

The Two Witnesses

Revelation 11:1-13

I. Their Mission

- A. The Two Witnesses are commissioned to prophesy for 1,260 days — 42 months; 3 1/2 years (11:3).
- B. Their clothing of sackcloth is a graphic picture of their message or repentance (11:3).
- C. Their ministry is directed toward the Jewish nation (11:4).
 - Note the existence of the Jewish temple in Rev. 11:1-2.
 - Note the prophetic vision given in Zechariah 4:1-6.

I. The Timing

- ➔ The ministry of the Two Witnesses likely occurs during the _____ half of the 7-year Tribulation period.
- A. The rebuilt temple in Jerusalem provides the setting (11:1-2).
- B. The Jews are living in Jerusalem in relative peace during the first half of the Tribulation; during the second half, the Jews flee Jerusalem en masse (Matt. 24:14-22; Luke 21:20-24).
- C. The 144,000 evangelists, likely saved through the ministry of the Two Witnesses, are commissioned to spread the gospel throughout the whole world before Christ returns (Matt. 24:14).
- D. The events following the martyrdom of the Two Witnesses appear to mark the beginning of the Great Tribulation, not the Second Coming of Christ.
 - There is no “sign of the Son of Man” coming in the clouds immediately following their martyrdom (Matthew 24:29-30).
 - The Beast (AntiChrist) is introduced in Revelation 13 as having unrestrained power during the last half of the Tribulation (13:5-8); during the first half, however, his power is restrained, allowing for the effective ministry of the Two Witnesses (11:5).
 - AntiChrist's “victory” over the Two Witnesses seems to mark the beginning of his blatant, blasphemous “reign of terror” (13:5-8).

NOTES

II. Their Supernatural Abilities

- A. Fire proceeds from their mouths to destroy any who would hurt them (11:5)
 - Note the antichrist is able to perform counterfeit miracles: the false prophet calls down fire from heaven (13:13).
- B. They have power to withhold the rain (11:6).
- C. They have power to turn the waters of the earth to blood (11:6).
- D. They have power to send plagues on the earth as often as they will (11:6).

III. Their Identity

- A. Scripture does not explicitly state the identity of these Two Witnesses.
- B. Clues in Scripture indicate that the Two Witnesses may be Elijah and Moses.
 - Their miraculous power corresponds with specific miracles that were performed in the OT (Elijah — 1 Kings 17:1; James 5:17; Moses — Ex. 7:20).
 - Elijah still has a future ministry that precedes the “great and dreadful day of the LORD” (Mal. 4:5-6).
 - Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-3).

IV. Their Martyrdom

- A. AntiChrist prevails over the Two Witnesses and kills them (11:7).
- B. Their bodies are shamed in the streets (11:8).
 - Note: *Sodom* and *Egypt* are references to the Jewish nation; a picture of the apostate condition of Israel (i.e. Isa. 1:10).
- C. People send gifts to each other in celebration of the death of the Two Witnesses (11:10).

V. Their Triumph

- A. The Two Witnesses are raised back to life after 3 1/2 days (11:11).
- B. The Two Witnesses ascend to heaven in the sight of all their enemies (11:12).
- C. A great earthquake kills 7,000 men and destroys one-tenth of the city (11:13).