

The Mission of the Two Witnesses in the Book of Revelation

by Jeremy James



The Book of Revelation is our guide to the End Time. It sets out in broad chronological order the many End-Time events mentioned in other books of the Bible. By giving a clear overview of these events and how they finally culminate in the Second Coming, this wonderful book allows us to take comfort in the knowledge that, despite the ever-worsening situation here on earth, the LORD God of Israel is sovereign over all things and His Son will return in triumph.

Seen in this light, as a work of comfort and consolation, the Book of Revelation is one that every Christian should study regularly. Indeed, it expressly states that all who read it will be blessed: "**Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.**" – Revelation 1:3.

Christ asked us to watch for signs of the End Time

It is clear from the End Time discourse given by Jesus in chapter 24 of the Gospel of Matthew that we are to watch for signs of the End Time and prepare ourselves accordingly. In order to encourage greater study of the Book of Revelation we have prepared herewith a short study on the possible identity of the Two Witnesses described in chapter 11 of that book.



PART ONE

Elijah as one of the Two Witnesses

Most Bible scholars are agreed that the prophet Elijah will be one of the Two Witnesses. There are many reasons for this:

1. The book of Malachi tells us that Elijah will come before the great End Time judgment falls upon the earth:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD" – Malachi 4:5

2. Jesus reminded his disciples that Elijah would immediately precede his second coming, just as John the Baptist had immediately preceded his first:

"And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elijah truly shall first come, and restore all things." – Matthew 17:10-11

3. Elijah had the notable distinction of being one of the two prophets chosen by the Father to visit His Son on the mount of Transfiguration:

"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him." – Matthew 17:1-3

4. The miraculous wonders performed by the Two Witnesses in the Book of Revelation include:

(a) the power to cause extreme drought, presumably wherever they choose for as long as they choose: **"These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy..." – Revelation 11:6**

(b) the power to destroy by fire anyone who attempted to harm them: **"And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies" – Revelation 11:5**

Both of these miraculous gifts were exercised in dramatic fashion by Elijah in the course of his ministry. He "shut heaven" and caused a drought across the length and breadth of Israel during the reign of the wicked king, Ahab:

"And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." – 1 Kings 17:1

He also called down fire from heaven to destroy two military detachments that had been sent to detain him:

"And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty."

– 2 Kings 1:10-12

It is notable also that the drought which Elijah brought upon Israel ("**there shall not be dew nor rain these years**") lasted exactly three and a half years. A Biblical year comprised 360 days, so the drought (which was also a judgment from God) was 1260 days in duration. This is precisely the length of time that the Two Witnesses will prophesy:

"Elijah 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." – James 5:17

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." – Revelation 11:3

Note the reference to sackcloth. This is an indication that the Two Witnesses will come from the Old Testament period since no-one is reported to have worn sackcloth in the New Testament, not even John the Baptist.

In light of this evidence from Scripture, it would seem reasonable to assume that Elijah will be one of the Two Witnesses.

If he were not, but came in another capacity, it would be difficult to understand why he is not otherwise mentioned in the Book of Revelation, given that he is the person who will precede Christ and "**restore all things**" (Matthew 17:11). (We will return to this question shortly.)



The Second Witness

This brings us to the main theme of our paper, namely the identity of the Second Witness. On the one hand, it may not be important for the church to have certainty on this question. On the other it is incumbent upon us to study what Scripture tells us about a matter of prophetic significance and draw what reasonable conclusions we can. We are not aiming to establish beyond all doubt the identity of the Second Witness, but simply to enlarge our understanding of what God is telling us for our benefit.

The term *witness*

Before proceeding we first need to consider the term 'witness'. A witness is someone who is both known and trusted, whose word is therefore dependable. Scripturally, the word of two witnesses is needed to establish the truth of a serious or contentious matter (Deuteronomy 17:6 and 19:15). Thus the Two Witnesses must be individuals who are already known to the nation of Israel. They must be persons of repute from the Old Testament since the Tanach (the Old Testament) is the trusted book of the Jewish nation. It is very unlikely therefore that the second Witness will be someone whose acts are not recorded in the Old Testament. What is more, to be a witness of the people and to the people, he will have to be Jewish, a descendant of Abraham. This would rule out Enoch who, even though he was translated from the earth in a miraculous manner, just like Elijah, he was not a descendant of Abraham and therefore not Jewish.



The case for Moses as the Second Witness

Many Bible commentators believe Moses will be the Second Witness. Several reasons have been suggested for this:

1. Both fasted 40 days and nights

Both Moses and Elijah went 40 days and nights without food or water. The only other person in the Bible who did this was Jesus:

Moses: "And he [Moses] was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water." – Exodus 34:28

Elijah: "And he [Elijah] arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God." – 1 Kings 19:8

This comparison would carry greater force had Elijah fasted for 40 days and 40 nights on *two* occasions, as did Moses. Deuteronomy 9:9 and 9:18 show that Moses fasted 40 days and 40 nights when he received the Ten Commandments the first time *and* again when he received them the second time.

