***The Ministry of the Two Witnesses  
  
RV146-02***

We are studying Revelation 11:3-14. This is "The Two Witnesses," and we are on segment number two.

**The Two Witnesses**

John, in his vision, has been introduced to two men who are God's special witnesses to all mankind during the tribulation era here on earth, which follows the rapture of the church. These two men prophesy the Word of God during probably the last three-and-a-half years of the tribulation. I do not want to be too dogmatic about that, because there are many good reasons why their ministry may actually be in the first three-and-a-half years. It doesn't make any difference either way. Certain things will be the result if they're in the first three-and-a-half years; and, other things will be the result if they're in the last three-and-a-half years. But the best the Bible teachers are divided on whether these men minister in the first segment of the tribulation or the second half.

**Mourning and Sorrow**

In any case, John sees that they are dressed in garments which signify mourning and sorrow. They are in grief over the horrible divine judgments that are about to come on the antichrist and his followers. They are therefore dressed as prophets of doom.

**Moses and Elijah**

These two witnesses are not identified to us by name. From the kinds of miracles they perform, they do call to our minds Moses and Elijah. Moses and Elijah also appeared with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration when that inner circles of disciples: Peter; James; and, John were given a preview of Jesus in His millennial kingdom glory. So, it is significant that when they saw the kingdom in Christ in His kingdom glory, indeed, Moses and Elijah were on the scene.

**John the Baptist**

The two witnesses are in the process of announcing the coming of Jesus Christ in His kingdom glory. Furthermore, we saw that the prophet Malachi predicted the return of Elijah before the millennial may of the Lord (before the tribulation era – perhaps before the middle of it). We are told in the Scripture that John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah, but he was not actually Elijah. The message of John the Baptist was to introduce Jesus as the Messiah. Had that message been accepted, Jesus said that John would have fulfilled the role of the predicted Elijah. However, John's message was rejected. So, Elijah is yet to come, as the Jews indeed expect him to come, and it may be that he comes as one of these two witnesses.

In any case, the mission of the two witnesses is certainly like that of John the Baptist of announcing the soon arrival of Jesus the Messiah on earth. The appearance of Moses and Elijah with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration could, furthermore, be symbolic of the believers who enter the millennium in two ways: some go through death and resurrection; and, some go through the rapture in the glorification of their bodies. You remember that Moses died, and God took special care to secretly bury the body, and perhaps to preserve it. Elijah went to heaven alive. At this point, it may be that the physical structure of both these men now comes back into operation as the two witnesses.

**Two Olive Trees**

The two witnesses are furthermore described by John as two olive trees who are thus symbolically filled with the Holy Spirit. Olive oil in the Bible is one of the symbols of the Holy Spirit.

**Two Lamp Stands**

The two witnesses are the source of God's spiritual light to the tribulation world as His lamp stands. This is a vital ministry in the tribulation era when people will be scoffing at the Bible more than they do today. The thing that will be upbeat will be the doctrines of the New Age movement – that man himself is God. So, these two witnesses are described as God's lamp stands of spiritual illumination to the tribulation world, and they are functioning under the power of God the Holy Spirit represented by the olive oil. Moses and Elijah would represent themselves (the light of the Old Testament Scriptures) for Moses represents the Law as Elijah represented the prophets. So, perhaps that's another evidence that Moses and Elijah are the men who are involved.

**The Gospel of the Kingdom**

The two witnesses stand before the true Creator God, as His channels of blessing or His channels of doom to the tribulation humanity. The two witnesses are going to be preaching a specialized kind of gospel that is called in the Bible, the gospel of the kingdom. It has to do with repentance and trust in Jesus in His role as the coming Messiah Savior. It is, of course, still salvation by grace, but the particular manner and emphasis of the Lord's ministry (the way he is presented in this gospel) is that of being the Messiah King.

In Matthew 9:35, we have this gospel specifically referred to. It was what Jesus, John the Baptist, and the early disciples actually preached: "And Jesus was going about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom." That's where we get that phrase: "And healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness."

