

## THE TWO WITNESSES

Just before the first resurrection and Christ's return as Conquering King to establish his Father's Kingdom on earth and during the end of this age of human rule on earth, there will be two dynamic and powerful men who will proclaim God the Father's good news message from Jerusalem.

Notice what is said in the Book of Revelation chapter 11, verses 3 and 4:

"And I will give to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two lamp-stands before the Lord of the earth" (vs.3-4).

These two men who are called the Two Witnesses in chapter 11 will play a major role in fulfilling prophecies concerning the calling of humanity to repentance and the proclaiming of God the Father's good news message to the world. But who are these two men who will be given tremendous authority and spiritual power from God just before the first resurrection and the return of Jesus Christ to conquer the earth and establish the Kingdom of God on earth. See Matt.24:14.

For centuries people have searched the scriptures and speculated as to the identity of these two men, because their actions will have a dramatic impact on the whole world during their 3½ year ministry.

Continue to listen to what I have to say and you can know who the Bible says these two men are and why God is going to send them as a witness to humanity in the not to distant future.

## THE GOSPEL AND THE EARLY CHURCH

Before we can understand who these two men are and how they fit into the plan of God for the salvation of humanity one must understand something about the early church and the mission of God's church that will exist during the end of the age.

The early church went forth evangelizing and spreading the Father's good news concerning Jesus Christ, salvation, and the Kingdom of God. Their spiritual zeal literally changed the course of history as they taught the Father's good news message of salvation.

Few realize the awesome power that Jesus placed at the disposal of the early church in order for them to fulfill

their commission to proclaim the Father's good news message. There are at least 21 distinct authorizations of spiritual and physical gifts of power from God noted in the New Testament that were given to the organized and unified Body of Christ during that time.

There are many accounts in the New Testament of the elect using these powerful authorizations at their discretion to perform miraculous works in order to fulfill their commission. See Acts 5:1-15; 6:8; 13:8-11; 15:12.

Jesus says the following about the activities of the early church:

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new languages; They shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands upon the sick, and they shall recover" (Mk.16:17-18 KJV). See also Acts 1:4-5,8.

Mark said the following concerning the activities of the early church:

"And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen" (Mk.16:20 KJV). See also 1.Thes.1:4-5.

## SIGNS, WONDERS, AND MIRACLES

Few people really realize the tremendous power that Jesus exhibited during his ministry. Jesus Christ had tremendous power at his disposal; he used this power at his discretion and authorize others to use this same power. Among his authorizations of power from the Father were the following:

- Power to heal the sick and raise the dead (Lk.7:20-23; Acts 5:15)
- Power to control evil spirits (Matt.17:14-18; Mk.16:17-18)
- Power to manipulate natural law (Matt.8:23-27; 14:25)
- Power to create physical things (Matt.14:15-21; Jn.2:1-11)
- Power to destroy the physical existence (Matt.21:18-22; Lk.9:54)
- Power to bring curses and blessings (Matt.21:18-22; Acts 13:9-12)
- Power to give and take life (Jn.17:2; Acts 5:3-10) and
- Power to enlist angelic help (Matt.26:53; Acts

12:6-7)

Jesus promised even greater power to those who would become members of his Father's household after his death and resurrection:

Notice what the apostle John records about this promise:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, He that believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater, than these shall he do; because I go to the Father. And whatsoever you shall ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask anything in my name, I will do it" (Jn.14:12-14 KJV).

As powerful as the apostolic era of the church was, they did not do a greater work than Jesus. They did perform many great acts and miracles as a powerful witness. However, the historical record clearly shows that they did not do a greater work than Jesus Christ did.

The prophet Joel says this about the time during which the end of the age church will exist:

"And I will pour out my spirit on my slaves and on my slave-girls in those days. And I will give signs in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and columns of smoke. And the sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord" (Joel 2:29-31 Para.).

Just prior to the return of Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords, the prophecies show the dynamic power of the holy spirit again being manifested through the Father's holy people.

During the time of the end, the Sovereign God's representatives on earth will have all of the spiritual and physical authorizations that Jesus and the early church had and more. There will be a unified dynamic body of the Father's Children who will be filled with tremendous spiritual and physical power with which they will be able to defy the very laws of the physical universe.

