

## WHAT IS OUR VISION FOR SERVICE?

SO WHAT IS OUR VISION FOR SERVICE? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? AND IS IT EVEN NECESSARY?

A very basic definition of vision is “the faculty or state of being able to see.” So do we see? Or better put, Do we see what God wants us to see? Are we looking ahead as God instructs us?

And since we are discussing our vision of service, then we would want to know in one sense, just what are we looking at as we serve? What is our perspective on life? Are we directed and instructed by God? Does the Bible set our course?

So many questions, I know, but we must see the necessity of embracing a biblical vision of service. A biblical vision of service reveals God for who he is. And seeing God as revealed in his word, we see the glory of his plan and the blessing it is to be a part of his glorious plan and purpose. We find an example of a biblical vision of service in today’s text.

- (Revelation 11:4 NIV) They are “the two olive trees” and the two lampstands, and **“they stand before the Lord of the earth.”**

Wow! What is the given perspective of these two witness? “They stand before the Lord of the earth.” No, we are not the two powerful, prophet witnesses of Revelation eleven, but we are servants of the Lord of lords and King of kings, Jesus Christ. We have a lesser role but God has blessed us with an amazing stewardship. Do we see this? We should. We should live with the reality of heaven and things to come directing our life and service.

- (Colossians 3:1–2 ESV) If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

Seek the things above. Look ahead to heaven. Find our true identity in his word. Are we serving now with those things in mind? And if we are not, then what is our goal in service? Our motivation? Why are we in church? What captures and inspires us?

In Matthew 7 Christ speaks of “many” who have a vision of service that he urgently warns against. It is the easy, popular way to serve ... the religious fastrack ... and it brings destruction.

- (Matthew 7:13 ESV) Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.

They didn’t look down the road to things to come, to eternity. They didn’t look past life on the planet. The here and now dominated their plans, and they built a very impressive religious resume based on this limited vision of service. But they left out the part that one day they would have to give an account of their lives to God.

- (Hebrews 9:27 ESV) And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.

## AN OUTLINE FOR REVELATION 11:1-14

### 1. GOD MEASURES THE JOB, 11:1-2.

John is once again given an active part in the revelation. He is to measure the temple of God. This seems to be more God demonstrating his protective care than measuring as no measurements were actually given. John’s task was to mark those whom God would set aside for protection and those whom God would set aside for his wrath and judgment. The time frame given is forty-two months, 3 1/2 years.

### 2. GOD SENDS HIS PEOPLE OUT TO DO THE WORK, 11:3-10.

God gives authority to two witnesses to prophesy for 1,260 days or almost 3 1/2 years. The math here is interesting because 3 1/2 years is 1,277.5 days [365 x 3.5 = 1277.5]. We are left with a half day and the two witnesses were resurrected after 3 1/2 days. One explanation for the 1,260 is that 30 day months were used.

We could also explain the “missing” 17 1/2 days in another way. The text says that they will prophesy for 1,260 days, “and when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them.” So isn’t it conceivable that they battle the beast for 14 days before he kills them, then they lie dead in the street for 3 1/2 days before God raises them? Thus we have 1,277.5 days total.

The two witnesses will prophesy for 1,260 days clothed in sackcloth signifying mourning. They are described as two olive trees and two lampstands using the same symbolism as in Zechariah 4. These two olive trees/lampstands “stand

before the Lord of the earth.” This is a very significant perspective to their witness. They consciously serve before the One who granted them authority.

They have devastating powers for the 1,260 days, but when they have finished their testimony, they will be killed, and their dead bodies will intentionally be left in the street for 3 1/2 days denying them a proper burial. Those who dwell on the earth will celebrate their death because of the devastation these prophets brought onto the earth.

### 3. GOD FINISHES THE WORK, 11:11-14.

They will lie dead in the street for 3 1/2 days, and then God will breathe life into them. They will then stand on their feet and be called up to heaven. Their resurrection will spoil the celebration and ruin any false hopes the rebels have for victory over the Lord of the whole earth. Great fear will fall on those who witness these things and at that hour a great earthquake will devastate a tenth of the city in which seven thousand people will be killed. Those who live through this will be terrified and give glory to the God of heaven.

(Zechariah 4:13-14 ESV)

He said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.” Then he said, **“These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”**