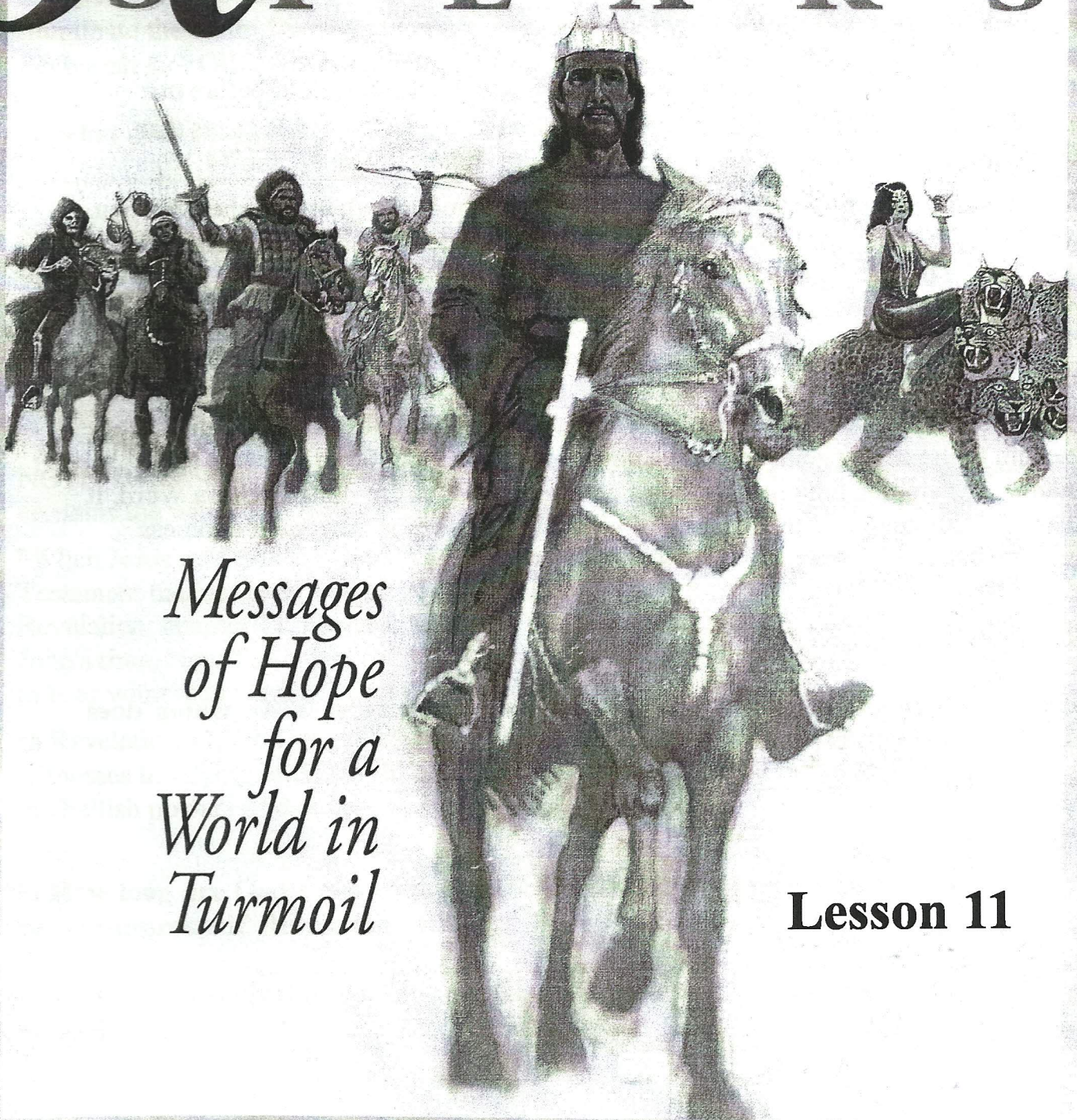


# Revelation

## S P E A K S



*Messages  
of Hope  
for a  
World in  
Turmoil*

**Lesson 11**

## God's Two Witnesses Resurrected

[This chapter is based on Revelation, Chapter 11]

In today's lesson we shall see the drama between good and evil unfold before *our* eyes. Satan hates God's Word, *for* it is the source of all truth. The Bible states that Satan "is the father of lies" (John 8:44). Jesus is the Author of truth (John 14:16).

