

## The Two Witnesses (Part 2)

### Revelation Chapter 11:1-14

#### I. Review.

- A. John's measuring of the temple—a picture of the tribulation period (11:1-2).
- B. The two witnesses—A picture from Zechariah 4; the lampstand and two olive trees.
  - 1. Their task was to get God's people to build the temple: They were frustrated.
    - a. Zechariah 4:10 **For who has despised the day of small things?**
  - 2. Method—*Not by man's power but the power of the Holy Spirit* (Zech. 4:6).
  - 3. The Picture—A lampstand, two olive trees—continuous supply of oil = Holy Spirit.
  - 4. The two witnesses—Zerubbabel and Joshua : The historical context of Rev. 11.

#### II. The two witnesses in Revelation 11.

- A. They are the olive trees AND the lamp stands (2).
  - 1. God provides the two witnesses with all the power they need to perform His task through the Holy Spirit.
  - 2. They will also be light to a dark world—Lampstands.
- B. Who are they?
  - 1. There is a plethora of ideas as to the identification of the two witnesses.
    - a. Symbolic of the witnessing church.
    - b. Peter and Paul.
    - c. Israel and the church.
    - d. Elijah and Enoch.
    - e. Elijah and Moses.
- C. Elijah?
  - 1. Malachi 4:5-6
  - 2. The Jews today are anticipating Elia's return prior to the Messiah's.
  - 3. A president of power with fire (2 Kings 1) and Revelation 11:5.

D. Moses?

1. A leader of the Jews.
2. Matched miracles in Revelation 11:6.
  - a. Turns water to blood (Exodus 7:17).
  - b. Moses launched the 10 plagues in Egypt (Compare to Rev. 11:6).

III. God's task is done (11:7).

- A. *When you have completed all that God wants from you, that's when He will take you home* (Danny Aiken).
- B. All of us have "an appointed time to die"—Hebrews 9:27.
  1. The "beast overcomes them" (7b).
  2. The saints in Revelation are all killed, only a remnant of Jews remain at the end.

IV. The "Great City" (11:8).

- A. Babylon? ( ... (17:5) **Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the world...(18) the woman whom you saw is the GREAT CITY which has a kingdom over the kings of the earth.**
- B. Jerusalem?
  1. Jerusalem had fallen into immorality and idolatry—Sodom and Egypt.
  2. Our Lord was crucified in Jerusalem.

V. The victory of the two witnesses (Vs. 9-11).

- A. The bodies dishonored for 3 ½ days—laying in the streets, no burial.
- B. A great "resuscitation" (V. 12).
- C. The blessing of tragedy (V.13)
  1. The earthquakes "shakes" up some—glorify their God!

## **The Two Witnesses (Part 2)**

### ***Revelation Chapter 11:1-14***

I want to revisit some of what we looked at last week...continuing on in this respite of judgement and wrath between the sixth and seventh trumpet...chapter 11 of Revelation.

John, the writer of this book Revelation was given another task by God... to measure the temple... the temple that will be built during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation... or before... measure the sanctuary and altar but not to measure the outside court of the gentiles...

God was painting a picture through this measuring... what is going to happen during this seven-year tribulation period that precedes the second coming of Jesus Christ.... the outer court represents all the gentile nations... the enemies of Israel, the Jews, that will trample the city for 3 ½ years...all the while... God will protect a remnant of the Jews... represented by the sanctuary and altar of the temple...

John is then introduced to another picture... a picture of two witnesses

#### **Read verses 3 & 4**

These two witnesses are the two olive trees... but not only olive trees... they are also called lampstands...these two witnesses... olive trees and lampstand have a historical precedent in the Old Testament of the Bible...

Zechariah chapter 4...King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Solomonic temple in 586 BC...Israel goes into Babylonian captivity for 70 years... the seventy years are over... Israel is instructed to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple... no easy job... the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah... all cover this period.

This was no easy task... one frustration after another... one setback after another...Israel is getting very frustrated... ready to quit...the reason I wanted to revisit here is because I think the Christian life is like that at times...Somehow we think that the Christian walk should be easy... after all... God is with us right?... *Come to Jesus life will be great*

*Why is everything so difficult... I pray... I read my Bible....*

These prophets... Haggai and Zechariah tell us just how difficult this time was... one of the problems was that the temple they were trying to build wasn't anything like the glorious Solomon temple...the first temple.

