

# The Extraordinary Preparation Needed to Finish God's Work!



Revelation  
10-11  
Study Four

# Lesson Four

## “Earth’s Last Witnesses”

A production of *Prophecy Research Initiative* (PRI)

God projects us into the immediate future where He wants us to have a part in completing the plan of redemption!



*“And I will give power unto my two witnesses.... These are the ... two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.”* (Rev. 11:3-4b)

As to who those two witnesses are, one could give several “right” answers! Their “context” echoes Old Testament clues that help us through their elevated purpose!

- A valid legal defense required two witnesses. (Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6, 19:15)  
There was then legal proof that their message was the “whole truth.”
- Of the seven churches/candlesticks (Rev. 1:20), only two remain at the end, Smyrna and Philadelphia. The rest apostatized!



There is another powerful illustration found in Zechariah. There God sets aside two leaders (chps 3–4). Joshua is given garments of righteousness by those standing before him. (3:3-5) He is identified as the High Priest. Zerubbabel became the new governor of Judah. It is noted that he was filled with the power of the Spirit. (4:1-6)

These two men became God's "personal witnesses" re-establishing the "kingdom of Judah" into a theocracy!



Who might those leaders represent? One symbolizes the laity (Zerubbabel), the other God's specially anointed (Joshua). John's two witnesses have also been seen as a symbol for the Old and New Testaments. (GC 267)

Thus we can rightly view the witnesses as:

1. Old and New Testaments
2. Laity and God's specially anointed
3. Two churches that haven't apostatized
4. Legal complement to fully represent truth

*“These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.” (Rev. 11:4)*

The two olive trees implicitly symbolize the source of God’s promised power, the Holy Spirit. The oil goes from those “trees” to the candlesticks to bring light.



Those candlesticks are God’s witnesses/churches doing heaven’s bidding.

“From the holy ones that stand in God’s presence, His Spirit is imparted to human instrumentalities that are consecrated to His service. The mission of the two anointed ones [Zech. 4:19] is to communicate light and power to God’s people. It is to receive blessing for us that they stand in God’s presence. As the olive trees empty themselves into the golden pipes, so the heavenly messengers seek to communicate all that they receive from God.” (TM 510)



The full meaning of the “two anointed” ones standing before God (not the witnesses!) relates to the “origin” of God’s Spirit. Who these messengers are remains a mystery!

From Zechariah: *“This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, [both “armed forces”] but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.”*

*“What are these two olive trees?”*

*“These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.” (Zech. 4:6, 11, 14)*

What do the two witnesses tell the world? The referenced material that began in the previous chapter includes:

