

"The Two Witnesses"

Part 3

Revelation 11:1-14

Introduction: The past two weeks we have been looking at the Two Witnesses who are mentioned in Revelation 11. In our study so far, we have considered several points about these two men.

I. Their Ministry

Their ministry will take place during the first half of the Tribulation. They will be used by God to stir a worldwide revival in the Tribulation.

After the rapture these two men will get saved and for a short period they will be the only two saved individuals on the earth. They will proclaim the Gospel and many will turn to Jesus Christ. From the ministry of these two witnesses the 144,000 Jewish men of Revelation 7 will get saved and they will be the missionaries which God will work through to reach the world.

Matthew 24:14

¹⁴ *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.*

The Gospel of the Kingdom will be twofold:

- a. It will be the Gospel that we know today that Jesus died and was buried and was resurrected on the 3rd day.
- b. It will be the good news that the King is coming.

II. Their Message

Their message will be a message which will break their hearts.

Notice Revelation 11:3

These Two Witnesses will be dressed in sackcloth. When a prophet wore sackcloth, it was understood to be an outward sign of an inward brokenness. The message of these Two Witnesses will break their hearts for they know will understand that in the days of the Tribulation many will perish. At the same time, they will have a message of hope for anyone who is willing to repent and accept Jesus Christ.

III. Their Identity

There is much speculation as to who these Tw Witnesses are:

- a. Enoch and Elijah
- b. Moses and Enoch
- c. The Church preaching Jesus in the Old and the New Testaments.
- d. Peter and James

This is but a few of the ideas of different Bible teachers. The bottom line is we are not told who they are so we do not know. It was said to me last week that it is likely they are two ordinary men whom God will use to turn the Nation of Israel around for God delights in using the weak to confound the wise.

1 Corinthians 1:27-28

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

We can almost be sure these two men will be Jews for it is in the Tribulation that God will work with the Nation of Israel once the Bride of Christ/the Church is complete. Listen to the words of Randall Price:

"The purpose of God to make Israel and her land the Centre round which He will gather the nations, is not frustrated, but postponed. Our chapter presents the initial stages in the development of this glorious earthly purpose."

This now brings us to where we are in our study today.

IV. Their Power

Notice Revelation 11:5

The very first thought which comes to my mind when I read this verse is, "Am I to interpret this verse literally?" In other words, does this verse mean there will be literal fire come out of their mouths or is this an analogy?

Some say this is not to be taken literally and they point to several verses.

Hosea 6:5

⁵ Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth.

Jeremiah 5:14

¹⁴ Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.

Jeremiah 23:9

²⁹ Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?

These verses are all meant to be interpreted as figurative and that is obvious because of the context. For example, Jeremiah says the people are WOOD and we know that is not to be taken literally.

But what about the text here in Revelation 11? There is a hint of symbolism.

Notice Revelation 11:4

Here in this verse the Two Witnesses are called OLIVE TREES and CANDLESTICKS. We know this is symbolic. But this is the ONLY hint of symbolism.

Notice Revelation 11:6a

Here we are told that they will have power to stop the rain for 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ years which is the length of their ministry. We know this to be literal because of what we read in James 5.

James 5:17

¹⁷ Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

Notice Revelation 11:6 again.

We see that they will have power to turn the waters to blood. We know this to be literal also because the plagues which God brought on Egypt through Moses were literal plagues.

Exodus 7:19-20

¹⁹ And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their

ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone.

²⁰ And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood.

So, it is clear that verse 6 is to be taken literally and for that reason I believe verse 5 is also to be taken literally. These Two Witnesses will have the ability to make fire come from their mouths to destroy those who attempt to destroy them.

These miraculous powers of the Two Witnesses will be for the reason of proving these men are TRUE PROPHETS.

Now some would object to this and say this is not something which God has ever done before. I agree with that but God has before done things that were out of the ordinary to show the authenticity of His servants.

Numbers 16:28-33

²⁸ And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind.

²⁹ If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me.

³⁰ But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD.

³¹ And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them:

³² And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods.

³³ They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.

Now there are 3 main reasons why these Two Witnesses would need this kind of power to be able to destroy their enemies with fire.

1. Deception will increase during the Tribulation.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-9

³ *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;*

⁴ *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*

⁵ *Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?*

⁶ *And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.*

⁷ *For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.*

⁸ *And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:*

⁹ *Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,*

Let me show you what Jesus said concerning the deception during the Tribulation.

Matthew 24:11

¹¹ *And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.*

There will have to be a way for the people of the Tribulation to distinguish between the True prophets and the false prophets.

Remember in the book of Acts when the church began? This was the New Testament Church without a New Testament Bible. Therefore, they had to follow the teaching of the Apostles.

Acts 2:42

⁴² *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

When the church began God led the church through the doctrine of the Apostles. It was then that Satan planted many false apostles. Notice what Paul wrote to the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

¹³ For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

¹⁴ And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

¹⁵ Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Because of the false apostles the church had to know how to distinguish between the True and the false Apostles so God empowered the True Apostles with what we call apostolic gifts.

Acts 2:42-43

⁴² And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

⁴³ And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

These apostolic gifts were evidence that these men and their messages were authentic.

It will be the very same way during the Tribulation. There will be many false prophets and those who are here in that time will need to be able to distinguish between the True and the false prophets.

2. Their power will exceed that of the False Prophet.

Revelation 13:11-15

¹¹ And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

¹² And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

¹³ And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

¹⁴ And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

¹⁵ And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

3. Their powers will be used to really grasp the attention of the Jews.

Notice Revelation 11:5-6

The Jews will associate these powers with the Old Testament and how they were warning signs that God's judgment be following on the heels.

Elijah announced to Ahab that God's judgment would come in the form of a famine. The drought brought about through these Two Witnesses will bring about a famine also. The Jews will be quick to make the connection.

The Water to blood as well as the other plagues will be a reminder of God's judgment on Egypt. Let us remember this is a time when God will be working with Israel because the church will not be here.

Conclusion:

What does all of this mean to you and me? These Two Witnesses will be used by God to turn the world upside down. Two men who are committed will make a major difference. God desires to use us in the same way today. We will not breath fire like these men but we can speak the Word of God.

Hebrews 4:12

¹² For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Let me leave you with Paul's prayer for the Ephesians.

Ephesians 3:17-20

¹⁷ That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

¹⁸ May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

¹⁹ And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

²⁰ Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,