I. Two weeks ago we look at several scriptures that showed us that the "two witnesses" were really the message of repentance and faith in God that the **Law and the Prophets** have always testified about throughout the ages. The message of the Law and the Prophets was fulfilled in the message of Christ. The two witnesses represented the preaching of the gospel that was going on in the time prior to and during the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman Empire. Now John will describe the fact that the faithful disciples of the Lord would indeed face persecution from the invading nation/Roman Empire along with the judgment that would come on the nation of Israel.

II. Verse7. John begins to reference the beast. The beast that rises from the abyss will make war with the two witnesses, conquers them, and kills them. In Revelation 9 we read the locusts being released from the abyss and identified the locusts as the Roman Empire. Now this Roman Empire is described as a beast. Revelation 13 will reveal why the beast imagery is used and we will look at those details when we get to that chapter. For now we simply need to see the Roman Empire as the beast that is the one desolating the Jewish nation. In the desolation of the Jewish nation, the prophets, apostles, and proclaimers of God's word are going to be killed as well. Let us look at a timeline of the Roman Invasion of Jerusalem between 65-70 AD.

66	• Roman procurator of Judea, Gessius Florus, murders 3,600 Jews (crucifying about 2,000) in May. May-Oct. Christians flee Judea. • Jewish Revolt against Rome begins with massacre of Jerusalem Roman garrison in Oct. • Roman gentiles of Caesarea kill 20,000 Jews • Jewish army defeats and massacres the Roman garrison at Masada • Gentiles of Damascus, Syria massacre 10,000 Jews • Roman occupied cities across Judea, Samaria, Egypt, Syria,and Asia attack Jews. • Roman General Cestius Gallus' army defeated in Nov. and driven out • **Jews fight each other; 3 different factions. Each leader claims to be 'messiah.'** • Numerous earthquakes
67	• General Vespasian and son Titus come across the Euphrates River; arrive in Judea from Syria with 4 Roman legions to destroy the Jewish revolt. • Revolts against Rome in Gaul and Spain • Peter and Paul executed in Rome (some time between 64-67?)
68 - 69	• "The Year of Four Emperors" Nero commits suicide and is succeeded by Galba, Otho, and Vitellius who is succeeded by General Vespasian. Vespasian is named Emperor by Roman Senate • Roman army destroys Qumran (community where Dead Sea Scrolls found)
70	• General Titus begins siege of Jerusalem in March. It lasts 31/2 months. The 9th of Ab: the Temple and Jerusalem are destroyed by the Roman army. Hundreds of Thousands are killed in the Palestinian region. • Jews who survive revolt are sold into slavery

III. Verse 8. When the Romans invaded Judea, they desolated over 980 towns, including the great city of Jerusalem. Their bodies are going to lie in the street of the great city that is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. A couple translations read that the great city is "symbolically called Sodom and Egypt" (ESV, NET). Some translations read "figuratively called Sodom and Egypt" (TNIV, NIV, NLT). A couple translations read "prophetically" (HCSB, NRSV). The NASB reads, "Mystically." The Greek word *pneumatikos* means spiritually. The spiritual condition of the city is in view. It is not a mystical statement or a prophetic statement. The city in view has will be judged like the city of Sodom and the nation of Egypt. Which city is in view? Which city is deserving of judgment because of their sins? It is the city where their Lord was crucified. The beast is destroying Jerusalem and in the process the two witnesses are also killed. This is not the first time in scriptures that the physical nation of Israel has been spiritually equated with Sodom and Egypt. Israel is identified spiritually with Sodom in Isaiah 1:9-10, Jeremiah 23:14, and Ezekiel 16:46-49. Israel was also spiritually identified with Egypt in Ezekiel 23 and Jeremiah 9:26. Notice a couple verses in Ezekiel 23 to see this spiritual identification. In Ezekiel 23:4 we are told that the prophecy is against Samaria and Jerusalem, representing both the northern and southern nations of the divided kingdom of Israel. The prophets spoke of how Israel was returning to its idolatrous ways as they had practiced when they were in Egypt.

IV. Verses 9-10. The beast is killing the witnesses, that is, the Romans are killing the apostles and those proclaiming God's word. People from all the nations will gloat over the death of these Christians, refusing to even allow a proper burial for them. For a dead body to lie in view was considered the worst humiliation a person could suffer from his enemies (Psalm 79:3-4). Let us not forget that Christians are not only dying in the great tribulation as the Romans attacked Judea, but Christians are dying throughout the Roman Empire under the rule of Nero. During the years of 66-70 AD is when the apostle Peter and the apostle Paul were killed by Nero. It is during this time that Nero is dipping Christians in wax and lighting them on fire so he could see his gardens. It is during this time that Christians are being dressed in animal clothing to be chased and torn apart by animals for sport. The world has no love for Christians during these years. Revelation 11 is describing all the events that are going on as the physical Jewish nation is receiving its judgment. Killing Christians was no big deal to the world. The ungodly rejoice at seeing the death of God's people and God's apostles because they preached to the world a risen Savior who would return in judgment against those who do not repent.