Throughout the centuries the devil has labored to introduce errors into the Christian church. After the death of Christ and the disciples, Satan influenced early church leaders to take the easy, popular way. Rather than stand stalwartly for truth, many compromised. Society's pagan practices greatly influenced the church. Erroneous doctrines entered like a flood.

*For* more than a thousand years, during the period known as the Dark Ages, Satan labored to suppress the study of the *Scriptures*. During the Reformation, from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, new light from God's Word shone in all its brilliance. During this time Satan made a concentrated effort to destroy God's Word. It is this unfolding drama of the triumph of God's Word over the powers of darkness which we shall study today.

*READ: Revelation 11: 1-19.*

**1. The central theme of Revelation 11 is introduced in verse 3. To whom does God give unusual power? Revelation 11:3.**

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**2. What two symbols are used to describe these two witnesses in verse 4?**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: God's two witnesses are pictured in the dual symbolism of olive trees and lampstands. In Zechariah 4:2, 3, olive trees provide golden oil for lampstands *to* illuminate the earth: "Not by might nor by power but by *my* spirit saith the *Lord*. I Zechariah 4:6. Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit throughout the Bible.

**3. What does the lamp stand or light represent in the Bible? Psalm 119:105**

NOTE: The Bible refers *to* the Word of God as a lamp. In other verses of Scripture, the Word of God is spoken of as a light-a light *to* dispel darkness and illuminate truth.

**4. Who is the true Light of the World of whom the Scriptures bear witness? John 8:12; 5:39**

NOTE: Both the Old and New Testaments testify of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament contains the witness of the prophets. They were the early preachers of the Gospel.

"When Jesus said that the Old Testament scriptures bore witness of Him, the New Testament had not been written yet. *By* the time John was writing the *Book* of Revelation, chapter 11, however, the New Testament was nearly complete. Thus, by John's time, New Testament scriptures as well as Old Testament scriptures were ready *to* bear witness *to* Christ." -*God Cares*, p. 300.

In Revelation 11, God symbolizes the Old and New Testaments as two living witnesses testifying of His truth. The chapter then describes the fierce opposition of the hellish powers of darkness warring against God's Word.

**5. How long are God's two witnesses pictured as "prophesying in sackcloth" or being suppressed? Revelation 11:3.**

Note: We shall study this prophetic period of 1,260 days in both Revelation 12 and 13 in detail.

### **Revelation Speaks - 3**

In these two later chapters, God's people are pictured as being persecuted by the "beast power" during the period most historians describe as the Middle Ages or Dark Ages. You will recall that in Bible prophecy, one prophetic day equals one literal year. This prophetic period represents 1,260 years (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6).

During the Dark Ages, from A.D. 538 to A.D. 1798, church and state united in Europe. The two witnesses were clothed in sackcloth, a symbol of mourning. During much of this period, the Bible was not readily available to the people. For one thing, it was not translated into the common language of the people. Very few people understood the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin translations.

Before the printing press in A.D. 1456, the few handwritten copies which existed were usually kept in monasteries. The medieval church taught that the common people could not understand the Bible. The church's view was that the Bible could only be understood by religious leaders, who would then interpret it for the people. In A.D. 1299, church leaders placed the Bible on the now infamous Index-a list of forbidden books for which the faithful were condemned if they read. God's witnesses, the Old and the New Testaments-His cherished Word-suffered a mortal blow.

**6. How powerful are these two witnesses, and what will eventually happen to those who attempt to destroy them? Revelation 11:5, 6.**

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**7. What prophet, through the power of God's Word, shut up heaven so that rain was withheld from the earth, as described in Revelation 11:5, 6? Compare James 5:17 with 1 Kings 17:1.**

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NOTE: Elijah called an apostate nation to obedience. His prophetic word shut up the heavens. Food and water was scarce. Challenging the false prophets, he called them to Mount Carmel. Here, through the power of the Word of God, he called fire down from heaven. Elijah called the nation from disobedience to obedience, from the worship of idols to the worship of the true God, from apostasy to truth.

