

“The Mystery of Death”

(Rev. 11:1-14)

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I. Introduction

A. The Death of Gerald Ford

1. Life in Grand Rapids seemed to stop last December
2. As his body lay in state at the Ford museum
3. Waiting in line for eight hours to see the body
 - a. It seemed to be on TV 24 hours per day
 - b. Our attention was riveted to the casket with a body inside
 - c. He was loved!

B. Another Scene

1. All normal TV programming comes to a halt
 - a. The whole world focuses its attention on two bodies
 - b. Constant coverage for 3½ days
2. But very different from President Ford
 - a. The world’s two most hated men
 - b. The authorities refuse to even bury the bodies
 1. Incredible hatred
3. Declare a world-wide holiday
 - a. “They’re dead!”
 - b. Exchange gifts
 - c. 24 hours per day news coverage

4. But after 3 ½ days...something beyond belief happens!

II. Review

A. Still paused before the final trumpet

1. An interlude (parentheses)
2. Last week, the little book and the incredible angel

B. Half way through the 7 years of tribulation

1. Today, the two great witnesses

III. The Text

A. The Rod of Measuring (v. 1 & 2)

1. How do you see yourself in your dreams?
 - a. Being chased
 - b. Falling
 - c. Preaching without pants
2. John sees a Temple.....v.1
3. He sees himself in the vision
 - a. He is doing something
4. John has a measuring rod
 - a. Would cut off a 10 ft. reed
 - b. Stiff and straight – yet – lightweight
 1. Like bamboo
 - c. Standard rod was 10 ft. long
5. He's measuring the Temple.....v.1
6. Which temple?

a. **Solomon's Temple**

1. Solomon around 1000 BC
2. Destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC
3. Ark of the Covenant removed...lost
 - a. Article re: Jews having the Ark
 - b. Ready to rebuild the temple

b. **The Second Temple**

1. Started by Zerubbabel's
 - a. After 70 years of captivity
2. Herod finished the job
 - a. Rebuilt Zerubbabel's during time of Jesus
 - b. Lavish and gorgeous splendor
 - *special on "Herod's Temple"
 - c. Destroyed by Romans in 70 AD

yet to come

c. **Tribulation Temple**

d. **Millennial Temple**

1. Described by Ezekiel in ch. 40-43
7. This is the "Tribulation Temple"
8. How we know the temple will be rebuilt
 - a. *Sacrifices and offerings will be made during the Tribulation*
 1. Could only be done in the Temple
 2. Destroyed nearly 2000 years ago
 - b. *Something happens in the middle of the Tribulation*

1. Described in Dan. 9:27 and by Jesus
2. It will happen in the “holy place” in the temple

Matt. 24:15, 16 *So when you see standing in the holy place
“the abomination that causes desolation,” spoken of through the prophet Daniel...let the reader
understand. (16)...then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.*

3. The Antichrist will reveal his true intent in God’s holy place
 - a. In II Thes. 2:1-13 the Apostle Paul said:
“that the Antichrist, in the middle of the Tribulation, will defy God by sitting in the temple of God and presenting himself to the world as God.
 - b. Therefore, the temple has to be rebuilt”
9. Why the temple has not yet been rebuilt
- a. If the Jews feel so passionately about it?
 - b. Let’s meet the Dome of the Rock
 1. One of Islam’s most holy sites
 2. Right over Mt. Moriah, the place considered to be the site where Abraham was prepared to sacrifice Isaac.
 3. The site of the holy-of-holies in the temple
 4. Why do you think Jews pray at the “wailing wall?”
 5. Praying for the restoration of the Temple
 - c. The seven years will begin with the signing of a covenant
 1. Guarantee of protection between Israel and the Antichrist
 2. He will help them built their temple—
 3. I don’t know how he will control the Muslims
 - d. But something will happen in the middle of the 7 years
 1. The Anti-Christ proclaims he is god in the Holy Place!

2. Could this be “the lie”?
 - a. will people believe it?
10. The purpose of measuring.....v.1
 - a. Lamentations 2 – God said—“measure Jerusalem for destruction”
 1. Judge those who worship there
 2. That would be the Jews
 - b. Told to skip the Gentiles.....v.2
 1. They’ll still get theirs, however
 2. During the final 3 ½ years
 - c. But they will rule Jerusalem for 42 months
 1. Gentiles will rule Jerusalem
 2. Will tread it under foot

B. The Rule of the Messengers (v. 3-6)

1. The most powerful of all of God’s witnesses.....v.3
2. Boldly proclaim God’s message for 1,260 days (42 months / 3 ½ years)
 - a. Probably during the first half of the tribulation
3. Prophecy
 - a. Preach
 - b. Couldn’t be silenced
4. Called the “two olive trees and the two lampstands”.....v.4
 - a. Picture from Zechariah 4 & 5
 1. Lamps = light
 2. Olive trees = the oil to burn in the lamps
 - b. Those who give “light”

5. Who are these guys?

a. Elijah

1. (Malachi 4:5)— ***“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.”***

2. Translated to heaven

3. Appeared with Moses at the Transfiguration of Jesus

a. Math.17:1-3 ***After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.***

b. Moses

1. With Elijah at the transfiguration

2. Both performed similar miracles

a. The 3 ½ year drought

b. Turn the water to blood

c. The plagues

c. However, they could be two special messengers alive at that time

1. We can only speculate

6. Can't be harmed.....v.5

a. Fire from their mouths

b. Devours their enemies

c. I don't know what that looks like

7. Their powers.....v.6

a. No rain

b. Water to blood

- c. Plagues
- 8. Trying to get world to repent
 - a. Hated because of it!
 - b. But they can't be stopped
- 9. Only stopped when God was finished using them
- 10. Special role during the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation
 - a. The 144,000 witness to the entire earth
 - b. These two to the Jews in the holy land