2. Both left this world under miraculous circumstances

Both Moses and Elijah left this world under miraculous circumstances.

The Word of God records that Moses (a) while still in good health passed from this life by divine command (Deuteronomy 34:7), (b) was buried in an unknown location, either by an angel assigned to this duty or by the pre-incarnate Christ (Deuteronomy 34:6), and (c) had custody of his corpse contested by Satan and defended by the archangel Michael (Jude 1:9).

Elijah left this world without undergoing the process of death. Therefore to this day he still retains his mortal physical body in heaven. Some commentators have assumed that his body was immortalised at his translation, but this was not so. Christ was the first fruits of all whom the LORD will gather to Himself. Only at the resurrection of the dead, which will take place on the same day as the Rapture, will redeemed sinners receive their immortalized physical bodies. This means that, as one of the Two Witnesses, Elijah will be able to die just as the Word of God has foretold (Revelation 11:11). By the same token Elijah must come to earth after the Rapture, otherwise, as a believer, he would have been taken up and immortalized in that momentous event. This is further evidence from Scripture that the Rapture will take place before the 7-year Tribulation begins.

It is difficult to know how much importance to attach to the fact that both Moses and Elijah asked the LORD to prematurely terminate their earthly existence (Numbers 11:14-15 and 1 Kings 19:4). Three other prophets – Job, Jeremiah and Jonah – made a similar request. What is clear, however, is that their respective ministries, which might otherwise have run for several more years, were abruptly shut down by divine decree. It was almost as if the LORD was keeping the unused portion of each for use at a later date.



3. Both humiliated powerful demons in a public and dramatic manner

Of all the prophets in the Old and New Testaments, only Moses and Elijah compare with Christ in the way they publicly humiliated the powers of darkness.

The Word of God tells us that the ten plagues which tormented the land of Egypt were also rebuking the demonic entities which claimed to be able to control a different aspect of the natural world. As Jethro said to Moses, "**Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them.**" (Exodus 18:9).

Elijah wrought havoc among the demonic entities that controlled the priests of Baal, making a public spectacle of them on Mount Carmel and then ordering their execution. Jezebel's raging response to this spectacular humiliation was undoubtedly energized with great force by Satan himself. This would help explain why the great prophet immediately fled the scene.



4. Both called down fire and caused extreme weather conditions

Both invoked the judgment of God in similar ways, judgments that included (a) fire from heaven (Elijah) plus fire that "ran along upon the ground" (Moses) and (b) extreme climatic changes on a national scale – severe drought by Elijah and an electrical hail storm by Moses. The power to cause drought on demand and project flames from their lips are two of the four distinctive miraculous gifts that the Two Witnesses will exercise before a worldwide audience. The other two are the ability to turn water into blood and strike the earth with "**all plagues**" as often as they choose – both of which echo the ministry of Moses:

"And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."

– Revelation 11:5-6

5. Both appeared with the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration

The Transfiguration was an immensely important episode in the New Testament since it showed Christ in his divine glory before the Resurrection. The event is marked in a unique way, having three witnesses from earth (Peter, James and John) *and* three from heaven (Elijah, Moses and the Father). Having been selected as heavenly witnesses on that unique occasion, it would seem fitting that Elijah and Moses should return in the End Time and serve again as Two Witnesses, this time on the streets of Jerusalem.

6. Both are mentioned by the prophet Malachi

The last book of the Old Testament is notable for the long prophetic silence that followed the closing words of Malachi, a silence that makes his words ring forth with even greater prophetic power:

"Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto 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:" – Malachi 4:4-5

These two prophets, Moses and Elijah, are given special mention in a passage of Scripture which points directly to the **"great and dreadful day of the LORD"**. The passage refers expressly to the return of Elijah, but the allusion to the person of Moses, and not just the law of Moses, is taken by some as an indication that he will return with Elijah as one of the Two Witnesses.

7. Both encountered God at Sinai

Moses was granted an awesome glimpse of God in His glory on Mount Sinai (Horeb):

"And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen." – Exodus 33:21-23

Elijah was granted a similar glimpse, also at Horeb:

"And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice." – 1 Kings 19:11-12

In fact, as MacLaren points out, the cleft in the rock where Moses stood and the cave where Elijah took refuge were very likely the same place. The KJV translates 1 Kings 19:9 as **"And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there..."** but the literal translation reads: **"And he cometh in there, unto the cave, and lodgeth there..."** (Young's Literal Translation). It was not simply "a" cave but "the" cave, a specific place already mentioned in God's Word.



All told these seven factors make a strong case for Moses as the Second Witness. They do not strain any rule of sound hermeneutics and complement each other in a most agreeable way. Why then would we want to look at a possible alternative? Well, there are several compelling passages in God's Word which point toward another possible candidate and it behoves us to weigh them carefully.