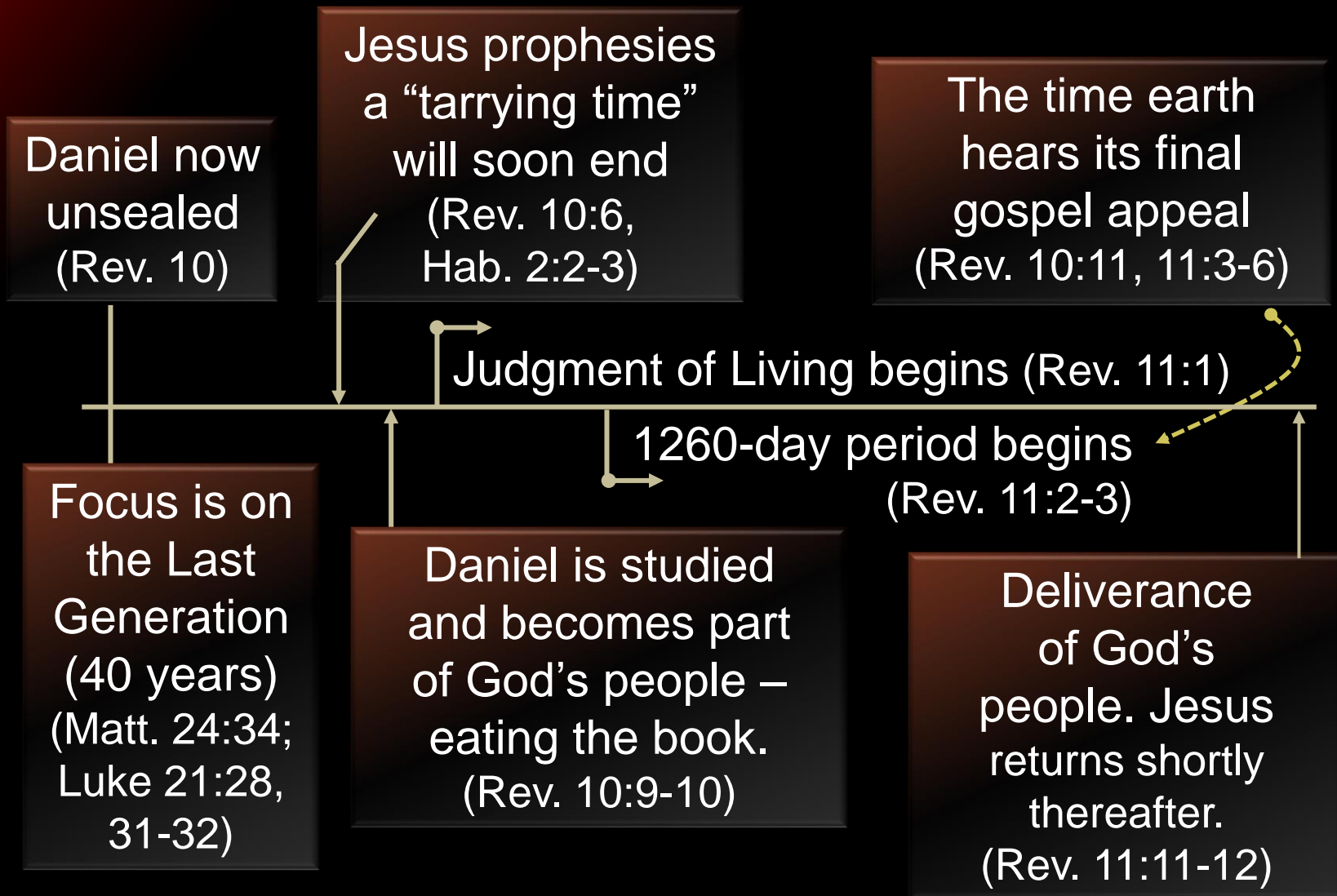
1. The assurance that heaven is globally presiding over earth's last "outreach."
2. The seven "legal thunders" herald major waymarks in end-time prophecy.
3. The stunning messages from the unsealed portion of Daniel (Dan. 8-12). That includes the gospel and Sabbath messages!

continued:

4. When the hour of God's judgment of the living begins.
5. That the witnessing and persecution will end in 3½ years.



# Graphically, this is what we've seen so far:



The outcome of that “Spirit power” is:

*“And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.*

*“These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.” (Rev. 11:5-6)*

Their ministry cannot be stopped or destroyed. This is the continued fulfillment of the promise that Jesus gave to the disciples:



*“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”* (Acts 1:8)

Will the final work of these witnesses be successful? Jesus had promised:

*“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”*  
(Matt. 24:14)

This prophecy informs us of details which the world must hear!

*“And when they shall have finished their testimony.”*  
(Rev. 11:7a) It will be heard!



By the end of the 1260 days allotted to this final task, the gospel will have gone to the whole of mankind.



As that work comes to an end,  
something horrible emerges:



*“And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.”*

(Rev. 11:7)



This is the first time John uses the word “beast.” It refers to a cruel, violent creature.

This, however, will be its last “act” before God destroys it. To understand the full beast story, we must go to other prophecies. First:

It is important to note:

If “killing” God’s witnesses is a *literal* death, the 144,000 would not be translated. This is a collective term for God’s final witnesses (another study) who will be translated. They are the “living saints” who will not see death!