Ezra tells us that there were men who remembered Solomon's temple... when they looked at this new temple... they cried... (Ezra 3:12)

**Yet many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' households, the old men who had seen the first house of Yahweh, were weeping with a loud voice when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes...**

*This temple is too small... so less elegant*

Many of our problems are self-created through comparison...so much of our discontentment and discouragement often comes from comparing ourselves... our situation, our lot in life with others that seem to have it so good... *How come my family doesn't look anything like that family on Facebook?... they are all so perfect... happy and look like they actually like being together...*

Zechariah tried to encourage and motivate this discouraged Israel through this difficult project...to move them from viewing the new temple as a small insignificant dwelling to the holy place it was meant to be....he said something that is now classic...Zechariah 4:10

**For who has despised the day of small things?** *Why are you despising the day of small beginnings?*...what has started here may look small to you.... But this is going to turn into something great... you just don't see it yet...

That spoke to me this week as I revisited Zechariah... and hopefully it speaks to you... we get involved in some aspect of ministry and we get discouraged.... *"It's too small!"*... *"it seems insignificant"* ...*look what they are doing down the street!*.... what we don't see... what we don't know is what the Lord is going to do with that small thing!...we can't see it....why?

I thought about AWANA... AWANA is really a plethora of small things....40+ volunteers doing small things...

Some of you are "listeners" in our AWANA program... each week you sit in a chair and you listen to children say their Bible verses and check off their book.... Small job... you might even think it's not all that important... you have no idea what the Lord is going to do in that small thing in the life of that child who is putting God's Word in his brain!

[Sycamore]

What we don't know is what the Lord is going to do with that small thing!...we can't see it....why?...why doesn't God let us see it?... because He wants us to walk by what?.... faith not by sight... if God showed us the end product it wouldn't be faith anymore...it would be sight.

And how then are we to move forward in faith?...How is Israel going to finish this temple?... how are we going to carry out our ministries?...to show us...God introduces us to Zerubbabel... Zechariah 4:6...**"This is the word of Yahweh to Zerubbabel, saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says Yahweh of hosts.**

Israel... *you're going to pull this off by the power of the Holy Spirit!*... How will our ministry be successful?...How do we live the Christian life?...NOT by our might or by our power....by relying on the power of the Holy Spirit....

**11 Then I answered and said to him, “What are these two olive trees on the right of the lampstand and on its left?” 12 And I answered the second time and said to him, “What are the two olive branches which are beside the two golden pipes, which empty the golden oil from themselves?” 13 So he spoke to me, saying, “Do you not know what these are?” And I said, “No, my lord.” 14 Then he said, “These are the two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of all the earth.”**

God is going to place into service two individuals... empowered by Him to carry out this building task...

In the tabernacle and the temple... there was a lamp stand... the seven candle menorah... on top was a bowl... the bowl had seven pipes that fed oil for fuel to each of the candles... it was the priests job to keep the bowl full of oil... if the priest failed to put oil in the bowl... the candles would cease giving off light.

That's the picture here... with one significant difference... there are two olive trees that continually provide olive oil to the bowl... what is coming into the bowl empowers the candlesticks to do their job...

Zechariah is showing us that the two olive trees represent the two individuals... who are they?... one is Joshua... a high priest... the other one is the governor of Israel... Zerubbabel... one represents the religious leadership of the nation the other the political leadership of the nation... these two will provide continuous oil to the lampstand... through the power of God Himself...

What is the oil?... Olive oil in the Bible represents the Holy Spirit (anointing)... what's happening here?... just as these two olive trees will provide around the clock supply of olive oil to the lampstand... in the same way... Joshua and Zerubbabel have an automatic, around the clock anointing of the Holy Spirit...

And because of that.... Remember Zechariah 4:6... **‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says Yahweh of hosts....** They will be able to finish the temple project... their task assigned to them by God Himself...

That's the imagery used in Revelation 11:4... it is a historical context... but it is not exactly the same scenario... yet the same method.

One difference is... not only will there be two witnesses during this first half of the tribulation period to carry out God's work who are like Zerubbabel and Joshua... operating by the power of the Holy spirit... an endless source of power (the two olive trees)... the task is different...

To do the impossible task of standing before a wicked nation and a wicked world and prophesy unto God... how will they do it?... **Not by might, not by power but by the Holy Spirit!**

**It also says *they* will also be the two lampstands... not only are they the two olive trees... they are also each a lampstand (4)...** what does the lampstands do?... they shed light to a very dark world... I hope you see the connection of all this to our Christian life...

You've heard the saying "*The Christian life is not hard; the Christian life is NOT hard... it's impossible*"?... God has always placed in front of His people impossible tasks... just like the seemingly impossible task of rebuilding the temple in Zechariah's day...

