



## A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE END TIMES

Week 59: The Two Witnesses, Part 3

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### Review:

1. We are presently studying the mysterious Two Witnesses of **Revelation Ch. 11**.
2. We've looked at a series of issues concerning these two individuals: We've asked the basic WHAT? WHERE? HOW? WHEN? questions, and we've made several conclusions from Scripture:
  1. The Two Witnesses are active for the first half of The Tribulation Period. Their ministry concludes at the midpoint.
  2. Their ministry is based in Jerusalem, and it concludes there as well.
  3. Their ministry is associated in some way with the rebuilding of the temple. The rebuilding of the temple seems to be a key factor in the covenant the antichrist confirms with Israel which starts The Tribulation.
  4. The Biblical context places the temple concerns and the ministry of **The Two Witnesses** alongside each other. **The Two Witnesses** are calling the Jews to repentance, and they are letting God's people know their Mosaic laws and sacrificial system will not save them.
  5. Supernatural powers are given to **The Two Witnesses**. They emit fire from their mouths to burn up their enemies and those that would seek to destroy them.
  6. They can also turn water into blood, shut up the sky so it will not rain, and strike the earth with various plagues.
  7. Their ministry is one of 'prophesying,' which means two things: (1.) they are proclaiming God's judgements which are forthcoming, and (2.) they are speaking the truth of Scripture. They boldly do both.
3. One very important piece of information we learned last week was the unusual ability of **The Two Witnesses** to execute these judgments which will serve two specific purposes:
  1. First, it provides unique testimony to the *source* of the judgments they are showing (God).
  2. Secondly, the *authority* of **The Two Witnesses** as God's spokesmen is also validated.
4. In the last part of our class last week, we began to study the death of **The Two Witnesses**. These details are outlined in **Revelation 11:7-10**. The basic bullet points are as follows:
  1. The antichrist, called "the beast" in this passage, is the one that kills **The Two Witnesses**.
  2. God permits this. It has nothing to do with the antichrist having more power than God. It is merely the time for the ministry of the Two Witnesses to end, and God allows them to die.
  3. "The beast," at this point, is noted in this passage to have come "up from the Abyss." This clearly marks a halfway point in the evolution of the antichrist. Also, it is probably around this point that the antichrist has died, and supernaturally

brought back to life by Satan in a somewhat different constitution than he was before.

4. The fact that the antichrist kills **The Two Witnesses** causes a worldwide celebration. As far as the world perceives this future moment, it is one of joy because **The Two Witnesses** have tormented the earth-dwellers with their judgements and their proclamations of truth.
  5. All the world gazes on the dead bodies of **The Two Witnesses** for 3 ½ days. They refuse the bodies to be buried, and they celebrate by sending each other gifts. In all likelihood, these points are probably a commentary on the role smartphones will play.
  6. The fact that the world refuses the two bodies to be buried likely suggests a couple of motives:
    - a. **First, this action is an affront to Jewish sensibilities** – One reason their bodies will remain unburied is to introduce an intentional insult to the Jews. This may be a sign of the world’s rising hostilities against the Jews at this time.
    - b. **The second reason is these bodies serve as trophies to the antichrist** –As the world sees it, they serve as trophies to the power of the antichrist. So long as these bodies lie on the street, they provide visual confirmation of the superiority of the antichrist. At least, that’s how the depraved world will see the matter.
- I. There are two important issues I want to attend to this week: First, the resurrection of **The Two Witnesses**, and then of course the burning question, **“Who are they?”**
- A. **The resurrection of The Two Witnesses**
1. **(Cf. vs. 11)** – “...after three and a half days” they are supernaturally raised back to life
    - a. As we observed last week, the “3 ½” days is an interesting detail here.
    - b. It will be three and a half years that the ministry of The Two Witnesses will be in effect.
    - c. It will be three and a half years that The Tribulation has been taking place, and it was 3 ½ years that Elijah had kept rain from falling on Israel.
    - d. This is not a coincidence! God is repeating a specific value here, the same way prior judgments have consistently impacted a ‘third’ of something.
    - e. God will show His sovereign control and His hand in it all.
  2. Here are a couple of things about the resurrection of **The Two Witnesses** we should take note of:
    - a. **First**, we are told in **vs. 12** that their enemies ‘*watched them.*’ The event of the bodily resurrection of The Two Witnesses is seen by many and will likely be recorded.
    - b. We already know that people from all over the globe are going to be ‘*gazing on their dead bodies,*’ and so it’s not hard to imagine that this event may be on some media live feed.

