

The Two Witnesses

compiled by Rachel Cory-Kuehl, 2015

Scripture is from New King James Version unless otherwise noted

Revelation 11:3-12 “And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.

4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.

5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.

6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

7 When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9 Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. 10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

11 Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.

12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, ‘Come up here.’ And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.”

TWO WITNESSES REQUIRED - for an Execution

Numbers 35:30 “Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but one witness is not sufficient testimony against a person for the death penalty.”

Deuteronomy 17:6 “Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness.”

Deuteronomy 19:15 “One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.”

Matthew 18:16 [Jesus quotes Moses] “But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.”

1 Timothy 5:19 [Paul quotes the Torah] “Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.”

Deuteronomy 30:19 “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live.”

Before the LORD can allow the complete destruction of the seven last plagues, he must warn the people involved. Before the LORD can bring His covenant lawsuit against those who have forsaken Him, He must hear the case. Two angels visited Sodom and Gomorrah before the destruction. Moses and Aaron testified before Pharaoh. Caleb and Joshua gave their testimony, before Israel was turned back to wander forty years in the wilderness.

YOU WILL BE WITNESSES

Acts 1:8 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

1 John 5:10-11 “And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.”

Revelation 12:17 “And the dragon was enraged with the woman [Israel], and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

Note: The remnant of true Israel will give testimony for Jesus Christ. They are not all Jews, left behind at the “secret rapture”, now seeking salvation by works of the law”.

WITNESSES GIVE TESTIMONY

Numbers 35:30 “Anyone who kills a person is to be put to death as a murderer only on the testimony of witnesses. But no one is to be put to death on the testimony of only one witness. (NIV)

The “two witnesses” of Revelation Chapter Eleven, give “testimony” (Rev. 11:7). We still use these words today, in our legal system.

THE TESTIMONY OF GOD

Exodus 31:18 “And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.”

Interesting that God used two tablets. Two witnesses? He could have used three.

Exodus 25:16 “And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you.”

The Torah, and the Ten Commandments, were “the Testimony” of God. The Ark was called “the ark of the testimony”. It was the box that contained the Testimony - The Ten Commandments. The tent which covered the Ark, was called “the Tabernacle of the Testimony.”

Psalms 19:7 “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.”

Psalms 78:5 “For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children.”

THE TWO WITNESSES - SHUT HEAVEN

Revelation 11:6 “These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy.”

Elijah prophesied to King Ahab, that rain would cease over Israel, because of their idolatry and worship of Baal (*1 Kings 17:1*). It did not rain for three and a half years. This was confirmed by Jesus (*See Luke 4:25*). The story ends with a showdown. The prophets of Baal, versus the prophet of God. **The message of Elijah** was very clear. “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him” (*1 Kings 18:21*). In the final days, every person on this earth MUST choose. They will worship the LORD, or they will worship the image to the Beast (*Rev. 13:7-8*).

WATER - TURNED TO BLOOD

Revelation 11: 6 “They have power over waters to turn them to blood.”

When the second warning trumpet is sounded, one third of the sea is turned to blood, killing the sea creatures and destroying ships (*Rev. 8:8*). Well - who has “power over waters to turn them to blood”? That’s right. The two witnesses. And one of those witnesses is represented by Moses. Moses was given the power to turn the River Nile to “blood”. All the fish in the Nile died, and the river stank.

The two witnesses will be like Moses. Moses “message” to Pharoah? “Thus says the LORD: ‘Let My people go, that they may serve Me.’” I believe the last two witnesses will say this to the ruling Beast power, and its “little horn”.

And Moses “testimony” to Israel? “Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments. And He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them” (*Deut. 7:9-10*).

POWER OVER PLAGUES

Revelation 11:6 “They have power” . . . “to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.”

God’s two witnesses testify during a time when plagues are poured out. I believe these “plagues” will be the trumpet judgments. The two witnesses do not *cause* these plagues, just as Moses did not cause the plagues of Egypt. They will predict them.

MOSES AND ELIJAH

Malachi 4:4-6 “Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”

Here we have two prophets - two witnesses, mentioned in the same passage. “Remember the Law” and “Make up your mind”. This was the message of Joshua. This will be the message of the last “two witnesses” before Jesus returns.

Joshua 24:15 “And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

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THEY PROPHECY IN MOURNING

Revelation 11:3-12 “And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy **one thousand two hundred and sixty days**, clothed in sackcloth.

Sackcloth was the traditional sign of mourning - in Ancient Israel. The two witnesses, prophesy in sackcloth, because this will be a time of great persecution.

The “little horn” on the Beast power, will set up the “image to the Beast”. He will demand that every person on the face of the earth, worship this “image”. Unless they take his “mark” they will not be able to “buy or sell”(Rev. 13:16-17). Finally, those who refuse to worship the Beast or his image, will be executed (Rev. 13:15).

Remember: King Nebuchadnezzar tried to execute Daniel’s three friends, when they refused to worship his image, but the LORD intervened.

THREE AND A HALF YEARS

The two witnesses prophesy for **three and a half years**. The remnant people of God are persecuted for **three and a half years**, leading up to the return of Christ. And six trumpets sound, each one bringing another judgment. When the “last trump” (the seventh trumpet), sounds “the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ”. The people of God will be “caught up to meet Him in the air”, and the seven wrath plagues will be poured out on the earth.

