

The Two Witnesses

REVELATION 11 CONTINUES THE SECOND Revelation 11 continues the second woe (11:14) with the appearance of God's two witnesses, who have been given great power through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This power allows them to release judgment on the earth in the same manner as Moses and Elijah. Often these two are interpreted as two men, yet the Bible reveals something different. These two are not men as many have supposed but are identified as *two olive trees* and *two candlesticks* (11:4). With this identification, we know these two are Israel and the Church (as the evidence below will make clear) which have reawakened to the power of Christ (the Holy Spirit), being purged and made white through the persecution of the Antichrist (Dan. 11:35; Rev. 6:9-11).

The witnesses, now filled with power, appear during the three-and-a-half years of great tribulation during the same time period in which Christ's wrath is poured out. They will be a witness for Christ for three and a half years, releasing His judgments on earth in a similar manner as Moses and Elijah. These power-filled witnesses are a small remnant who was not martyred by the Antichrist in the global holocaust of Jews and Christians. They now have experienced a true revival and the fullness of the Holy Spirit, fully trusting Christ during this period that has seen most of God's people and over one half of the earth's population up to this time killed. Through the fire, the church and Israel are awakened and become power filled.

For years, I taught the traditional view that these two must be Moses, Elijah, or Enoch. But then it struck me that to come up with this view was without clear scriptural support. I began to look again at this passage and realized the passage tells us who these two are--they are actually four--two olive trees and two candlesticks, which we will identify below:

"I will give power to my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth" (Rev. 11:3-4).

I then had to ask if Scripture had anything to say about olive trees and candlesticks. It did, and what I discovered was that Scripture is clear concerning who the olive trees and candlesticks are—they are Israel and the church. Here are two Scriptures clearly identifying the olive trees:

"If some of the branches be broken off, and you being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree." (Rom. 11:17).

"The LORD called your name, A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit" (Jer. 11:16a).

These two Scriptures clearly identify Israel as the natural and green olive tree, and the church as the wild olive tree grafted into Israel. To understand these witnesses as two men is to move away from the context of the Scripture.

Scripture also clearly identifies the church as candlesticks:

"The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which you saw are the seven churches" (Rev. 1:20).

Though each of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 are a candlestick, yet the two candlestick witnesses are not seven in number, but only two. The reason is because there were only *two* of the seven churches that were faithful witnesses of Christ, without any of their members encouraged to repent—the church at Smyrna and the church at Philadelphia (2:8-11; 3:7-13). Smyrna was encouraged to be "faithful, even to the point of death" (2:10). Philadelphia was honored "because you have kept the word of my patience" (3:10). The other five churches did not have the Holy Spirit alive within them. They had conformed their Christianity, and tolerated sin. Scripture is clear the candlesticks refer to the church.

A second confirmation that Israel and the church are the two witnesses is the fact that God has called Israel and the church His witnesses as these verses reveal:

CONCERNING ISRAEL

"Ye are my witnesses, says the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me" (Isa. 43:10; cf. Deut. 7:6-8).

CONCERNING THE CHURCH

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnessed to me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Scripture is clear the two witnesses are Israel and the church. To see them as two individual people moves us from the clear teaching of Scripture. As we understand the implications of you and I being the witnesses, there is absolute awe as we consider what we will soon experience. Reread these Scriptures about the two witnesses. Discern the reality of these two witnesses and let them move you to great expectation and a renewed search for the power of the Holy Spirit within you.

Have you received the Holy Spirit since you committed your life to Jesus? It's entirely possible to feel you are committed to Jesus but have only a superficial relationship with Him because the Holy Spirit is not within you. Ask yourself: Is the Holy Spirit alive and active within me?

Let us strive to be people who are doers of the word we know and allow the Holy Spirit to rise up in us like a mighty wind.

~2016