- c. **Second**, the resurrection of The Two Witnesses perhaps amounts to the pinnacle moment of their ministry.
- d. Prior to this point, they have shown the power and authority of God in their judgments and in the supernatural abilities they have.
- e. Now, they will, via the same sovereign power of God, display the power to overcome death.
- f. This is very significant if we consider the fact that the antichrist is likely to have been raised from the dead just a short time before.
- g. It is clear from Scripture that the antichrist suffers a mortal head wound, but through the power of Satan, he comes back to life, albeit, I believe, in a different and more malevolent form or constitution.
- h. This is a key reason why the world follows and worships the antichrist and exclaims, *"Who is like him?"*
- i. The antichrist will have killed **The Two Witnesses** which nobody else was able to do. From the depraved world's perspective, the antichrist has one-upped everything **The Two Witnesses** have stood for thus far.
- j. However, God turns the tables on the situation. Just as Moses' and Aaron's rods turned into serpents and consumed the serpents Pharaoh's magicians had similarly created, so now God does something that overcomes Satan's counterfeit miracles once more.
- k. The antichrist (and Satan) could not silence God, they could not overcome the ministry of The Two Witnesses, and they were subordinate once more to God's greater intentions.
- l. This resurrection of **The Two Witnesses** consequently becomes their greatest and final testimony. Given the whole situation, it directly contributes to the great fear that falls on those who see all this in the next verse.
- m. **Third**, the resurrection of The Two Witnesses is accompanied by several other phenomena, which, by all accounts, are perceived by everyone around them and by everyone who is watching:
  - There is the voice from heaven which announces, *"Come up here"* in **vs.12**.
    - This is exactly what John heard in **Revelation 4:1** when he was transported to heaven in a type of The Rapture at the end of the Church Age.
    - Here, that same instruction is heard once more in what we see as another type of the Rapture.
    - In **1 Thessalonians 4:16**, we are told concerning The Rapture, that *"the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout."* It is possible that this shout will also be a command we hear to *"Come up here."*
  - The second phenomena is they went up to heaven in a cloud.
    - Jesus ascended to heaven in a cloud.

- Elijah was taken up to heaven in something described as “a whirlwind” in **2 Kings 2:1**.
- It may very well be that our own Rapture will be accompanied by a similar phenomenon. I know of some Bible scholars that are convinced of this.
- The third phenomena, and it’s an important one, is the ascent into heaven of **The Two Witnesses** was seen by others.
  - Again, this was also true for Jesus and for Elijah.
  - While it is conventionally taught that The Rapture will be an act of instantaneous disappearance – one moment we are here, and the next moment we are gone – this is not supported in Scripture.
  - What IS most strongly suggested in Scripture is that our ascent during The Rapture will be seen by others. It will likely be a gradual process, at least one that can be watched. This is my personal belief.
  - What DOES happen instantaneously is we are changed from mortal to immortal, from corruptible to incorruptible.
  - The transition from mortal to immortal happens in “*the twinkling of an eye*,” but the ascent will likely be gradual. I think the types in God’s Word of the Rapture support this.
  - So here, in **Revelation 11:12**, the enemies of **The Two Witnesses** watch them go up. I’m betting this makes the evening news.

**B. I want to briefly revisit a related set of issues that we’ve covered. It is a series of things that I think are VERY significant.**

1. I believe the church’s Rapture will be an event that the unsaved world sees, the same way Jesus’ and Elijah’s and **The Two Witnesses** ascents are seen.
2. I think those who are unsaved may see some sort of change in us when our bodies go from mortal to immortal. Then, they will see us gradually ascend into heaven after that.
3. I think the unsaved world will NOT want to admit the truth of Scripture in all this. They will not want to admit that what just took place is indeed the Biblical Rapture.
4. There will be many “in the church” that will be left behind that will not want to admit this either. The Rapture is, in fact, a doctrine of “comfort” for the followers of Jesus. The fact that it is under fierce attack in many churches today is alarming.
5. The Bible makes a strong case that a key litmus test of a church’s integrity, and the integrity of one’s faith for that matter, are their attitudes and postures towards end-times doctrines.
6. This means that, after the fact, *any alternative explanation* for The Rapture will be embraced. Any other view but the right one will be supported.
7. Just as people choose today to believe obvious lies, so it will be after The Rapture. Folks will not want to believe the truth of the Bible.
8. As I’ve shared before, I believe fallen angels will re-enter the sphere of human experience very soon after the Rapture. They will declare that they took all those ‘fuddy-duddy Christians’ out of here.

