PANTEGO Studies for families in Belonging, Becoming, and going Beyond Volume 15 Number 49 December 15, 2013

GOD WITH US "REJECTION" REVELATION 11:1-14

This Week's Core Competency

Eternity – I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish his eternal kingdom. John14:1-4 Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going.

"Jewish Christian" sounds like an oxymoron to modern ears. After all how can a person be a Jew and a Christian at the same time? It's easy to forget that the first Christians were all Jews. Jesus was a Jew; the Twelve were Jews; Paul was a Jew. On the relationship of Christians to Jews at the end of the first century with regard to the seven churches of Revelation, one commentator writes: "It is clear that the seven churches were in a hostile environment from two directions-the Jewish world and the Roman world. The 'synagogue of Satan' (2:9; 3:9) had turned against them. Relations between church and synagogue, never good from the start, deteriorated in the last couple of decades of the first century, and Revelation reflects that situation. Judaism had a special privilege that the Romans allowed only them, freedom from worshiping the

I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days.

– God

Roman gods and participating in the Greco-Roman cults. Christianity was considered part of Judaism at least through the Jewish War (A.D. 66-70) and also benefited from this privilege. However, Judaism tried more and more to separate itself from Christianity and get the Roman Empire to recognize that Christianity was not exempt. This probably caused some of the pressure reflected in the book" (Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, BECNT, 11).

Tensions between Christians and Jews, which have ebbed and flowed throughout the centuries, are still with us today as witnessed by the firestorm of protest over President George W. Bush's recent appearance at a fundraiser for the Messianic Jewish Bible Institute in Irving, Texas and the deportation of a Messianic Jewish man from England arrested for taking part in an evangelistic event in southern Israel. Regarding the first, "in the Jewish Daily Forward, the influential rabbi David Wolpe decried the entire messianic enterprise, saying, 'The sudden rise of "Messianic Jews" owes more to a clever way of misleading untutored Jews than to making theological sense. It should not receive the imprimatur of a former President of the United States" (Michael Luciano, "George W. Bush's 'Jews for Jesus' Causes Uproar, But It Shouldn't," www.policymic.com). Regarding the second, Jews for Jesus members fear there is a troubling possibility that Israeli immigration officials under the influence of Yad L'Achim, an ultra-orthodox, anti-Christian group, may have an unwritten directive to arrest foreign religious workers as part of a general crackdown on missionaries (see "Israel Orders Deportation of Jews for Jesus Missionary," www.christianitytoday.com).

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The fact that there are ethnic Jews and religious Jews explains how a Jewish person can be a Christian. Ironically, a Jewish person can even be an atheist. According to research done by Pew Research Center, "American Jews overwhelmingly say a person can be Jewish even if they work on the Sabbath (94%) or are strongly critical of Israel (89%). Two-thirds (68%) also say a person can be Jewish even if they do not believe in God. Far fewer say believing that Jesus was the messiah is compatible with being Jewish. Even here, however, a sizable minority (34%) says a person can be Jewish even if he or she believes Jesus was the messiah" (*A Portrait of Jewish Americans*, "Chapter 3: Jewish Identity," www.pewforum.org).

Contemporary acrimony aside, the Bible teaches that "all Israel will be saved" (Ro 11:26). Put differently, one day the Jewish people en masse will receive Jesus and believe in his name. Only a remnant of those in Israel who heard Jesus' words and witnessed his works accepted him as their messiah and savior. The vast majority, including its religious leaders, rejected him. The fact that his people as a whole rejected him raises the question; did God in turn reject his people? Paul says, "By no means!" (v. 1). While God passed judgment on the generation in Israel that cried out to Pilate, "Crucify him! . . . Let his blood be on us and on our children!" (Mt 27: 22, 25), and while he hardened them (Ro 11:8), for the sake of the patriarchs and the covenants he did not discard them (v. 28). So again the apostle asks, "Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all!" Paul answers. "Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious" (v. 11). Regarding God's plan, the apostle explains, "Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins" (vv. 25-26). The two witnesses described in Revelation 11:1-14 and the 144,000 mentioned earlier in 7:1-8 bear witness to the truth of the gospel that ultimately leads to Israel's salvation before Christ returns.

ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him. Revelation 11:1-14 them. 8 Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city,

1 I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshipers there. 2 But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. 3 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. 5 If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. 6 These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want. 7 Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill

them. 8 Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 For three and a half days men from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. 10 The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth. 11 But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. 12 Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on. 13 At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. 14 The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Box "like" indicating comparison in v. 1.
- * Circle "temple" in v. 1.
- * Box "but" indicating contrast in vv. 2, 11.
- * Circle "exclude" in v. 2.
- * Box "because" indicating reason in vv. 2, 10.
- * Underline "42 months" and "1260 days" in vv. 2, 3 respectively.
- * Circle "olive trees" and "lampstands" in v. 4.
- * Bracket "from their mouths" in v. 5.

- * Underline "shut up the sky," "turn the waters into blood," and "strike the earth" in v. 6.
- * Circle "the beast" and "Abyss" in v. 7.
- * Circle "the great city" in v. 8.
- * Underline "inhabitants of the earth" in v. 10.
- * Bracket "in a cloud" in v. 12.
- * Bracket "gave glory to the God of heaven" in v. 13.
- * Circle "second woe" and "third woe" in v. 14.



EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help. 1. John *excludes* the "outer court" in his survey of the temple and his count of the worshipers there. What does that signify?

2. The *metaphors* "two olive trees" and "two lampstands" used to refer to the two witnesses imply their *comparison* to Joshua the priest, and Zerubbabel the governor in Zechariah 4:2-3, 11-14. How so?

3. The two witnesses are hardly defenseless. Explain.

4. Their powers resemble those of two Old Testament characters. Identify them and explain.

5. What do you infer about the one who attacks the witnesses from his description in verse 7?

6. What do you infer from the fact the two are denied a burial?

7. Explain the *contrast* and perhaps the *irony* introduced in verse 11.

8. Were the two raised from the dead or resurrected from the dead? Explain.

9. **Discussion:** What do you make of the survivors' response to the earthquake?

day **B EXAMINE** – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Before the final phase of our Lord's Advent, his second coming, which will mark the end of this age and the beginning of the age to come, "all Israel will be saved" according to Paul (Ro 11:26). Two unnamed individuals simply called "my two witnesses" by God in Revelation 11:3 will minister with a view to achieving that end. They will prophesy and perform miracles for 1,260 days during an "awful time" prior to the Lord's return called "the time of trouble for Jacob" by Jeremiah (30:7; cf., "the time of Jacob's trouble," NKJV), "the time of wrath" and "a time of distress" by Daniel (8:19; 11:36, and 12:1 respectively; cf., "a time of trouble," 12:1 NKJV), a time of "great distress" by Jesus (Mt 24:21; cf., "great tribulation," NKJV), and the time of "messianic woes" by Jews.

This period will last seven years; it is the last "seven" of Daniel's prophecy of the seventy "sevens" (Dan 9:27a) and will be divided in half. In the middle of this week of years an unnamed wicked ruler "will put an end to sacrifice and offering" and "set up an abomination that causes desolation" in the temple (27b; cf., Mt 24:15). The reference to "42 months" in verse 2 and "1,260 days" in verse 3 of Revelation 11 allude to the two halves of the tribulation. People *will* be saved during this terrible time. Revelation 7:4 mentions specifically 144,000 from the tribes of Israel, not to mention a multitude of others from every people group on earth (vv. 9, 14; cf., 11:13).

Revelation 11:1-14 describes a number of things: 1) the command given to John to measure the temple and count the worshipers there (vv. 1-2), 2) his description of two witnesses and their prophetic ministry (vv. 3-6), 3) his description of their death (vv. 7-10) and 4) their resurrection (vv. 11-12) along with the earth-dwellers' reaction to each, and finally 5) his description of a severe earthquake and its consequences (vv. 13-14).

