

Celebrating 50 years of Proclaiming Christ
BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH

The Worshipers Are His Witnesses

Revelation 11



³ And I will give *power* unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. ⁴ These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. ⁵ 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. ⁶ 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. ⁷ 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. ⁸ 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.



⁹ And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ And after three days and an 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. ¹² 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. ¹³ And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. ¹⁴ The second woe is past; *and*, behold, the third woe cometh quick



Let's be clear: I may be wrong.

The 42 months referenced in this chapter may literally be 1260 days just before the return of Christ.

And the two witnesses could be just two individuals who preach and breathe fire out of their mouths.

But this also all may be symbolic.



Ask and answer this question:

Would I describe the majority of the language in Revelation as:

- A. Symbolic/figurative.**
- B. Literal or without metaphoric associations.**
- C. A balance of both evenly.**
- D. None of the above.**



Last week we saw how John was called to measure the temple of God but not the outer court and I suggested that the temple represented the true churches of Jesus Christ whose lampstands have not been removed.

While the outer court represents the aspects of Christianity that may profess to be part of the temple but in reality are given over to the Gentiles or the nations.

The way you interpret the temple, altar and worshipers impacts the rest of the chap.



Revelation 11:3



- And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.”

Many suggest the two witnesses are Moses and Elijah come back from the grave to testify for God during the final 1260 days of life on the planet before Christ returns. Some suggest Enoch.



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**Nothing in the text
suggests anyone is
being sent from heaven
to the earth—nothing.**



I am going to argue that God is not sending two humans who are in his presence back to the earth to be witnesses but instead is calling us to be His witnesses like Moses and Elijah. In fact isn't that the job of the church.

If I am wrong it will be obvious to you and you will again be able to say Pastor Sean was wrong.



Before I continue on the direction that God is not sending Elijah and Moses.

I want to remind you that the Jews thought God was sending Elijah back to be the forerunner of the Messiah.

But Jesus clarified that false understanding in Matthew 11.

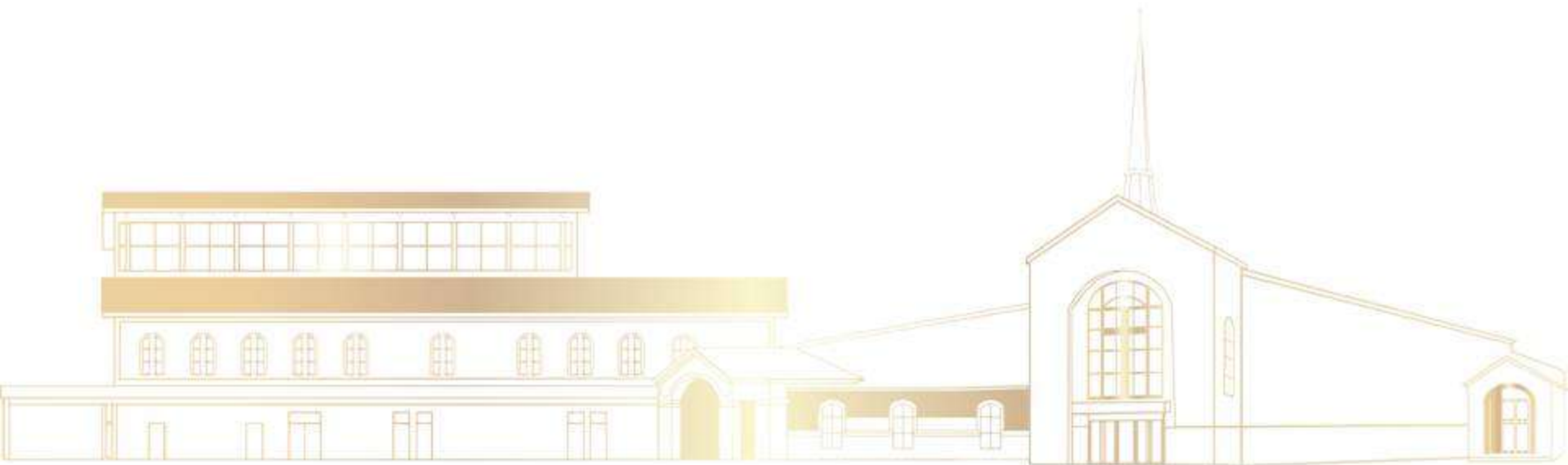
John the Baptist was the Elijah to come.

