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THE WRATH OF CHRIST REVELATION 7-11

Preparing for the Wrath of Christ

FOR THREE AND a half years the Antichrist has had his supremacy over the earth. It is now time for Christ to release His judgment upon the Antichrist and his kingdom. These judgments are not the day and hour of God's judgment upon the earth; they come from the hands of Christ, the Lamb of God (Revelation 6:16). Perceiving what is about to come upon them, the people cry out "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the *wrath of the Lamb...*" (emphasis added). Apparently the people are running to their underground bunkers for protection, but there is no hiding from the wrath of Christ.

No amount of physical preparation will shield us from these times of trouble.

Before Christ's judgments are poured out, there are preparations in heaven that must take place.

The four angels in charge of releasing Christ's judgments upon the earth and seas are told not to do any harm until after the 144,000 Israelites, who kept themselves pure before God, were sealed with God's protection; they would not experience Christ's judgment. The great multitude of martyred ones, who were given white robes in Revelation 6, rejoice, knowing these judgments will bring their salvation.

Once these preparations are complete in heaven, Christ is ready to release His wrath upon the earth.

The Wrath of Christ

In Revelation 8-11, we are introduced to the seven trumpets of Christ's judgments. When the seventh seal is opened, there is silence in heaven for half an hour as the seven angels standing before God are given the seven trumpets of Christ's wrath. Another angel is given much incense to offer upon the golden altar—along with the prayers of all the saints—that is before God's throne. The prayers of God's people will now be answered as the angel takes a censer, fills it with fire from off the altar, and casts it into the earth. The seven angels now prepare to blow the seven trumpets.

In contrast to the Antichrist, who used military might, economic power, and the law to kill God's people, Christ unleashes His wrath upon the Antichrist and those who follow him using what He has made—the forces of creation.

The first trumpet sounds and hail and fire mingled with blood burn up one-third of all trees and green grass. When the second trumpet sounds, something resembling a burning mountain is thrown into the sea and one-third of it becomes blood, one-third of the creatures within it die, and one-third of the ships are destroyed. After the third trumpet sounds, a large burning star causes one-third of all fresh water to become bitter and undrinkable, and countless people die. When the fourth trumpet sounds, one-third of the sun, the moon, and the stars become so dark that the day loses one-third of its light.

As bad as these four trumpets are, another angel flies through heaven lamenting the horror of the three trumpets which are about to sound. So horrible are these trumpets that the angel calls them woes.

In Revelation 9 the first woe comes when the fifth trumpet sounds. An angel is given the key to open the bottomless pit, releasing a hoard of locusts with scorpion tails to torment for five months everyone who does not have the seal of God in their forehead. So terrible is this judgment that the people want to die, but will not be able to.

The second woe accompanies the blast of the sixth trumpet, releasing the four angels bound in the Euphrates River. These angels motivate an army of two hundred

million Asians that kills one-third of mankind. The only Asian nation in our world today with this capability is China. When added to the one-fourth who were killed when the fourth seal was opened, one-half of the world's population will be killed in a very short period of time.

With all that has happened, it is incredible that people still refuse to repent and turn toward God, preferring their sin and the things of this earth.

The second woe continues in Revelation 10 where we find a mighty angel with the seven-sealed book open in his hand. He encourages John to take it and eat it. When John does, it is sweet until digested and the understanding of what is taking place becomes reality. The angel tells him to "prophecy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" (Revelation 10:11).

We who understand what is taking place also have the responsibility to warn others so they might trust their lives to God. The prophet Daniel is clear when he states that in these last days, "...they that understand among the people shall instruct many..." (Daniel 11:33). It is a dreadful thing to have knowledge of impending danger and not warn others of their doom. Who would walk by a burning house and not warn the occupants inside of the impending danger? Neither can God's people have knowledge of future events, yet refuse to warn others.

The second woe continues with the appearance of God's two witnesses. They appear toward the end of the

three-and-a-half year rule of the Antichrist, the same time period in which Christ's wrath is poured out.

These two are not men as many have supposed, but are *two olive trees* and *two candlesticks*. With this identification we know these two witnesses are Israel and the Church which have reawakened to the power of Christ after having been purged and made white by the persecution of the Antichrist (Daniel 11:35; Revelation 6:9-11). For more details on these two being Israel and the church, see Appendix E. Israel and the church release the judgments of Christ in the spirit of Moses and Elijah as they have the power to stop the rain from falling, to turn water into blood, and bring a variety of plagues upon the earth as often as they choose. When their ministry is finished, three and a half years later, the Antichrist will kill them and their bodies will lie in the streets of our cities throughout the earth. Three days after their death, these witnesses will rise up and ascend into heaven; this is the event that immediately precedes what we call the rapture. The same hour the dead in Christ ascends, a great earthquake erupts and one-tenth of Jerusalem collapses, killing seven thousand. This ends the events of the second woe.

