

THE TWO WITNESSES IN REVELATION 11

Floyd Nolen Jones, Th.D., Ph.D.

Excerpt from Apples of Gold

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” Proverbs 25:11

All objections to the contrary, the identity of Christ’s two witnesses in Revelation chapter eleven is both certain and straightforward. God did not give scripture to conceal but to reveal. They are Moses and Elijah.

This may be seen in that God will give them power to call down fire on any who would harm them as well as the ability to cause it not to rain for 1260 days (Rev. 11:5–6). Now 1260 days is the same as 42 months or 3½ years – the length of the original 360 day year.¹ These are the same abilities God gave to Elijah.² Even the span of the lack he caused was also 3½ years.³ God will also grant them authority to turn water into blood and to “smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.” These were the same acts performed by Moses.⁴

Now some would have them be Elijah and Enoch because both were taken up to heaven and did not see death. These brothers believe these two must therefore return and die in order to fulfill “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). However, this fails to consider the fact that there are a number of places in scripture where God makes a statement and then gives an exception clause elsewhere. By so doing, they overlook that an *entire generation* of Christians will be caught up to meet Christ Jesus in the air and not experience the sting of death.⁵

Enoch and Elijah are the Old Testament examples of such an experience – of God’s exception clause. He had these experiences recorded to help New Testament saints both believe and understand His promise that a generation would not see death but instead be raptured. Furthermore, there is no record that Enoch brought about *any* miracles, much less those mentioned above. Indeed, it completely overlooks that God translated (raptured) Enoch for the very purpose “that he should not see death”,⁶ yet they would have him so do. Enoch is not one of the two witnesses.

Moreover, the Transfiguration gives a strong indication that the two here in Revelation eleven are Moses and Elijah (Mat. 17:1–13). In that vision, the glorified, shining Moses is seen as representative of the redeemed that died prior to entering the Kingdom, whereas glorified Elijah is representative of those who were translated into the Kingdom.

Peter, James and John asked our Lord why the scribes taught that Elijah must come before the Kingdom. Christ confirmed Malachi 4:5–6 to them. Elijah would come first and restore all things (Mat. 17:11–12). Jesus further indicated that John the Baptist’s mission,⁷ who had

¹ Genesis 7:11, cp. 8:4: these give the length of the Flood as exactly 5 months, which Gen. 7:24 says to have been 150 days: 150 divided by 5 gives 30 days to the month before the Noachian Flood ended.

² 1 Ki. 17:1: cp. 1 Ki. 18:1; 2 Ki. 1:10 and 1:12.

³ Luk. 4:25; Jam. 5:17.

⁴ Exo. 7:20–12:30.

⁵ At the rapture, 1 Thes. 4:16–17.

⁶ Heb.11:5.

⁷ John the Baptist was already dead at this time, Mat. 14:1–12.

THE TWO WITNESSES IN REVELATION 11

Floyd Nolen Jones, Th.D., Ph.D.

Excerpt from Apples of Gold

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” Proverbs 25:11

come “in the spirit and power” of Elijah’s future end-time ministry, had been a partial fulfillment of that promise during His first Advent (Luk. 1:17).

Now surely the fact that Malachi brings the Old Testament to a close by speaking of Moses and promising to send Elijah *before* the day of the LORD⁸ cannot be without major significance. Here, Moses clearly represents the Law and Elijah the prophets. Appearing as they do at such a prominent place in scripture does not prove that they are the two witnesses of Revelation eleven, but it certainly strongly infers such an identification – and we take it as so meaning.

But regardless of the identity of the two witnesses, if properly interpreted Revelation eleven will enable us to resolve a far more important eschatological problem. Scripture is clear that to establish truth, at least two witnesses are required.⁹ Indeed, this is why there are two such men given in Revelation eleven. And herein lays a major problem with almost all conservative, Bible believing teaching on the Tribulation period.

Its seven year length and the placing of the abomination of desolation¹⁰ at the mid-point of that time span are determined from Daniel 9:27. Even though we agree with this, the problem has been that it is the only passage that nearly everyone has ever offered as proof for these two major issues. Such works have not met the biblical demand for proof – they have given but one witness.¹¹

The seventieth week of seven years gleaned from Daniel 9:27 is divided into two periods of 3½ years by that part of the verse that reads: “and in the midst of the week” (week in Hebrew = xbv, which transliterates shabua and translates into English as “sevens” or “seven”). The question before us is: can the seven years as well as both halves of the week be confirmed elsewhere? The key to answering these is Revelation 11:2–3.

2 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.