And I am suggesting that the church of Jesus Christ is the two witnesses of Revelation 11.



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The NT Fact is We are His Witnesses



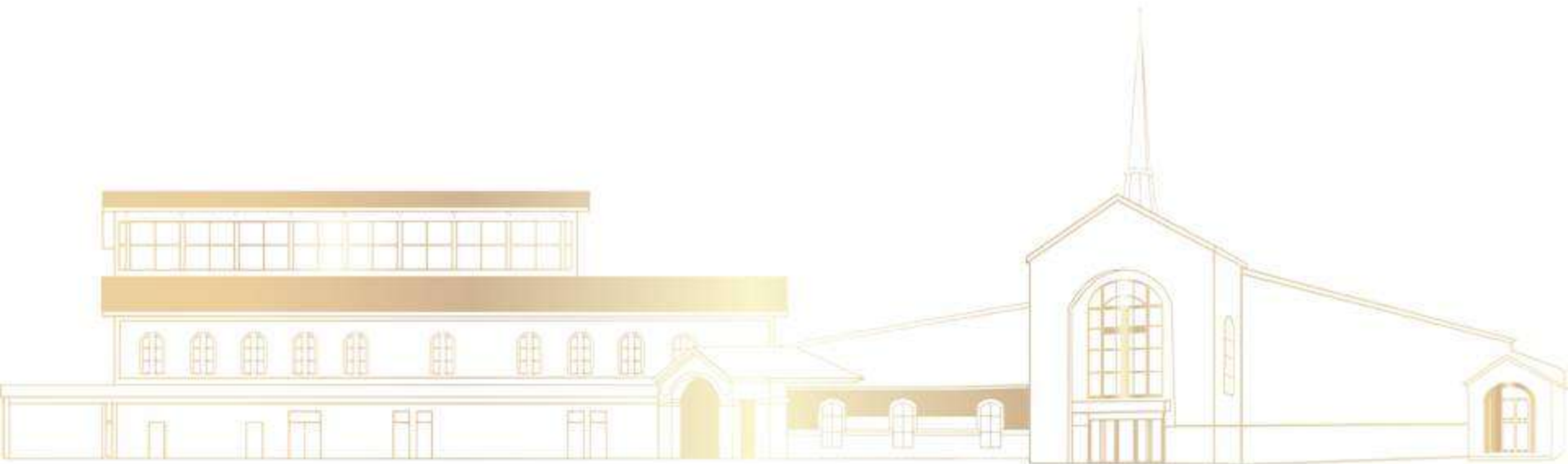
Acts 1:8

- But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and **you will be my witnesses** in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”



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Why just two witnesses?



Deuteronomy 17:6

- **At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; *but* at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.**



Mark 6:7

- And he called the twelve and began **to send them out two by two**, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.

**Jesus sent witnesses out
two by two.**



Revelation 11:3



- And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.”

1260 days is the same period of time as the 42 months.

During the same incomplete period of time that the beast makes war on the saints God's witnesses prophesy concerning judgment and salvation.



Again if I am wrong and Moses and Elijah show up on the streets of Jerusalem smoking the enemies of God with fire then it will be obvious to you and you can begin counting down the days to the return of Christ.



Revelation 11:4



- These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

Olive trees provided oil which seems to be a symbolic representation of the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the two witnesses which are really not two but representatives of all Spirit empowered witnesses.



Acts 1:8

- But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”



Revelation 11:4



- These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

Lampstands provide light.

Matthew 5:14–15 (ESV)

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.



**Both the olive tree and
lampstand symbolism is
drawn from Zechariah.**

**Read Zechariah 3 & 4 to
make the connection.**



Revelation 2:5



- Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

The correlation between the two witnesses being lampstands and the church having a lampstand that can be removed gives me greater confidence that the two witnesses are representatives of the true church with its prophetic ministry.



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Look @

v. 10



Revelation 11:10



- and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because **these two prophets**

**Prophets are not
exclusively an OT
idea.**

**The NT church had
prophets.**



Prophets in the Church

Acts 13:1	Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers
Acts 15:32	And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets
Acts 21:10	a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.
1 Cor. 12:28	And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets,
1 Cor. 14:29	Let two or three prophets speak
Eph. 4:11	And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,
2 Peter 1:19	And we have the prophetic word

Revelation 11:8

The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and **for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints**, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.”

