

Ponderosa Bible Church
Sermon Based Small Group
November 1, 2021



The Angel, the
Scroll, the
Temple, and the
Two Witnesses
Revelation
10:1-11:14

-A Facilitator Guide-

For the Facilitator: *As a small group facilitator, if you have not heard this week's teaching, then please go online to our YouTube channel and watch the video titled "The Angel, the Scroll, the Temple, and the Two Witnesses" in order to have a full discussion for this small group.*

"Digging Deeper" Fellowship time:

Fellowship time suggestion: Hello my amazing friends! Welcome to week seven of our small groups! Thank you so much for your ministry and I pray that this time has been as much of a blessing to you as it is to those who have attended your small groups! This week, for your "Digging Deeper Fellowship Time," ask your small Group, "What part of this small group meant the most to you and what did you enjoy most about it." A question like this helps to promote camaraderie and helps to build each other up. So get ready to laugh, cry, and bond even closer together. You all are awesome and enjoy this week!

Sermon Based Study Questions:

For the Facilitator: *A few things to remember while leading this study: (1) You are not TEACHING, you are facilitating! There will be small group leaders who have led a small group that will teach, but that is not the primary purpose of this leader guide, the primary purpose is to help you facilitate. Your job as a small group leader is to facilitate a discussion, not teach a lesson. The pastor has already taught the lesson, now you are trying to start a discussion on what was taught. You are putting a magnifying glass to the teaching and teasing out the details. (2) As a small group leader you want to bring out personal application of the Sunday message (which means you should have listened to it). Ask questions during the discussion, “How does this apply to you? What did you learn? How does this change your views on Christianity?” Etc. Personal application is the goal of the Sermon based small group. (3) It is not the goal of this outline to get through the whole guide, the goal is to foster conversation. While progressing through this guide is a desired outcome, don’t consider getting to the end as “success.” Success as defined by the “sermon based small group” is defined as equal parts fellowship and a deepening study of the Sunday Sermon. (4) Not every sub-point under a question needs to be asked, these are suggestions for you to consider while you are talking about the question from the study guide. If you asked the study guide question and had a good discussion about it then you may not even need to discuss the sub-points. These points exist to help you encourage a discussion.*

This week's scripture: Revelation 10:1-11:14, "Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded. And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down." And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay, but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets. Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, "Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter. And I was told, "You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings." Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months. And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth."

These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed. They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may 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 kind of plague, as often as they desire. And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth. But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come."

Questions from the study guide:

(1) Although Some believe the Mighty Angel is Jesus, what does the passage say that negates this viewpoint?

****Ask ONE of the following UNLESS you think that asking both will make for a better discussion****

A. What did position did Pastor Joe say that people use to support that the Might Angel is Jesus?

-or-

B. What are your thoughts on this passage of scripture?

• **For the Facilitator:** *So, this is a very interesting question for a couple of reasons: (1) There is a precedent in the Old Testament where Christ, in the form of a “Christophany,” appears as “the Angel of the Lord.” We can find this when the angel of the Lord stops Abraham from sacrificing his son, when he protects Ishmael and Hagar, when he appears to Joshua as he is about to conquer Jericho, and when he appears with Meshac, Radshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace. In almost every instance the angel of the Lord is performing things and doing things that are atypical of Angels, and in some cases he receives worship. This has caused many to believe (Including myself) that this is the pre-incarnate Christ. (2) The description of the*

Angel of the Lord matches up almost perfectly with the description of Jesus in Revelation 1. (3) The Bible Believer's Commentary also espouses this view.

However, I do not agree that this is Jesus. First, Jesus is always called by name in the book of Revelation (11 times to be precise). Second, Jesus is never referred to as an angel in the book of . Third, if the Mighty Angel were Jesus, then when the Angel touched down on the land and sea, that would be Christ's second coming. However, we see Christ's second coming occur in Revelation 19:11-16, and he is followed by the armies of heaven. Therefore, this cannot be Jesus. Lastly, the Mighty Angel swears "by the name that is above every name." However, in the Bible we see that because God has no other name greater to swear by, "he swears by his own name." Thus, if this were Jesus, then he should be swearing by his own name, and not a name greater than his. This means that the Mighty Angel is only an Angel, and not Christ.

(2) Even though our tendency is a desire to know what the seven thunders said, why is this impossible?

****Ask ONE of the following UNLESS you think that asking both will make for a better discussion****

A. Have you ever wondered what these thunders said?

-or-

B. Why do you think that these thunders were sealed up?

• **For the Facilitator:** *The answer to this question is simple, because John was told to “seal up the seven thunders.” So even though we may desire to know what the seven thunders said, we never will know. The ESV Expository Commentary says the following about this:*

The seven thunders resound, and John is about to write the message communicated. Suddenly, John is interrupted by a heavenly voice instructing him not to reveal the content of the seven thunders. He is to “seal up” their message instead of writing it down. This stands in contrast to the remainder of the book, for John is told at the conclusion of the book not to seal up the message, for the end is imminent (22:10). In this respect, the sealing of the seven thunders echoes the command to Daniel to seal up what he had written, since it related to the end of time (Dan. 8:26; 12:9). Revelation, as a whole, must be distinguished from Daniel, since “the time is near” (Rev. 1:3), and thus the message is revealed to John’s generation. Nevertheless, the message of the seven thunders is similar to the message given to Daniel, for the readers are left in the dark as to its contents. In other words, the fullness of what is to come at the end is still concealed and hidden from believers. Not everything is disclosed; surprises still await us as history draws to a close.

