Dr. Becker explains *WHEN* the visible church will deserve to be called Sodom and Egypt, see pages 170-171 (*today!*)!
- b. **9** Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at **their dead bodies** for three and a half days [*probably the "short time" of Rev. 20:3; compare 3.5 days (short time) with 1260 days (NT era) = 0.0028 x 2,011 = about 6 days*], and will not permit **their dead bodies** to be laid in a tomb [*since seeing their dead bodies will*

make them happy].¹⁰ And those who dwell on the earth 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. How does Word and Sacrament torment unbelievers? Dr. Becker wrote: Their “message... rebukes [sharply blames or scolds] **them** either for their ungodly life or their wrong religious opinions” (172).

3. **God’s Two Witnesses are Raised to Life:**¹¹ But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into **them**, and **they** stood on **their** feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them [their coming to life will give “...evidence that their message had been divine and therefore, true.” (Becker, 173)].¹² And **they** heard a loud voice from heaven [or the sky] saying to **them**, “Come up here.” Then **they** went up into heaven in the cloud [like Jesus’ ascension], and their enemies watched **them**.¹³ And in that hour [when the two witnesses went up to heaven] there was a great earthquake [these are other “GREAT earthquake” references: Ezekiel 38:18-20; Luke 21:8-11, 25-28; Revelation 6:12; what about Elenin, see the 6-26-11 sermon], and a tenth of the city fell [“...the visible church is of itself not a place of safety” (Becker, 174), **only Jesus Christ**]; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven [^{NAU} Phil. 2:11 “...every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord...” but not unto salvation].¹⁴ The second woe [trumpet six] is past; behold, the third woe [trumpet seven] is coming quickly.

4. **The Seventh Trumpet, the End of the World:**

- a. ¹⁵ Then the seventh angel [8:2] sounded [^{NAU} 1 Thess. 4:16 “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven...with **the**

trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.”]; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.” ¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God [4:4, 10; 5:8], fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying, “We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who ~~are~~ [is] and who ~~were~~ [was], because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. Finally, *Christians on earth and in heaven will SEE the REALITY of what they BELIEVE!*

- b. ¹⁸ And the nations were enraged [*their status will finally be confirmed, they are the losers*], and Your wrath came, and the time *came* for the dead to be judged, and *the time* to reward Your ~~bond-servants~~ [slaves] the prophets and the saints [*namely*] those who fear Your name, the small and the great [*“All Christians, without regard for their importance in the eyes of the world will share in the reward.” (Becker, 177)*], and to destroy those who destroy the earth.” ¹⁹ And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant ~~appeared~~ [was seen] in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm. Even though judgment is coming for unbelievers, LET US BE AT PEACE – *because* Jesus “loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood...” (Rev. 1:5 ESV).

Conclusion: And all God’s people said: *Amen!*