These two witnesses in Revelation 11 will face an impossible task... and it doesn't end well... immediately for them... I would guess that each one of you has in your life... if you are trying to live this Christian life... you have right now... an impossible task... it's bigger than you.

A family issue... a marriage issue... a child not following the Lord... a decision to go into ministry but that would upturn your life... a health issue that is crippling you or threatening your very existence... just getting through the day!

And Satan is doing everything he can to convince you to do it all on your own might and strength... with the ultimate goal to frustrate you and discourage you and to get you to give it all up.... And sometimes God will let you do just that... listen to Satan and try to do it all in your own power.... Just to show you... you can't and your need for the Holy Spirit.

To get you to the point where you say *I can't do it*... and God says... Ok... *Now you're ready to listen.... I've never asked you to do ANYTHING without Me giving you the power to do it!*... One commentator said *If it's God's work, it's God's power.*

That's what's going on here... God is providing the power to these two witnesses... ongoing, never ceasing power... a constant non-stop flow of power... and under this power... these two witnesses will be able to do the impossible task laid out in front of them... **THEN THEY WILL BE LIGHT.**

Do you see how practical all this is?... all of us live and world surrounded by darkness... at school at work... maybe even in your home... we as Christians are called to be light... do you think you can be light if you try hard enough?... as we yield to the power of the Holy Spirit... we are given a continual flow of His power... **keep this image in your mind the rest of your life!**

Before we go any further I had better address the identity of the two witnesses... who are they?... as many things Revelation... there are many ideas regarding their identity... no 100% agreement anywhere... I can't lay all this out in detail which will frustrate some of you... but time is short... *I'll just tell you what to believe...*

Some just say let's stick with Zerubbabel and Joshua... *they did it once before... that's good enough for me.* I personally think they were the historical model... they had their mission... and God supplied the power to complete it... this was a different mission with a different purpose...

Listen to these suggestions by various commentaries...

1. *They are symbolic to the witnessing church*—(you know I have a problem with that... I believe the church has been removed...church is not mentioned anywhere after chapter 3).

2. *Elijah and Elisha*

3. *James and John*

4. *Peter and Paul*

5. *Israel and the church*

6. *The two “good churches” of Smyrna and Philadelphia.*

I think the two suggestions with the most merit would be:

7. *Elijah and Enoch*... Enoch and Elijah both were *taken by God*... no death.

8. *Elijah and Moses.*

I think that it is Elijah and Moses...I think Elijah is the easiest to argue for... Malachi 4:5-6  
**“Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and awesome day of Yahweh...**Elijah is prophesied to return before Jesus’s final return.

**The Great and awesome day of the Lord** is the *time times and a half of time*...(Daniel 7;12 and Rev. 12)... remember that?...that is 3 ½ years...the second half of the tribulation... when Israel will suffer greatly... the time of Jacob’s Trouble...Elijah will return before then.

What will Elijah do when he returns?... Malachi 4. **6 And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land, devoting it to destruction.**”...He will be a lamp to the Jews!...

Interesting... at the Passover meals today... the Jewish family will towards the end of the meal send a child to the door to see if Elijah is there... if Elijah is there... they will know that their Messiah will come shortly...plus they will be freaked out!

Also... at the Passover table... they set an extra chair and place setting at the table where no one will sit... who’s it for?... in case Elijah comes.... To the Jew... Elijah will precede the Messiah based on passages like Malachi 4.... At the end of the Passover meal... if Elijah doesn’t return, they close the dinner by saying *“Next year in Jerusalem”*....a statement of hope for the Messiah.

These two witnesses are to be witnesses to who?... the Jews... it makes sense that both the witnesses would be Jewish...Moses and Elijah are Jewish... [Enoch was a gentile]

Also... back in Revelation 11...

## Read verse 5

I was thinking that could be handy...but it’s probably good God doesn’t gift too many of us with this ability... someone bothers you just open your mouth and they burn to death.... God

sometimes deals with people like this... Elijah was involved in such a situation in 2 Kings chapter 1...

King Ahaziah fell through the lattice in his upper chamber which made him ill... He seeks help from Baal a little g god... Elijah gets involved... he ticks off the messengers of the king who was seeking out Baal to help the king... **Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of Baal....?**

So, the king sent an army to confront Elijah... 2 Kings 1:9-13

**Then the king sent to him a commander of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him, and behold, he was sitting on the top of the hill. And he said to him, “O man of God, the king says, ‘Come down.’” 10 And Elijah answered and spoke to the commander of fifty, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty.” Then fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.**

*If you're a man of God get down here and do what the king tells you to do...actually, in that I am a man of God I'll just zap you right now!...Bye Bye!*

**11 So he again sent to him another commander of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and spoke to him, “O man of God, thus says the king, ‘Come down quickly.’” 12 And Elijah answered and spoke to them, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty.” Then the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty. The third guys gets wise!**

**13 So he again sent the commander of a third fifty with his fifty. Then the third commander of fifty went up and came and bowed down on his knees before Elijah, and he begged him and said to him, “O man of God, please let my life and the lives of these fifty servants of yours be precious in your sight.**

So here is another connection to Elijah to the witness in Revelation 11...Elijah had experience using fire!...