PART TWO

The Work of the Two Witnesses

Before we examine our second candidate, we need to look more closely at the mission of the Two Witnesses and what they will actually do during their earthly sojourn.

It is significant that the 'Prophecy Conference' experts, who like to give the impression that they are addressing all aspects of End Time prophecy, say little of substance about the Two Witnesses. The subject is a painful one for the architects of the New World Order since it brings on the scene two figures who will shake the political establishment to its foundations.

Consider once again the powers the LORD will give them. They will be able to project fire from heaven at any of their enemies, at any time (Strictly speaking it will proceed out of their mouths). They will turn water into blood, smite the earth with plagues, and cause extensive drought anywhere they choose. Their wrath can be directed, not only at military targets, but at neighboring nations and large centers of population. They may even inflict judgment on places far distant from Jerusalem. In short, the Two Witnesses will have the ability to cause havoc and consternation across the face of the earth.

Every day will be filled with prophetic significance

They are called 'witnesses' because they are God's witnesses here on earth. The previous Witness had just left in the Rapture. Since God never leaves Himself without a Witness on earth, they will surely arrive almost as soon as the church, the previous witness, departs. If the Rapture takes place on Monday, the Two Witnesses will very likely descend to earth on Tuesday. Perhaps we are being too specific, but we should remember that every day of the Seven Year tribulation will be filled with prophetic significance and every hour utilized to the fullest extent.

The Two Witnesses will not have time to build the Temple. This is a feat that could hardly be accomplished in the short time available. Rather, it is more likely that the Temple will already have been built in Jerusalem. It may even have been in operation for several years before the Two Witnesses arrive. But when they do, they will take charge of everything.



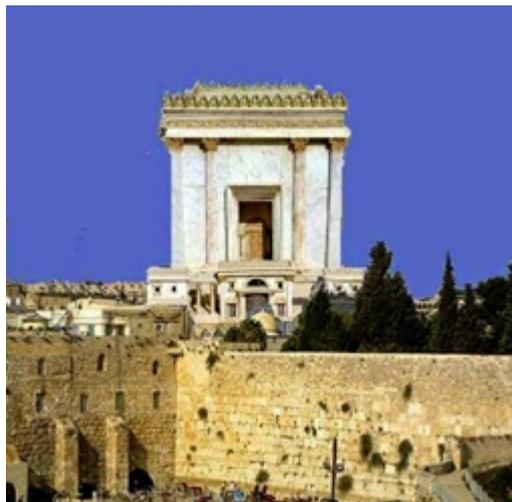
Elijah will restore all things

This is what Christ meant when he said that Elijah would "restore all things" ("**Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.**" - **Matthew 17:11**). What "things" did Jesus have in mind? Well, at the time he spoke those words, many of the "things" in question were still in place, notably the Temple, the priesthood and the sacrifices. His disciples would not have understood the prophetic implications of what he was saying since he was referring to the condition of Israel and the city of Jerusalem after 70 A.D.

When the Romans destroyed the city and demolished the Temple they removed the very "things" that Elijah will one day restore. The appointed place of the twice-daily sacrifices had been taken from them, along with the priests who were authorized to make the sacrifices. The Feasts too were gone, most notably the Day of Atonement when the Aaronic High Priest entered into the Holy of Holies. Much else was destroyed in this unimaginable catastrophe: the holy vessels, the holy vestments, the method of manufacturing the incense and anointing oil, the water of sanctification, the Temple records, the priestly schools, the singers and musical instruments, the silver trumpets, and the long-established and highly intricate Levitical system of Temple administration.

Consecrating the Temple

When Elijah returns he will restore all things. He will train and consecrate the Aaronic line of priests and their Levitical assistants, teaching them the Mosaic rituals in godly conformity with the Torah. He will show them how to make the sanctifying water of the red heifer, the holy anointing oil, and the sacrificial incense. He will approve the vestments and vessels and the various elements needed to conduct the offerings ordained by Moses. Most important of all, he will consecrate the Temple so that it will no longer stand merely as a building erected and dedicated by man. Rather it will stand as the very place that the LORD God of all Creation has approved and recognized – through His witness and emissary, Elijah – as His Holy Temple on earth.



How the Third Temple may look.

The Antichrist can only desecrate a place that is truly holy in the eyes of God. If the LORD did not consecrate the Temple through the office of Elijah, it would not be possible for the Antichrist to profane it. The abomination of desolation can only take place in this divinely anointed location, in a temple building consecrated by a prophet of God. No earthly building, even a magnificent Temple built by man on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, would satisfy that requirement.

Born-again Christians will need to reflect on this. When we can see that the Temple which men will build can have prophetic significance only when it is consecrated by a prophet of God, we will see why Elijah must come first to restore all things.



The 144,000

This in turn will enable us to place certain key events in their correct order. For example, the 144,000 witnesses – 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel – will be appointed by the Two Witnesses.