C. The Rejoicing of the Masses (v. 7-10)

- 1. The death of Herod the Great
 - a. Brilliant
 - 1. Temple...Masada...Ceasarea...Herodian...etc.
 - b. Yet he was hated
 - 1. Babies at birth of Christ. Etc.
 - c. Fear there would be a party
 - d. Imprisoned 1,000 of the best loved in Jericho
 - e. To be killed upon Herod's death
 - 1. so there would be sadness in the land
 - 2. didn't do it
- 2. Likewise the masses hated the two witnesses
 - a. God allows the two witnesses to be killed.....v.7
 - 1. But it takes the power of Satan to do it
 - b. The Beast from the Bottomless Pit makes war with them
 - 1. Either Satan or the demon general from the Abyss

3. Key....no power over them until “they shall have finished their testimony.”

a. They will be “immortal until their work is done”

b. True of all who obey the will of God

1. You won’t die a minute before God’s plan allows

a. Nor a minute later

2. God has numbered your days

4. Their bodies will lie in the streets of Jerusalem.....v.8-9

a. Called a spiritual Sodom or Egypt

b. Even savages have respect for the bodies of the dead

1. But not here!

c. Lie there for 3 ½ days

1. Worldwide rejoicing

2. “Ding Dong the Witch is dead”

3. Continual news coverage

d. Special world holiday.....v.10

1. Even gift giving

2. Think their problems are behind them

a. Their tormentors are dead!

D. The Resurrection of the Messengers (v. 11-14)

1. As the cameras roll.....v.11

- They’re getting *UP!*
- The world shuts down in AWE!

2. *“terror struck those who saw them”....v.11*

- No kidding!
3. Then the voice from heaven.....v.12
 - a. *“Come up here”*
 - b. And they did
 - c. While the cameras roll...and their enemies watch in disbelief
 4. God punctuates the occasion.....v.13
 - a. Great earthquake
 - b. 1/10 of city fell
 - c. 7,000 people killed
 5. The Jews who survive will *“give glory to the God of Heaven”*.....v.13
 - a. They will finally acknowledge God’s power
 6. The remnant of the Jews turns to Christ during the second half
 - a. This cataclysmic judgment of God upon the city of Jerusalem could be the event that triggers the revival that will sweep across Israel during the latter half of the Tribulation
 6. And the 3rd and final (and worst) woe is about to begin!.....v.14

IV. Summary

A. God has a plan for your life too

1. Though the whole world oppose you
 - a. If it is in God’s will – it can’t be stopped
 - b. Ours is a supernatural religion
2. Investing your final months on earth
 - a. None of us knows how long we will have
 - b. My call to lead this church in Hudsonville
3. Without a fear of death

- a. So many teens are preoccupied with a fear of death

B. Why you have no reason to fear death

1. You won't die a second too soon...or second too late

- a. Nobody could kill the two witnesses
 - 1. God wasn't done with them yet
- b. God has a job for you to complete
 - 1. You won't leave early
 - 2. ...and you won't leave late
- c. God has already "numbered your days"

2. Every person here will die some day

- a. Unless the Lord takes you up before death
- b. And we can never know when death will take us
 - 1. John M's talk with the cardiologist
 - 2. *"None of us knows if we'll live to see tomorrow."*
- c. Have to be ready to face God at all times

3. The death of a believer is precious in the sight of God

- a. Psalm 116:15....."precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints"
- b. Why?
 - 1. Because He alone can see both sides...the full scope of life as we know it here, and also as He knows it beyond this dark veil we call death.
 - 2. Parents miss their children
 - 3. When God calls one of his kids home

4. You will be far better off on the other side

a. Romans 8:18 ***“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”***

b. Talking with Herm and Barry

1. Our bodies are wearing out

c. What the Apostle Paul saw

1. II Cor. 12:3-4

“And I know that this man...whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows...(4) was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.”

2. Phil 1:21-24

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. (22) If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! (23) I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; (24) but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

5. Death is a transition...not a destination

a. Death marks the true beginning of the believer’s glorious journey

1. Psalm 23:4 ***“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;”***

b. Life as we know it is a narrow vestibule where we linger for a time waiting for the door to open so we may step into our life of incredible dimensions

c. Blind Fanny Crosby wrote a song entitled, “My Saviour First of All.”

***When my life work is ended, and I cross the swelling tide,
When the bright and glorious morning I shall see;
I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side,
And His smile will be the first to welcome me.***

***Thro’ the gates to the city in a robe of spotless white,
He will lead me where no tears shall ever fall;
In the glad song of ages I shall mingle with delight,
But I long to meet my Savior first of all.***

6. Your “death date” will be far more glorious than your “birth date”

a. *Our birth begins a life of uncertainty. There are sorrows, disappointments, pain, losses, broken lives, broken bodies, and broken homes. But our “death-date” marks the beginning of certainty. On this date, chiseled into the marble markers as our termination point, the believer leaves a life of struggle and uncertainty and enters a life of bliss and certainty...into the glorious presence of God*

b. Psalm 23:6 “and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever”

7. *Your death will take you to the greatest of all reunions*

a. The joy of a family reunion

b. If we could see death from the viewpoint of the multitudes already in heaven, death would likely be viewed more as a homecoming...a reunion

c. John will greet us when we arrive

8. *The most important fact in death is whether or not you have accepted Christ as your Savior*

a. All else is left behind

b. God’s question; “Why should I let you in?”

c. “Because of your Son, Jesus”

d. I’m here in Christ alone