What then is the story of “that beast?” It actually begins in Revelation 16 and 17.

First, let’s look at several symbols to orient our thinking as to what John is saying:

Beast – means an earthly nation or empire. It is usually in the context of opposing or even warring against God’s people. (Dan. 7:18, 27)  
It is not Satan, as some think, since he is represented as a dragon, serpent or the devil.

(Rev. 12:3, 9)

Bottomless Pit – is the same as the “abyss,” noted as the “haunt” of demons. (Luke 8:31, II Pet. 2:4, Jude 6).



Ascendeth – the context suggests that it had already ascended and was there to attack the two witnesses. (Aune, *Revelation*, 2:616)

John saw a harlot riding a beast in Revelation 17. The angel he was with explained:

*“The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; [it was a nation and then it disappeared] and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit [the nation returns/emerges from the haunt of evil], and go into perdition [God will eventually destroy it].”*

Later, the world admires this creature (Rev. 13:3) *“when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.”* (Rev. 17:8) (It regains a nation.)

The *key* is the association of this beast with a harlot woman, which represents an apostate church. (II Cor. 11:2, Eph. 5:31-33)



A church is seen ruling over a nation. From these verses, it had had a nation in the past, then it lost that rule and, finally, at the end, before God destroys it, that church/state is once again restored.

How do we put this all together?

- The harlot is also sitting on seven hills. That refers to the city of Rome. (Rev. 17:9) Rome is known as the city of seven hills.
- Might this be the Roman Catholic Church?
  - The king of the Franks (later France), “Pipen the Younger,” donated land he conquered in Italy to the papacy (Pope Stephen II) in 756+ A.D. These became known as the “Papal States.”
  - The Church “was” then a woman/beast, church/state.

- The Italian kingdom, Italy, was formed on March 17, 1861. Victor Emmanuel II became its king.



- General Giuseppe Garibaldi, on behalf of this king, began to confiscate those Papal States. Finally, on September 20, 1870, he took Rome, the last land that was held by the Roman Catholic Church.



- The “beast” then, “was not!” Prophecy was being fulfilled. When did the papacy then regain land/beast/nation?

This is so interesting – and important. If the Harlot–beast imagery in Revelation 17 is to be accurate, the Roman Catholic Church would have to gain a nation once again. This is how that happened:



Benito Mussolini reads his credentials prior to signing the Lateran Accords on behalf of King Victor Emmanuel III. Cardinal Gasparri (seated), signed on behalf of Pope Pius XI.



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**What did this create?**

Benito Mussolini reads his credentials prior to signing the Lateran Accords on behalf of King Victor Emmanuel III. Cardinal Gasparri (seated), signed on behalf of Pope Pius XI.


The Vatican City State (108.7 acres). This was then given to the papacy and recognized as a nation!



The church/state was once again restored! The Bible, however, calls it the “harlot and the beast.” That “woman” is seen by God as an apostate church! This “state” is the smallest in the world. Yet, it is perhaps the most powerful! It exchanges ambassadors with 179 nations of the world!

Look once again at the verse we have currently in focus:

“The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder ... when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.” (Rev. 17:8)

The beast that “ascends” points to the Roman Catholic geopolitical structure called the Holy See: 

The Holy See is the combined church and state, represented by the horrible apocalyptic “beast” seen in Revelation 11:7b and chp. 13:

- 756–1870 – church/state period which is partially identified as the “Holy Roman Empire.” The beast that “was.”
- 1870–1929 – ecclesiastical period where the Roman Church had no land/nation. That is the “beast” that “is not.”
- 1929–present – the Roman Catholic Church has the Vatican City State. It has ascended!



Leader of 1.2 billion people from nearly every nation.

How can we convincingly know that this man heads a prophetic church/state power which came from the “bottomless pit” (that place of evil where it will once again go – “perdition” – God’s destructive judicial sentence)?