Some preachers get confused over this. For example Pastor Charles Lawson of Temple Baptist Church in Tennessee said, referring to the 144,000: "They're preaching that gospel to bring in Elijah and Moses. There's a reason for that gospel. They're preparing the world to receive the Two Witnesses." [April 18, 2018] But this cannot be true since the Word of God tells us that each of the 144,000 is a representative of his tribe. Jews today do not know which tribe they are from since the relevant records were lost long ago (The only possible exceptions are those who have surnames associated with a particular tribe, such as Levy). Before they can commence their missionary duties the 144,000 will need to be selected from their respective tribes and sealed by the Two Witnesses.

The Two Witnesses are not called by man but are sent by God. As soon as the Holy Spirit returns from the earth, taking with Him the Bride of Christ, the Two Witnesses will descend from heaven to Jerusalem. Elijah will appear as suddenly and dramatically as he did in Ahab's palace at Samaria, striding as though from nowhere and instantly becoming the main figure in a huge political storm.

Repent or face divine judgment

For 1260 days the Two Witnesses will make their presence felt. The whole world of Judaism will be startled by the arrival of two men claiming to be prophets of the Old Testament. Dressed in sackcloth throughout their mission, they will be easily recognizable in televised news reports. When they start telling everyone how to run the Temple – which will likely be constructed before they arrive – and demand complete obedience to their word, their activities will be reported week by week on television networks around the world. Everyone will want to know about these two men and their astonishing ability to direct fire from their mouths at anyone who tries to remove them. Their message will echo the symbolism of the sackcloth they are wearing – Repent now or face divine judgment!

The international news networks will mock these 'supposed prophets' for their intolerance and their bigotry, their utter disregard for the religious sensibilities of the nations around them. Their 'fire' will be dismissed as a trick of skilled illusionists, while the drought and plagues that their followers attribute to them will be regarded by almost everyone else as extreme natural disasters.



The power of the world media

Given that the followers of the Antichrist will have complete control over the media and the Internet, the message preached by the Two Witnesses will not be conveyed accurately to the world. An intense and carefully managed disinformation campaign will be in operation. Their words will likely be twisted and interpreted in ways that portray them as scoundrels and troublemakers. This is why the 144,000 are so important. They will travel to all four corners of the earth and bring the gospel message in person.

The Word of God would seem to give a loud warning about the power of the media in the End Time:

"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not." – Matthew 24:23-26

The "**any man**" to which Christ refers is indeed *any* man, for just about anyone can speak to you through the media. All kinds of experts and religious authorities will relay stories and reports about miraculous happenings in various parts of the world. Every supernatural sign performed by the Antichrist will be amplified and exaggerated in the media. The public will be convinced that the world has entered a new level of consciousness and "something special" is happening. The cosmic transformation that the great 'Masters' had predicted was now under way and fallen man will rush to embrace it. The power exerted by the media throughout this period will be extraordinary.

Hatred of the Jews

Meanwhile the world Jewish population will be in turmoil. The New World Order will have succeeded in blaming the Jews for all the problems of mankind, just as the Nazis did in Germany in the 1930s. No matter what social or economic problem is under discussion, the Jews will be blamed for it. The Nazis used crude propaganda to convince the German public that a great future lay ahead for their nation if only they had the courage to deal once and for all with the 'Jewish problem'. The NWO will use the media with an expertise and subtlety unknown to the Nazis to persuade people at every strata of society, every nation, every race and creed, that the world would blossom into a paradise if only these 'parasites' were exterminated. It is horrifying to speak in these terms, but this is exactly what the forces of darkness are working to achieve.



Christ promised to return to earth when his people called on him. These are his brothers and sisters in the flesh. But they must do so as a nation, not just a collection of individuals. If Satan can eliminate them, he believes, then he has thwarted God's plan, he has proven Him wrong and made it impossible for Him to keep His word.

This, to our ears, is astounding hubris, but it is the central End Time objective that the prince of this world has been pursuing for some time. The Antichrist is coming, not simply to reign on earth, but to destroy the Jews. That is his mission.

Jewish conversions

The world Jewish population will also be in turmoil for another reason. Many of their own will have heard and accepted the everlasting gospel, the gospel of Christ, preached by the 144,000. They will be reviled by their fellow Jews for having done so. When this starts to happen it will be just as Christ foretold:

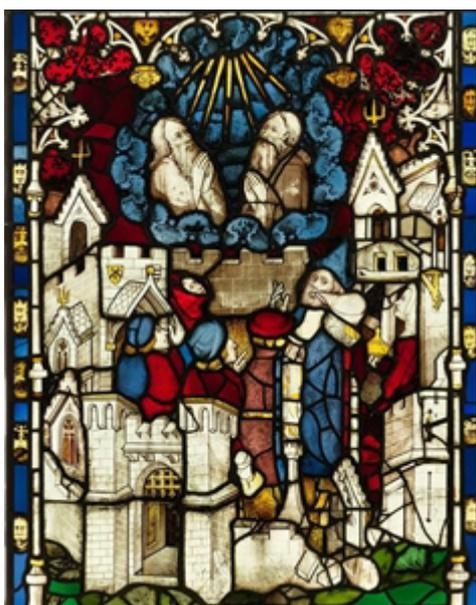
"The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law." – Luke 12:53

This is truly a time of judgment for the Jewish people. All that the prophets foretold will come to pass in those tumultuous and traumatic seven years. It will be "**the time of Jacob's trouble**" – the severest possible testing for the nation of Israel – and the furious outpouring of the wrath of God on the whole of mankind.