**8. What does the Bible predict would happen to God's two witnesses at the end of this prophetic period of 1,260 years? Revelation 11:7.**

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**9. What does a beast represent in Bible prophecy? Daniel 7:17, 23.**

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NOTE: A beast represents a king or kingdom. Throughout the centuries Satan has worked through varying political or religious systems which have disregarded God's will. These rebel powers have been his agencies of deception and destruction.

**10. How is this political power described and what is it spiritually called?**

**Revelation 11:8.**

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NOTE: During most of the Dark Ages, the Word of God was suppressed. Toward the end of this period, a mighty reformation restored many of the truths lost sight of for centuries. A political power, described as spiritual Sodom and Egypt, waged a wicked battle against truth. Sodom is the ancient city which God destroyed because of its immorality. Egypt stood fiercely in opposition to the true God. This system, with its many gods, denied the true God. Wicked Pharaoh declared, "Who is God the Lord, that I should let Israel go?" Sodom and Egypt are symbols of atheism.

The question then might be asked, "What power arose in the late eighteenth century which exalted reason above the Scriptures and openly defied God?" There is only one. In his book, *The Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Sir Walter Scott commented: "In 1793 the world for the first time heard an assembly of men, born and educated in civilization assuming the right to govern one of the European nations, uplift their united voice to deny the most solemn truth which man's soul receives, and renounce unanimously the belief and worship of deity."

In spite of the bitter opposition to the Bible by the leaders of this atheistic movement, a spiritual revival rocked Europe. The saving grace of our Lord was presented as the only means of salvation. Satan reacted viciously against this renewed interest in God's Word. Bibles were gathered and burned. Churches and religious institutions were closed. The existence of God was denied. Fornication was legalized. France plunged into the horrors of the French Revolution. The nation was thrown into a state of chaos as it made war against the Bible. The two witnesses were figuratively slain in the streets of Paris. And an immoral woman was exalted as the Goddess of Reason! The light had gone *out*! The two witnesses were in mourning! The philosophies of the French Revolution set the world on a new course. The mind of man was placed above the Word of God. Reason was placed above revelation.

Although the French Revolution lasted only three and a half years, its humanistic seeds found fertile soil in the minds of Marx and Lenin. The atheistic, socialistic states in the former U.S.S.R., Eastern Europe, and China, which captured the minds of millions, were built on the foundation of the French Revolution. When man's reason is exalted above God's revelation, His two witnesses are symbolically clothed in

## **Revelation Speaks - 5**

sackcloth and ashes.

### **11. How long would this persecution and oppression of God's Word take place? Revelation 11:11.**

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NOTE: We found that three and a half prophetic days represent three and a half literal years. The French assembly voted to ban the Bible in November, 1793. And three and a half years later, just as predicted, in June of 1797, it was restored. God's Word proves its accuracy again!

When the French Revolution ended, the Bible enjoyed a greater circulation than it had had in centuries. The world's Bible societies were born. The Word of God was circulated by the tens of thousands of copies. The two witnesses have borne their testimony to the world.

### **12. Although the kingdoms of this world may threaten to destroy God's Word, suppress God's truth, and attack God's people, what is ultimately certain? Revelation 11:15-17.**

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### **13. Prior to Jesus' return, what does John see opened in heaven? What is in this temple? Revelation 11:19.**

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**Note:** The Bible describes two sanctuaries. One on earth built after the instructions of God by the Israelites, and the other in heaven. The earthly sanctuary was only a scale model of the great original in heaven. In both sanctuaries, the temple was the central feature.

In the Most Holy Place of the earthly sanctuary, at the base of God's Throne, the Ark of the Covenant rested. This Ark of the Covenant contained God's law. The law of God is the foundation of His throne. It is the foundation upon which all human law is based!

Before the second coming of Jesus, God's two witnesses again speak. The temple of God is opened in heaven. The attention of the human race is directed to God's law. A loving God appeals to men and women everywhere to love and obey Him. God's law

## Revelation – 6

in all of its magnificence calls us to obedience.

### ***My Response***

\_\_ Yes, I desire to listen to the voice of God's two witnesses in the Bible by lovingly obeying my Lord.

\_\_ I want to hold up the "two witnesses" to others so they will know God's truth for this hour.