Notice that God is enabling these two witnesses to do the job He wants them to do... He protects them... He provides for them... He gives them great power

### **Read verse 6**

These two witnesses do things similar to what Elijah and Moses did in the Old Testament... Elijah had **the authority to shut up the sky**... in other words to cause drought... remember he pronounced a 3 ½ year drought on the land in 1 Kings 17:1... the New Testament book James tells us about that as well...

James 5:17 (A New Testament commentary on 1 Kings 17:1)



**Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.**

Verse 6 also tells us that these two witnesses will have the authority to turn the waters into blood... does that sound familiar?... Moses in Exodus 7:17 turned the river Nile into blood... Egyptians were really messed up by this...their major river that is used for irrigation is turned to blood polluting their source of clean water...

But also they believed the Nile River to be their number one god... study the gods of Egypt back in Moses day... they had many, many gods... but the river Nile was number one...for the river to turn into blood... their god died!... you can imagine the panic over Egypt!...

Verse 6 also says **they strike the earth with every plague...** That sounds familiar... how about the ten plagues that struck Egypt through the hand of Moses?... the Bible isn't playing a game "WHO ARE THE TWO WITNESSES?"... I think there are evidences here that the witnesses are Moses and Elijah...

The next verse is important:

### **Read verse 7**

**And when they have finished their witness...nobody is going to be able to hurt these guys until they are finished doing the task God has for them to do...**there is not a force in the world that will overpower God's plan in their ministry. God has empowered them supernaturally to do their job... through the power of the Holy Spirit... remember?

I love what missionary from the late 1800's, Lottie Moon famously said... *I am immortal until my work is done*"... Years later missionary Jim Elliot before he was martyred by the Acca Indians said *Remember you are immortal until your work is done*...

***When you have completed all that God wants from you, that's when He will take you home***...Danny Aiken

I've been thinking about that a lot lately as several prominent Christian leaders have passed on... even when an assassin's bullet get you in the middle of a thriving ministry...*God is saying your work is done*....**this is a reality for all of us!**

**Your life cannot be extinguished until you have done all that God has called you to do...** *We will all die on time!...it's appointed to man once to die...*Hebrews 9:27...we don't know when that will be... only God does...

I've been with people on their death bed...one time the doctor told the family to say their goodbyes... *he won't last through the night*... the next morning he wakes up "*What's for breakfast?*"...went on living for several more years... God said "*I'm not done with him!*"

(7) **...and when they finished their witness...** interesting that the word translated as “witness” in the English is *Marturia* in Greek... sound familiar?... we get the word martyr... **from this point onward**... I want you to notice the sovereignty of God playing out...if you ever question whether or not God is really in control.

It looks at the moment as if there is no victory...these two witnesses are going along... able to protect themselves with mouths of fire... literally... having special power over creation... amazing power... but then.

(7b)**The beast that comes out from the abyss will make war with them and overcome them and kill them.** The beast here is not Satan... it is one of Satan’s workers that has come out of the abyss...Satan doesn’t come out of the abyss... he will be thrown into the abyss in chapter 19...many think... I do... that this is the rider of the white horse remember back in chapter 5.

Look over to chapter 13:7

**And it was also given to him** him here is not Satan either but one of Satan’s evil workers, a beast... the Antichrist **to make war with the saints and to overcome** what did overcome mean in chapter 11?...death... kill them **them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.**

Look at verse 15

**And it was given to him** to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. Who gave this evil being all this power?... God... what happens to all the saints?... all the believers who came to Christ in the tribulation?... they are all killed....it all looks so hopeless!

The only non-evil survivors will be the remnant of the children of Israel... the Jews which are spared and protected by God... *the sanctuary and the alter*...remember?

### Read verse 8

Again as everything Revelation... there’s much argument over what and where this **Great city** is...the term “great city” occurs 10 times in Revelation...don’t think you immediately know what and where this city is.

Some say the term great city is referring to Babylon... in Revelation 17-18... the woman who rides the beast...(17:5)**Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the world...**(18) **the woman whom you saw is the GREAT CITY** which has a kingdom over the kings of the earth.