The Word of God tells us that two thirds of the Jews will be destroyed in this End Time Holocaust. Furthermore, by the time it is all over, possibly fewer than ten percent of the world's Gentile population will be left alive. If the crazed destructiveness of the Antichrist were allowed to run just a little past the limit set by God, the whole of mankind would have perished.

The Two Witnesses Depart

The Two Witnesses will be reviled in the international media and their words and actions distorted in the most outrageous ways. The world will see them much like villains in a reality TV show, religious phonies whose antics both amuse and offend at the same time. As the first half of the Tribulation unfolds and the world as a whole falls more and more under the spell of the Antichrist, the Two Witnesses will be increasingly hated by almost everyone.



The Two Witnesses ascend into heaven.

Many attempts will be made to assassinate them, but this cannot happen until their mission is complete. After 1260 days they will be struck dead in some manner on the orders of the Antichrist. As the Word of God tells us, the masses will celebrate this dramatic event in a most unseemly way, even sending celebratory gifts to one another. As a blasphemous mark of their satisfaction with this malicious deed, they will leave their dead bodies lying in the street. However, after three and a half days, the Two Witnesses will come back to life and ascend to heaven before the eyes of the world. Ironically, the very cameras that were intended to broadcast macabre evidence of their destruction will instead transmit startling images of their resurrection.

The Abomination of Desolation

Very soon after this happens, the Antichrist will travel to Jerusalem and enter the Temple, which is no longer protected by the Two Witnesses. By this time a large proportion of the Jewish people will be convinced that he is the Messiah. A huge media campaign conducted during his rise to power, along with his remarkable charisma, profound intelligence, and repeated demonstrations of supernatural power, will have done their job. They are already greatly in his debt – as they see it – for negotiating a peace treaty three and a half years earlier between Israel and her many enemies. Now, having removed the Two Witnesses and assumed jurisdiction over the Temple, the national leaders will formally acknowledge him as the Messiah.

Then it happens. When he enters the Temple and addresses the mesmerized audience, he is greeted like a god incarnate. The Book of Acts foreshadowed this event when it described the last days of Herod Agrippa, king of Judea – grandson of Herod the Great:

"And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost." – Acts 12:21-23

Josephus in his *Jewish Antiquities* gives the following account of the same incident:

"After his third year of rule over all of Judea, Agrippa came to Caesarea to celebrate games in honor of Caesar. For this occasion, a large number of men who held office or rank in his kingdom had assembled. On the second day of the games, he entered the theater at dawn, dressed in a garment of woven silver, which gleamed in the rays of the rising sun. His flatterers at once started addressing him as a god...The king did not censure them nor reject their flattery as impious. ...immediately...he felt a stab of pain in his heart and an intense ache in his stomach... They carried him into the palace, where he died after five days of unremitting pain in his abdomen. He was 54 years old..."

(Translation by Paul Maier, 1994)





The amphitheatre at Caesarea where King Herod Agrippa was struck down by an angel of God.

When Herod Agrippa accepted the acclamation of deity, he was struck down by an angel of the LORD. As soon as the Antichrist does the same, he will commit a heinous deed which instantly destroys his holy façade. The man who, up to that point, had deceived the whole world through his false humility, his seeming piety and his supernatural charisma, is suddenly revealed for what he is, a brutal tyrant energized by Satan himself.

Christ was referring to this episode when he said:

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

– Matthew 24:15-21

The passages in Daniel to which Christ was referring are –

"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

– Daniel 9:27

"And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." – Daniel 12:11

Note those ominous words, "he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease". The Antichrist will put an end to the morning and evening sacrifices and oblations that were reinstated by Elijah, seemingly by committing this act of desecration in the Temple itself. Christ refers to this blasphemous act as "the abomination of desolation" and states that it will happen in "the holy place", namely on the altar of the Temple consecrated by the Two Witnesses.

Flight and Refuge

Even though the next phase in this epic drama will not involve the Two Witnesses, we should examine it nonetheless since it flows directly from the work they had done over the previous three and a half years.