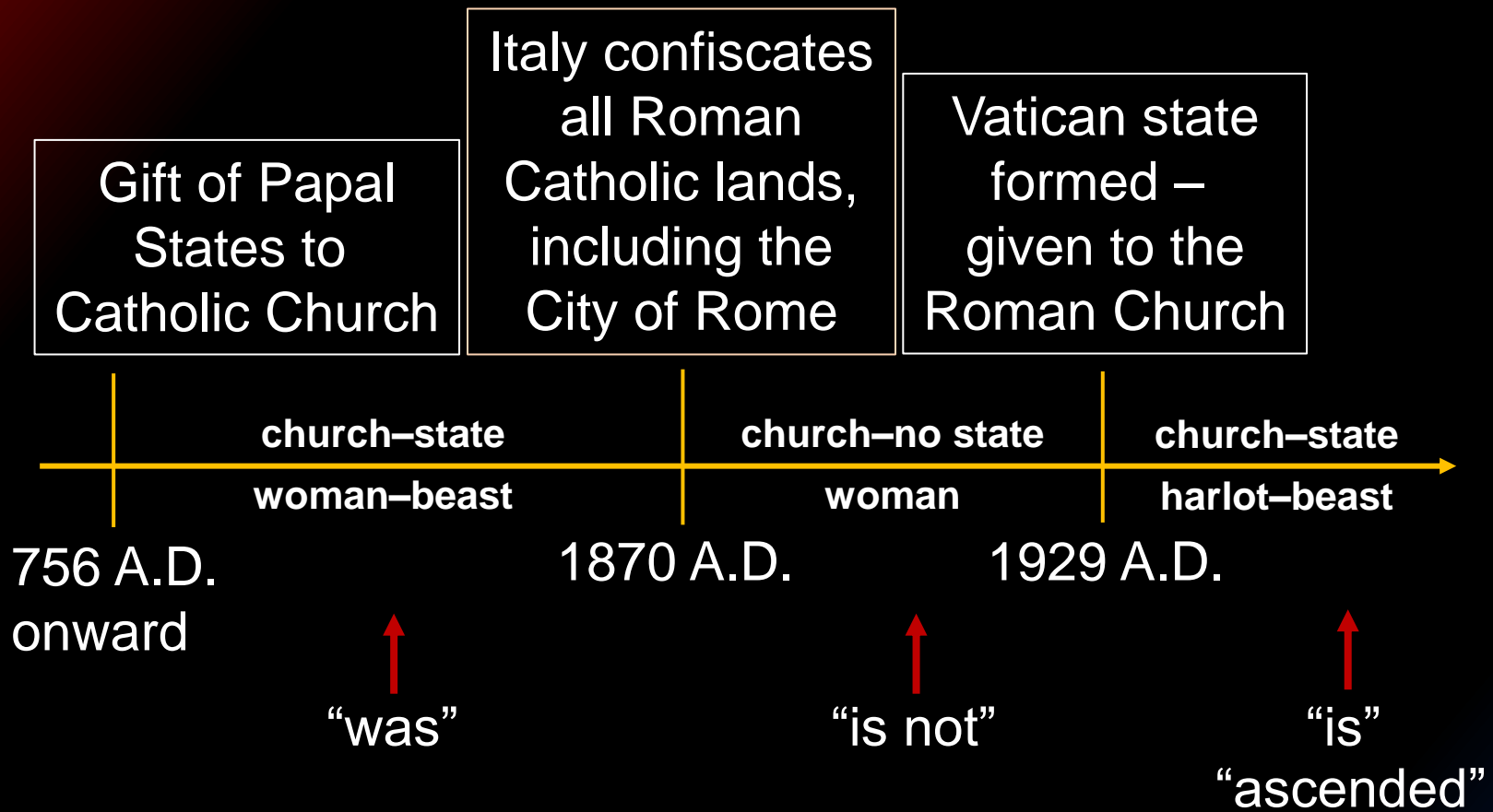
Let’s look at our  
Revelation 11 text once again:

*“And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.” (Rev. 11:7)*



The “war” that is depicted is similar to the one from the beast that ascends out of the “sea” (Rev. 13:1, 7). This echoes the “little horn,” “vile person” and “king of the north” of Daniel 7, 8 and 11. It is hatred from the antichrist power associated with Rome!