No spiritual or physical power will be able to stop them from performing their God-given task to proclaim the entire gospel message, teach God's truth, and announce the good news of the coming Kingdom of God.

Theirs is a greater work because their task is greater than that of the early church. Therefore, they require greater power to proclaim the gospel and warn a sinful and rebellious world that it is about to meet its Creator.

The Prophet Habakkuk says this to the scattered tribes of Israel who will live during the time of the end:

"Behold you [the various tribes of Israel] among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvelously: for I will work a work in your days, you will not believe, though it were told" (Hab.1:5 KJV). See also verses 1-4.

The apostle Paul issued a prophetic warning to those of his day and the future in regard to Habakkuk's prophecy, Paul said:

"Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, you despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it to you" (Acts 13:40-41 KJV). See also Isa.29:9-14.

This is the context and historical setting that the Two Witnesses must be viewed in, in order to be able to recognize them when they come onto the world scene.

## **THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM**

The building of a temple and the establishment of the sacrificial system of worship are required under the covenant that God made with national Israel at Mount Sinai and are central to the mission of the Two Witnesses and the fulfillment of many of the prophecies leading up to the first resurrection and the return of Jesus Christ. Therefore, important to have an overview of how the building of the temple will develop and what impact it has on the ministry of the two witnesses.

The prophet Daniel said that the daily sacrifices would be stopped and an abomination will desecrate the holy place within the temple at the end of the age. The gospel of Matthew records that Jesus referred to this same event as being one of the signs leading to his return.

In order for the daily sacrifices to be stopped and for the holy place to be desecrated, there are a minimum of three things that must exist in Jerusalem in accordance with the Mount Sinai covenant: An altar for sacrifices, priests of the Aaronic bloodline to perform the sacrifices, and a temple with a holy place in it.

Because the temple is the focal point of the Two Witnesses' ministry, it must be concluded that the Aaronic priesthood will be established with a high priest to officiate over it and a temple will be constructed in Jerusalem. But, who will begin the process of building

the temple and re-establishing the priesthood and the sacrificial system in Jerusalem?

## **THE PROPHET, GOVERNOR, AND HIGH PRIEST**

The first clue we have as to who the two witnesses are is in found in the book of Haggai.

Notice what the prophet records in chapter 1, beginning in verse 1:

"In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel (sheh-al-tee-ale), governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying: So speaks the Lord of hosts, saying, These people say, The time has not yet come for the Lord's house to be built" (vs.1-2).

The prophet Haggai brings a stern reprimand from God to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the high priest, regarding the lack of enthusiasm that they and the people of the house of Judah had for rebuilding his temple in which to perform his worship system.

Continuing in verses 3 and 6:

"Then the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai saying, Is it a time for you, yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruin? Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: Give careful thought to the results of your ways. You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it" (vs.3-6).

God sent Haggai the prophet to tell them,"Look, here you are living in your fine homes, you like to have the good life, and yet you are putting off rebuilding the temple" (vs. 3-6 Para).

The point is that they had known for some time that they should have been rebuilding the temple, but they had been procrastinating; therefore, God sent Haggai to command them to rebuild it.

The Jews in this age have known for many years that a temple should be built in Jerusalem and that God's sacrificial system of worship should be established, yet they have been procrastinating since the formation of the

modern nation of Israel. They have ignored the clear instructions of God, just as their ancient ancestors did in the time of Haggai.

## **The Prophetic Zerubbabel**

Just before the return of the Messiah at the end of this age a prophetic Zerubbabel (a government official in the Jewish nation of Israel) will receive a number of different messages from Jesus Christ concerning his call to repentance and salvation. Jesus Christ will also give him the authority and responsibilities that he will have during the end of this age.

## **His Call and Authority**

The prophetic Zerubbabel's call to his office and his authority are noted in Haggai chapter 2, verses 20 to 23:

"The second time the word of the Lord came to Haggai in the 24th day of the ninth month, saying. Speak to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations; and I will overthrow their chariots, and their riders and horses, and their riders shall come down, each one by the sword of his brother. In that day, says the Lord of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel, my servant, son of Shealtiel (sheh-al-tee-ale), says the Lord, and will make you as a signet: for I have chosen you, says the Lord of hosts" (Hag.2:20-23 KJV Para.).