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

Since the 42 months of verse two comprise a 3½ year span during which the Gentiles shall “tread under foot” Jerusalem, such must refer to the last half of Daniel’s “seventieth week (called the Great Tribulation),” because in the first half the Jews possess the Holy City and

⁸ Malachi 4:4–6. Note that if Elijah is actually one of the two witnesses in Revelation 11 and as Malachi 4:5 says he will come *before* the day of the LORD, the day of the LORD cannot be placed at *the beginning* of the Tribulation period as many would have it. Besides, to so place causes the Kingdom to be 1007 years long rather than 1000 as Revelation 20 declares some six times.

⁹ Deu. 19:15; Mat. 18:16; John 8:17.

¹⁰ Also see Mat. 24:15.

¹¹ Having never found or read where any other verse or verses were offered to substantiate the classic conservative interpretation of Daniel 9:27, the present author thought the resolution above, which came to his attention in 2010, was his personal insight – a first. However, in 2013 it was discovered that Dr. Alva J. McClain, for 25 years president of Grace Theological Seminary, had come to the same conclusion in his *Daniel’s Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks* publication (Zondervan) back in 1940 (pp. 48–49). Alas! Solomon was right: “there is no new thing under the sun” (Eccl. 1:9 etc.).

THE TWO WITNESSES IN REVELATION 11

Floyd Nolen Jones, Th.D., Ph.D.

Excerpt from Apples of Gold

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” Proverbs 25:11

worship at the Temple.¹² This may also be seen in that it is at the *middle* of the seventieth week that the Roman prince causes the Jewish sacrifices to cease whereupon he then becomes their persecutor (Dan. 9:27).

Whereas at first glance Revelation 11:3–13 appears to take place during the last half of the Tribulation because verse 14 apparently connects them to the time of the second “woe.” Now the second woe is the same as the sixth trumpet, and it transpires in the last half or toward the end of the Great Tribulation.¹³

However, Revelation 11:3–13 has to be a parenthetical insertion and cannot connect in time to 11:14 because the 1260 days of verse 3 refer to the first half of the seventieth week. This is demanded due to the fact that the two witnesses cannot be slain until the Roman beast (the antichrist) comes to the height of his power at which time it is “given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them” (Rev. 11:7, 13:7; Dan. 7:21). Indeed, the events recorded in Revelation 13 cannot transpire as long as the two heroes are alive. The two must be removed before it can be said that no one can make war with the Beast and win (Rev. 13:4 and vs. 7).

Furthermore, opening the third seal causes a great famine that brings about severe hunger during the time of the fourth seal (Rev. 6:5–8). Unquestionably it is one of the two witnesses (Elijah) causing it not to rain over the 1260 days or 3½ years of his prophecy that brings about the drought which results in the famine. The point is that all place the third seal as taking place during the first half of the seventieth week, and this supports as well as confirms our conclusion that the two minister in that half of the Tribulation.

The first half of the seventieth week is the time of relative peace during which the Roman prince’s power is growing (but is himself a Jew), and the two witnesses are testifying at the Temple area in Jerusalem. The second half is the period of the Beast’s total dominion over the world along with his terrible persecution of Israel and the great judgments of God against an unrepentant world.

At the exact mid-point of the seventieth week, the antichrist comes to the temple, proclaims himself god, and has his image placed in the temple area (2 Thes. 2:3–4; Rev. 13:14–15). This is that which scripture refers to as, “the abomination of desolation” (Mat. 24:15; Dan. 9:27). It is at this occasion that the Beast slays the two witnesses.¹⁴ With the two dead and no longer able to protect the nation, the Beast breaks his seven year treaty with Israel (the “covenant of Daniel 9:27) and launches a dreadful 3½ year long period of anti-Semitic persecution.

Thus, verse two of Revelation 11 gives 42 months or 3½ years as the duration of the last half of the Tribulation and verses 3–13, which we have shown to take place in the first half, is a

¹² Mat. 24:15–21.

¹³ Rev. 8:13, cp. 9:1 where the 5th trumpet is the first woe and woe 2 (the 6th trumpet) begins at 9:13 & ends at 11:14.

¹⁴ Immediately after this, the Beast will receive a near mortal wound to the head from a sword (Rev. 13:3, 12 & 14). The injury is so severe that it will leave him blind in his right eye and also without the use of one arm (Zec. 11:17). Indeed, his recovery will appear miraculous – a counterfeit resurrection. His false prophet will undoubtedly use this as proof that he is the true “Messiah” and thereby deserves worship.

THE TWO WITNESSES IN REVELATION 11

Floyd Nolen Jones, Th.D., Ph.D.

Excerpt from Apples of Gold

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” Proverbs 25:11

span of 1260 days or 3½ years. As the two periods of 3½ years sum to seven years, we have confirmed the Daniel 9:27 passage and in so doing resolved the question set before us: can the seven years as well as both halves of the week be confirmed elsewhere? Do we have the required second proof? By taking into account the whole counsel of the Word of God with respect to Revelation 11:2–3, the answer is yes. Selah.