V. Verses 11-12 reinforce the message of hope for those who overcome. In Revelation 7 we saw the people of God sealed. Though they are killed they are shown standing before the throne, with the Lamb, receiving white robes of victory. The victory is pictured again. The beast is killing the apostles and those who are proclaiming the message of the Law and the prophets. But these slain people of God are pictured as resurrected. They ascend to heaven in a cloud just as Jesus ascended when he went back to the Father in heaven. The word of the Lord is not dead. The word of the Lord is not extinguished or silenced. God's word continues to be proclaimed. Christianity was not extinguished and those who were killed are victorious as they go up to heaven. Even though the church was highly persecuted, the church grew greater after the persecution like never before.

VI. Verses 13-14. The earthquake (symbolical destruction by Rome) is a further sign of God's vindication of his servants who proclaim the word of the Lord. Just as the great earthquake that occurred at the death of Jesus was God's vindicating act of Jesus and a message of judgment to the earth, so also this earthquake for the two witnesses. A tenth of the city falls and seven thousand people are killed. For a tenth of the city

to fall leading to the dead of seven thousand shows that this is a smaller city being judged. The population of the city of Rome in the first century is estimated to be about 5 million people. The population of Jerusalem in the first century is estimated to be about 70,000 to 100,000. The imagery fits the capture of the city of Jerusalem. Part of the city falls as Rome surrounds Jerusalem. Part of the city was conquered, the part called the newer city that was outside the second wall but inside the third wall. Now the hysteria within Jerusalem begins as the siege wall is built and Jerusalem is about to fall. The people begin to cry out to God in their terror. However, it is too late. The second woe has passed. There is one more woe that is soon to come.

VII. Verse 15-17. The seventh angel blows his trumpet. Remember what this meant. Go back to Revelation 10:7 and note that when the seventh angel blew his trumpet then all that the prophets had spoken concerning this event would be fulfilled. Remember that this angel was seen in Daniel 12:7 saying that the shattering of the power of the "holy people"(Isreal) was going to come. The angel in Revelation 11:6-7 says there is no more delay. The shattering of the power of the holy people would take place when the seventh angel sounds the trumpet. The seventh trumpet now sounds. This picture of the fall of the city of Jerusalem, the judgment against the physical Jewish nation. The final judgment of the Jewish nation shows the continuing establishment of Christ's kingdom as Christ conquers all of his enemies. This verse declares that when the trumpet sounds his kingdom reigns. The question for the student is when did Christ reign begin? Does he reign later or does he reign now. Let's look at other scriptures for help. Mark 1:13-15, Luke 4:43, John 18:36, Luke 17:20-21, John 3:3, Galatians 2:20. These verses help us see that the kingdom of God is not like worldly kingdoms, but it is a spiritual kingdom inside the believer. Christ reigns in you and me now!! His kingdom is here and he is reigning now. When he rose from the grave his kingdom started Matthew 28:18. When the temple was destroyed that ended any physical worship so that believers could clearly see that worship would have to be spiritual. Jesus predicted this and it has come to pass. The old has been done away with to be replaced by the new(2 Corinthians 3:6, Hebrews 7:22, Hebrews 8:6, Hebrews 9:15, Hebrews 12:24). Now that the reign of Christ has begun John sees the response of the 24 elders (angelic beings) to this new reign. The elders are praising God for this new reign.

VIII. The enemies of Christ's kingdom have been defeated. Every enemy is being subjected under the feet of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:25). Notice verse 18: The nations rage, but your wrath has come. Time for judgment and time for reward for those who are God's servants. This imagery recalls Psalm 2:2 where the nations rage against God's anointed. However, Christ rules over the earth and subjects the nations. Verse 19 concludes the woe and it is an important image. God has judged. There are flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. These are images that God has brought final judgment on the nation. God's temple is seen in heaven, not on the earth. This relates to what we studied in Hebrews 12:26-28. The things shaken had to be removed so that the things cannot be shaken may remain. Though the physical temple was destroyed, the true temple of God remains in heaven. The true people of God remain. Further, the ark of the covenant is seen in heaven, not on earth. The ark of the covenant represented God's presence and favor in the Old Testament. Josephus records that the ark of the covenant was not in the second temple (Wars V. 219). The ark had been lost when the Babylonians invaded back in 586 BC. God's presence was never again pictured with the physical nation or the physical temple in Jerusalem, though it had been rebuilt in 516 BC and was beautified and expanded by Herod at beginning of the first century. The ark of the covenant is pictured within the heavenly temple. God's presence and favor is with his people, not the physical Jewish nation. God has destroyed another nation that stood in opposition to the people of God.