You also have this in Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all nations, and then the end shall come." Some have taken this verse in Matthew and said, "You see, until every human being has heard the gospel, Jesus cannot return. The rapture cannot take place." That is totally false doctrine. The order of events of the prophetic Scripture make it very clear to us that everything has been fulfilled in God's plan up to the point of removing the church (the believers – the Christians) from the earthly scene in the rapture event. Therefore, we say that the rapture is imminent. It can happen at any time. There is nothing standing in the way of the rapture, any-moment experience.

However, this gospel of the kingdom has a different emphasis than the gospel of the grace of God that we preach today. This gospel of the kingdom indeed will be preached to all the nations. It will be preached during the tribulation period, and these two witnesses are going to be part of that proclamation. Furthermore, the 144,000 evangelists (the Jewish evangelists that we studied earlier) – they too will be a source of this gospel of the kingdom. What this Scripture is saying is that when this gospel is preached in the tribulation, then, finally, all of nations of the world will get the information on how to go to heaven through Jesus presented in His role as the Messiah Savior, and then God's going to bring human history to an end.

This message of salvation of the two witnesses is going to be preached with such clarity and such conviction that no lost person will be able to plead ignorance of how to go to heaven. The Scriptures indicate that many Jews and gentiles will indeed believe in Jesus the Messiah, and they will be saved, but it also indicates that most of them will be persecuted and martyred.

**The Antichrist**

The antichrist, of course, is going to do his best to silence the two witnesses by killing them. Again, we must remind you that as history progresses, we have further enlightenment on the prophetic Scriptures. Many of us in our younger days, reading this Scripture about the information of the two witnesses and their message being worldwide, found that difficult to explain. How could we communicate? All we had was literature and radio. With the advent of television and with the advent of international communications, it is no problem to get a message to the most remote corners of the world today. This message will very easily reach all nations of the world.

**Fire from their Mouths**

In Revelation 11:5, we have declared something that's very special about the two witnesses. They are immortal. They cannot die. If anyone desires to harm them, John says, "Fire proceeds out of their mouth, and devours their enemies." If anybody at all gets the hankering to kill these two men (and certainly the antichrist is going to want to kill them, and many people listening to their message will be enraged, such as the Jews in Jerusalem were enraged at Paul for his message of the gospel of grace to gentiles), these two witnesses are going to have a very super protection. They're going to be able to spew fire out of their mouths, and this fire will devour. The Greek word for "devour" actually means "eat down." It's just going to cut them down. What it is going to cut down is what is described as "their enemies," referring to those who are trying to kill them.

So, the enemies of the two witnesses are the enemies of God. In fact, because they are God's enemies is why they are the enemies of the two witnesses, and why they are attempting to destroy the two witnesses. And if anyone, John says, should desires to harm these people, fire proceeds out of their mouth. The result is that if anyone deserves to harm them in this manner, they are going to be killed. This means that this is absolutely necessary, by God's provision and by God's order.

This is a wonderful thing that these two witnesses have provided by God. You know what it takes to provide security for the president of the United States, even in a non-threatening context. The car that you see the president riding in looks just like any nice limousine. But that car is a tank. It is literally a tank which has been covered to look like a car. It has armor plating. It has bulletproof windows. Everything is thick. That car weighs tons, and it is transferred wherever the president goes so that he can ride, and nobody can open up with an automatic weapon and get through any part of that vehicle.

**The Holy Spirit**

That's what we have to do today, where we have God the Holy Spirit on the scene holding back the depths of evil of the human heart. At this time, the Holy Spirit has gone to heaven with the church. He is off the scene in His presence. He is here in His omnipresent, but he is no longer restraining the evil of mankind.

So, God provides these two enemies with a marvelous way of protecting themselves. They just hit their enemies with a fiery halitosis that simply burns them to the ground from top to bottom. This happens to anybody who attempts to do anything to them. When they open their mouths, anybody who tries to assassinate them is going to be killed. It is very clear that what God intends to do is very definitive. The word "kill" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "apokteino." "Apokteino" here means "to execute." It is in the aorist tense, which means at any point where somebody tries to injure them or to assassinate them. It is passive, which means that these people do not simply take their own lives, but this is done to them by God through His witnesses. It is in the infinitive mood in the Greek language, which tells us that it is God's purpose in dealing with anybody who attacks his communicators.

