

The Two Witnesses

Introduction:

This essay will take a look at something from the Bible that is very poorly understood. We will be seeking understanding on the two witnesses that are spoken of in the holy word. I will show you who they are, as well as their role in God's end-times economy. For some reason, there has been quite a bit of confusion as to the identities of these two mysterious characters, but I will share with you what evidence may be found in the Scriptures. So let us begin our study of these individuals so that we may be edified on the great redemptive plan of our God.

Chapter 1: What is the Witness?

We find the most extensive mentioning of the witnesses in the book of Revelation, chapter 11:1-14, but they are also featured elsewhere in the Bible. In Revelation 11:3-4, we find the following Scripture.

3 "And I will give power to My two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands, standing before the God of the earth.

The Lord calls them His witnesses, but what is it that they are witnessing, and by the way, what does it mean to witness? Let's answer the second question first. A witness is one who testifies, concerning his knowledge of the circumstances under consideration. The most obvious example of this can be found by examining how this process is utilized in a court of law. Say for example, there is a case involving a robbery, and a suspect is on trial. The prosecutor may produce a "witness" to the crime. The witness will then tell the court what they actually perceived with their senses regarding the crime. They may have seen or heard something related to the commission of this crime. Based on what they say, it might help the jury to decide if what is alleged about the defendant is true or not.

Now to the first part of this question about witnesses, to what are the Lord's witnesses actually testifying? They, as their counterparts in a court of law, are reporting what it is that they saw, and or, heard. Their testimony is that they saw the excellent glory of the Lord as he set on His throne, and that His chosen One is there at His right hand, having overcome the sting of death; He forever lives and will reign over the whole of creation, for the glory of the Father. Amen.

What else might these two have witnessed in heaven? They undoubtedly saw the grapes of His wrath being tread out in the back room. This certainly would have been an ominous sign for the inhabitants of the Earth. They would have seen the mighty angels of God preparing their weapons for war. The glorious cherubim would have been singing their songs of praise to the Lord. Finally, they surely would have seen the bride of the Lamb making herself ready for the wedding feast.

There is something else that we see here in this revelation, and that is the testimony of the witnesses is time limited. They only provide their witness for a period of 1,260 days. Now this is a very significant amount of time, but I will not go into detail here, for it would open doors of discussion into the end times that may prevent me from returning to my primary topic in this essay for many pages. Suffice it to say that the Lord will not allow the voice of the Antichrist to be the only one heard during the time of the reign of evil on the earth.

Why two witnesses? You may ask.

15 Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. (Matthew 18:16-17)

Considering the judgment that was about to befall mankind, it was prudent for the Lord to provide multiple witnesses of His anger toward those who were disobedient. In this way it was clear to those who heard that the testimony of the Lord was true, and that the time was short.

Chapter 2: The Basis of the Witness

If the testimony of a witness is to be believed, it must be established that they were present at the scene of the events that they are reporting. Going back to our analogy of the court of law, if it is found that the witness to the crime was actually in a city 500 miles away during the time that the crime was committed, their testimony is invalid and they are shown to be false witnesses. With that thought in mind, it must then be shown that God's witnesses did indeed have the opportunity to perceive the events about which they testified. In order to investigate this matter, let us look at Revelation 11:4. Take note that they are called the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the throne of God. It is also clear from the rest of the chapter that these two witnesses are actual men and not metaphors. To get a little more insight into these mysterious olive trees we can consult the book of Zechariah. In chapter 4:1-3 we find the following.

1 Now the angel who talked with me, came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep.

2 And he said to me, "What do you see"? So I said, I am looking and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand, seven lamps, with seven pipes to the seven lamps

3 Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl, and the other at it's left.

Zechariah continued to converse with the angel who told him many things. Later on in the chapter, he asked the angel concerning the two olive trees as to what they were. The angel's answer given in verse 14 was quite intriguing.