The moment the abomination of desolation takes place, the power of Satan will scorch the city with a hatred never previously seen on earth. The Antichrist will already have instructed his troops, upon his signal, to range forth and slaughter all of the Jews. He will have so thoroughly primed and deployed his men, some openly and some under cover, that no-one could hope to escape. The killing will start without warning and quickly escalate into a frenzied wave of terror that will envelop the entire city.

This would seem to be the specific event to which Christ was referring in Matthew 24: ***Then** let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

But how exactly will any escape? The Antichrist will have planned this barbarous campaign in such detail that no-one could expect to survive. He is just like Pharaoh, a type of the Antichrist, who was bent on exterminating the entire Jewish nation and was confident of exploiting their helpless situation, trapped as they were between his vast army and the Red Sea. This is where the LORD intervenes with a miracle even more astounding than the parting of the Red Sea. The earth itself will open up along an east-west axis to form a massive highway stretching from the heart of Jerusalem and onward into the mountains to the south-east. The Jews flee in their thousands along this miraculous route, protected on each side by a huge wall of solid rock – and very likely an army of angels. They have not a moment to lose. Those who hesitate will be cut down by the Enemy.



How do we know this will happen? Because the Word of God tells us so. The most significant reference is in the book of Zechariah where, in the three closing chapters (12-14), the prophet gives an extraordinary picture of the End Time and the miraculous preservation of the righteous remnant of Israel:

"And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee."

– Zechariah 14:4-5

The Book of Revelation refers also to the timing of this earthquake

"And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven." – Revelation 11:11-13

The Greek word for "hour" in verse 13 is *hora* (Strong's G5610). This word appears 108 times in the New Testament and is translated in the KJV as "hour" 89 times, "time" 11 times, "season" 3 times, and in other ways 5 times. It may not refer in this instance to an event taking place in the same 60 minute period, but (as we use the term today) to events in close proximity. Seen in that light, the earthquake may occur a few days after the Two Witnesses ascend into heaven, perhaps immediately after the abomination of desolation. (The 7,000 slain in the earthquake may have been soldiers of the Antichrist.)



Sheepcote (N.B. Gate not in picture)

Azal

After the great highway is created, the people will flee to a place called Azal (Zechariah 14). The Hebrew word *Azal* (Strong's H682) means "reserved" or "a place reserved." This is the sheepcote or sheepfold which Christ, the True Shepherd, has prepared for his flock. [A sheepfold or sheepcote in Biblical times normally comprised a sheltered area or pen enclosed by a sturdy stone wall with a single gate or door for entering and leaving.]

Isaiah speaks of Christ coming down to Bozrah in Idumea and, in divine judgment, slaughtering a vast number of the heathen that had striven with Israel and sought to destroy her ("**Thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things**" – Psalm 45:4) Idumea or Edom would correspond today to southern Jordan and possibly part of northern Arabia:

"For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness. For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion." – Isaiah 34:5-8

By carrying out this "sacrifice" in Bozrah in a climate of great urgency, Christ, like David, is defending his flock from the marauding 'lions' and 'bears' that were trying to break through. The word Bozrah, Strong's H1224, means "sheepfold" and may correspond to Azal – *a place reserved* – in Zechariah.

The Fury of the Lord

The fury of the Lord as he carries out this part of his mission is made abundantly clear in chapter 63 of Isaiah:

"Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth." – Isaiah 63:1-6



Christ will come to earth the second time, not as a Lamb but as a Lion. In obedience to his Father, he will execute vengeance on all who have rejected the everlasting Gospel. By the time he arrives, all who hate him, all who hate the Gospel, and all who hate Israel will be one and the same.

Jeremiah refers to the judgment at Bozrah as follows:

"Behold, he shall come up and fly as the eagle, and spread his wings over Bozrah: and at that day shall the heart of the mighty men of Edom be as the heart of a woman in her pangs." – Jeremiah 49:22

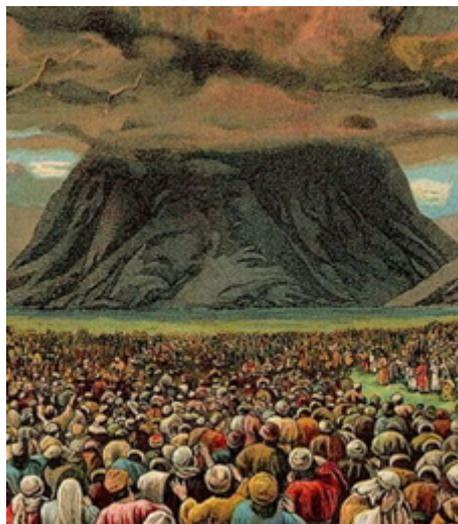
Micah refers to the same event:

"I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold: they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men." – Micah 2:12

The prophet describes the righteous remnant of Israel as a very great number indeed – **"I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee"**. When the Israelites departed from Egypt, the iron furnace, they numbered about two million souls. The flock at Bozrah will very likely comprise at least that number, if not more.