Some of you might remember when Saddam Hussain set out to rebuild ancient Babylon in Iraq... he thought of himself as a reincarnated Nebuchadnezzar... he never finished “the great city”... something got in the way around 2003 ish.

But... **we all know that the Lord was crucified in Jerusalem**... but it says this city is **spiritually called Sodom and Egypt**... Jerusalem has been known as God’s city... the Holy city...the city of David... but during this tribulation period... it will be overrun with evil... think Sodom in Genesis 19...

And Egypt known for its pantheon of gods...gross idolatry... to think that Jerusalem is going to be spiritually like these evil cities is tragic!... When I visited Israel, I was struck by how pagan so much of it is...for being such a religious country... in many ways it is a very irreligious country...

Right now Tel Aviv is known as the most progressive city in the world....the secular has replaced the spiritual... at least biblical spirituality... just 43 miles from Jerusalem...it doesn’t take much to imagine the reality of verse 8.

The dead bodies of these two martyred witnesses will be just left on the streets.

### Read verse 9

Anytime you read “**peoples and tribes and tongues and nations**”...a term that used several times in Revelation...(5:9; 10:11; 13:7; 17:15) it is referring to the entire world... which is very interesting when you think about it... **these bodies will be laying in a street in Jerusalem, and the entire world will be looking at them.**

I looked up some commentaries over 100 years old... they don’t know what to make of this...they just ignore it.... *how could the entire world be looking at these dead bodies?*...not a problem today is it?...when I was in Jerusalem they showed us their high tec surveillance system all around the ancient city of David... you can imagine that Israel must have cameras everywhere!

**These bodies will lay on the streets for 3 ½ days..... 3/1/2!** Hmmm... they will not let them be put in graves/tombs! That’s big!... even criminals would immediately be prepared and put in a tomb. To lay them out for 3 ½ days would be unheard of and very, very hateful.... The world is going to hate the righteous.... It already does!

### Read verse 10

Anytime you read something like **those who dwell on earth** or **earth dwellers**... used 11 times in 9 verses in Revelation refers to a social class of stubborn sinners who are set in their rebellion with God... only found during the tribulation time.

They are having an all-out party... including a gift exchange!...they are rejoicing over the deaths of these two Godly men... they hate them and love them dead and rotting!... Can you imagine

people getting to this state of near ecstasy over such evil?..... of course you can!... if your eyes are open.

All out celebration... by the way this is the only place in Revelation that you'll see rejoicing....why are they rejoicing?... it says **because these two prophets tormented those who were watching them...** twenty years ago....maybe just 5 years ago I would have had a hard time understanding that...

But evil people hate righteous people.... They are tormented by them!...so it is a big celebration when the righteous are eliminated...John 15:19 **If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.**

I'm not saying our president is righteous or not... but we saw...People cheering the attempted assassination attempts on our president... cheering the successful assassination of a young Charlie Kirk... on mainstream television!... College students celebrating the October 7<sup>th</sup> massacre of Israelis this last week... Everywhere I look I see the world setting itself up for the events of Revelation.

### Read verse 11

3 ½ days another resurrection... or here more accurate... a resuscitation... much like Lazarus... I don't think it is unreasonable for those looking on to be a bit afraid...

### Read verse 12

**"Come up here"** we heard that same thing in chapter 4 when John hears a command from heaven saying **come up here...** and the whole scene is similar to when Jesus ascended to heaven 40 days after his resurrection... **when He went up in a cloud...**

Can you picture these two... I can see them waving at these thugs saying *"goodbye!...enjoy the rest of the tribulation!..*

### Read verse 13

The Jerusalem Post...

*The chances of a great earthquake in Israel are significant, both from a geological and a biblical perspective. Geologically, Israel sits on the boundary between the African and Arabian tectonic plates, specifically along the Dead Sea Rift, which is known to be an active fault line. Throughout history, this region has experienced several major earthquakes, with scientists warning that there is potential for another large quake in the future.*

*While scientists can estimate probabilities based on historical patterns and tectonic activity, the timing and magnitude of a future "great earthquake" remain uncertain. However, both secular*

*and religious perspectives acknowledge that Israel is a region where such an event is possible and even expected.*

Seven thousand people will die in this earthquake... and those who don't were just terrified.... And then **they gave glory to the God of heaven...** isn't it amazing what a little trauma will do!...they party when someone they hate gets murdered then left to rot.... But almost killed by a supernatural earthquake...*Let's give glory to God of heaven!*

Something this world needs... this country desperately needs... all of us need... is to have a holy fear of God...