Anybody who tries to assassinate the two witnesses during this three-and-a-half year period is going to be killed. God gives these two witnesses supernatural powers to preserve their lives. This is obviously because people are going to become increasingly enraged at them, and want them dead. There is no more restraining Holy Spirit. Violence is everywhere in the tribulation period. There is no sympathy for someone who stands up and (like the prophets of old) says, "I speak for God." As we shall see, God gives them the capacity to back up their words, and they do this with this lethal fire from their mouths.

The two witnesses are feared. They are hated, but they are immune from death until a certain point. That point is when their life mission has been completed. This is still true of Christians today. Nobody dies in the Christian community. We are untouchable as the two witnesses will be. Nobody dies until your mission (your good works, which God has ordained for you to perform) have been executed, or until you come to the point in time where God decides you're never going to change, and you're never going to get back on track. You may never have fulfilled the divine good that he has designed for you. You may have been lulling yourself to sleep. You may not have been taught. You may have been going to church someplace where the Word of God was not explained to you. You weren't even alerted to the fact that earning rewards is the name of the game of the Christian life.

One man called me after last Sunday's service, and he said, "It just really hit me. The problem with Christians (the problem with all of us) is we don't understand and fully grasp that earning rewards is what the Christian life is all about. We think it's praising; we think it's singing; and, we think it's doing things. But he understood the principle that if you are not earning rewards in heaven, that means that God's work is not being done through you. That means that you are not fulfilling those works that Ephesians 2:10 says that God has specifically ordained for you to do so.

So, these two witnesses, as is true of us, are immune from death until our mission is completed. These two witnesses are in fact the executioners who are participating in God's seven-year program during the tribulation of removing all unbelievers from the earth gradually through death. Remember that by the middle of the tribulation, half of the earth's population will be dead. That's an enormous number of people. But this is how God is going to start flushing out all those who resist him, and all those who are rebellious against His authority and His Word, because when the millennium begins, everybody is born again. You are either a born-again person in a resurrected body, such as we the church will be; or, you are a born-again person who has gone through the tribulation in your human body, and you have trusted in Christ the Messiah, and you have been saved. But when the millennium begins, all over the earth, there are nothing but born-again believers.

The two witnesses are actually participating in this program that God has of removing unbelievers from the earth. Whenever the message of God's true witnesses, of course, is rejected, then divine judgment must follow. And that's what these men are illustrating. Anybody who attacks them is only going to attack them because of what they're saying. That is what the people don't want to hear. They don't want to hear that there is a heaven; there is a hell; and, you are destined for one of the other. And unless you know God's way on how to get to heaven, you will most certainly end up in the lake of fire.

They will immunity from death when they are confronted by the anger; the hatred; and the antagonism of the whole tribulation world. Don't forget that they're going to be on public television. This is going to be nightly news. The word will get around. The fact that all the world is against them, and yet no one can touch them, is going to be in an enormous sign that they are under divine protection. Remember that the antichrist has presented himself as God, and he has told people that he is the epitome of New Age doctrine. He has discovered his own godhood. Here he is, a god who cannot handle the God of the Bible that these two witnesses are proclaiming.

Yet in the very work of these two witnesses, we have the demonstration of the principle once more that God always provides grace – an opening, and an opportunity to escape, before He brings judgment. And indeed, a lot of people are going to pay attention to the two witnesses, and they will escape the judgment.

In verse 6, we're told of the credentials that God has given to these two men. They have power to shut up the sky. They have supernatural power to close the sky; that is, the first heaven (the atmospheric heaven in which we live), in order that rain may not fall during the days of their prophesying. Their prophesying here refers to the message that they're preaching. There'll be no rainfall here on this earth for three-and-a-half years.

Again, this calls to mind the very thing that Elijah did in his day to Ahab's kingdom. In 1 Kings 17:1, Luke 4:25, and James 5:17, you have this reference to Elijah's capacity to keep it from raining. Indeed, for three-and-a-half years, this is what happens now.