# Graphically, the “beast” (nation) history [not to scale]:



This story fits the many prophecies perfectly!

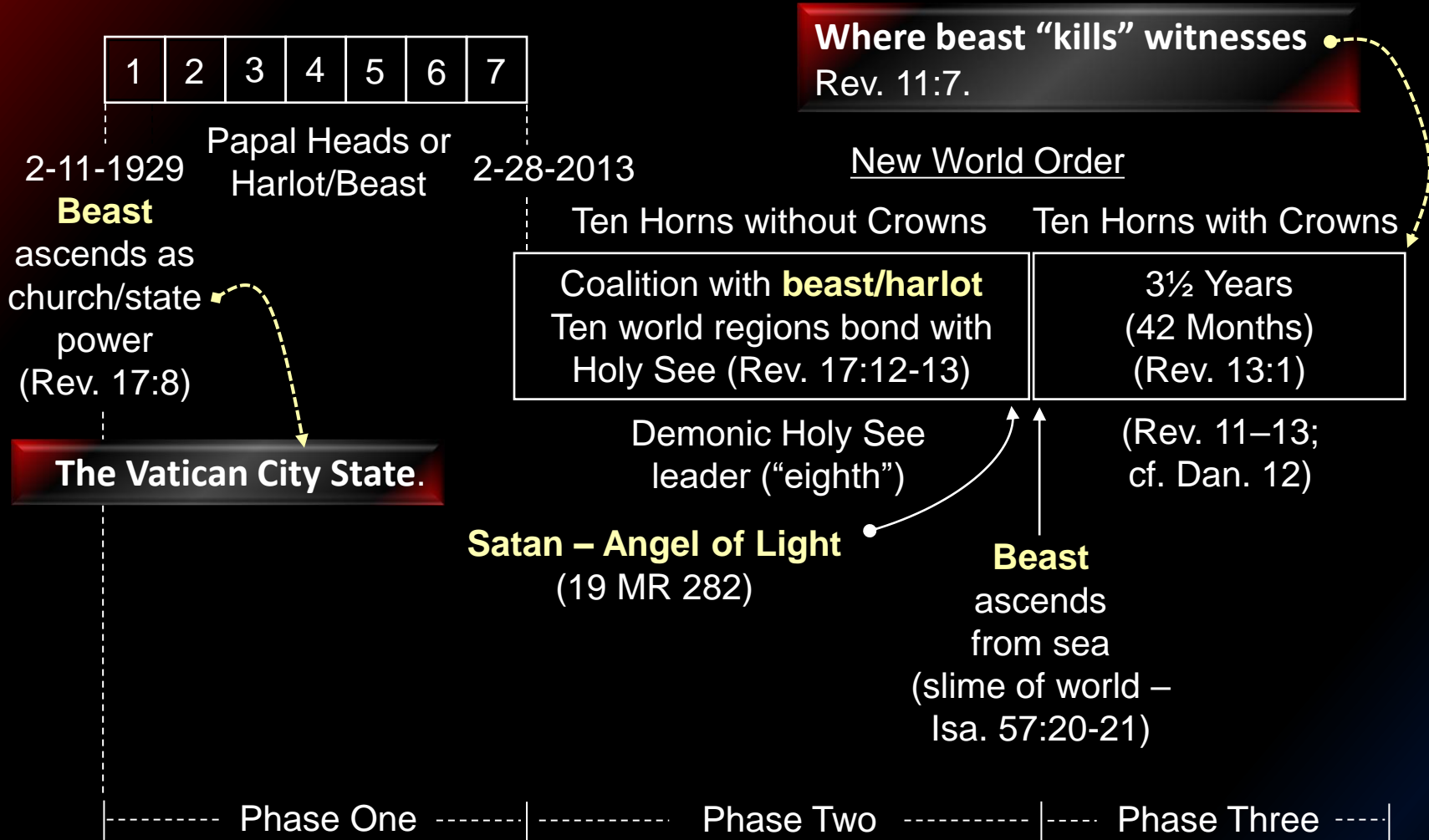
continued:

Then we note that in John's Revelation there are three additional stories of the "beast" after it receives the Vatican City State! They show how that final church/state will act and end, finally going into "perdition."