The clamorous attempts by the Antichrist to break through and destroy them will naturally cause this nervous congregation to make a **"great noise"**. Incessant gunfire, jet fighters flying overhead, and constant missile bombardment will be unsettling for many. This is why the LORD has placed the archangel Michael in their midst, not only to protect them but to soothe and calm their troubled souls during their three and a half years in the wilderness:

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." – Daniel 12:1





PART THREE

Elijah and Elisha as the Two Witnesses

The prophet Elijah is far more closely connected to Elisha than is generally realized. The following points of connection, all based in Scripture, would strongly suggest that, when Elijah returns as one of the Two Witnesses, he will be accompanied by Elisha rather than Moses.

1. Shared prophetic office

Elijah and Elisha are the only two prophets to share the same prophetic office:

"And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."

– 2 Kings 2:9

Some commentators have taken this request by Elisha – a request which God granted – to refer to the measure of the Holy Spirit which Elisha would receive. But this doesn't make sense. The Holy Spirit is not a quantity that can be 'doubled' in a Scripturally meaningful way. Neither would it seem appropriate for Elisha to be so presumptuous, especially as his master was about to translate from the earth.

So what was Elisha's actual request? The answer may be found in the book of Deuteronomy:

"But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his." – Deuteronomy 21:17

Elisha had asked to inherit the prophetic office that Elijah was on the point of vacating. To ask for a 'double portion' is to ask to be recognized as the legal successor, a right which normally fell to the firstborn. This was confirmed before the eyes of the world when the individual received twice as much in his inheritance as any of his brothers. If, for example, a man had six sons, his estate would be divided into seven parts. The eldest, the firstborn, would receive $2/7^{\text{th}}$ while his five brothers would each receive $1/7^{\text{th}}$.

This was not something that Elijah himself was able to grant, as he acknowledged. However, when his master's mantle fell from the ascending chariot, Elisha knew that the LORD had heard his request. Furthermore, the followers of Elijah received proof that Elisha was Elijah's divinely appointed successor when he parted the waters of the Jordan with the same mantle that Elijah had just used.

"And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him."

– 2 Kings 2:15

Scripture had already marked out Elisha as Elijah's successor when the LORD sent Elijah to anoint him:

"...and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room." – 1 Kings 19:16)

These facts alone would suggest that Scripture – and not just human reason – is pointing to Elisha as the Second Witness, but there are many more passages that connect the pair in a special way. One of the most striking may be found in the fourth chapter of Zechariah, which we will now examine.



2. The Two Olive Trees

The Book of Zechariah offers an astonishing wealth of detail about the End Time, much of which has a direct bearing on how we ought to interpret the Book of Revelation.

The prophet refers to a vision of two olive trees (or branches) on either side of a "candlestick" (lampstand or *menorah*):

[1] And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep,

[2] And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof:

[3] And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof...

[11] Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof?

[12] And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves?

[13] And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.

[14] Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the LORD of the whole earth. – Zechariah 4: 1-3, 11-14)

The lampstand obviously represents Christ, but whom do the two olive trees represent? The Book of Revelation gives a definite answer:

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed." – Revelation 11:3-5)

By reading Zechariah 4 in conjunction with Revelation 11 we can see that the two olive trees in Zechariah are the Two Witnesses in Revelation. Furthermore, they are described in both chapters as standing before the God of the earth, namely Christ.

Only two prophets ever claimed to stand before God. These were Elijah and Elisha:

Elijah

1 Kings 17:1

"And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."

1 Kings 18:15

"And Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day."

Elisha

2 Kings 3:14

"And Elisha said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee."

2 Kings 5:16

"But he [Elisha] said, As the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused."

Comparing scripture with scripture, as we are required to do, it is difficult to deny that these passages identify Elijah and Elisha with the Two Witnesses of Revelation.

3. Crossing the Jordan

The Word of God refers many times to the fact that the LORD in His mercy redeemed the children of Israel from the iron furnace – their captivity in the land of Egypt – and led them safely over the Jordan.

As a picture of salvation and rest, crossing the Jordan must surely qualify as one of the most powerful images in Scripture. To cross the Jordan means to enter spiritually into one's inheritance, to come to the ultimate place of blessing. The perfection of this new spiritual state was marked by the cessation of the three great miraculous phenomena that had accompanied the twelve tribes for 40 years, namely, the daily manna, the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night. What they now possessed and enjoyed was even greater than what had gone before.

Joshua led the twelve tribes to the Jordan, in accordance with the instructions given him by God. When the priests entered the water carrying the Ark, the waters parted miraculously and allowed two million people to pass over.

Given the enormous spiritual importance of this event – not just for Israel but for the whole of mankind – it is significant that the Jordan was also parted on two other occasions, both on the same day, on the first occasion by Elijah and on the second by Elisha. In the language of the Bible, this conspicuous day would seem to be pointing to an even more momentous day sometime in the future involving these particular individuals.