**No Rain**

Now, this has an effect immediately on the world's food supply. It devastates and creates even more famine. Furthermore, it affects the lakes. The water shortage becomes enormous, and, of course, water is the basis of life for everyone here on earth. So, for three-and-a-half years of their ministry, there is no rain. I can hardly imagine how the world can survive. I can't press this to say that this is no rain worldwide. It just says, "No rain." It may be selective. In a way, I'm inclined to think that that is what this means, because, as we shall see in a moment, the very Greek language lets us know that these two witnesses take no pleasure in the suffering that they're bringing upon humanity. They are simply trying to alert them that they do speak for the living God (the true God), not the God that people pretend to be, but the God who made it all, and who therefore can control the very forces of nature. Whatever they do; wherever they do this; and, however widespread this is, it is going to cause famine and (again) more death, and more flushing out of unbelievers off the face of the earth.

This, of course, was exactly the kind of miracle that Elijah performed. Remember that he did this when God's people the Jews were in great apostasy. Isn't it interesting that the two witnesses are doing it under the same condition when the Jewish people are in great apostasy; when the Jewish people have rebuilt their temple; and, when they are running their whole sacrificial system again under the auspices of the antichrist, which is one reason this would suggest that these two witnesses are in the first part (the three-and-a-half years) of the tribulation era. But the Jews themselves have rejected the true Messiah. They have no use for the gospel of the kingdom. They're going through their ridiculous motions of the restored temple sacrifice sacrificial system, and Elijah dealt with a people in that kind of apostasy, and the two witnesses do the same thing.

**The Turn the Earth's Water into Blood**

Furthermore, these two witnesses have power in another way over nature. We're told that they have power over waters to turn them into blood. They have power to turn water areas, both freshwater and saltwater areas, into blood. You know what that's going to do to the marine life. Talk about messing up the environment! The New Agers are proud of the fact that one of the things that they are going to do is to return the earth to a pristine condition. Here they thought that they had control of things to make that come about now, because something happened all of a sudden to all the fundamentalist biblical Christians. One day they suddenly all disappear.

The explanation all over the world on the nightly television news will be that the force has removed all these resisters to the enlightenment of mankind – those who will not subject themselves to the masters of wisdom as Shirley MacLaine talks about. The masters of wisdom speak to her and have appointed her to be their messenger to our generation. And some people will not listen to the masters of wisdom, which are demons. All these people are going to say that the force has removed these people (these fundamentalist Christians) to another plane until they are re-educated, so that they can be brought in and restored. They are keeping us from being able to move the world forward to a wonderful condition.

Well, they have no control over the fact that these bodies of water have turned to blood. When that happens, the marine life is dead. It washes up on the seashores, and on the shores of the lakes. The stench is enormous. The decomposition is enormous. The disease spreads rapidly from that sort of thing. It is a frightening, terrible condition. These two men have the capacity to do that.

**Plagues**

Furthermore, it says, "They have the capacity to smite the earth with every plague. They have the capacity to hit the earth with every kind of plague, which again, on both these events, calls to mind Moses, who did this very thing. Remember that Moses did this at a time in the history of the Jewish people when they were under the authority and control of a gentile tyrant, the pharaoh. Here, the two witnesses are doing the same thing when God's people, the Jews again, are under the authority and domination of another tyrant, the antichrist.

So, the two witnesses are able, as Moses of old, to turn water to blood, and bringing every kind of plague on the earth; and, no doubt, these things will create death. It says that they do this: "As often as they desire." The word "often" is this Greek preposition (eon), which is often translated as "if." It is a third class "if." So, what it is telling us is that they may do this, or they may not do this. The third class condition specifies that maybe they will, and maybe they won't. But at any time they wish, they can do this. This leads me to believe that maybe they turn on the pressure, and then back off. Then maybe they put pressure a little higher, and back off. Then maybe they ratchet up a little higher, and then back off. So, they don't necessarily keep all this going constantly on mankind.

