

Revelation's HOPE

Lesson 10: The Two Witnesses & the 7th Trumpet

I. Introduction to the Two Witnesses

A. Popular understanding

“Walvoord pointed out that because the Revelation passage does not specifically identify who the two witnesses are, it would be safer to conclude that they are not related to any previous historical character. The literalist typically has a dispensationalist or futurist interpretation that the two witnesses will appear in the Last days”.¹

- Most believe that before Jesus comes again, the two witnesses must appear LITERALLY. This view is not new→

B. Two Witnesses in **Malachi 4**

“For, behold, the day cometh, it burneth as a furnace; and all the proud, and all that work wickedness, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith Jehovah of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. ² But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings; and ye shall go forth, and gambol as calves of the stall. ³ And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I make, saith Jehovah of hosts ⁴ Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes and ordinances. ⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. ⁶ And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (**Mal 4:1-6**, ASV).

- Moses and Elijah linked to preparing the way for the end of the World: the coming Messiah. The world would not be “blessed” but cursed if they did not accept their message.

C. In Jesus’ day it was taught that Elijah comes first (before the Messiah), and that he would come LITERALLY. Literalism has found its way to modern schools of prophetic interpretation even though there are examples in the Bible where this method is seriously challenged:

⁵ While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. . . ¹⁰ And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come? ¹¹ And he answered and said, Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things: ¹² but I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they would. . . (**Matthew 17:5, 10-12**, ASV).

D. The Meaning of “Elijah comes”

. . . Even so shall the Son of man also suffer of them. ¹³ Then understood the disciples that he spake unto them of John the Baptist” (**Mat 17:12b -13**, ASV).

- Elijah “shall” / will come: Future
- Elijah “has” come = John the Baptist.

E. Why John the Baptist is “Elijah”

¹⁷ “And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him” (**Luk.1**)

F. John’s Ministry

- Message of repentance
- Said to be in the spirit and power of Elijah
- From about 27 AD to 30 AD (3 yrs)
- Prepared the way for Jesus’ first coming
- Ended in the death of the “witness” / martyr.
- Jesus said this type of ministry would come again – but when?

G. Elijah and Moses did Appear

- True, they did appear to affirm Jesus:

³⁰ “And behold, there talked with him two men, who were Moses and Elijah; ³¹ who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem” (**Luk 9:30-31** ASV).

- Moses and Elijah appeared to encourage Jesus to go forward with His mission.
- A message of Elijah “will” come again and will prepare the way for Jesus to finish His mission→

II. Elijah “will come” - **Revelation 11**

“And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and one said, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. ² And the court which is without the temple leave without, and measure it not; for it hath been given unto the nations: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. ³ And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. . .

A. Allusions

- Measure temple – same as in Zechariah 4: during the day of Atonement / Judgment. This points to a time AFTER 1844.
- Nations = gentiles (message to All World in Matthew 28; Romans 11 = Gentiles included).
- Shall tread the Holy city = can represent God’s people
- Shall prophesy 1,260 days = period Woman / Church in the wilderness **in Ch. 12**
- Clothed in Sackcloth = message of Repentance (like that of John the Baptist)
- Let’s look closely at Zechariah 4 to get more details about Two Witnesses.

B. Closer look at Zechariah 4

“And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep. ² And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have seen, and, behold, a candlestick all of gold, with its bowl upon the top of it, and its seven lamps thereon; there are seven pipes to each of the 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. . .” (**Zech. 4:1-3**, ASV).

- Candlesticks in Revelation = Churches led by Spirit. This is where Jesus is in Revelation 1. Back to Zechariah for more→

C. Identifying the Two Witnesses of Zechariah 4

⁴ And I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? ⁵ Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these are? And I said, No, my lord. ⁶ Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of Jehovah unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts. ⁷ Who art thou, O great mountain? . . .” (**Zech. 4:4-7**).

- These = olive trees in previous verse. Spirit led message from God. Zechariah 4 for still more information:

“before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the top stone with shoutings of Grace, grace, unto it. ⁸ Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, ⁹ The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me unto you. ¹⁰ For who hath despised the day of small things? for these seven shall rejoice [keep reading], and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel. .

- This house = temple. NT = Church of Jesus. Zechariah 4 mentions two witnesses:

. . . these are the eyes of Jehovah, which run to and fro through the whole earth. 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 the second time, and said unto him, What are these two olive-branches, which are beside the two golden spouts, that empty the golden oil out of themselves? ¹³ And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these are? And I said, No, my lord. . .

III. Two Witnesses of Zechariah 4

. . . ¹⁴ Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth” (**Zec 4:14** ASV).

A. Descriptive Characteristics of Two Witnesses in Zechariah & Luke.

- Two witnesses are from among God’s people (candlesticks). Where have we seen the candlesticks in Revelation? That’s right – the 7 Churches.
- They are spirit led
- They end up standing by the Lord of the Earth.
- They proclaim the “word of Jehovah”.
- Jews thought Moses and Elijah must come first – then the Messiah would appear. Some think these are literal prophets in Jerusalem. However, let’s look at what the Two Witnesses did at Jesus’ first coming.