Elijah parts the Jordan.

4. The Three Divine Assignments

After Elijah had his dramatic encounter with God in Mount Horeb, the LORD gave him three assignments to complete:

"And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazeal to be king over Syria: And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room." – 1 Kings 19:15-16)

He completed only one of these tasks – the anointing of Elisha. It was Elisha who carried out the other two tasks, doing so AFTER Elijah had left the earth. As Albert Barnes says:

"...Elijah performed one only of the three commissions given to him. He appears to have been left free to choose the time for executing his commissions, and it would seem that he thought the proper occasion had not arisen either for the first or the second before his own translation. But he took care to communicate the divine commands to his successor, who performed them at the fitting moment."

The Pulpit Commentary notes: "There may have been good reasons, of which we know nothing, why Elijah should devolve the appointment of the two kings upon his successor..."

We can hardly conclude that the prophet failed to complete the two assignments but must infer, rather, that they were the responsibility of his office and could therefore be carried out by his divinely appointed successor. The acts of Elisha were, in effect, recognized by God as the acts of Elijah. Thus we have two illustrious prophets sharing, in succession, the same prophetic office.



The corpse revives when it touches Elisha's bones.

5. Both performed a miracle after they left the earth

These men are also unique in that they both performed a miracle after they left the earth. Apart from Christ, the Word of God does not credit anyone else with this distinction.

Elisha's extraordinary miracle is described as follows:

"And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet."

– 2 Kings 13:20-21)

The miracle by Elijah took the form of a letter to Jehoram, king of Judah, pronouncing judgment on him for his disobedience and wickedness.

"Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah thereto. And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah, But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself: Behold, with a great plague will the LORD smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods: And thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day. Moreover the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, that were near the Ethiopians: And they came up into Judah, and brake into it, and carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and his sons also, and his wives; so that there was never a son left him, save Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons. And after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease." – 2 Chronicles 21:11-18

Referring to this passage, Adam Clarke states:

...Elijah had been taken up to heaven thirteen years before the time of this writing...It is certainly a possible case that this writing might have been a prediction of Jehoram's impiety and miserable death, delivered in the time of the prophet, and which was now laid before this wicked king for the first time: and by it the prophet, though not among mortals, still continued to speak. I can see no solid reason against this opinion.

The exceptional circumstances of these two miracles would suggest that the prophets had – and still have – some unfinished work on earth.



CONCLUSION

As stated earlier, we are not aiming in this paper to establish beyond all doubt the identity of the Second Witness, but simply to enlarge our understanding of what the Word of God is telling us for our benefit.

The architects of the New World Order are doing all they can to promote a false or confused understanding of End Time prophecy. It suits their purpose to extinguish the lamp which the LORD has given for our guidance and edification. The better we understand End Time prophecy, the less open we are to deception.

The Enemy would dearly love to fabricate a phony fulfillment of End Time prophecy, to trick the world into believing that a certain impostor was the Antichrist. Whoever came along and destroyed that individual would then be welcomed by the entire world as Christ. Of course, we know from Scripture that this could not possibly be true since Christ will return and defeat the real Antichrist, not an impostor.

It would be easier to create a phony End Time scenario if certain elements of Bible prophecy were poorly understood. For example, the task would be easier if the vast majority of Christians believed (a) that the Rapture would take place after the 7-year tribulation had begun, (b) that the Two Witnesses will be allegorical figures rather than actual people, and (c) that the 144,000 will be something other than a real assembly of Jewish male preachers and evangelists commissioned by the Two Witnesses.

No doubt, the Catholic Church will continue to do everything it can to annul, twist and corrupt Bible prophecy relating to the End Time. We can expect the Illuminati to invent many more outrageous lies to dupe and deceive the Bible-believing church. Without a sure grasp of Scripture and a close familiarity with all that God's Word states about the End Time, many are sure to fall prey to these tricks and devices.



The great media machine, controlled by the NWO, has many facets – Hollywood, newspapers, television, radio, the popular music industry, Facebook, Yahoo, Google, Disney, NASA, video games, the publishing industry, glossy magazines, etc. It is a truly formidable force. The way it impinges daily on the thoughts and emotions of virtually everyone on earth, shaping and conditioning their views and opinions on a thousand different subjects, is mind-control in its most potent and seductive form. Willing participants are far easier to deceive than those who know they are targets of propaganda. Unless Christians immerse themselves daily in God's Word, they too will be carried along by the great tide of neo-pagan humanism that is sweeping over the earth.

In closing we would note that the media machine will also exert considerable influence over the masses during the End Time. It will produce so many rumors, false revelations and phony news reports about supposed miracle workers, Christ-like figures, supernatural happenings, and much else besides – backed up by convincing on-the-scene, eye-witness testimonials and impressive video footage – that the minds of millions all over the earth will be putty in the hands of the Antichrist and his Luciferian cabal.

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July 4, 2018

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