The following slide shows those three event-filled phases graphically. Study it carefully. (It is detailed in a separate PowerPoint study of Revelation 17.)



# End-Time Beast Prophecies – Revelation 17, 13, 11



We are in a highly symbolic area of prophecy. John is now using much hyperbole. The saints are “killed,” meaning that no more will their voices be heard appealing to repent.



Expositor White talks of this time:

“Mercy no longer pleads for the guilty inhabitants of the earth. The people of God have accomplished their work.... Then Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above. He lifts His hands, and with a loud voice says, ‘It is done.’”

(FLB 339; cf. Rev. 16:17)

A dual message is given in verse 7:

1. The beast will “overpower” (NIV) or “conquer” (NET) God’s two witnesses.
2. They will be symbolically “killed.”

It is impossible to understand what is now happening without referencing other similar prophetic messages elsewhere!

In this very brief prophetic overview we appeal to Daniel for clarification:



*“While I was watching, that horn [the antichrist–beast in Revelation] began to wage war against the holy ones and was defeating them [“killed” – cf. Rev. 12:14-16; 13:7], until the Ancient of Days arrived and judgment was rendered in favor of the holy ones of the Most High [deliverance of God’s people – cf. Dan. 12:1]. Then the time came for the holy ones to take possession of the kingdom [at the Second Coming – cf. Rev. 11:11-17).” (Dan. 7:21-22 – NET)*

Exegetically, the “conquering” means that God’s people/witnesses no longer are able to serve humanity. Their lives are in jeopardy. This is the time when God’s people will flee to hide from the wicked. God will protect them:

*“Then the serpent spouted water like a river out of his mouth after the woman in an attempt to sweep her away by a flood, but the earth came to her rescue; the ground opened up and swallowed the river.”*

(Rev. 12:15-16 – NET)

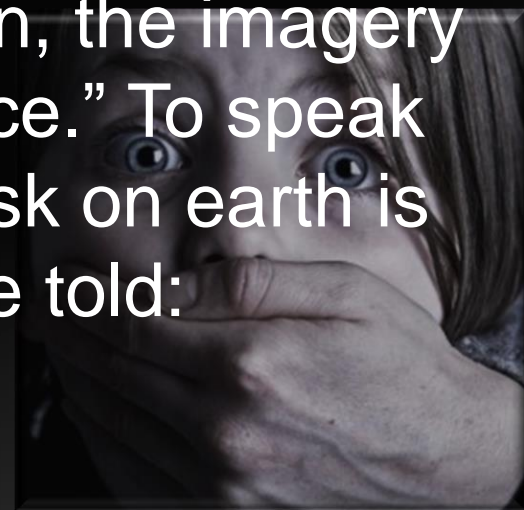
**They are delivered!**



The “killing” is like: *“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”*

(Rom. 8:36; cf. Psa. 44:22)

Since God’s witnesses come back to life shortly and ascend to heaven, the imagery is best seen as “forced silence.” To speak out would imperil life. The task on earth is complete. Of this time we are told:



“As the decree issued by the various rulers of Christendom against commandment keepers shall withdraw the protection of government and abandon them to those who desire their destruction, the people of God will flee from the cities and villages and associate together in companies, dwelling in the most desolate and solitary places. Many will find refuge in the strongholds of the mountains.”

(GC 626)

We honor the devotion of those witnesses and must be willing to join that cadre of workers:

*“They did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”* (Rev. 12:11 – NIV)





This completes Lesson Four, “Earth’s Last Witnesses,” of the series:

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# The End



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