This third class suggests to me that they're not happy to have to do this. They are reluctant to be putting this kind of suffering on humanity. They are not having a ball in not permitting rain to fall, or bringing about the pain that is caused by turning water to blood, or the plagues that are on the unbelievers. So, someplace along the line, they have the capacity to turn it on and to turn it off.

It does not spell out for us what the plagues are. They may be similar to what Moses did in Egypt, but they'll be very painful, and people will be well aware that the suffering is coming from these two witnesses who are claiming to be the spokesman of the living Creator God.

These two men, of course, are in temporal fellowship with God. Therefore, they can use their miracle working power at will. That's why it uses that third class condition. They have, under God's authority, His approval and His favor to use this or not to use it. And God supports them completely through it.

We come to verse 7. The antichrist is getting fed up, and he doesn't know what to do. Any police power he sets there are burned to death by the fire from the mouth of these two men. Any individuals that rush up to attack them are destroyed. How is he going to remove the terrible light in which this places him in pretending and claiming to be a God, and he can't handle these two men who say, "We are the witnesses and the representatives of the real God? Your antichrist is a false God."

Well, he gets his break because, in God's providence, the work of these two men comes to an end. Verse 7 says, "And when they have finished their testimony." The word "finished" is the Greek word "teleo." At a certain point in time, they have completed their mission. It is subjunctive mood, which means it's a potential event. As with all believers, there comes a point in time when God's plan for your life and service comes to an end, or you have brought it to an end by your own carnality, resistance, and disobedience to the Word of God. God is in total command of a believer's life span. But even though that's true, it is up to us to make the most of the life span that we have for our eternal rewards.

In Psalm 39:4, the psalmist says, "Lord, make me to know my end, and what is the extent of my days. Let me know how transient I am." What a good request that is: "Lord, let me know my end. I'm not going to be here forever. Let me know the extent of my days. Let me realize, Father, when I am young and in full capacity, that the Bible speaks the truth when it says, 'As your years (as your days), so shall your strength be.' Let me realize that, as I get older, I won't have the capacity to do the things that I can when I'm younger. Furthermore, there will come a time when I'm going to fade up. Let me know how transient I am."

Those of you who are in the flesh bloom of your youth and young lives should remember that verse, and take it very seriously. You should not consider that you're going to be here forever, or that you have all the time in the world to get around to serving God seriously. In the long haul, you really don't.

Job also recognized this. In Job 14:5, he is speaking about men (human beings): "Since his days are determined, the number of his months is with You, and his limits You have set so that he cannot pass." Everybody's days are determined. How many months God has given you is laid out. You're not going to go one second beyond that point in God's program.

Now, the two witnesses have come to the point where their service for God is completed. What they have completed is their testimony. This is what the Bible calls their "marturia." This is related to the word "witness," which is martus," which is the word from which we get our English word "martyr." So, this is the testimony of a martyr. God's message of imminent judgment, and escape from that judgment, has been pronounced. They've been preaching to the whole world by one means or another for three-and-a-half years.

At this point, we read that the antichrist makes his move. Verse 7: "And when they have finished their witnessing" (their testimony) – the end of their three-and-a-half year tour. Next we have: "The beast." The word "beast" is the Greek word "therion." "Therion" is an important word. It is the word that is used in the Bible for a wild, destructive animal. This is not a nice animal. This is a mean, destructive beast. The word "beast" is a good way to translate it. Of course it refers here to the antichrist himself. When we get to chapter 13, he is referred to by this title again: "The beast that comes up out of the pit." This individual comes out of a place which is called "the abyss." In the Greek Bible, it looks like this: the "abussos." This is referring to a place in the center of the earth that is the abode of Satan and of the demons.

We have this referred to in Luke 8:31. This is the story of the casting out of the demons at Gadara. When Jesus is casting them out of this demon-possessed man, they address Jesus, saying, "And they were entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss." They did not want to be sent back into this holding place in the middle of the earth where eventually they are going to end up.

