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Studies in the Revelation, BIB 755
Assignment #5
February 25, 2005

The Two Witnesses

The two witnesses are introduced in verses 3 through 6 in the 11th chapter. We are told that their ministry would be for the space of 1,260 days which equals 3 ½ years. That means that their ministry will be for the first half of the 7 year Tribulation period. It will end at mid-point of the Tribulation or at the time that the Antichrist breaks his seven year covenant with the Nation of Israel which will happen at the same time.

According to verse 4 are the fulfillment of Zechariah 4:11-14 where it says, *"Then I answered and said to him, "What are these two olive trees -- at the right of the lampstand and at its left?" And I further answered and said to him, "What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?" Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." So he said, "These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth."* Dr. C.I. Scofield, in Reference Bible notes says that these two olive trees spoken of here in Zechariah are Joshua and Zerubbabel, "whose witness in that day is the prototype of the two witnesses" during the Tribulation.

Now the question begs to be asked, "Who are these two witnesses?" The answer has been the source of much speculation for many years. Most agree that it is men in the Bible who never tasted death upon this earth. Those men are Moses, Elijah, and Enoch. I personally, as do most, believe that they are Moses and Elijah.

Why Moses? He seems to be the one that everyone agrees upon the most. The

answer lies in the text of Revelation 11:6b where it describes one of the witnesses as having the ability to turn water into blood and *“to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as he will.”* Anyone who knows anything about the life of Moses will quickly identify these miracles with his ministry during the children of Israel’s exodus from Egypt.

Moses was told by God in Exodus 7:3, *“And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt.”* One of those signs was the turning of the water into blood spoken of in Exodus 4:9 where it says, *“And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour it on the dry land. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land.”*

The second witness is where the disagreement comes in between many. However, if we go by the rule of hermeneutics that were used in the case of Moses, we must go with Elijah as that Enoch never did any miracles at all during his earthly sojourn and Elijah did both miracles that are mentioned in verse 5 and 6a.

The first miracle was performed by Elijah in 2 Kings 1 when King Ahaziah, king of Samaria fell through his lattice and was injured and sent men to inquire Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, if he would recover from his injuries. At that same time, the Angel of the Lord revealed to Elijah what King Ahaziah was doing and told him to go out and meet the messengers of the king and ask them if the God of Israel was no longer there and that the king would not recover because of his idolatry.

After returning to the king and recounting the story, the king sent a captain and his fifty men to go back to Elijah and demand that he come to the king at once. They did so and Elijah called fire down from heaven and destroyed the captain and his fifty men. This happened a few times before the third captain begged for mercy and pleaded that Elijah come to the king; which he did.

The next miracle mentioned is the shutting of heaven to rain throughout the days of the ministry of the two witnesses. Elijah performed this miracle as well in 1 Kings 17 when he proclaimed a drought to King Ahab. It says in 1 Kings 17:2, *"And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word."*

There are also some verses in the Bible that clearly identify Elijah as one of the witnesses as well. Jesus, when speaking to the people of John the Baptist referred to a prophesy found in Malachi 4:5-6 which says, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. 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."

He went on to say in Matthew 11:13-14, *"For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come."* He also identified Elijah in Matthew 17:11-12 when he said, *"Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. 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."*