9. People will say they removed all those who did not want to conform to globalist ideals, who did not believe in climate change, who did not support national borders and other laws of God, who did not support God's design of two genders, who did not value and worship mother earth, and so on....
10. In fact, as I have shared before, specific messages are being received from the so-called spirit guides of New Age leaders that are making this very point. These New Age leaders are being told that 'aliens' will someday soon remove millions of people from this earth in one event.
11. I think many of the unsaved world will believe this is what happened, and I believe many people who now populate our churches (but will miss The Rapture) will believe this as well.
12. The lies will be persuasive. The fallen angels will return once more, and their presence and words will be convincing.
13. Remember, the post-Rapture world is one in which "*counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders*" will saturate people's minds and perceptions. They will believe what they want to, however they won't believe the truth.
14. I think all the way up to this halfway point of The Tribulation, that lie (that aliens took the Christians out of here) will become one that many people by that future point will have chosen to embrace.
15. And so, the supernatural resurrection and ascent of ***The Two Witnesses*** becomes an event that is watched by the entire world, and it dramatically disproves all the lies they have chosen to believe up to that point.
16. In one fantastic supernatural moment, God reaffirms the truth of The Rapture and what had really taken place several years before when He removed His Church from this planet.
17. All the lies and deceptions that have swirled since then are suddenly disproven. The world sees once more very similar events that they had seen when the Church was taken to heaven.
18. Once more, dead bodies come back to life. Once more, it's possible the same loud voice from heaven emanates.
19. This time however, it's obvious aliens have nothing to do with it. Whatever false ideas have found root to that point, they are suddenly uprooted.
20. That is part of the reason the onlookers here in ***Revelation 11:13*** are terrified, and it is probably a key reason why this verse also says, "*they gave glory to the God of heaven.*"
21. Another part of the reason they are terrified is a large earthquake takes occurs which takes down a tenth of the city of Jerusalem. Its timing is significant in that it underscores the supernatural resurrection and ascent of ***The Two Witnesses***.
22. In other words, when all is said and done, depraved humanity will see and will be convinced of the truth, both of The Rapture and of God Himself.
23. All the suggestions here point to a large population coming into a right relationship with God as a result of ***The Two Witnesses*** resurrection and ascent.

24. The phrase to “*fear God and give glory to Him*” is exactly what the angel in **Revelation 14:7** commands the earth-dwellers to do when that passage says the angel declares the eternal Gospel.
25. “*Giving glory to God*” in both **Revelation** passages is one way of affirming a right relationship with God. God will use the event of the resurrection and ascent of The Two Witnesses to bring many into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

**C. (Lastly) Just WHO are The Two Witnesses?** There are three primary theories on the identity of the two witnesses here in **Revelation Ch. 11**: (1) Moses and Elijah, (2) Enoch and Elijah, and (3) two unknown believers whom God calls to be His witnesses in the end times.

**NOTE:** Enoch is mentioned as a possible candidate because of two main reasons: (a.) like Elijah, he was taken up to heaven without dying, and (b.) Enoch gave many prophecies about end times events and the Day of the Lord which would seem to position him as being a potential candidate here.

1. However, all that said, I think the strongest case is made that The Two Witnesses are a PHYSICAL RETURN OF MOSES AND ELIJAH. (By saying this, yes, I mean the literal Old Testament figures themselves). Here are the various reasons why I believe this is the best position:
  - a. First, there are the specific miracles the Two Witnesses perform:
    - The Two Witnesses will have the power to turn water into blood and to bring about plagues which duplicates the miracles of Moses in **Exodus Ch. 7**.
    - Also, **The Witnesses** will have the power to destroy their enemies with fire which corresponds to an event in Elijah’s life in **2 Kings Ch. 1** where he did the same thing.
    - **The Two Witnesses** can also shut the sky so it cannot rain. As we learned last week, Elijah did the same thing, also for 3 ½ years.
    - So, the specific miracles **The Two Witnesses** will perform duplicate things both Moses and Elijah did in ancient times.
  - b. Second, both Moses and Elijah represent to the Jewish people, “the law and the prophets,” more than any other two Old Testament figures.
    - This is a very key matter. The Jewish people, in terms of their own religious system, revere “the law and the prophets” more than anything else.
    - Remember, this will be a future time during which the Jewish people have returned to Levitical laws, temple worship, sacrifices, and so on.
    - The ministry of **The Two Witnesses**, as seen in the context of **Revelation Ch. 11**, are chiefly to the Jewish people, and it is prompted

in some way with the timing and issues of the temple construction. We learned this last week.