We also had this referred to in Matthew 8:29 in this same incident of the healing of the demoniac. Matthew reports: "And behold, they (the demons) cried out saying, 'What do we have to do with you, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?'? And when you put these two verses together, when Jesus was going to cast out these demons, they were fearful that he was going to put them into the place of suffering, which was in the abyss – in the middle of the earth. They said, "Are you going to send us there ahead of our time? Are you going to send us into the abyss?" So they asked him instead to put them into a herd of swine that was there on the hillside, that some of the Jews had been smuggling into the country – raising pork, and selling it on the side. Here, these demons wanted to go into the swine. Well, Jesus did that for them, and they all ran over the cliff, and the swine killed themselves. So, that dealt with the Jews who were doing something that was violating the Mosaic Law.

The abyss is also the location of Hades and the compartment in Hades called Tartarus, which holds a special class of evil angels – specifically, those who cohabited with the women that are described in Genesis 6 before the flood, and created the half-breed race of men and demons. In Revelation 9:1-3, we have this referred to: "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth, and the key of the bottomless pit." Here it is the pit of the abyss – the same word: "Was given to him. And he opened the bottomless pit." This is probably referring to Satan. Someone gives him the key; he opens the pit; and, smoke went up out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. And the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. And out of the smoke came forth locusts (demons in the form of locusts) upon the earth, and power was given to them as scorpions of the earth have power." In the abyss, Satan, who has authority, is given the permission to open a special compartment of particularly vile, filthy demons which are turned loose on the earth at this time under this particular judgment.

Notice also, in Revelation 9:1, speaking of these demons who have come out of the center of the earth: "They have a king over them, the angel of the abyss. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon (which means 'destruction'), and in Greek, his name is Apollyon, which means 'destroyer.'" This is referring, of course, to Satan. Satan is the king of this demonic realm.

While Satan poses before unbelievers as a master of wisdom full of good deeds, he is in fact a destroying tyrant who is leaving destruction in his wake, and his demons are doing exactly that. The people of the New Age movement are followers of Satan because they consider him to be one of the enlightened masters, but instead he is deceptively leading them into a pit of abysmal darkness.

This is exactly the way the apostle Paul says that Satan works. Notice 2 Corinthians 11:14. He talks in this context about false teachers of the Word of God: "False apostles who disguise themselves as men of God, but, in fact, are men of Satan. Then in verse 14, Paul says, "And no wonder that these men do this. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light." This is what is happening today in our day. The New Agers are viewing Satan as an angel of light when, in fact, he is the deceptive angel, and he is a source of great darkness.

Nothing good ever comes from abandoning the Bible. Nothing good ever comes from turning to any other source of supposed religious enlightenment in the form of Eastern mysticism, and certainly not in the basic idea of Eastern mysticism – that man is a God himself. But this is going to become the popular doctrine of the tribulation. This is what Paul is referring to in 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12, where we read, "And for this reason, because they have rejected the truth of Scripture (they would not listen to the true instructors of the Word of God in the tribulation), God will send upon them a diluting influence so that they might believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness." One of the things that they're going to be so foolish as to believe is their own deity. This is what part of the great lie is going to be – part of the great deception.

You notice that the reason for it is that if you won't listen to the Bible, then God will let you listen to the deceit. You're going to believe something. If you will not listen to God's truth, then you're going to pick up human viewpoint, which is the basis of our society.

During the millennium, this pit of the abyss is going to be where Satan is going to be put and kept for that 1,000-year period. Revelation 20:1-3 tell us that: "And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss, and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for 1,000 years, and threw him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer until the 1,000 years were completed. After these things, he must be released for a short time." Certainly when Satan is put out of commission, we may also expect that the demonic ghosts will go with him. That's one of the other grand things of the millennium. Not only will no longer be around to deceive people, but his demonic hosts will not be there to do his work. They too will be flushed off the face of the earth, and no doubt put into this abyss with him.

Wouldn't it be interesting if God produced as many believers (as many Christians) as there are billions of demonic angels, and each Christian takes one demon by the scruff of his neck; stands at the opening to the pit of the abyss (which is someplace on the face of the earth); gives him a boot in the bottom; and, kicks him into the shaft. I suggest that you should practice that (but not on your friends) so that you are equipped to do that when it comes. That may be a service the Lord may call upon you.