Clearly, this is a prophecy for the end of this age when Christ will shake the heavens and the earth causing great destruction before he returns to conquer the nations of this world. Notice that Zerubbabel is called to be a signet (Hebrew: Sum hotam. English: an authorized seal) for God. This man is given the authority to use the awesome power of God in a discretionary manner in order to carry out his responsibilities during the end of the age.

## **His Power Over Nations**

In order to understand this prophecy, one should keep in mind that all of this prophecy is in the context of a prophet being sent to command a governmental official in the Jewish nation to initiate the process of building the temple.

Whatever Zerubbabel is going to do for God, he is going to do it through the supernatural power that God gives

him: The prophet Zechariah records the following about the authority and power of this man who is to be sent from God in the end of this age.

Notice what Zechariah says in chapter 4, verses 4 to 9:

"This is God's message to Zerubbabel. Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of Hosts. Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground [In prophetic symbolism a mountain is symbolic of a government or a nation]. And he will bring forth the capstone to shouts of Grace! Grace to it [the prophetic capstone is always a reference to Jesus Christ]. And the word of the Lord came to me saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you" (Zech.4:6-9 Para.).

These verses show the awesome power over this world's nations that the prophetic Zerubbabel will have. Whoever this man is, he will have a major role in the building of a temple in Jerusalem along with his participation in proclaiming the gospel message that will culminate in the first resurrection and Christ's return to rule the earth.

The prophecies of Zechariah leave little doubt that a high government official of the Jewish nation of Israel is the prophetic Zerubbabel who will initiate the building of the temple in Jerusalem. The prophecies also show that he may well be one of the Two Witnesses noted in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of Revelation. But, if he is not one of the Two Witnesses, he is an extremely important and powerful man who will proclaim the gospel message to the world during the end of this age.

## **THE PROPHETIC JOSHUA**

The prophet Zechariah shows that the two individuals who were instrumental in rebuilding the temple and in establishing the sacrificial system of worship in Jerusalem around 520 B.C. are also symbolic of two prophetic individuals who will accomplish the same task just before the Messiah's return.

In the third chapter of Zechariah verses 1 through 7, we see a clear and easily understood prophecy concerning the conversion of the high priest of the temple in Jerusalem to true Christianity during the end of this age.

### **Zechariah 3:1-7 Paraphrased**

Zechariah the third chapter, beginning in verse one:

"Then he [that's God's messenger] showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. The Lord said to Satan, The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this a burning stick snatched from the fire [this is speaking of the prophetic Joshua]? And Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and he stood before the angel" (vs.1-3). See also Amos 4:11.

Here, we see the prophetic Joshua in his capacity as the high priest. Besides the messenger and Joshua, Satan is present to accuse Joshua of wrong doing. This prophetic Joshua is called a burning stick pulled out of the fire, which pictures him as being one who is in the process of being destroyed because of his sinfulness; however, God has rescued him from eternal death for his own righteous purpose.

Notice that Joshua's garments are very dirty. This is a to the spiritual condition of this man prior to his transformation into a righteous person. Because the high priest only wears his priestly garments for official functions within the temple, perhaps this prophetic event takes place just before one of the functions in which he must officiate in the temple.

### **Joshua's Sins Forgiven**

In verses 4 and 5, we see the prophetic prophet Zechariah directly involved in the events surrounding the high priest's conversion to a son of God. notice what is said in these verses:

"The angel [that is, the messenger] said to those who were standing before him, Take off his filthy clothes. Then he said to Joshua, See, I have taken away your sin, and I will cloth you with a change of ceremonial robes. Then I [ this is the prophetic Zechariah speaking] said, Put a clean turban on his head. So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood by" (vs.4-5).

The messenger says that he has taken away this man's sins. Notice also that Zechariah says to place a clean turban on his head.

Its important to know that under the first covenant with national Israel that sins were never removed, they were only covered. Therefore, we know for certain that this high priest is a person that lives after after Jesus Christ

came to earth the first time.

It's also important to understand that angels do not have the authority to forgive sin. There are only two beings shown in the scriptures who can remove sins: God the Father and Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ does this through the authority given to him by his Father. Because the Father will not come to earth until his plan for the salvation of humanity has been completed, this messenger must either be Jesus Christ or someone else who has been authorized to give the message of forgiveness to the high priest. (The prophet Nathan gave a similar message to David and Isaiah gave a similar message to Hezekiah).

