

~Other Speakers S-Z: David Servant:

During the final days of the final days, Jerusalem, referenced in this chapter as "the holy city" and "Sodom and Egypt" (11:2, 8), will be trodden underfoot by the nations for forty-two months, or exactly three-and-a-half years (11:2). Due to a prophecy in the ninth chapter of Daniel that leads many to believe that the end times' tribulation lasts seven years, the three-and-a-half years mentioned by John is often thought to be the last half of seven years of tribulation. But no one really knows for sure.

We are introduced today to "two witnesses," prophets whom John wrote will prophesy for exactly 1,260 days in Jerusalem, clothed in sackcloth (11:3). If we divide 1,260 by the number of days in a Jewish year---360---we discover that 1,260 days is exactly 3 1/2 years also. We don't know, however, if the 3 1/2 years in which Jerusalem is trodden underfoot by the nations is the same 3 1/2 years that the two witnesses prophesy there.

We are also not told the identities of those two prophets. Some speculate that they are Enoch and Elijah, two Old Testament prophets who never died. Yet nothing is said about the two reincarnated witnesses being Old Testament men. I happen to be flying home from Texas as I write these words, and while I was there I met a man who believes that he is Elijah and that he is one of those two witnesses. I was not convinced, however.

God refers to those witnesses as the "two olive trees and two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth" (11:4). That doesn't help us much! We find something similar in the fourth chapter of the Old Testament book written by the prophet Zechariah, who saw (about six-hundred and fifty years before John's vision) his own vision of two olive trees and a lampstand (Zech. 4:1-4, 11-14). Zechariah was told that the two "olive branches" were "two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth" (Zech. 4:14).

Regardless of what we don't understand about them, it is quite clear that God will grant those prophets incredible powers by which they will be able to kill those who oppose them and make life even more miserable for everyone on the earth. They will surely call the world to repentance, but their preaching will apparently be fruitless. After three-and-a-half years of ministry, they will be slain by a "beast that comes up out of the abyss" (11:7), who will later be revealed to us as the antichrist.

The demise of those two prophets will make world headlines, and everyone will celebrate, thinking that their problems are finally over. The party, however, will last for just three-and-a-half days, because the dead bodies of those two prophets will be resurrected as they lie on Jerusalem streets and then be taken up to heaven. That event will doubtlessly be broadcast around the globe as well. Yet there will be no revival. Rather, there will be an earthquake in Jerusalem that will kill 7,000 people.

When God removes those two prophets, it would seem that all hope of mercy on the earth departs with them. The seventh angel sounds his ominous trumpet, over which there is reason to rejoice in heaven, for the inhabitants there know that God will soon judge the dead, rewarding the righteous and destroying the unrighteous (11:18). And then He will reign over all the earth.

These future events are sure to come, and they could occur within your lifetime if you eat healthy!