God gives John a measuring rod and tells him to measure the temple proper including the holy place, the holy of holies, and the altar of incense, and to count the worshipers. On the one hand, this measuring and counting suggests the temple and its worshipers belong to God and they come under his protection as their owner. One commentator explains: "The metaphor of measuring a city has nothing to do with determining its dimensions. It is a symbol of setting a city aside either for preservation or for destruction" (George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, 151). On the other hand, the deliberate exclusion of the outer court of the Gentiles and those in it implies the exact opposite. "The language indicates utter rejection and the reason is given–the Gentiles will tread underfoot the city of Jerusalem forty-two months" (Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Revelation*, 72)–likely an allusion to the last part of the tribulation.

God then tells John about his two witnesses, who will prophesy and perform miracles for 1,260 days. Commentators disagree over to which part of the tribulation this refers. But even though the text does not say specifically, it appears to refer to the first part, since the beast attacks and kills the two, but he doesn't come onto the scene in power, demonstrating his true character and demanding to be worshiped, until the middle of the tribulation. This would mean that the two minister alongside the 144,000 during the first part of the tribulation (72). And while their identity has sparked much speculation (see J. Dwight Pentecost, Things to Come, 304-309), it seems best to "take these men to be two Jewish prophets whom God will raise up during the Tribulation itself" (Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, The Footsteps of the Messiah, 234). John then explains that the two are authorized and anointed for their ministry, like Joshua the priest and Zerubbabel the governor in Old Testament times. And they know how to take care of themselves. If anyone tries to harm them, they simply say the word and their enemies are destroyed. And if that weren't enough, they have miraculous powers, too, powers like Elijah and Moses had, which the two use to authenticate their prophecies.

Next John reveals how the two die and how "the inhabitants of the earth" respond. Once they finish their evangelistic ministry, the beast (a.k.a. the little horn [Dan 7:8], the man of lawlessness [2Th 2:3], the Antichrist [1Jn 2:18]) attacks and kills them, leaving their dead corpses in the street of Jerusalem for all to see. The significance of this vile action is obvious. "To refuse to allow burial for the dead was a terrible insult in the ancient world (see Gen.40:19; 1 Sam. 17:43-47; 2 Kings 9:10; Tob. 2:1-8; Josephus, *J. W.* 3.8.5-6 ßß376-84). This emphasizes the universal scorn heaped upon the witnesses after they

are martyred" (Osborne, 426). Earth-dwellers gloat over them and celebrate by sending each other gifts in what amounts to a macabre anti-Christmas celebration in honor of the Antichrist. Too bad for them, their festivities are short-lived. They were tormented for three and a half years but can only celebrate the death of their tormentors for three and a half days! God raises them from the dead, and terror strikes the hearts of everyone who sees them. The two receive immortal bodies like the Lord's resurrection body and go up to heaven while their enemies look on. "At that very moment" (GNT), at "the same time" (NLT) they are resurrected, a violent earthquake destroys a tenth of the city (cf., Mt 28:2), leaving the survivors to make sense of what happened. At least some of them, while terrified, give glory to God. Put differently, they believe the message proclaimed by the two martyrs and are saved and added to the growing number of tribulation saints. Salvation, available in every age, is always by grace, through faith, based on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The Message of the Passage

In preparation for the second phase of our Lord's advent, two witnesses with power like Elijah and Moses will prophesy and perform miracles during the first half of the tribulation, and many will believe and be saved.



Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

• Journal your thoughts on the passage:

-Write about how God revealed himself to you . . .

-Write about how God wants to change you . . .