14 So he said, "These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth."

As an aside, olive oil is symbolic of the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which is to be set apart, and equipped for, some purpose of the Lord. In this case, they were anointed to witness as to what they had seen while they were standing before the throne of the Lord of the whole earth. The Hebrew word that is translated anointed is “*Mashak*”; which literally means to smear on and to rub into as oil.

We have established that these two witnesses are indeed men, who prior to the time of their testimony, abided beside the throne of God. At some point in time, still future to us, they will descend to the Earth, where they will begin their testimony concerning the plans and purposes of God. They will have power to render judgment and to show mighty signs and wonders. This they will do with impunity for three and one half years. After this, their testimony will be finished and they will be overcome by the forces of darkness and killed. Their bodies will lie in the streets for three and one half days, after which they will be resurrected and ascend back to heaven.

At this time, the only thing left is to reveal the identities of these “sons of fresh oil.”

Chapter 3: Who are the Two Witnesses

Most of you have probably followed me thus far, but now is where the confusion and the error creep in. I dare say that everyone you could think of, with the possible exception of the devil, has been offered up as one of these two witnesses. What I will now share with you is the truth of the matter. I will serve as the “witness” of this truth, for I cannot deny that God has revealed to me by His Spirit a great many things, amongst the least of which are the identities of these two exalted servants. Once again, you may maintain that I speak presumptuously. However, if I speak from my own resources, how excellent must I be, to be the guardian of such precious things! No, I would rather think that the Lord God of Heaven has entrusted me as a faithful servant, to be the vessel through which He reveals the heretofore hidden mysteries of His handiwork. Ok, enough with the disclaimers; let us proceed on to the identities

The first witness is none other than the prophet Elijah. This is the easy one since his involvement with the end times has been well established through prophesy. For example:

5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord

6 And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse. (Malachi 4:5-6)

After the mount of transfiguration experience, the disciples questioned Jesus on the role of Elijah in the end times. (Matthew 17:10-13)

10 And His disciples asked Him saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

11 Jesus answered them saying, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things".

12 But, I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.”

13 Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

In this Scriptural example Elijah is an archetype for one who comes in the name of the Lord to bring good news, but is not at all well received by his intended recipients. Just as John the Baptist was treated shamefully by the ones he came to bless with the good news, and the Lord Jesus was held up to public ridicule, and His testimony rejected by His brethren, the testimony of Elijah will be rejected by the sons of disobedience when he comes, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

Finally, consider the following Scripture.

17 He will also go before Him, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. (Luke 1:17).

This is testimony concerning John the Baptist, who would be sent to the rebellious house of Jacob, before the coming of the Lord Jesus. Now what is this, “the spirit of” Elijah? This means that the same way that John came is also the way that Elijah will come to save his people.

In light of these references, it is incontrovertible that Elijah is one of the two witnesses. Moreover, there is one more very important piece of information that is needed to assure Elijah’s place. Since the two witnesses are killed after the days of their testimony, it is necessary that those who would be witnesses must be subject to the first death. This is mandated by the command that states that it is appointed for man *once* to die, and then after this, the judgment. This means that we cannot die physically more than once (a condition that will take some explanation shortly), and then, after we die, we are subject to judgment for the deeds done in the body. So anyone who serves as one of the witnesses must not have already died since, in serving as the witness, they would be required to be subjected to death a second time, thus violating the Scriptures. Elijah qualifies for the job as witness, since he was translated, and ascended to Heaven without seeing death first. Thus if he were to return to the Earth realm, he would be subject to death without breaking the Scriptures. Let us confirm then that the first witness is Elijah.