Daniel 7:25 “He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then **the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time**. 26 `But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy it forever. 27 **Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High**. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”

Daniel 7:21 “I was watching; and the same **horn was making war against the saints**, and prevailing against them, 22 **until** the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and **the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom**.”

Obviously, the time has not yet arrived for the “saints to possess the kingdom”. This tells me, that the prophecy is for the very last days.

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

Revelation 11:15-18 “Then **the seventh angel sounded**: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!’

And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: ‘We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come, because You have taken Your great power and reigned. The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And **the time** of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth.”

“It’s time!” It’s time to judge the dead. The wicked will be “raised to shame and everlasting contempt” (*Dan. 12:1-3*). It’s time to “reward Your servants”. The righteous dead will be “raised to everlasting life”. It’s time to “destroy those who destroy the earth”. The seven wrath plagues are poured out when the seventh trumpet sounds.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 “Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trumpet**. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

WHEN THEY FINISH THEIR TESTIMONY

Revelation 11:7-10 “When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified [Jerusalem].

Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.”

The whole wicked world will celebrate the death of the witnesses. They think the plagues will end, because they killed the messengers. Wrong! They will get a whole lot worse!!

Do I believe that every servant of God will be killed before Jesus returns? It is possible that these verses are speaking of **a death decree**, much like the one issued by the wicked Haman, in the days of Esther. When the Jews heard the death decree, they feared they would all be killed. Mordecai tore his robe, and thru dust on his head. Its unlikely that *every* witness for the truth of God, will be brought to the City of Jerusalem for execution.

What I do believe, is that the truth of God will be silenced. When the last “witness” is silenced, either by death, or by imprisonment, or because he is hiding in a cave - THAT’S when it’s over. God cannot win another person for His kingdom. There is no further reason for delay.

The “Man clothed in linen” said to Daniel, “it will be for a time times, and half a time; and **when the power of the holy people is completely shattered, all these things will be finished**” (*Dan. 12:7*). The “power of the holy people” is their power to witness. Jesus said, “You will receive power, after the holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be witnesses to Me . . . to the end of the earth” (*Acts 2:8*).

THE RESURRECTION - of the Two Witnesses

Revelation 11:11-12 “Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.

And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, ‘Come up here.’ And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.”

The two witnesses are resurrected just (and I mean just) before the 7th trumpet sounds, and they ascend into Heaven.

TWO WITNESSES - TWO LAMPSTANDS - TWO OLIVE BRANCHES

Revelation 11:4 “These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.”

First let me explain that the word “trees” is not in the original. “Two olive” could mean two trees, or it could mean two branches of one tree. The LORD named Israel “Green Olive Tree” (*Jer. 11:16*). Branches were “broken off” “because of unbelief” so that believing Gentiles could be “grafted in” (*Rom. Cpt 11*). If only two branches remain on the tree, those two could represent the final witnesses left standing in the sight of God.

In the ancient Tabernacle of Yahweh, there was a seven branched lampstand made of beaten gold. Each branch had a lamp, which burned olive oil. We know that Heaven itself is “the true Tabernacle” (*Heb. 8:2*), and John the Revelator, in his vision of heaven, saw “seven golden lampstands”. The Menorah with seven branched arms, and the “seven golden lampstands” seem to represent the same thing. Both have seven flaming light sources.

Revelation 1:12-13 “Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands, One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.”

In the vision of the prophet Zechariah, “two olive branches” feed olive oil into bowls which flow into golden pipes, which feed the lamps, which sustain flames of light. We know that olive oil was used for anointing, and was a symbol of the Spirit.

Zechariah 4:11-14 “Then I answered and said to him, ‘What are these two olive (trees)-- at the right of the lampstand and at its left?’ And I further answered and said to him, ‘What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?’ Then he answered me and said, ‘Do you not know what these are?’ And I said, ‘No, my lord.’ So he said, ‘These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.”

In Zechariah Cpt 4 - the two branches represent Joshua the high priest, and Zerubbabel the King (priest and king). Only priests and kings were anointed with oil. It is worth noting that the true people of God are called “a royal priesthood” (1Peter 2:9).

The “two witnesses” are said to be the “two olive branches” and “the two lampstands”. They are full of the Spirit, and they shine with the power of that anointing.

SEVEN LAMPSTANDS

John the Revelator is told that the seven lampstands, represent the “seven churches”. John is given a message for each church. Five of the churches are told “repent, or I will remove your candlestick from its place” (Rev. 2:5, 2:16, 2:21-22, 3:3, 3:19). If you begin with 7 lampstands, and you remove 5, how many remain standing before the Lord? Two!

Yes. I believe the seven churches represent 7 literal ancient churches. I also believe they represent 7 different types of people, within those churches. When the final persecution ends, only 2 lampstands will remain - Smyrna, the church of the martyrs, and Philadelphia, the church of brotherly love. **The prophecy of Revelation reveals the character of the “two witnesses”. They will love the brethren, and they will be faithful unto death.** A “crown” is promised in the message to each of these two congregations.

THE CHARACTER - THE MESSAGE - AND THE TIME PERIOD

The character and the message, of the last two witnesses is revealed. The time period during which they give their testimony is given in the prophecy. And the final destination is described as Heaven. Do I want to be one of those witnesses? Do I want to live during a period of terrible persecution? No - not really. But if the Lord calls me to that work, then He will supply the strength. I would not refuse.

*We pray this study will prove a blessing.
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