

Established by the Testimony of Two Witnesses

The second woe recorded in the book of Revelation concludes with the resurrection of the two witnesses (Rev 11:14). These two prophets of God have a 1260-day ministry (v. 3). They have powers similar to Moses and Aaron— “they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire” (v. 6). And during their ministry, they are “a torment to those who dwell on the earth” (v. 10).

The revelation of Christ Jesus is mostly silent about what the two witnesses prophesy. The most revealing statement about their message is encoded in their identity. They “are the two olive trees and two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth” (Rev 11:4). The reference is to the prophet Zechariah’s vision of the two olive trees, whom the angel identifies as “the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth” (Zech 4:14). And the work these two anointed one do is, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts” (v. 6).

Bible prophecy is unlocked with a single key: the visible reveals the invisible (Rom 1:20), and the physical precedes the spiritual (1 Cor 15:46). This key is named *typology*. So disciples will find in the canonized text prophesied phenomenon that came to pass as the visible, physical shadow of an invisible, spiritual reality. The focus of God has been from the creation of the earth the dual harvests of the earth, the early barley harvest and the latter main harvest of wheat. The promised land of Israel is the physical geography that brings forth these two annual crops. It is not a land watered with one’s foot [irrigated lands] (Deu 11:10), but a land dependant upon the early and latter rains to gather in the grains, oil and wine (v. 14). Moses, when describing the promise of the land that these then uncircumcised Israelites (Josh 5:2–7) were about to enter, asked, “And now Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul [mind], and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good?” (Deu 10:12–13). Moses continues: “And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul [mind], he will give you rain for your land in its season” (Deu 11:13–14). So rain in its season is linguistically as a teacher of righteousness, a peculiarity of Hebrew that allows the physical landscape to be linked with the mental topography of disciples. It is rain that makes the barley and wheat grow to maturity. It is the Holy Spirit that gives spiritual life and causes disciples to grow. So as barley is the firstfruits of the geographical promised land, the many glorified brothers of Christ Jesus (Rom 8:29–30) are the spiritual firstfruits of the earth, with Christ Jesus as the first of the firstfruits. Their teacher is Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit, *Pneuma 'Agion* or Breath of God. Thus, the rain that gives spiritual life is the Word. All that is required for salvation is to hear the words of Jesus and to believe the One who raised Him from the dead. However, *to believe* is not to acknowledge, but to walk in the ways of the Lord.

The question of whether *the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord* teach Israel to walk in the ways of the Lord is moot. What these two prophets prophesy, however, remains germane.

Within the remnant of spiritual Israel that left Babylon to rebuild the temple, speculation has existed about whether the two witnesses are human beings, or angelic beings. To die and be resurrected three days later suggests that the two witnesses are humans; however, to kill with the breath of their mouth suggests angelic powers, as does the two witnesses being the two olive trees that stand before the Lord. One prominent administration of the remnant taught in its radio ministry that as the endtime Philadelphia Church, its members would hide in a hole in the rock while the two witnesses delivered

the good news of Christ's soon coming millennial reign to an otherwise doomed humanity. That teaching was woefully short on love for both their brothers [and sisters] in Christ as well as short on love for their elder brother Christ Jesus. True saints in Philadelphia will be, during the ministry of the two witnesses, fighting to win a kingdom for their elder brother, not hiding in rocks as if they are rodents. Their fight will not be by might, for the Philadelphia Church has little strength, but by Spirit. And how do the two witnesses kill those who would kill them? By Spirit, or by fire that pours from their mouths as if breath.

The physical-mindedness of Israel has prevented the holy nation from understanding that the central event recorded about the two witnesses— their death and resurrection three and a half days later— is the witnesses' and Christ Jesus' testimony to the defeat of Death. By the testimony of two or three witnesses a thing is established. Death is the name of the fourth horseman of the Apocalypse. He is the dreadful fourth beast of Daniel chapter 7. He is the beast that appears like a Roman cross; he is the true king of the North. And it is his image that fallen Satan as the true antiChrist will require his slaves to accept.

The two witnesses will prophesy about one central event and the ramifications of that event: when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and of His Messiah (Rev 11:15), the Holy Spirit or Breath Holy [*Pneuma 'Agion*] will be poured out upon all flesh. Receipt of the Breath of God bestows spiritual life to human beings— all of humanity will become the holy nation of Israel, will become the single nation promised to Abraham (Gen 12:2). Israel will have been liberated from bondage to sin at the beginning of the seven years of tribulation, represented by the seven days of Unleavened Bread when yeast represents sin. For seven years, Israel will live without sin, or Israel will be in rebellion against the Father and the Son just as Satan and his angels are. For once Israel is liberated from bondage to sin, Israel will no longer need a sin sacrifice. And the great falling away of the Christian Church (2 Thess 2:3) is the majority of Israel (Scripture suggests 90%) returning to spiritual bondage. But returning to spiritual bondage again places a person under the sentence of death, which hasn't yet been dealt its mortal wound.