**Satan and the Antichrist**

So, this is very fascinating – that we're told that when they have finished their testimony, this beast comes up out of the abyss, obviously referring to someone that is closely associated with Satan, and he will make war on them. The beast here is characterized as coming from the abyss, and it is referring to the antichrist. This is because he is empowered by Satan, who is the king of the abyss. The antichrist is so united to Satan that he is, in fact, viewed as Satan incarnate. That's why the Scripture simply says, "The beast that comes up out of the abyss." The antichrist doesn't come up out of the abyss. Satan comes up out of the abyss, but the antichrist is the incarnation of Satan, so that the antichrist now, in fact indwelt by Satan, becomes, in all practical effect, Satan himself.

We had the same thing with Judas Iscariot. In John 13:2, Jesus calls Judas a devil. If you have a King James Bible, very often the word "daimonion," which is the Greek word for demon, is translated, unfortunately, as "devil." There is only one devil. There are many demons. The translators often use the translation "devil" for "demon." But this time, I can tell you that in the original Greek, it is "devil." Here, Jesus is calling a human being "the devil: "And during supper, the devil already having put into the heart of Judas, the son of Simon, to betray Him." Here, Judas is indwelt by Satan.

In verse 21, Jesus said, "One of you is going to betray me," and they want to know who it was. In verse 26, Jesus answered: "'This is one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him.' So, when He had dipped the morsel, He gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. And after the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Jesus therefore said to him, 'What you do, do quickly," meaning: "Get on with the betrayal."

Now, here we have the distinct statement that Satan entered into Judas, and Judas therefore became the personification of the devil, and was, in fact, at that point, operating as if he were indeed Satan himself. There was no difference between them. So, this is extremely significant that one indwelt by Satan here actually was treated by the Lord as the devil.

Let's add to that John 6:70-71: Then Jesus said, "Didn't I myself choose you, the 12, and yet one of you is a devil?" Now you see what he means. I think you can understand. Satan is indwelling Judas Iscariot. Judas is, in fact, the devil himself: "Now He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the 12, was going to betray Him."

So, when we're told here that the beast comes up out of the abyss, what he is saying is that one totally indwelt and empowered by Satan is coming up out of the abyss, because it is the dwelling place of Satan.

**The Little Horn**

The antichrist is referred to in Scripture in various ways. There are a variety of ways by which he's defined. In Daniel 7:8, you have the picture of ten kings, which represent a confederacy in Western Europe. And among them comes what is called "a little horn." He knocks all three of those kings, and the other seven make a deal with him, and he becomes the ruler of the Western Confederacy. So, in Daniel 7, the antichrist of the book of the Revelation is called the little horn.

**The Abomination of Desolation**

In Mark 13:14-20, Jesus talks about the antichrist under the term of the abomination of desolation, or the abominable thing that makes desolate. There again he's talking about the antichrist, because there he's describing when the antichrist, in the middle of the tribulation, turns against the Jews, and tells them that, from now on, their temple, that he has permitted them to rebuild, must be a temple dedicated to him as their God. And he sets up a statue of himself in the temple for them to worship. That, of course, is an abomination of idolatry in the sight of God, and it makes any relationship to God completely desolate.

**The Man of Lawlessness**

Then the apostle Paul, in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10 refer to the antichrist as the man of lawlessness.

**The Antichrist**

All of these are titles of this same powerful personality called the antichrist, who begins his career as a conqueror over three nations, and a ruler over ten. Then, in the middle of the tribulation, when God Himself has destroyed Russia (when Russia and the Arab nations make their move against Israel), then God will destroy Russia, so that the Bible says that only one-sixth of them are left of their armies to straggle back home north to Russia. And a great number of the homeland is destroyed also. Russia now is out of the picture. Where is the United States? I suspect that it is long gone as a world power. Now the antichrist has no one to stand in his way. At that point, he takes over the whole world, and he becomes a worldwide ruler.

