



# Groups

**Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides!** If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions beginning at the bottom of page 2.

**NEW this year:** These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders. As always, use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group. And of course, please continue to give us feedback.

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## LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

for the Sermon given on May 28, 2023

by Pastor Ruthie Seiders

**WITNESS FOR THE WORLD - Revelation 11:1-12; Acts 1:8**



Question: What do the two witnesses in Revelation 11 represent?

Bottom Line: The two witnesses represent us, Christ followers, the Body of Christ where Jesus is the Head. Like the two witnesses, we have responded to Jesus' invitation to follow Him and have access to the power of God to testify to the life-transforming love of Jesus.

We are near the midpoint of our sermon series, “Revelation: For the World”. So far, we have learned:

- Revelation is from God, about Jesus, to the church and for the world.
- We can live in the hope of divine deliverance.
- Worship sends us out into the world to live and love like Jesus.
- The church is good for the world when it is faithful to its mission to love like Jesus.

Today we are going to learn about the two witnesses in chapter 11 and dig deep into the Old Testament to find references to similar prophets and heroes.

Let’s begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

### **Main Scripture Reading:**

#### Revelation 11:1-12

**11** I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, “Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, with its worshipers. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.” <sup>4</sup> They are “the two olive trees” and the two lampstands, and “they stand before the Lord of the earth.”<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> They have power to shut up the heavens 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.

<sup>7</sup> Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. <sup>8</sup> Their bodies will lie in the public square of the great city—which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt—where also their Lord was crucified. <sup>9</sup> For three and a half days some from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. <sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> But after the three and a half days the breath<sup>[b]</sup> of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. <sup>12</sup> 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.

#### Acts 1:8

<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

## Group Discussion Questions

1. At the start of the message, Pastor Ruthie mentioned that Revelation 11 may be the most difficult section to interpret. What are your thoughts or feelings about this sermon series thus far? How has it been helpful to you?

Ruthie found comfort in the words from Revelation 1:3. As you process how the sermon series is impacting you, take a moment to read Revelation 1:3 as a group and invite the Holy Spirit to lead you to seek to understand and learn from the mysterious vision(s) John writes about.

2. The descriptions in Revelation 11 make indirect reference to several prophets and heroes of the Old Testament:

In summary: the two witnesses...

1. **Prince Zerubbabel and High Priest Joshua** who represent a Kingdom and Priest, Peter reminds the early church they are “a chosen people, a royal priesthood... that we may declare the wonderful deeds” (1 Peter 2:9)
  2. **Elijah and Moses** who represent the Law and the Prophets, summed up by Jesus in the commandment to “Love the Lord your God... Love your neighbor as yourself... this sums up the Law and the Prophets... By this the world will know you are my disciples, if you love one another” (Matthew 22:36-39; John 13:34-35)
  3. **Enoch and Elijah** who represent as ones who walked with God, talked with God, and were with God. They point towards the promise Jesus made to the disciples in the upper room (John 15:26-27).
- Which of these two witnesses spoke to you the most?
  - Which combination do you find the most interesting and why?
  - Which combination are you curious to learn more about?
3. Pastor Ruthie reminded us that it was Pentecost Sunday, the day the disciples received the Holy Spirit. In Acts 1:8 Jesus said, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Share with your group how the power of the Holy Spirit helps you in your daily interactions with others to testify about the life and love of Jesus Christ for every people, tribe, language, and nation.

4. Pastor Ruthie quotes theologian Craig S. Keener, who says,

“Revelation calls us to prepare ourselves as a martyr church. The moment we become Christ’s followers we forfeit our lives for the work of the Kingdom, yet

for the most part we have failed to prepare ourselves and our fellow servants for this calling...We must be **Spirit-empowered witnesses to the world**, ready to pay any cost and utterly dependent on God's power to accomplish his purposes."

Spirit empowered witnesses look for opportunities to share the love of Christ and share their stories of how Jesus has transformed their lives in the workplace, offices, grocery stores, neighborhoods, schools, and sports fields. Think about the people that you interact with each week. During your closing prayer ask for the Holy Spirit to guide you to someone who is in need of that love or has ears to hear the truth.

### **Take Home Message:**

The two witnesses in Revelation 11 are not random symbols of past heroes. *The two witnesses point to us, each of us members of the Body of Christ, the church. And we are called to bear witness to what we have seen and heard to be true, about Jesus' love for every people and tribe and language and nation.* No matter what the cost.

### **Homework Until Next Time:**

Ask the members of your LG to complete the Discipleship Planning Tool and the GPS Assessment Tool before your next meeting. Here is some fresh language:

*We're all on a journey; where is yours taking you?*

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it's not just good for us, it's good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn't come from just hearing the words of Jesus; it comes from putting them into practice. Three kinds of practice, actually:

- The with-God life of our personal habits and routines;
- The with-others life of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- The for-the-world life that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

### **Let's Pray**

**Support for the Leader (These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and also opportunities in the life of our church).**

**Teaching Points:**

- A prophet is someone who, under the power and leading of the Holy Spirit, speaks truth into a situation. Sometimes that truth comes with a call to repentance, rebuke, and warnings of possible consequences
- Our witnesses in Revelation 11 remind us of the law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah), the sum of which Jesus tells us is to love – to love God and to love others, and that it is by this we will be known as his disciples
- Two witnesses (pairs) from the Old Testament:
  - Governor (Prince Zerubbabel) and the High Priest Joshua
  - The prophet Elijah and the Law-giver Moses
  - Enoch and Elijah
- The witnesses are the Body of Christ, all Christ followers. And like the two witnesses in Revelation, we have access to the power of God to testify to the life-transforming love of Jesus
- “Revelation calls us to prepare ourselves as a martyr church. The moment we become Christ’s followers we forfeit our lives for the work of the Kingdom, yet for the most part we have failed to prepare ourselves and our fellow servants for this calling. We must be **Spirit-empowered witnesses** to the world, ready to pay any costs and utterly dependent on God’s power to accomplish his purposes.” – Craig S. Keener

**For Further Biblical Study:**

- Zechariah 4:1-6, 11-14
- Exodus 19:3-6
- 1Peter 2:9
- Matthew 22:36-39
- John 13:34-35

**How to Use These Study Guides:**

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
  - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
  - Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

**Group Leader Support:** Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Grace Lee from the Group Life team.