B. Elijah and Moses with the Lord

³⁰ “And behold, there talked with him two men, who were Moses and Elijah; ³¹ who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem” (**Luk 9:30-31** ASV).

- Moses and Elijah appeared to encourage Jesus to go forward with His mission.
- They pointed Jesus, and us since we are reading their message, to the Cross.
- A message of Elijah “will” come again→

⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth. ⁵ And if any man desireth to hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies; and if any man shall desire to hurt them, in this manner must he be killed. ⁶ These have the power to shut the heaven, that it rain not during the days of their prophecy: and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they shall desire. (**Rev 11:4-6** ASV)

C. Summary

- Two Olive trees were those who would deliver the “word of Jehovah” in Zechariah’s day with the power of the Spirit.
- John the Baptist did so in Jesus’ day.
- These are likened to Moses and Elijah: One brings fire, shuts the sky so it will not rain during their prophecy (Elijah), the other witness turns water to blood and smites the earth with every kind of “plague” (Moses).
- Jesus said “Elijah” will come = these are God’s last day messengers.

D. When Their Message is Complete

⁷ And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that cometh up out of the abyss shall make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them. ⁸ And their dead bodies lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. ⁹ And from among the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations do men look upon their dead bodies three days and a half, and suffer not their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. . .

- Testimony – martureo: witness. Linked to faithfully sharing the prophetic message of Jesus (**Revelation 2:13** – Antipas).
- Beast – We will find out more later about this character: enemy of God; opposes the truth.
- Spiritually Sodom and Egypt: Jerusalem when they did not listen to message of Jesus; end of time it is Babylon (**Revelation 18:6**)
- 3 ½ days = same as 1,260 days (more later). Some point to literal 3 ½ year ministry of Elijah, 3 ½ year ministry of Jesus and approximately 3 year ministry of John the Baptist. The text does not say literal or symbolic. Maybe it could be both!
- When does this take place? During the Final judgment (Day of Atonement) which began in 1844.

E. Sodom

Mat 11:23 And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt go down unto Hades: for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day.

Mat 11:24 But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

- Town on the Western shore of the sea of Galilee
- God will Judge ALL the Earth including those who claim to be His people.

F. Measuring God's people

- Interesting parallels found in Leviticus 16.
- "In that chapter, there are four basic entities noted as having atonement made for them-the priests themselves, the sanctuary, the altar, and the congregation (see vss. 6, 11, 16-18). The priesthood would obviously be omitted in any NT parallel, for Christ as High Priest -'holy, blameless, unstained, set apart from sinners' (Heb 7:26)-would need no atonement for himself. It is striking, then, that the three other exact entities to be atoned for in Leviticus 16 are precisely those three elements to be 'measured' in Rev 11:1"(Strand, "An Overlooked Background to Revelation 11:1", 322).

IV. Last Message of God's Messengers

- The message of God at the end echoes from the days of Moses, Elijah, Zechariah, John and the 1st Coming of Jesus all the way to the 2nd Coming of Jesus!
- It is the last message (which we will learn more about later) that is what is emphasized rather than the last messengers!
- The message is against the great city – Babylon and all the forces of evil.
- This message is one of final preparation→

V. Events Surrounding the Messengers

¹⁰ And they that dwell on the earth rejoice over them, and make merry; and they shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth. ¹¹ And after the three days and a half the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them that beheld them. ¹² And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they went up into heaven in the cloud; and their enemies beheld them" (**Rev. 11:10-12**, ASV).

A. Note the Progression: 1,260 day ministry; death; Resurrection & Ascension



1. 1,260 day prophecy (we will learn more about it later)
2. 3 ½ days the bodies lay in the streets while world rejoices
3. Their death effectively prepares the world for the Lord to return

B. After their death

¹³ “And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city [Babylon] fell; and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand persons: and the rest were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. ¹⁴ The second Woe is past: behold, the third Woe cometh quickly. ¹⁵ And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever” (**Rev. 11:13-15**, ASV).

C. What happens when the 7th Trumpet sounds? Praises & the world ends.

- Prophets & Saints Linked in this praise

¹⁶ And the four and twenty elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, ¹⁷ saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast; because thou hast taken thy great power, and didst reign. ¹⁸ And the nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth” (**Rev. 11:16-18**).

D. The Message & Ascension of the Witnesses points in one direction: Heavenward!

¹⁹ And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail” (**Rev 11:19**, ASV).

- We progress into the MHP at the end of this part of the vision. This validates the Day of Atonement premise we had earlier = after 1844 last message comes.
- The text points to a message of Christ’s heavenly ministry being restored. ARK = later
- Hold up your head when the world rejoices because joy is Coming!

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy” (**John 16:20**, MKJV).

I want to be one of God’s faithful messengers today and every day until Jesus comes – how about you? I want to share Jesus – don’t you?

ⁱ (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two_witnesses)