(3) Even John is told to measure the temple, what does that tell you about the probabilities of the temple being rebuilt? What stands in the way of the Temple being rebuilt? Who will help the Jews move forward in the rebuilding of then Temple?

****Ask ONE of the following UNLESS you think that asking both will make for a better discussion****

A. Why is the temple being built such a “big deal” in the grand scheme of things?

-or-

B. Why do you believe the antichrist helps the Jews rebuild their temple? What can be gained from this?

• **For the Facilitator:** *Because John is told to measure the Temple, this means there is a Temple to measure. Something you need to be aware of when reading this passage of scripture, is that the book of Revelation was one of the last books of the Bible to be written. It was written somewhere around 95AD. This is important because the Temple was destroyed in 67AD. So, for John to be writing about the Temple meant that he was looking at a future date when it would be reconstructed. This means that Revelation is a prophetic work because it describes things that have not yet happened. That being said, what stands in the way of the Temple being built is “The Dome of the Rock.” This is one of Islam’s holiest sites in the world. In order for the Jews to rebuild their Temple, they would have to move this Dome, and since Islam teaches that this place is where Muhammed ascended to Allah, the likelihood of them moving the Dome of the Rock is very low. Because the antichrist will want to curry favor with the Jews, rebuilding their Temple will be akin to a miracle, and how he will endear himself to the Jewish people and create “peace in the Middle East.” Thus, he will become a “savior” to the world.*

(4) Discuss the possible identities of the two witnesses.

****Ask ONE of the following UNLESS you think that asking both will make for a better discussion****

A. Do you believe the two witnesses are only men, or something more?

-or-

B. Who does the Bible say that the two witnesses are?

• **For the Facilitator:** *I have always wanted to know more about the two witnesses. They just fascinate me. One of the big reasons why I wanted to know more about them is because they are called “the two lamp stands and the two Olive trees that stand before the Lord of the earth.” If you don’t understand this reference, it goes all the way back to the book of Zechariah (4:1-6; 10b-14):*

And the angel who talked with me came again and woke me, like a man who is awakened out of his sleep. And he said to me, “What do you see?” I said, “I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it. And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.” And I said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?” Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.” Then he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.

...For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.

“These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth.” Then I said to him, “What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?” And a second time I answered and said to him, “What are these two branches of the olive trees, which are beside the two golden pipes from which the golden oil is poured out?” He said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.” Then he said, “These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”

These passages of scripture are what John was referring to when he declared that the two witnesses were the two olive trees and lamp stands that stand before the Lord of the whole earth. So, you can understand my interest in these two witnesses. The Expositor’s Commentary explains the two witnesses in the following way:

The reference to the “two olive trees and the two lampstands” is an allusion to Joshua and Zerubbabel in Zechariah’s vision, who were also said “to serve the Lord of all the earth” (Zec 4:1–6a, 10b–14). The whole import of Zechariah’s vision was to strengthen the two leaders by reminding them of God’s resources and to vindicate them in the eyes of the community as they pursued their God-given tasks. Thus John’s message would be that the witnesses to Christ who cause the church to fulfill her mission to burn as bright lights to the world will not be quenched (cf. Rev 1:20; 2:5).

Why there should be two olive trees and two lampstands has been variously answered. Some suggest that “two” is the number of required legal witnesses (Nu 35:30; Dt 19:15; cf. Mt 18:16; Lk 10:1–24); others suggest that “two” represents the priestly and kingly aspects of the church or the Jewish and Gentile components. Perhaps the dualism was suggested to John by the two olive trees from Zechariah and the two great prophets of the OT who were connected with the coming of the Messiah in Jewish thought, i.e., Moses and Elijah (v.6; cf. Mt 17:3–4). What Joshua (the high priest) and Zerubbabel (the prince) were to the older community and temple, Jesus Christ is to the new community. He is both anointed Priest and King, and his church reflects this character especially in its Christian prophets (1:6; 5:10; 20:6).

(5) How will all the world be able to see the
bodies of the two witnesses lying in the streets of
Jerusalem?

****Ask ONE of the following UNLESS you think that asking both will
make for a better discussion****

A. Why do you believe that the Bible specifies that the *entire world* will see the bodies of the two witnesses dead, and in the streets of Jerusalem?

-or-

B. Why is it important that the entire world see the two witnesses dead bodies in the streets of Jerusalem?

• **For the Facilitator:** *The most common answer to this question 30 years ago was “Television and 24 hour news networks.” And to be honest, I don’t think we have added much to this answer with the exception of the internet and social media websites. Though the medium may vary on how the entire world will see these two witnesses dead in the streets of Jerusalem, I tend to believe it will not look much different than it did 30 years ago. As the Bible Knowledge Commentary says:*

For three and one-half days the whole world gloated over their dead bodies. This implies some worldwide display, now made possible by television. Their deaths were considered a great victory for the world ruler and Satan, and were celebrated by people sending each other gifts.

For further study please check out: Ezekiel 1:28; Joel 3:16; Amos 1:2; Daniel 12:4; Jeremiah 15:6.

PLEASE READ, VERY IMPORTANT!!! How you close your meeting is very important so even if you do not get through all the questions and even if you stick on one point for far longer than you anticipated, please decide how you plan on ending your meeting before it has even started. It would even be good to choose a talking point to end the meeting on about ten minutes before it ends. Also decide who is going to pray to close out the meeting. Ending a meeting in an abrupt manner leads to a very awkward meeting. So have your last talking point ready to go along with someone chosen to pray in order to close the meeting smoothly.