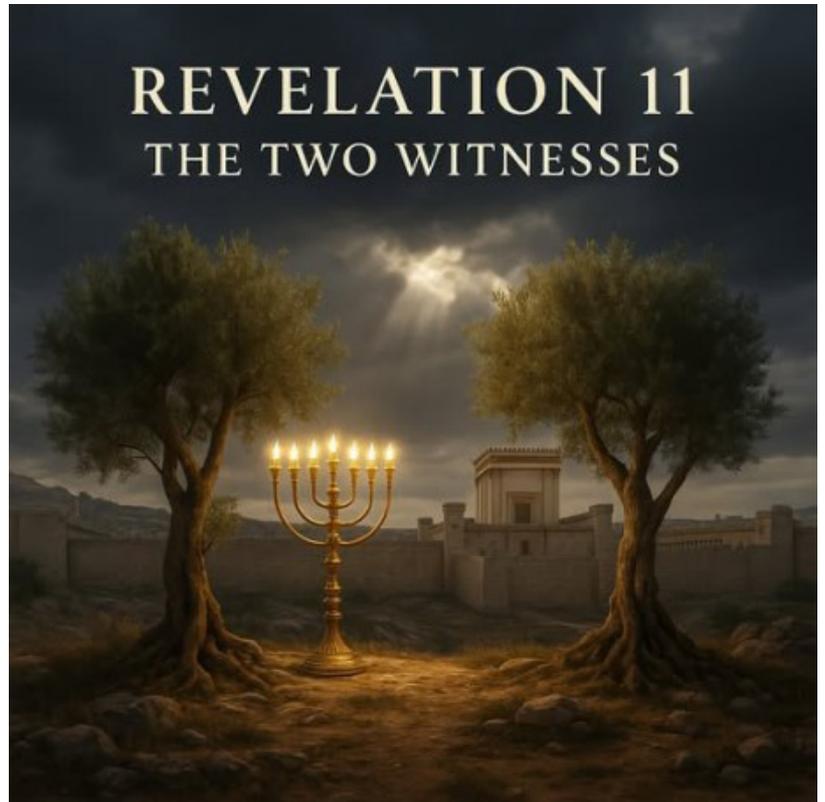


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Revelation 11 - The Two Witnesses



By Dan Maines

Revelation 11 - The Two Witnesses

Revelation 11:3-4

And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

† They are the first century covenant church, the royal priesthood in Christ, Jew and Gentile together, bearing witness against Jerusalem in its last days.

† Two lampstands points to churches, Revelation 1:20, so this is corporate, not two future individuals.

† Two olive trees recalls Zechariah 4, priest and king, now fulfilled in the church as a kingdom of priests, Revelation 1:6, 5:10, 1 Peter 2:9.

† The number two answers the law of witness, Deuteronomy 19:15,

confirmed by Jesus, Matthew 18:16.

† Explanation in plain terms

† In fulfilled theology, the two witnesses are not two future prophets (like Enoch and Elijah or Moses and Elijah, as futurists often claim).

Revelation itself tells us who they are.

† Olive trees = priest and king roles from Zechariah 4.

† Lampstands = churches, Revelation 1:20.

† Two witnesses = covenantal requirement for testimony, Deuteronomy 19:15.

† Put together, that means they are the first-century church, Jew and Gentile believers together in Christ, a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9).

† They wore sackcloth because they were warning Jerusalem like prophets. Their ministry looked like Moses and Elijah, plagues, drought, fire, but that is symbolic, not literal. Their "death" represents persecution and the attempt to silence the church's testimony. Their "resurrection" is their vindication when Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70, proving their message was true and that Christ had come in judgment just as He promised.

† So the two witnesses = the covenant community of the church in the first century, bearing faithful testimony against Jerusalem before its destruction.

† Olive trees in Zechariah 4:3, 11-14 stand for the priest and the king, Joshua and Zerubbabel, who were empowered by the Spirit to lead God's people. In Christ, those roles are combined and extended to the church, which is made a kingdom and priests, Revelation 1:6, 5:10.

† Lampstands in Revelation 1:20 are not individuals but churches. John already explained this at the beginning of the book. When Revelation 11 calls the witnesses lampstands, it is showing they are a corporate body of believers, not just two men.

† Two witnesses in Deuteronomy 19:15 and Matthew 18:16 reflect the covenant law that nothing is established without the testimony of two or three witnesses. The number is not random, it is covenantal language that says the church's witness was legally valid before God.

† When you put these together, it becomes clear that the witnesses are not two special end-time prophets. They are the first-century church itself, Jew and Gentile joined into one body in Christ, called a royal priesthood, 1 Peter 2:9. Their role was to testify against Jerusalem before its destruction in AD 70.

Revelation 11:2-3

They will tread underfoot the holy city for forty-two months. And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.

† Forty-two months equals 1260 days, three and a half years, the tribulation span of the Jewish War leading to AD 70.

† Their sackcloth shows covenant warning and mourning to Israel before the end of the Old Covenant order.

Luke 21:20-22

But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are inside the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city, because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which have been written will be fulfilled.

† Jesus fixed the timing, the fulfillment would occur when Jerusalem was surrounded by armies in that generation.

Revelation 11:5-6

And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies, so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

† Moses and Elijah motifs, drought and blood, show the church speaking with prophetic authority, Jeremiah 5:14, 1 Kings 17, Exodus 7, not that Moses and Elijah literally return.

† The church bears the Law and the Prophets fulfilled in Christ, Luke 24:44, testifying to Israel before the judgment.

Revelation 11:7-9

When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.

† The great city is Jerusalem, where the Lord was crucified.

† The beast's assault pictures the attempt to silence the church's witness

by Jewish and Roman power before AD 70.

† Jerusalem is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt for its covenant corruption.

Revelation 11:11

But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell upon those who were watching them.

† God vindicated His people, the testimony revived, the gospel could not be crushed.

† AD 70 confirmed Christ's coming in judgment and His witnesses' victory.

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

† Royal priesthood language ties the church to Zechariah's priest king pattern, matching the two olive trees identity.

† Conclusion, the two witnesses are the corporate, royal priestly church of the first century, testifying in the spirit and power of Moses and Elijah, establishing covenant lawsuit against Jerusalem, and vindicated in AD 70.

† The two witnesses are not the Old and New Testament. The text identifies them as olive trees and lampstands, not books. Scripture is living and active (Hebrews 4:12), but Revelation 11 speaks of a people prophesying in sackcloth, being killed, and vindicated. That cannot apply to scrolls.

† The two witnesses are not Jesus Himself. Revelation distinguishes the witnesses from the Lord of the earth whom they stand before, Revelation 11:4. Jesus is the Judge and King, not one of the two witnesses.

† The two witnesses are not the Father. The Father never takes the role of a prophetic witness clothed in sackcloth, nor does He suffer persecution or death at the hands of Jerusalem and Rome.

† The two witnesses are not Jesus ben Ananias, the prophet Josephus records who warned Jerusalem before its fall (Wars 6.5.3). He was one

man, not two, and he is not called an olive tree or lampstand. His warnings confirm the church's testimony, but he does not fulfill Revelation 11.

† Revelation itself defines the two witnesses: they are the covenant community of the church in the first century, Jew and Gentile together, a royal priesthood testifying against Jerusalem before its destruction.

† **This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies**
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Source Index

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