-Write about how God wants to use you to change your world . . .



notes N STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 1 temple "[Naos] is the only term used for the temple in this book (see on 3:12; 7:15) and refers to the building itself rather than the whole temple area . . . The [thusiasterion] then may well be primarily the altar of incense in keeping with its use in 6:9 and 8:3 [cf., Ryrie, 71]. With the combination of 'temple and altar' here, it is also likely that this refers to the inner 'sanctuary [the basic meaning of naos] rather than the whole complex of buildings . . . The major debate is whether we should take this literally of a reconstituted temple in the last days [with Seiss, Walvoord, Thomas] or figuratively of the church in this final period [Ladd, Mounce, Aune] or throughout church history [Caird, P. Hughes, Beale]" (Osborne, 410). The advice of one commentator is helpful at this point: "While it is recognized that Revelation does employ symbols, it seems a mistake to take all that is revealed there as symbolic" (Pentecost, 305). And so, "the temple here is apparently that which will be in existence during the great tribulation. Originally constructed for the worship of the Jews and the renewal of their ancient sacrifices, during the great tribulation it is desecrated and becomes the home of an idol of the world ruler (cf. 11 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:14-15; Dan. 9:27; 12:11)" (John F. Walvoord, The Revelation of Jesus Christ, 176).

v. 2 42 months "The 'forty-two months' (see also 13:5) is one of three ways the three and a half years (the one expression not found in Revelation) of Dan. 7:25; 9:27; 12:7, 11-12 are expressed in ensuing chapters-with '1,260 days' (an idealized time using thirty-day months in Rev. 11:3 and 12:6; Dan. 12:11 has the correct '1.290 days') and 'time, times and half a time' (with 'time' = one year, 'times' = two years in Rev. 12:14, alluding to Dan. 7:25; 12:7)" (Osborne, 414).

v. 4 two olive trees Two metaphors are used here to refer to the two witnesses. "This is a definite allusion to a vision of Zechariah, in which he saw a golden lampstand with seven lamps, flanked by two olive trees (Zech. 4:1-3) from which they drew their supply of oil (Zech 4:12). In Zechariah, these two represent the two anointed 'who stand by the Lord of the whole earth' (Zech. 4:14), his two witnesses, Joshua the priest (Zech. 3:1) and Zerubbabel the governor (Zech 4:6-7). The symbolism of Zechariah is used by John to affirm the divine authorization of the two witnesses and the source of their prophetic utterances" (Ladd, 154).

"Here is an allusion to the story of Elijah whose prophetic call was certified by fire from v. 5 fire . . . heaven (II Kings 1:11-12), but more clearly to Jeremiah, the words in whose mouth were a fire devouring a rebellious people (Jer 5:14). These two prophets bring destruction upon their enemies by the words they utter" (155)

"Like the Prophet Elijah, the two witnesses also have power to shut up the heavens that it v. 6 **power** cannot rain. This is reminiscent of the judgment of God imposed on Israel when in answer to Elijah's prayer it did not rain for three and one-half years, curiously the same length of time as the ministry of these two witnesses in Revelation. Like Moses, they have power to turn water into blood and to bring plagues upon the earth as often as they will (cf. Exodus 7:17-19) . . . these two witnesses have a combination of the greatest powers ever given prophets on earth, and this accounts for their ability to withstand their enemies for the entire period of 1,260 days" (Walvoord, 180).

v. 7 the beast "The beast or Antichrist was a familiar concept in Jewish-Christian thought and did not require detailed description. The idea goes back to Daniel 7 where a succession of great world empires is symbolized by the appearance of four fierce beasts. The fourth beast had ten horns, out of which grew another horn which was greater than its fellows (Dan. 7:20) and which 'made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.' This 'little horn' (Dan. 7:8) 'shall speak words against the Most High and shall wear out the saints of the Most High . . . , and they shall be given into his hand for a time, two times, and half a time' (Dan. 7:25). This little horn had an initial fulfillment in Antiochus Epiphanes, the Seleucid king who tried to turn the entire Jewish nation away from the worship of her God (see the account in 1 Maccabees), but it refers ultimately to the eschatological Antichrist" (Ladd, 155-56).

