

The Two Witnesses of Revelation 11

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Overview

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. - Revelation 11:3

As foretold in Scripture, at the end of the age the people of the earth will worship an image of the beast and receive a mark in their forehead or right hand. At this time the antichrist will perform the *abomination of desolation* in the temple of God; this abomination may include placing an image in the temple of God. In response to this God will send to the earth two witnesses who will appear in Jerusalem for a three and a half year period.

- Who are these two witnesses?
- How will we recognize them?
- How will it end?

Evidence the two witnesses are Moses and Elijah

There are two main schools of thought as to who these two witnesses are; they are either Moses and Elijah or Enoch and Elijah. Since I believe they are Moses and Elijah, let us start by looking at similarities in Moses and Elijah's lives.

Both Moses and Elijah fasted for forty days

Moses:

And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. - Exodus 34:28

Elijah:

And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God. - 1 Kings 19:8

Both Moses and Elijah divide the water and walk on dry ground

Moses parts the Red Sea:

And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. - Exodus 14:15-16

Elijah parts the Jordan River:

And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground. - 2 Kings 2:8

Not only are Moses and Elijah able to divide the waters, both Moses' successor Joshua and Elijah's successor Elisha are also able to do the same thing.

Joshua parts the Jordan River:

And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.

And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan.

[...]

*That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon a heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. **And the priests that bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood***

firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan. - Joshua 3:7-17

Finally, Elisha parts the Jordan River:

And he [Elisha] took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over. - 2 Kings 2:14

Moses and Elijah, have experience dealing with idol worshipers

- Moses confronted the Israelites who were worshiping the golden calf in Exodus 32.
- After many years of worshiping idols, Israel worships Baal. In 1 Kings 18:21 we read that Elijah is tries to turn the people's hearts back to the God of Israel.
- The people in both Moses and Elijah's time saw God do miracles, yet in both cases no major revival followed.
- Moses and Elijah were both willing and able to stand up to the masses when they are given over to idol worship. This fortitude will be a necessary character trait for the two witnesses.

Both Moses and Elijah request God to take their lives

Moses:

*And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, **blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.** - Exodus 32:31-32*

Elijah:

*But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, **It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.** - 1 Kings 19:4*

Perhaps Moses and Elijah did not suffer so much from death wishes as from the frustration of their people's desire to worship an image even after they had seen God's glory.

In Mt. Sinai, both Moses and Elijah stand before the Lord of the earth.

Moses:

And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.

And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

*And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped.
- Exodus 34:5-8*

Elijah:

And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake:

And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? - 1 Kings 19:11-13

The Two Olive Trees

Not only did Moses and Elijah stand with the Lord in Mt. Sinai, they also stood in His glory (Matthew 17:1-3) on another mountain. It is likely that the two witnesses would have a close relationship with the Lord.

*And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. **These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.** - Revelation 11:3-4*

When John says "*These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth*", does he expect us to recognize them? Where else in Scripture are two olive trees and candlesticks mentioned? The answer is the book of Zechariah.

*And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. So I answered and spoke to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord?
- Zechariah 4:2-4*

AND

*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? And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then said he, **These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.** - Zechariah 4:12-14*

Zechariah's interpretation of his vision as the "two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" brings up the next question. Who are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth? Let's go back to the Gospel of Matthew.

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him. - Matthew 17:1-3

It seems possible that the Bible identifies the two witnesses as Moses and Elijah.

The witnesses perform the same plagues as Moses and Elijah

The Bible mentions many of the plagues that the two witnesses perform by name. Moses or Elijah have previously performed every one of these plagues.

Fire

*And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.
- Revelation 11:5*

This is an accurate description of an event in Elijah's life.

*Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of a hill. And he spoke unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. And **Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty.** And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.*

*Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. And **Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty.** And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.*

*And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight. Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight. And the angel of the LORD said unto Elijah, Go down with him: **be not afraid of him.** And he arose, and went down with him unto the king. - 2 Kings 1:9-15*

Drought

*These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy:
- Revelation 11:6a*

Again, this happened in Elijah's time and at his command.

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. - 1 Kings 17:1

This first drought lasted for about three years (1 Kings 18:1).

Turn water to blood

... and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. - Revelation 11:6b

To see waters turned to blood we turn to Moses.

And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land. - Exodus 4:9

AND

And the LORD spoke unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. - Exodus 7:19

All plagues

... to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. Revelation 11:6b

All the plagues that Moses was capable of inflicting can be found in Exodus through Deuteronomy.

A list of plagues at the end of the age, is found in the passages on the seven trumpets and vials in the book of Revelation.

Malachi predicted Elijah and hinted at Moses

Most of the Christians who believe that the two witnesses at the end of the age are real people expect one of them to be Elijah. Many Jews also expect Elijah to precede the coming of the Messiah. However, there is only one verse in the Old Testament, Malachi 4:5, that predicts the coming of Elijah by name before the “*dreadful day of the Lord*”. Interestingly, this passage also mentions Moses.

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

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

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. - Malachi 4:4-6

Jesus said, *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets.* The scriptures mention the words *law* and *prophet* together in twenty different passages. The law and prophets are God's witness to his people. The law is personified by Moses the lawgiver and the prophets by Elijah.

