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Witnesses and the War for Authority

Prophetic Testimony, Measured Rule, and the Reassertion of God's Claim Rev. 10 & 11

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– Prophetic Testimony, Measured Rule, and the Reassertion of God’s Claim – Rev. 10 & 11

- **Introduction: Revelation’s Second “Commissioning” Moment**

Revelation 10-11 reveals the **nature of the conflict** that the judgments have exposed — rather than simply being an ongoing advance in the chronology of the judgments themselves.

Where Revelation 6–7 answered *what happens* when authority is exercised, Revelation 10–11 answers *how* God confronts rebellion — not first through force, but through **testimony**.

These chapters *pause* the trumpet judgments to clarify a critical truth:

God’s final confrontation with rebellion is not merely destructive — it is **prosecutorial**, God’s justice is unveiled and proclaimed.

Before any rival divine powers are removed, they are first **exposed** for all to see.

• Revelation 10: The Mighty Angel and the Little Scroll

Where Authority is Reasserted and Testimony Recommissioned

The Mighty Angel — The Angel of Revelation 10 is described using imagery associated elsewhere with divine presence:

- Wrapped in a cloud
- A rainbow above his head
- Face like the sun
- Legs like pillars of fire

It is important here not to confuse the Angel with God, but to understand that God is **signaling delegated authority**. In Divine Council terms, this figure functions as a **royal envoy**, bearing the authority of the throne. The Angel stands: one foot on the sea, one foot on the land. This posture signifies **jurisdictional claim**. Where both the sea and the land represent the totality of the created order — particularly both *chaotic* and the *ordered* realms alike.

The message is unmistakable: God's authority is not absent, delayed, or diminished — it is now asserted.

- **The Roaring Voice and the Seven Thunders**

When the Angel speaks, his voice is described as a lion's roar, and the *seven thunders* respond.

John is forbidden to record what the thunders say. This restraint is important.

Revelation is not *unveiling* everything — it is unveiling **what God has chosen to disclose**. The hidden words remind the reader that **God's knowledge exceeds revelation**, and that judgment is not dependent on human comprehension.

This protects Revelation from becoming:

- A codebook
- A predictive oracle
- Or a tool for control

The emphasis, therefore, remains on **obedience and allegiance**, not *secret insight*.

- **“There Will Be No More Delay”**

The declaration that “there will be no more delay” does not mean wrath and judgment happens immediately. It means that **the mystery of God is no longer postponed**, though the period of tolerance toward rebellious powers is ending.

This echoes Divine Council judgment language found in:

- Psalm 82
- Daniel 7

God’s patience has had a purpose — to gather witnesses, as many as can be found. That purpose is now complete.

- **The Little Scroll Sweet and Bitter**

Here John is commanded to eat the scroll. This action mirrors earlier prophetic commissioning scenes:

- Ezekiel 2-3
- Jeremiah 15

The sweetness reflects:

- The goodness of God's word
- The joy of revelation
- The privilege of participation

The bitterness reflects:

- The cost of proclaiming truth in hostile territory
- The suffering that accompanies faithful testimony
- The rejection prophets inevitably face

- **The Little Scroll Sweet and Bitter** (*Continued*)

Prophetic authority is never neutral.

It confronts rival claims and provokes resistance.

John is told:

“You must prophesy again about many peoples and nations and languages and kings.”

This is not *prediction* — it is **indictment**.

- **Revelation 11: Measuring the Temple**

Claimed Space vs. Occupied Space

The command to measure the temple draws directly from:

- Ezekiel 40–48
- Zechariah 2

But this measuring is not intended to be seen as architectural — it is **jurisdictional**.

To measure something is to:

- Claim it
- Define it
- Declare it under authority

- **Revelation 11: Measuring the Temple** *(Continued)*

We described that the inner sanctuary is measured.
The outer court is not.

This distinction signals that:

- God knows who belongs to Him
- Not all religious space equals covenant loyalty
- Proximity does not equal allegiance

Where the nations are permitted to trample the outer court, that has only been for a limited time — with a purpose.

Authority has only been restrained, never fully surrendered.

- **The Two Witnesses**

Lawful Testimony Against Rebellious Rule

The Two Witnesses function as **legal agents**, not merely *end-time prophets*.

They represent:

- The minimum number of witnesses required for legal testimony (Deut 19:15)
- The Law and the Prophets
- God's covenant lawsuit against the world's rulers

Their imagery blends:

- Moses (plagues)
- Elijah (fire, drought)

This signals continuity of covenant.

The Witnesses' power is not their own, it is not *novelty*, but a hearkening to power of the Most High — It is delegated authority to **testify**, not to dominate or rule.

- **Death, Mockery, and Public Exposure**

When these Witnesses are killed, the response of the world is revealing:

- Celebration
- Gift-giving
- Relief

Why?

Because prophetic testimony remains unbearable to illegitimate power.

Their bodies lie unburied — a sign of contempt — but also of **public exposure**. The world itself is now witness to what it has rejected.

When God raises these Witnesses again, the point is not to create spectacle. It is **vindication**. The resurrection demonstrates a divine legal reversal:

- The court rules in favor of the witnesses
- Their testimony stands
- Their authority is confirmed

- **The Seventh Trumpet: The Transfer of Rule Announced**

The Seventh Trumpet announces a verdict, it does not unleash destruction. The verdict being:

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.”

No, this is not the moment of the beginning of Christ’s reign — it is the **public declaration** of what has already been long secured through faithfulness.

The elders respond with worship, not surprise. They recognize:

- Judgment as justice
- Wrath as measured
- Rule as rightful

The language echoes Psalm 82:

God arises to judge the rulers and reclaim the nations.

- **Theological Synthesis: Testimony Before Triumph**

Revelation 10–11 teaches a crucial **Divine Council** principle:

God removes illegitimate authority only after it has been lawfully confronted:

- Judgment follows testimony.
- Wrath follows witness.
- Rule follows vindication.

This imagery and presentation illustrates that God's Revelation is never reaction through *divine impatience*, nor is His judgment cruel.

God does not silence rebellion through force alone — He **exposes it through truth.**

- **Further Reading: Old Testament Foundations for Revelation 10-11**

OT Imagery Includes:

- **Ezekiel 2-3** (eaten scroll)
- **Zechariah 2 & 4** (measuring and witnesses)
- **Deuteronomy 19** (lawful testimony)
- **Psalms 82** (judgment of rulers)
- **Daniel 7** (courtroom and verdict)

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