Continuing in verses 6 and 7

"The angel of the Lord gave this charge to Joshua: This is what the Lord Almighty says: If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you will judge my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place to walk among these standing here" (vs.6-7).

There are four extremely important things to note from these verses:

1. The high priest has not been a righteous man, because he has lived his life as a Jew following the practices of Judaism, a practice that Jesus says is in opposition to the righteous ways of his heavenly Father. See Matt.3:7; 12:33-34; 15:7-9.

Notice what both John and Jesus said about the religious leaders that lived during their day:

John said in Matthew 3, verse 7 to 8:

Matt 3:7-8 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said to them, O generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

Notice what Jesus says in Matthew 12:

Matt 12:33-34 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

He also said in Matthew 15:

Matt 15:7-9 7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, 8 This people draws nigh unto me with their mouth, and honors me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

2. The second thing that we see is that in order for this man to continue in his office as high priest, this man must observe and practice the ways of righteousness that will have been revealed to him. And he must perform the mission that he will be given.
3. The third thing to notice from these verses is that, this man will be offered the awesome opportunity to represent God the Father and Jesus Christ, govern the Father's earthly family of ambassadors and priests, be responsible for spiritual things of God on earth, and to fellowship with the servants of God.
4. The fourth thing that these scriptures indicate to us is that, this man will have an awesome opportunity and an equally awesome responsibility. However, if he does not follow through with what he has been instructed to do, he will lose his eternal salvation, because whoever functions as the high priest in the end of the age is one of the two witnesses and will have God's holy spirit. And anyone who fails to follow God's ways after receiving the holy spirit and being made righteous will die the second death in the Lake of Fire. See Matt.13:36-42; Rom.6:23; Rev.21:8.

## THE PROPHETIC OLIVE TREES

Zechariah chapter 4 verses 1-14 give us more insight into these two extremely important men known as the Two Witnesses:

### Zechariah 4:1-14 Paraphrased

"Then the angel who had been talking with me woke me, as though I had been asleep. What do you see? he asked. I said, I see a golden lamp stand with seven lamps and a bowl on top of it with seven tubes that feed the seven lamps, and two olive trees are beside it, one on the right of the bowl and one on its left. And I spoke to the angel that was talking with me, and asked, What are these my lord? And he said to me, Do you not know what these are? And I said no my lord" (vs.1-5).

In order to understand the prophetic meaning of verses 1 through 5, it is necessary to study verses 11 through 14, because they seem to be a continuation of the prophecy in verses 1 through 5:

"Then I asked, What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lamp-stand? Again I asked him, "What are these two clusters of olives that are beside the two golden pipes emptying the golden oil from themselves? He replied, Do you not know what these are? No, my lord, I said. So he said, These are the two sons of fresh oil who stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (vs.11-14).

### **The Two Olive Trees**

Trees are often symbolic of men or people and the olive tree is sometimes symbolic of righteousness and that which endures; therefore, it seems logical that the trees represent two righteous men.

Because the angel says that the olive trees are two individuals who are at the right and left side of the Lord of the earth who is Creator God who became Jesus Christ, it can be assumed that these two individuals play an extremely important role in the plan of God the Father for the salvation of humanity.

The Hebrew word translated 'lamp-stand' is 'manora'; therefore, the lamp-stand in these verses is a lamp-stand similar to that which stood in the ancient temple and shed light in the room just outside the holy of holies.

### **The Oil and the Lamp-stand**

Its clear that the lamps are light givers and because this is a prophecy for the end of the age, it seems logical that the seven lamps are symbolic of seven churches and/or seven spiritual leaders that will exist and give spiritual light to the world along with the Two Witnesses just before the return of Christ. See Rev.1:12,20; 2:1.

The bowl at the top of the lamp-stand is a reservoir that holds the golden oil that comes from clusters of olives on the two olive trees (i.e., the fruit of the two trees). The Hebrew word for fresh oil noted in verse 14, refers to fresh oil used for cooking and in lamps that give light. This fresh oil comes from these two men who serve the God of the earth ( who is Jesus the Christ) at his right and left hand. Therefore, it seems logical that the fresh oil is spiritual knowledge that is directed through these men to the seven churches who will use this knowledge for spiritual enlightenment.