Now that you have been patient, I will reveal to you the identity of the second witness. This is none other than Moses; yes, the Moses that led the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt. He and his partner, Elijah, will surely become a thorn in the flesh of the Antichrist when they bear witness of the wrath of God against those who dwell on the face of the Earth. “How do I know that Moses is the other witness?” You ask. I could simply say that the Lord told me, but where is the defense in that? Allow me to accept your challenge and present my case. I think that any reasonable person will agree with me. (An admittedly painful experience, but it only hurts a minute)

We have already established that the two witnesses are, at this time, dwelling in the throne room of God, which is, of course, located in the spirit realm. Now let us return again to the mount of transfiguration. (Matthew 17:1-3)

1 Now after six days, Jesus took Peter, James, and John, his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves;

2 And He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun and His clothes became as white as the light.

3 And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

Here is what happened on that fateful day. While on the mountain with three of His disciples, the heavens opened up and the excellent glory of God bathed the Lord Jesus in its power. This had the effect of overriding the limitations of His flesh, and for a brief time He reverted to His celestial state. While in this state the veil that separates the natural from the celestial was lifted. This allowed the two worlds to share the same space and time so that, those in the natural could perceive the realm of the celestial. During this coincident manifestation, those who inhabited the natural world saw both Elijah and Moses in the spirit world. That is where their station was at that time, and remains so until this day. I submit to you that what the disciples saw in the spirit was the very same thing that Zechariah saw when he was granted divine insight into the celestial realm. These two, Elijah and Moses, are the two olive trees who stand by the throne of God.

But wait a minute! Isn't Moses dead? And if so, was he not in the bowels of the Earth in Abraham's bosom, along with all of the rest of the righteous dead? Moreover, didn't I just tell you that it is appointed unto man once to die, and then be judged? If Moses is the second witness, are not the Scriptures broken? So, you think you've got me, don't you? Come on, you don't think that I "get" that easily, do you? Now watch closely, as I wiggle off of your hook.

There are certain non-disputed truths here. The first is that it was indeed Moses, who was seen by the disciples in the throne room of God. Secondly, Moses indeed died in the wilderness. Third, the Scriptures cannot be broken. How can I possibly explain all of this? Actually, it is all rather easy, just stay with me for a while as I take you through it.

Behold the word of the Lord.

4 Then the Lord said to him, "This is the land that I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying I will give it your descendants. I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there."

*5 So Moses the servant of the Lord **died** there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord.*

6 And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day.

Based on these Scriptures, it is clear that Moses died. But if that were true, which it is, then we have another, even bigger problem to consider. What is a pre-Emanuel soul doing in the throne room of God? Were not all who perished before the coming of the Holy One of God held captive by the Adversary, in the lower parts of the Earth, also

known as hell? Indeed, and none escaped this fate, not even one. For if one could be found to stand in the presence of God according to the flesh, there would have been no reason to sacrifice the Lord Jesus as a remission for our sins. Moses could have then done the job, and at least, as a son of Adam, he would have been worthy of judgment.

The fact that Moses was shown to be in the throne room of God shows us that something peculiar was going on. Maybe, God just took his soul to Heaven, bypassing the grave. I think not! For this would have engendered a storm of protest from the devil, since he had a right to imprison the soul of everyone who was born of Adam, and Moses was certainly born of Adam. Well then, perhaps God resurrected him and then carried him into Heaven. Wrong again, for then Moses would have been the firstborn from the dead and not Jesus, thus breaking the Scriptures. (Remember, when Jesus was seen talking to Moses in heaven, He had not yet been glorified, having not yet endured the suffering of the cross.)

Since by now I probably have you climbing the wall, I will tell you what happened. Yes, Moses died on Mount Nebo as reported by Joshua, and as far as he was concerned, God had buried him somewhere in the land of Moab. But that is not exactly what happened, because after he died, God *resuscitated* him, which means that his soul, and spirit returned to his original body, in exactly the same way that Lazarus, Tabitha, and others were resuscitated by the power of God. Even to this day there are those who are declared dead, as evidenced by a lack of physiological functioning, who mysteriously return to life some time later. The critical issue in all cases of resuscitation is that the person, so revived, is still subject to death. In these cases, death is merely postponed but not cheated. After the resuscitation process, Moses would have been a normal functioning human creature. God then translated him exactly the way that He would subsequently do to Elijah, and then took him up to Heaven, where he took his place as one of the two olive trees, while he waited for his partner in witnessing to arrive, namely Elijah.

