**Lesson 5**

**The mighty angel and a small scroll; The Two witnesses; The Woman, Child, and Dragon (Rev. 10-12)**

**The mighty angel and a small scroll**

**10:1** A mighty angel described as wrapped in a cloud with a rainbow over his head and a face like the sun seems to indicate a divine figure, such as Christ.

**10:2** The little scroll, though somewhat different, may be the same scroll the lamb opened in chapter 5. That book revealed God’s plans for the ages.

**10:3-4** The seven thunders may be a heavenly being, or the voice of God. They may be prepared to reveal upcoming judgments just like the seals and trumpets but are told to not do so. In Leviticus 26 there are four sets of seven judgments.

**10:9** The scroll would taste sweet to the mouth but would be bitter to the stomach, has some parallels to Jeremiah 15:15-18. The words of hope for believers would be sweet, but the judgment on unbelievers would be upsetting.

**10:10** Prophecy again, may represent John’s recommissioning as a prophet. He was previously commissioned in 1:10-20 and 4:1-2.

**The Two Witnesses**

**11:1** Measuring the temple is an acted-out parable. It may be referring to Ezekiel 40-48 where the prophet saw the future temple of God.

**11:2** Some have viewed this as a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. It more likely represents the Church.

The outer courtyard was the Courtyard of the Gentiles. This may represent the Church’s exposure to the secular, hostile world.

**11:3** 42 monthsequals roughly 3 ½ years. This is probably symbolic and can refer to many things. Jesus’ ministry was roughly 3 ½ years. Elijah and the drought in Israel lasted roughly 3 ½ years (Luke 4:25; James 5:17). The Israelites had 42 camp stops in their wilderness wanderings. It has been estimated that, counting the two years before the Israelites rebelled against God, they spent 42 years in the wilderness in total (Num. 33:5-49). 1,260 days would represent 42 months with an average of 30 days in each month. This probably refers to the same prophecy of Daniel 7:25; 12:7, 11-12. This will be a time of intense persecution of the Church before Christ brings time to an end.

**11:4** The two witnesses are described as olive trees and lampstands. The Greek word for witness is where we get the word “martyr” in English. There are two witnesses to fulfill the law (Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6; 19:15). This may be drawn from Zechariah 4:12-14.

The two witnesses may represent the Church as a whole, especially since they are described as lampstands (1:20).

**11:5** Fire comes from their mouths. This can describe the power of their testimony and witness. Elijah was also well known for calling fire down on his opponents.

**11:6** They can also prevent rain, as did Elijah (1 Kings 17-18; Luke 4:25; James 5:17). They can also turn water into blood, as could Moses (Ex. 7:17-25).

**11:7-10** The beast is first mentioned here. He comes up from the abyss and kills the witnesses. A short period of 3 ½ days the witness’s bodies lie shamefully unburied. This short period reflects that the beast’s apparent victory will be short-lived.

The “great city” at this time typically referred to Rome. It is “figuratively called “Sodom” and “Egypt.” Sodom represented the worst depravity and Egypt symbolized the bondage of God’s people.

The people of the earth will celebrate and gloat because they did not like the message of the witnesses.

**11:11-14** The breath returning to the witnesses is taken from Ezekiel 37:5, 10.

“They went up to heaven” could refer to the rapture of the Church. But it may also indicate the ultimate victory of the Church over the power of Satan. Ezekiel was repeatedly taken up in the Spirit as well (Ezekiel 1:28-2:2; 3:12-14, 23-24; 11:1-5; 43:5).

Clouds usually refer to God’s presence with his people (Ex. 13:21-22; Num. 14:14; Deut. 1:33; Ps. 78:14; Is. 4:5; Ezek. 1:4; Dan. 7:13; Matt. 17:5; 24:30; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:34-35; Acts 1:9).

A great earthquake occurs immediately after the witnesses are vindicated. The wording is similar to Ezekiel 38:19. The population of Jerusalem at this time was approximately 70,000. 7,000 dead would be the same as the 7,000 survivors under Elijah (1 Kings 19:18).

This brought an end to the second woe after the 4th trumpet had been blown.

**11:15** The seventh trumpet brings the climax of judgment, just as the 7th seal and bowl in chapter 16. The 3rd woe is the 7th trumpet. It narrates the end of history. There are similarities with Joshua and Jericho. On the 7th day, the ark of the covenant was brought out, trumpets were blown, and victory was won. This also relates to Daniel 7.

**The Woman, child and dragon**

**12:1** A great sign, appeared in heaven (meaning it is symbolic). Sun, moon, and a crown of twelve stars on head. Typically, this would represent Jacob, his wife, and the twelve tribes, or the people of God (Gen. 37:9).

**12:2** The woman is pregnant, presumably with the Messiah.She will have other children, representing God’s people, or the Church.

**12:3** A fiery red dragon, with seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns. Dragons always represent evil kingdoms (Ps. 74:13-14; 89:10; Is. 30:7; 51:9; Ezek. 29:3; 32:2-3; Hab. 3:8-15). The ten horns refer to the image in Daniel’s fourth beast (Dan. 7:7, 24). The color red most often refers to blood.

**12:4** A third of the stars could represent God’s people being brought down (Dan. 12:3, 10). Some interpret this as alluding to Satan’s fall from heaven and bringing 1/3 of the angels with him in his rebellion.

**12:5** The dragon sought to devour the child. This represents Satan’s war against the Messiah and is exemplified in King Herod’s effort to kill the babies around Bethlehem. The child was caught up to God, which could signify Jesus’ ascension.

**12:6** 1260 days equals roughly 3 ½ months. It can represent the time of Christ’s resurrection until his final return and the tribulations the Church faces under Satan’s attacks.

**12:7-9** This describes a heavenly battle in which Satan and his angelic forces fought against Michael and his army. Satan was defeated and cast down upon the earth where he wages war against God’s people. Michael is a great angel who represents God’s people (Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1).

The devil, and Satan mean “slanderer” and “adversary.”

**12:12** Satan fights with great fury because he knows his time is short.

**12:14** The wings of an eagle delivering the woman can refer to Exodus 19:4 and Deuteronomy 32:10-12.

**12:17** The woman’s offspring would be the Church, God’s people.

**Questions**

1. **What strikes you about the judgments God unleashes on earth?**
2. **How are you seeing these judgments occurring now?**
3. **What strikes you about the two witnesses?**
4. **What strikes you about the way the dragon tries to destroy the child?**