The good news to which the two witnesses testify is that Death will be defeated, that when all of humanity becomes the holy nation of God, Death will no longer reign. Every person who lives by faith, refusing the mark of the beast— the mark of Death— will be saved (Matt 24:13). And the testimony of the two witnesses will be that they will defeat Death when they are resurrected— Christ Jesus will deal Death its mortal wound when the world sees the two witnesses resurrected to life after laying dead for three and a half days. No longer will anyone have to fear Death. And this good news comes following the sixth trumpet plague when a third of humanity is again killed, so death will be on everyone's mind.

Receipt of the Holy Spirit without also being in bondage to sin— the described condition of humanity when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Father and of the Son— removes everyone from the penalty of death. The good news that must be proclaimed to the world as a witness to all nations before the end comes (Matt 24:14) is that all who endure to the end shall be saved (v. 13). These are the words of Jesus that disciples need to hear and believe. Halfway through seven years of tribulation, Death will be dealt a mortal wound. Satan will be cast from heaven (Rev 12:9), and he will be under penalty of death (Ezek 28:18–19). In order for him to share his evil fortune, he brings about the return of Death by creating an image of the cross-shaped beast, and requiring all who would buy and sell to accept its mark, either in their mind or as a tattoo. Literally, he causes people to be marked for death.

The two witnesses are, indeed, human beings. Any teaching contrary reveals the person's lack of spiritual understanding. But these two individuals have received power from the spiritual realm; they are like the two spies Joshua sent into the promised land in that they cross the Jordan before the remainder of Israel crosses this spiritual river. And to understand them being the two olive trees that are with the Lord calls for understanding the nature of time in relationship to its absence. Outside of time, there is only *the present*. There is no past or future as Western culture perceives the concepts and their realities.

Therefore, the resurrection of saints to glory causes these saints to enter *the present*, which was also *the present* when Christ Jesus was resurrected to glory. The two millennia between those two resurrections can only occur inside the creation of the universe. That passage of time cannot occur outside the creation. And understanding predestination also calls for comprehending this relationship, which has the heirs of God already glorified outside of time, but not yet having reached that location inside of time.

What the two witnesses prophesy is that Death will be defeated, and everyone who endures to the end shall be saved, shall not die, that their human nature will be changed to where they will no longer learn war, or do harm. Even the nature of animals changes when the Breath of God is poured out upon all flesh, so that a lion and a lamb can lie down together. The beast and the false prophet will be thrown alive into the lake of fire. Human beings born in the Millennium will live until Satan is loosed for a short season (three and a half years) after Christ's millennial reign. Because fallen Satan as the antiChrist previously resurrected the Cross (a.k.a. Death), he can be expected to attempt the same stunt, thereby causing all who were born in the Millennium to experience the choice between saving their physical lives or choosing spiritual life. God is not a respecter of persons. So after a thousand years without sin and death, Israel can expect both to return for a season.

Liberation from sin means a person is no longer compelled to sin— the war the Apostle Paul experiences between his mind and his flesh will be won by his mind. Death loses. And Christ Jesus along with the two witnesses as the two olive plants will deal Death its mortal wound. These three are the three ribs in the mouth of the second beast of Daniel chapter 7. This second beast is the king of the bottomless pit; he is Apollyon, so he too has a name.

Liberation from sin means Christ no longer needs to bear this person's sins, that this person will be fully responsible for living within the laws of God. Sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4). Lawlessness is rebellion against the Father and the Son. And a great rebellion occurs after Israel is liberated from bondage to sin at the second Passover. The face of this rebellion will be that of the Cross— the greater Church will return to bondage to sin, and to Death, by returning to the Christianity of the Cross. Put in easier to understand terms, the Christian Church will, following the second Passover slaughter of uncovered firstborns, quit keeping Sunday as its day of observance, begin keeping the Sabbath, then when the man of perdition (the little horn on Death's head) puts a little pressure on the Church, most Christians will return to Sunday observance. Oh, the theological debates will be deeper than this, but this is what outside observers will see. And this is all that needs to be seen to comprehend the scope of the rebellion against Father and Son.

All of the liberated Christian Church that returns to Sunday observance will experience the second death. Rebellion carries a high price tag.

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