

Understanding the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11

By Rich Jacobs, M.D.

Revelation 11:1-12

1 And there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and those who worship in it. 2 "And leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months. 3 "And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." 4 *These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.* 5 And if anyone desires to harm them, fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their enemies; and if anyone would desire to harm them, in this manner he must be killed. 6 These have the power to shut up the sky, in order that rain may not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they desire. 7 And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 And those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. 10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. 11 And after the three and a half days the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were beholding them. 12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies beheld them (NASB)

1. Learning from **Revelation 11**

- a. How many witnesses will there be? _____
- b. What will they be doing? (1) _____ (2) _____
- c. For how long will they be doing it? _____ days (_____ years)
- d. Where will they be doing it? _____
- e. What will the rest of the world think about them? _____
- f. Who will kill ("make war") against them? _____
- g. What eventually happens to them? _____

2. Setting: Color handout attachments (2)

- a. What begins the time of their prophesy and power? _____
- b. How many plagues do they bring upon the earth during this time? _____
- c. Quickly reading about these plagues in **Revelation 8:6-9:21**, why do you think the Two Witnesses are so disliked by the world?
- d. Where is the faithful remnant of Israel during the time of the ministry of the Two Prophets? _____
- e. What do you think faithful Israel thinks about these two witnesses and the "Beast"? What do you think they hope for, and why?

3. Besides calling them "witnesses", what else does Revelation call these two prophets (hint: italicized in scripture verse, above)? Some insight into what these titles mean comes from **Zechariah 4:1-7**.

1 Then the angel who talked with me returned and wakened me, as a man is wakened from his sleep. 2 He asked me, "What do you see?" I answered, "I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lights on it,

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with seven channels to the lights. 3 Also there are *two olive trees* by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left." 4 I asked the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?" 5 He answered, "Do you not know what these are?" "No, my lord," I replied. 6 So he said to me, "*This is the word of the LORD* to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty. 7 "What are you, O mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'God bless it! God bless it!'" (NIV)

4. Identifying these two witnesses -- hints from Scripture

a. Malachi 4:1-5

1 Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the LORD Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them. 2 But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall. 3 Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things," says the LORD Almighty. 4 "Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel. 5 "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. (NIV)

- i. What great and dreadful day does this passage talk about? _____
- ii. What two Biblical names does this passage mention? _____

b. Matthew 16:28-17:13

16 "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." 1 And six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves. 2 And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. 3 And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. 4 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." 5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" 6 And when the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were much afraid. 7 And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." 8 And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, except Jesus Himself alone. 9 And as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead." 10 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" 11 And He answered and said, "Elijah is coming and will restore all things; 12 but I say to you, that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands. " 13 Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist. (NAS)

- i. What did Jesus promise the disciples would see before their death?

- ii. What happened to Jesus on the mountain? _____
- iii. Who else appeared on the mountain with Jesus? _____ & _____

c. Homework:

- i. read **Exodus 7:14-11:10.**
- ii. read **1 Kings 17:1 through 2 Kings 2:1-16; 2 Chronicles 21:12-15**

Who do you think the two (2) witnesses of Revelation will be? Do you now understand why they are present, what they are doing, where, and when?