Evidence that Enoch is one of the two witnesses

Another common belief among some Bible students is that the two witnesses are Enoch and Elijah. These Christians believe it is Enoch rather than Moses because like Elijah, Enoch was caught up to heaven without seeing a natural death.

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: - Hebrews 9:27

Since the Scriptures say it is appointed unto men once to die and neither Enoch nor Elijah saw death, the reasoning is that they must be the two witnesses. The problem is that this does not allow God to make any exceptions. Has God made any exceptions? Yes, it happened to every person who died twice, this includes everyone who Jesus or one of his apostles raised from the dead.

In Matthew 10, Jesus told his apostles:

*Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, **raise the dead**, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. - Matthew 10:8*

Later Jesus told the disciples of John:

*The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, **the dead are raised up**, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.
- Matthew 11:5*

The raising people from the dead also happened in the Old Testament. Though this is not a complete list, here are two passages where Elisha raised people from the dead.

And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

*Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.
- 2 Kings 4:34-35*

AND

And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulcher of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet. - 2 Kings 13:21

The exception to the rule "*it is appointed unto men once to die*" not only happens when people die twice. It will happen in the other direction also, some will never die.

*Behold, I show you a mystery; **We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.** - 1 Corinthians 15:51-52*

AND

*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. **Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air:** and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. - 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18*

Hebrews 9:27 cannot be used to prove that Enoch will, or will not be, one of the two witnesses. While Christians take sides in this discussion, an interesting possibility presents itself. As Elijah is John the Baptist (therefore he has already died once),

*And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? [...] A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee [...] For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. **And if ye will receive it, this is Elijah, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.** - Matthew 11:7-15*

Could there be a connection between Enoch and Moses? When Jesus said, “*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*” we realize that many people will not be able to believe that John the Baptist was Elijah. While I know of no proof (I am only mentioning this for the sake of speculation), it would be amazing if, in the same way, Moses were Enoch after all.

What is the ministry of the two witnesses?

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. - Matthew 5:17

Their Past Ministry

Both Moses and Elijah were ministers or ambassadors of the Lord. Both brought God's judgments down on pagan deities; Moses on the God's of Egypt and Elijah on the worshipers of Baal. Moses pled with Pharaoh to let His people go to worship Him, Elijah pled with Israel to turn from Idols back to the living God.

Moses

And the LORD spoke unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me. - Exodus 8:1

AND

*For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and **against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.** - Exodus 12:12*

Elijah

*Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God. And Elijah said unto them, **Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape.** And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there. - 1 Kings 18:37-40*

In both Moses and Elijah's time, the rulers of the people would not allow them to worship God according to His commandments. Today there are many places in the world where the people are forbidden to worship God, conditions will be even worse when the two witnesses appear.

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. - Matthew 24:9

Their Future Ministry

Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumor shall be upon rumor; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients. - Ezekiel 7:26

The two witnesses show up at a time when the world is carrying out two great abominations. First, they are worshiping the image of the beast.

*And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that **as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.** - Revelation 13:14-15*

Second, in the middle of Daniel's seventieth week they perform the abomination of desolation.

And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. - Daniel 11:31

There are different opinions among Christians, however I think the evidence points to this being the time when the two witnesses show up, and their ministry will continue for the last three and a half years of this age.

*And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and **the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.** - Revelation 11:1-2*

*And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a **thousand two hundred and threescore days**, clothed in sackcloth. - Revelation 11:3*

Why are they called witnesses?

The Greek word for witness is the word *martus*, the same word is translated Martyr. Perhaps the scripture calls them the two witnesses because they give their lives for their testimony.

And when they [the two witnesses,] shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. - Revelation 11:7

Lord pleads for Israel

Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted. - Isaiah 31:6

The ministry of the two witnesses is to plead with Israel and with the nations. First, they plead with Israel for their revolting against the Lord.

And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD. - Ezekiel 20:35-36

Second, the witnesses plead with the world for their treatment of the Jews.

For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land. - Joel 3:1-2

Ministry of pestilence

These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. - Revelation 11:6

Why do the witnesses smite the earth with their plagues? John may answer that question himself.

For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. - Revelation 16:6

Today, though the mainstream media ignores it, Christians are being murdered and tortured in many countries. At the time of the end, the whole world will be persecuting the saints. Though they know what they are doing is wrong, they think that they will get away with it. God is righteous and just to avenge His people.

*For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.
- Isaiah 63:4*

No rain during their ministry

*These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy.
- Revelation 11:6a*

Though the prophets spoke of famines in their own age, here are some passages that may speak of a famine at the end of this age.

*And their nobles have sent their little ones to the waters: they came to the pits, and found no water; they returned with their vessels empty; they were ashamed and confounded, and covered their heads. Because the ground is chapped, for there was no rain in the earth, the plowmen were ashamed, they covered their heads. Yea, the hind also calved in the field, and forsook it, because there was no grass. And the wild asses did stand in the high places, they snuffed up the wind like dragons; **their eyes did fail, because there was no grass.** O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee. - Jeremiah 14:3-7*

AND

*When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops. Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; **the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:** Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.
- Habakkuk 3:16-18*

AND

*Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished. The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.
- Joel 1:11-12*

AND

The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered. How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. O LORD, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field. The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness. - Joel 1:17-20

Call fire down from heaven

*And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.
- Revelation 11:5*

Some believe that the fire literally comes out of these witnesses' mouth, yet it is possible that this is a brief description of Elijah as recorded in the book of Second Kings.

*Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of a hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, **If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty.** And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. - 2 Kings 1:9-10*

When Moses gave his signs to Pharaoh often Pharaoh's magicians were able to duplicate them; thus, Pharaoh hardened his heart. Will the world's rulers be as stubborn at the end of the age?

*And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. **And [the second beast] doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast.** - Revelation 13:11-14a*

Here are some other passages from the book of Revelation where fire comes down from heaven. As Moses gave many signs to Pharaoh, perhaps the two witnesses are pleading with the world to let God's people go.

*And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.
- Revelation 8:5*

AND

*The first angel sounded, and there followed **hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth:** and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. - Revelation 8:7*

AND

*And the second angel sounded, and as it were **a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea:** and the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. - Revelation 8:8-9*

AND

*And the third angel sounded, and **there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp**, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters*

And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

- Revelation 8:10-11

AND

And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

- Revelation 8:12

While this fourth plague is not exactly fire falling from heaven, it is a sign and judgment from heaven and it should make the miracles performed by the antichrist at this time seem insignificant.

*And the fifth angel sounded, and **I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth**: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit*

And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

- Revelation 9:1-2

When God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, he performed many of these plagues at the hand of Moses, among them; turning water into blood, a great hailstorm, and causing the sun to go dark over Egypt. It is possible that God will use the two witnesses to do these these same plagues. If so, will the world respond as Egypt did?

How will it End?

And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

- Revelation 11:7

This age ends with the seven year Great Tribulation. We get the seven years from Daniel 9:27,

*And he shall confirm the covenant with many for **one week**: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. - Daniel 9:27*

By the context of chapter nine we know that this week is a seven year period. This last seven years are divided into two three and a half year periods. The antichrist reigns unopposed during the first three and a half years.

*And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a **time and times and the dividing of time**. - Daniel 7:25*

AND

*And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue **forty and two months**. - Revelation 13:4-5*

At the beginning of his reign the antichrist allows the Jews to rebuild the temple (the temple has to be rebuilt in order for him to desecrate it as will be shown). During his reign the antichrist persecutes Christians and when God does not seem to notice, after three and a half years, he is emboldened to break his covenant with Israel and he becomes the abomination that causes desolation.

*Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.
- 2 Thessalonians 2:4*

AND

And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. - Daniel 9:27

This is when the two witnesses appear. If they did not appear at this time, the nation of Israel would have been forced to worship the Image of the Beast. However, during the last three and a half years, the two witnesses plead for Israel with all the plagues that have already been mentioned.

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. - Revelation 11:3

However, the plagues performed by the two witnesses do not bring the world to repentance, for John testifies:

*And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues **yet repented not of the works of their hands**, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: **Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts**. - Revelation 9:20-21*

AND

*And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and **they repented not to give him glory**. - Revelation 16:9*

AND

*And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, **and repented not of their deeds.** - Revelation 16:11*

So rather than repenting, the world musters all its forces to Jerusalem and in a strange twist of events, the Beast, or antichrist, overcomes and kills the two witnesses in the *Battle of Armageddon*. Zechariah says this about the battle.

For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. - Zechariah 14:2

It is at this time, when they sack the city of Jerusalem, and the two witnesses are killed, that the Lord warns us He is coming.

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. - Matthew 24:44

Yet rather than expecting the Lord's return, we see by John's record, the world's reaction at this time.

*And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them [the two witnesses], and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies **three days and a half**, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And **they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them**, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. - Revelation 11:7-10*

This celebration goes on for three and a half days, when to the worlds surprise ...

*And after three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And **they heard a great voice from heaven** saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. - Revelation 11:11-12*

While many Christians believe in a [pretribulation rapture](#), does not these witnesses ascending in a cloud sound like the rapture mentioned in 1st Thessalonians 4:16-17?

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. - 1st Thessalonians 4:16-17

Conclusion

There has never been another time in history when these events could take place exactly as written. Today (I am not setting dates) there is nothing that restrains the antichrist, and shortly thereafter the two witness, from coming at any time.

This study is given in hopes that when the two witnesses appear you be able to recognize them.

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: - Malachi 4:4-5

In the beginning of Israel's history, it was Moses' plagues. Years later God punished the wicked through Elijah. This time it will be both of them together. When they come, will you recognize the two witnesses?

Written by [Jeff Barnes](#)

I have spoken with certainty in this study since I strongly believe this is how the end will turn out. However I do not claim to be a prophet and recently another teacher strongly believed the Day of Judgment was on May 21,2011. He was wrong, and being willing to learn from his mistakes, my studies are subject to correction. May God bless you as you study the end time events for yourself.

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. - Revelation 1:3

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More studies are available at www.the-Gospel.org
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