The third woe begins when the seventh trumpet sounds. At this time, the kingdoms of the world are turned over to Christ as He unites with His great power as God, no longer sitting at God's right hand, but now sitting on the throne of God. This uniting is also spoken of in Matthew 19:28 and 1 Corinthians 15:24-28. This uniting infuriates

the nations as they realize that the hour for God's anger to be poured out is at hand, the dead will be judged, rewards will be given to God's people, and God will destroy all those who destroyed the earth. When Christ unites with his Father, God's throne, and God's power, He is no longer our advocate or redeemer—He becomes our judge. The temple of God is now open in heaven and ready for His people to enter.

A lot has happened in Revelation 6 through 11. The next chapter gives insight into why these events have taken place.

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APPENDIX E

THE TWO WITNESSES

WHEN I FIRST published *Hard Times Coming: An Overview of the Book of Revelation*, I had followed the traditional teaching concerning the two witnesses of Revelation 11 and identified them as two men, Moses and Elijah.

As I reread and meditated upon what I had written, I was amazed at how I did not follow the same rules of interpretation I had followed throughout the book. I did not let Scripture interpret Scripture, but let tradition influence my interpretation. As we look at these two witnesses nowhere is there any clear Scripture support for these two witnesses being men and none, other than the power they exhibited, for them to be Moses and Elijah. However, when Scripture is permitted to interpret itself it becomes clear that the two witnesses are Israel and the Church. Scripture has taken the guesswork out of identifying them. Look at these verses in Revelation 11:3-4:

“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.”

It is clear that the two witnesses are two olive trees and two candlesticks, not two individuals.

TWO OLIVE TREES

When we let Scripture interpret itself, it is clear who the two olive trees and two candlesticks are. Israel is referred to as a green olive tree:

“And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;” (Romans 11:17)

“The LORD called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit:” (Jeremiah 11:16a)

Also note in Romans 11:17 above that the church is referred to as a wild olive tree grafted into Israel, the green olive tree.

Scripture is clear that the two olive trees are Israel and the church. To understand these witnesses as two men is to move away from the clear sense of Scripture.

TWO CANDLESTICKS

Scripture is also clear that the church is the candlesticks as referred to in Revelation 1:20:

“The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.”

Though it is clear that each of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 are a candlestick, yet the two candlestick witnesses are not seven in number, but only two. The reason for this is because there were only two of the seven churches which were true witnesses of Christ: the church at Smyrna and the church at Philadelphia (Revelation 2:8-11; 3:7-13). The other five churches were condemned because they did not have the Holy Spirit alive within them; they had conformed their Christianity and tolerated sin.

Scripture is clear that the candlesticks refer to the church.

THE GREAT CITY

We are told in Revelation 11:8 that the dead bodies of the two witnesses will be seen in the “great city.” Some have thought this “great city” referred to Jerusalem. We know this cannot be Jerusalem because it is called Sodom and Egypt. Though Israel has been referred to as Sodom (Isaiah 1:10), never has she been referred to as Egypt. In *Appendix D: Babylon Is the Earth*, of this book, it is clear that Babylon is the “great city” and the great city is the earth. When scripture speaks of the dead bodies of God’s two witnesses being seen in the “great city,” it informs us that throughout the earth, Israel and the church will lie dead in our streets and then three days later those dead in Christ will rise again and be caught up in the air to meet Christ.

Scripture is clear that the great city is the earth.

GOD’S GENERATIONAL WITNESSES

Israel and the church have been known from the beginning of their existence as God’s witnesses as these verses reveal:

Concerning Israel:

“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall

there be after me.” (Isaiah 43:10; Deuteronomy 7:6-8)

Concerning the church:

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

Scripture is clear that the two witnesses are Israel and the church. To see them as two people seems to move from the clear sense of Scripture. As we understand the implications of you and I as the church being the witnesses, there is an absolute awe as we consider what we will soon experience.

GREAT POWER

One of the lessons we learn with Jesus’ temptation is that great power is preceded by great temptations. Scripture is clear that the time will soon be upon us when the church and Israel will go through great troubles in order to make us clean and pure ready to meet him at his coming. The result of this cleansing will be great power so that God’s people, with the Holy Spirit active and alive in full power, will be able to do many great exploits such as stopping the rain from falling, turning water into blood, and bringing a

variety of plagues upon the earth as often as they choose. The ultimate end to this power is the end that has come to all God's prophets: death. Jesus taught that his disciples would do greater works on earth than he has done (John 14:12). This verse is usually interpreted to mean our ability to preach to millions of people. However, when Jesus speaks of works he is also referring to his miracles. The works performed so far by the church have not been greater. Jesus spoke these words looking forward to the time of the end when the rain would be stopped, water turned to blood, etc. This type of power will be upon us when the Holy Spirit is fully awakened within, and is what Daniel refers to as exploits that will be done by God's people during the time of the Antichrist (Daniel 11:32) and what Joel saw concerning the outpouring of God's Spirit in its fullness (Joel 2:28-32).

Our present age is leading you and I to this that time of ultimate sacrifice. The trouble with today's church is the same as it has been with the church throughout its history: the majority who claim the name of Christ do not know Christ. As a faithful witness, able to withstand the great troubles ahead, it is essential that we 1) learn today to live with the Holy Spirit truly alive within us 2) learn to be lead and taught by God 3) learn to truly to take up our cross, deny ourselves, and follow Christ. Now is the time to prepare for the hard times coming before the boat tips over.