"Everywhere else in the Apocalypse the phrase refers to Rome (16:19; 17:18; 18:10, 16, 18, v. 8 the great city 19, 21 = 'Babylon the Great,' a euphemism for Rome; cf. 1 Pet. 5:13). It must refer to Jerusalem in this context, however, for 11:8 describes it as the place 'where also the Lord was crucified' . . . this 'great city,' like Sodom in its rebellion and like Egypt in the enslavement and bloodshed that typified its hatred of the people of God, is the place 'where also their Lord was crucified'" (Osborne, 426-27).

v. 10 inhabitants Cf., "all the people who belong to this world" (NLT). "This verse is framed by the technical term for the persecutors, 'earth-dwellers' (3:10; 6:10; 8:13 thus far) . . . emphasizing that they live only for the things of this earth and worship the earthly gods (9:20-12)" (428)

v. 13 gave glory "There is a great difference of opinion as to whether this is true repentance or the forced homage of a defeated foe" (Osborne, 433, see 434-35). Perhaps it's best to conclude with Ryrie, "Some may be converted because of this experience, but some will simply recognize divine power without personal repentance" (75).



Connect the **FAMILY**. Kids Kindergarten thru 6th grade receive Kid Pix tokens for discipleship

activities completed during the week.

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Note to Parents: For our Christmas series we will be using different texts than the adult scrolls. Each week in our series, The Perfect Gift, we will learn about a gift that was given to us through the Savior. This week we are focusing on the gift of Love. In Ephesians 5, we are told to love as Christ has loved us. His love led Him to give Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. I love the smells of Christmastime. The scent of fresh pine, cinnamon and apple cider drifting through the air makes me smile. Christ's sacrifice should do the same. We should smile when we remember His love and sacrifice for us. Likewise, 2 Corinthians 2:14-16 challenges us to be the aroma of Christ. What kind of scent are we giving off to others around us? Does it draw them to the love of Christ and make them smile? Use the following activity to get your family thinking about its "scent". Put drops of different liquids on cotton balls - cinnamon, vinegar, lemon juice, perfume, soy sauce. Ask your family to guess each scent and decide on a favorite. What are some ways your family can spread the aroma of Christ this season? Will others experience the sacrificial love of Jesus through you this season? I'm praying we all smell beautiful for Him!

What Does The Bible Say

Read: Read Luke 2:8-20

1. Who gave a message to the shepherds in the field?

2. What was the message?

3. What did the shepherds do?

What Do You Think

God sent Jesus to the earth because He loved us so much. Ephesians 5:1-2 tells us that we can live a life of love because Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. What are some ways we can be "imitators of God"?

What R U Going To Do

As a family, decide on some people you know that need to be shown the love of Christ this season—a neighbor who lives alone, a family that is going through a hard time? Do you live near a nursing home where people might be sick or lonely? Come up with a way to show these people the love of Christ. Write down what you plan to do.

MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Salvation by Grace - I believe that I become a child of God through faith in Jesus, not because of anything I do.

Memory Verse

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

I memorized CC _	and Verse	KIDPIX COUPON Family completed Say _		Do
Child's name		Grade Parent's s	ignature	
Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page. Questions: Kids@pantego.org				

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14* I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalm 121:1-2* I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John* 1:12 I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians* 4:15-16 I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John* 3:16 I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalm* 82:3-4 I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4 I believe there is a heaven and a hell

and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19* I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalm 95:1-7*I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.
Prayer *Psalm 66:16-20*I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.
Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew* 6:33 I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans* 12:4-6 I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes. Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world. **Giving Away My Time** *Colossians* 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians* 6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans* 12:1 I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4* I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus* 2:11-13 I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4* I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12* I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs* 14:29 I take a long time to overheat and

endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15 I choose to do the right things in my

relationships with others. **Gentleness** *Philippians* 4:5 I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you Belong, Become, and go Beyond as follower of Jesus Christ through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.