- There would be no one more significant to communicate with the Jewish people more than Moses and Elijah in bodily form.
- c. Third, it was Moses and Elijah that appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.
- It's important to remember that this was a occasion in which Jesus was presented in his future glory, in a form He would be known by at the end of times.
  - Both Moses and Elijah appeared and were conversing with Jesus in a picture of this future time of glory. That lines up with future end times events in which both Moses and Elijah would appear to have a key role.
- d. Fourth, both Moses and Elijah left this earth in unusual ways.
- Elijah never died, but he was transported to heaven in a fiery chariot and a whirlwind in a type of The Rapture (**Cf. 2 Kings 2:11–12**)
  - God caused Moses to die when Moses' health was still in peak form, and He supernaturally buried Moses' body in a secret location (**Cf. Deuteronomy 34:5–7**).
  - In fact, **Jude 9** tells us the archangel, Michael, disputed with Satan about the body of Moses. It may be that Satan knew Moses would eventually return to play a key role in the end times, and he wanted to disrupt that plan.
  - The statement of **Hebrews 9:27** that *"it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment"* does not rule out Moses' return, since there are other exceptions to that general statement (such as Lazarus (**Cf. John 11:14, 38–44**)).
- e. Fifth, both the Old Testament as well as Jewish tradition expects Moses and Elijah to return in the future.
- **Malachi 4:5** predicted the return of Elijah. It says, *"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD."*
  - The Jews SO believed that God's promise to raise up another prophet like Moses necessitated Moses' return. They even asked Jesus in **John 1:21** if He fulfilled either of the predictions about Elijah and Moses.
  - It is important to recognize that Jesus' statement in **Matthew 11:14** that *"if you are willing to accept it, John [the Baptist] himself is Elijah who was to come"* does not necessarily preclude Elijah's future return.
  - Since the Jews did not accept Jesus, John did not fulfill that prophecy. However, he came, according to **Luke 1:17** *"in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the*

*disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord"*

- D. I need to mention an interesting passage in **Zechariah Ch. 4** that gives us a prototype of **The Two Witnesses**. It has also caused some confusion, and so I wish to clarify a few things:
1. In this passage, Zechariah, himself a prophet, has a vision in which he sees a solid gold lampstand. On top of the lampstand is a bowl of oil, and olive trees stand by it on each side.
  2. Here we see the lampstand giving its light without any human intervention or maintenance, being constantly supplied by the olive oil flowing from the trees into the bowl.
  3. God's message to Zechariah was that: God's work (which was rebuilding the temple) would be accomplished *"not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit" (Cf. vs. 6).*
  4. Zechariah asks about the meaning of the olive trees and the branches supplying the oil, and the angel who speaks to him says, *"These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (Cf. Zechariah 4:14, )*
  5. In other words, God's power to sustain His sovereign work is flowing through two individuals which are set apart for the specific task.
  6. In the **Zechariah** context, these two individuals are Joshua, the current high priest, and Zerubbabel, the current governor of Judah.
  7. A foreshadowing of Jesus Christ is seen here, as the Messiah would combine the offices of priest and king. Furthermore, "Joshua" in Hebrew is "Yeshua," and when that is translated into Greek and then into English, we get "Jesus.'
  8. When we come to the passage we are studying here in **Revelation 11:4**, the description of the two witnesses is given as, *"They are 'the two olive trees' and the two lampstands, and 'they stand before the Lord of the earth.'"*
  9. John quotes from this portion of **Zechariah 4**. This fact has led some people to believe the Two Witnesses will be Joshua and Zerubbabel, but I think for a variety of reasons this conclusion is in error.
  10. The Two Witnesses of **Revelation Ch. 11**, like Joshua and Zerubbabel of Zechariah's time, will have God's power flowing through them to accomplish God's work.

**CONCLUSION:** The identity of **The Two Witnesses** is not an issue Christians should be dogmatic about, but I believe I have given you the best information I can provide to argue for the most likely scenario that The Two Witnesses are a physical return of Moses and Elijah.