But Pastor, "Didn't the Bible say that God buried Moses?" Yes, it certainly did, but is this a statement of truth, or merely truly stated, meaning that as far as the writer (Joshua) knew, the Lord had buried Moses. This was a logical conclusion to be drawn, since they knew that they had not buried him, and he was not lying on the ground somewhere outside of the camp.

Now before I go on in this case, and for the sake of completeness, allow me to briefly mention the phenomenon known as resurrection. This occurs when your spirit, and soul enter into a celestial body, as opposed to your original terrestrial one. Once in the resurrected condition, you are no longer subject to physical death, but you do, however, remain susceptible to spiritual death. Just ask the angels who sinned, for their celestial bodies were no hindrance to rebellion.

Perhaps at this point you are thinking that I seem to be taking liberties with the Scriptures, but only if you are not inclined to believe me anyway. To those who seek knowledge, your spirits are burning within you as you rejoice in this revelation. But nevertheless, I have one more compelling piece of Scriptural evidence to present to you that should remove all doubt amongst those of you who are not suffering from a terminal case of hardening of the spiritual arteries. Now, allow me to share with you this rather peculiar Scripture.

8 Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries.

9 Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “ the Lord rebuke you!” (Jude v.8-9)

There is doubtless much that can be learned from these verses. But for now, I want you to focus on the fact that Michael was contending with the devil, and this contention had something to do with the body of Moses. Now doesn't it strike you as strange, seeing as that is an awful lot of high-octane spiritual fire power, to be brought to bear over something as inconsequential as burying a carcass? Remember that God is not at all concerned with the flesh, which is at enmity with Him, nor can it inherit His kingdom, but it is only fated for corruption. Why, then, would He send a captain of the Lord's host to tend to such a trivial matter? Moreover, why would the devil care about the burying of a body? His only concern is about securing the soul that used to inhabit that body. In light of all of this, it seems rather illogical that either side should be making such a fuss over who gets to bury Moses, **UNLESS**, it wasn't burial that God had in mind.

I will now tell you what happened that fateful day. Moses died on Mount Nebo, as reported by Joshua. His body lay on the ground on the mountaintop. Even though he had been disobedient and, as such, forfeited his opportunity to cross over Jordan, God had an even more marvelous mission planned for him. For it was the Lord's purpose to use him as one of His witnesses. After his death, God sent Michael to see after Moses' body so that it would not be rendered corrupted and thus uninhabitable. Lucifer, observing this “incursion” into his domain of such a high-ranking angel as Michael, knew that God was up to something. When he discovered what it was, he protested. He felt that, as the god of this age and the mediator of the curse, it was his right to afflict all of those who are sons of Adam. This meant that once you died, he imprisoned your soul in the grave, where he sought to rob you of the hope of redemption through deceit. He would not have taken kindly to being denied a soul, especially one that had played such a prominent role in unfolding God's plan for redemption. For the devil gloried in the fact that no matter how much someone may have served God in life, he could snatch defeat from the jaws of victory, by imprisoning their souls in death. In the case of Moses, however, he did not prevail for God still had need of him. So, He did not cancel his appointment with death, but merely rescheduled it.

Conclusion:

So there you have it. I have presented, in a logical manner, what the Bible has to say about these two witnesses. In addition, I have correctly identified who they are, and in this we have seen some wonderful insight into the mind of our God. There is no doubt that the day will come when these two men will again walk the Earth, and they will convict all of those who transgress the holy word of God. Even though they will not be spared the sting of death, through their testimony, many will be made victorious in life. Pray that you do not witness their testimony. Selah.