**Socialistic Government**

When I was in Dallas seminary, Dr. Walvoord, who was the president at that time, used to teach systematic theology. When we were in prophetic studies on the events of the tribulation era, Dr. Walvoord was wanting to relate to Russia (which was not nearly as significant a nation then as it is now. Dr. Walvoord said that one thing was clear from Daniel's prophecy about the progression of world governments, the image that was seen on Nebuchadnezzar plain. He said, "After the Roman Empire, there will not be another world empire until the empire of Jesus Christ puts it together." What the antichrist has is not a new world empire. It is simply the old Roman Empire that fractured off into individual nations, of which indeed we are a descendant also. Those are going to be put back together as the antichrist's revived Roman Empire. His point was that since there will not be another world empire, therefore Russia will never rule the world. However, he said, "Russia's economic system will dominate the world." And I look back on this now, and I think, "That was pretty perceptive." The antichrist will be a socialist, and that means that government will be dominant in the lives of people.

Please be aware that what you are seeing happening in Eastern Europe has one subtle thing that the people on nightly news are not telling you. While the Communist Party is being brought down, these nations are not terminating their socialism. They want to be socialism with a human face. Socialism is what their problem is – not the Communist Party. And the nightly news people are very careful not to tell you that the people are suffering from the domination of socialism. They keep saying they're suffering from the domination of communism. But even Russia says, "Communism doesn't exist in the world today. Communism is down the road when our economic system of socialism has regenerated all human beings. A baby will be born under socialism. He'll never learn greed. He'll own everything with everyone else. He'll be ready to share everything. He'll be ready to work himself to death for everyone else. And then we will have communism." Russia says, "Now, all we have is socialism."

So, what are the people of Eastern Europe fighting? They're fighting what has brought them misery, which is not communism, but socialism. The antichrist is going to impose the same system.

So, this ruler of these nations is going to end up as a dictator of the whole world. There'll be one world government. What the Council on Foreign Relations; and the Trilateral Commission of David Rockefeller; and, the international bankers are putting together, and have been putting together since the end of World War I, will finally bear fruition. Those men have no hesitancy. They have told you that they believe that there should be an interrelationship (an interdependency) of all nations on this world. There should be eventually a governmental action that works for all the nations of the world – one economic system, and one political system. They are talking about a one-world government, and a one-world governing agency of some kind.

**The Antichrist Kills the Two Witnesses**

Here, the antichrist, who has produced just that kind of a world, is under great misery and agony because he cannot control the two witnesses. But suddenly, this man, the antichrist, who is empowered by Satan from the abyss, and is the incarnation of the devil himself, decides to make his move. He goes to war against the two witnesses. He actually mounts up a major military attack on them. And, lo and behold, it works. He is able to overcome them. The Greek word is "nikao," which means "to conquer."

So, either at the middle, or near the end of the tribulation period, the movement of the antichrist here (this military move) is able to conquer the two witnesses, and the result is that, lo and behold, to the astounding of the whole world, he is able to kill them. The Greek word is "apokteino," which means the affliction of physical death. So, after three-and-a-half years of immunity from death, their testimony is completed. Now God permits these two men to be killed. The antichrist, to his surprise, and to his great delight, has finally killed these people that have been such a thorn in his side for so long.

You can be sure that all the TV programs in progress will immediately be interrupted by all the networks by a special bulletin announcing this dramatic development: "The two witnesses have been killed by our leader, the antichrist." People are going to be euphoric. because they will now gain a new sense of encouragement, and a new sense of enthusiasm that their god, the antichrist, whom they are freely worshiping as their god, and freely looking to him as their god – their God has proved himself victorious over the God of the Bible. He is going to be beside himself with joy.

Now everyone thinks that things are finally going to get turned around. New Age doctrines are going to be able to prove their validity for creating a world of peace and prosperity all over the face of the earth. But are they in for a big surprise? For indeed, the voices of God's communicators have been silenced, but the power of God has not been restrained. God has a script, and He's working it out. While the world is euphoric that their leader has finally killed these two men and silenced them, this is going to be news for several days to follow, until a new development suddenly puts it all into a new perspective. A dramatic thing then happens. And if you want to know what that is, please join us in the next session.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1989

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