## **THE MINISTRY OF THE TWO WITNESSES**

Now that we have gone through a number of prophecies concerning these two men, let us read a literal translation of the prophecy concerning these Two Witnesses in the book of Revelation chapter 11, beginning is verse3:

"And I will give to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two lamp-stands before the Lord of the earth" (vs.3-4).

This is absolute proof that the two olive trees that are noted in Zechariah chapter 4, werset 1 to 5, and verses 11 to 14 are symbolic of the two witnesses. Because Zechariah 3 clearly shows that the high priest who will officiate in a temple in Jerusalem is a direct representative of Jesus Christ; therefore, he must be one of the Two Witnesses.

During the ministry of these two men they will be protected from all their enemies as they proclaim God's message and cause tremendous destruction on the earth through the use of their supernatural spiritual power, in order to prove that what they say is from God and not man. These two men will have the spiritual power to destroy anyone who attempts to stop them from completing their ministry:

Continuing in verse 5 and 6:

"And if anyone desires to harm them, fire comes out of their mouth and devours their enemies. And if any one desires to harm them, so it is right for him to be killed. These have the authority to shut up the heaven, that no rain may rain in the days of their prophecy. And they have authority over the waters, to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire" (vs. 5-6).

Their proclamation of the gospel as a witness and warning to the world will be accomplished over a period of 3½ years and will be performed with unimaginable power, signs, and wonders.

Continuing in verses 7 and 8:

"And when they complete their witness, the beast coming up out of the abyss will make war with them, and will overcome them, and kill them. And their bodies will be on the street of that great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where our lord was

crucified" (vs7-8).

Only after these men's mission is complete will God allow them to be killed by the political and religious system of the Beast power. And they will only be killed for the purpose of showing that their witness was true and that they were indeed sent from the true God.

After these two men are murdered in Jerusalem, their bodies will be left to lie in the street.

Continuing in verses 9-10:

"And some from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will see their dead bodies for three and a half days and refuse them burial. And the inhabitants of the earth will rejoice, and celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth" (vs.9-10).

After these two men are killed, the world will gloat and celebrate, because these two troublemakers who brought so much destruction to the world, especially to its economic system, are dead. However, the death of these two men is not the end of this prophecy; notice what happens next in verses 11-12:

"And after the three and a half days a spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear struck those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, Come up here. And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies watched" (vs.11-12).

Because these two men will have been dead for 3½ days, it is easy to imagine the fear and terror that will grip those who see them come back to life, hear a voice from heaven calling to them, and watch them rise through the air and disappear in the clouds.

Notice what happens in verses 13 and 14 immediately after the resurrection of God's two men:

"And in that hour a great earthquake and a tenth part of the city fell. And seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, seven thousand names of men, and the rest became terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon" (vs.13-14).

Throughout the ministry of these two men, God will bring various types of plagues upon the earth and specifically upon nations that comprise the Beast

system, the Jewish nation of Israel, as well as the other tribes of national Israel who are scattered among the nations of the world today. These plagues and the destruction that follows them are all a part of God's warning for them to repent in order to be saved from his wrath that will soon come in great fury upon all of humanity.

Shortly after the death of the Two men, there will be a great earthquake that clearly shows that the God of the Two men is not finished with his punishment of the wicked and that there is more death and destruction to come.

As these events unfold in rapid succession, the festive attitude of the people will suddenly turn to terror and panic as they realize that more devastating plagues are coming.

## SUMMARY

Just before the first resurrection and Christ's return as Conquering King to establish his Father's Kingdom and during the end of this age of human rule on earth, there will be two dynamic and powerful men who will proclaim God the Father's good news message from Jerusalem.

Together with the true followers of God scattered throughout the world, these two will preach a powerful warning message of repentance to the house of Judah, the house of Israel and the rest of the world.

The impact of the Two Witnesses will have a devastating affect on the governments of this world and those who practice religion in opposition the Sovereign God's worship system.

I see that my time is up, but if you want to know the end result of the ministry of the Two Witnesses and clearly understand these two mens importance to the lives of you and your loved ones. Write for your copy of [Prophecies for the end of this age](#) at the address given in the following announcement.

Until next time this is Bud Cocherell for Bible Research .org

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