Revelation 16:6

For they have shed the blood of **saints and prophets**, and you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!”

Revelation 18:20

Rejoice over her, O heaven, **and you saints and apostles and prophets**, for God has given judgment for you against her!”

Revelation 18:24

And in her was found the blood of **prophets and of saints**, and of all who have been slain on earth.”



The Ministry of the Worshipers

11:3	Two witnesses	Testify of God's Work of Salvation through Christ
11:4	Two olive trees	Are empowered by the Holy Spirit
11:4	Two lampstands	Bear witness about Christ the Light of the World
11:10	Two prophets	Proclaim God's Word including impending judgment of sin

With the full and complete revelation of God in our hands—the Bible—each and everyone of us are called to be prophets to a lost and dying world.

We speak for God.

We are His prophets.

Turn to

Revelation 22:9



Revelation 22:9



- but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

James 5:10

- As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, **take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.**



Prophet Defined

- 1: one who utters divinely inspired revelations;
specifically often capitalized: the writer of one of the prophetic books of the Old Testament
- 2: one gifted with more than ordinary spiritual and moral insight; *especially: an inspired poet*
- 3: one who foretells future events: predictor
- 4: an effective or leading spokesman for a cause, doctrine, or group

Merriam-Webster

**None of those definitions
work for us!**



**Baptists are super uncomfortable
with calling Christians prophets.**

But the NT isn't.

**Prophets are men and women who
speak for God.**

**But you say I could never
speak for God...**



Modern Day Prophet



The world desires to silence the church.

Will we be silenced?

Will fear of reprisal shut down the prophetic voice of the church?

Hasn't it already?



Revelation 11:5



- And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes.
- If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed.

**Is this literal fire
spewing forth
from their
mouths?**



Matthew 3:11

- “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit **and fire.**



**What does fire
represent in
Matthew 3?**



Luke 9:54–55

- ⁵⁴ And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “**Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?**” ⁵⁵ But he turned and rebuked them.



Jeremiah 5:14

- Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, **I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.**



**Fire came out of the
mouths of both John the
Baptist and Jesus with
their prophetic ministry
like Elijah and Moses.**



Matthew 3:12

- His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, **but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”**



Matthew 18:8–9

- And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. ⁹ And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes **to be thrown into the hell of fire.**



Revelation 11:6



- They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may 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 kind of plague, as often as they desire.

**Should vs. 6 be
interpreted through the
lens of figurative or lens
language?**



Is v. 6 specific to two individuals or is this the power the church has through the power of prayer?

Is this verse introducing a whole new level of judgment in additions to the seals, trumpets, thunders, and bowls ?

Or is v. 6 God's answer to "thy kingdom come they will be done..."



Revelation 11:7



- And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them,

The witnesses are not dying prematurely.

The Greek Word behind 'have finished' is teléō.

Christ used this same word when he said it is finished on the cross.

The point is the beast is not permitted to make war on the saints until their mission is complete.



Revelation 11:7



- And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them,

Revelation 13:5–7



- And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. ⁶ It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation,

The two witnesses are clearly not individuals but a mighty host, for the beast will not simply kill them; he will ‘make war’ (poiēsei polemon) with them (cf. Dan. 7:21).

Leon Morris, vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries



Revelation 11:8



- and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.

At this point, John seems to go out of his way to remind the reader this is symbolical.

Egypt is not a city and Sodom was destroyed and then he speaks about the place where Christ was crucified. These are three different locations.

Perhaps this isn't any city in particular but a representation of the **city of man.**



Revelation 11:9



- For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb,

Leaving a dead body on the streets is not literal. Instead, it is the most graphic thing the author can write to describe the disdain the world has for those who proclaim judgment upon the world for sin.

Paul described these people in Romans 1.

Romans 1:18–32



¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. ²¹ For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. ²⁴ Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,



²⁵ because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. ²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; ²⁷ and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. ²⁸ And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹ foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. ³² Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.



Revelation 11:10



- and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.

The enemies of God celebrate the defeat of the prophetic voice of the church.

This may be hard for us to imagine in Fayetteville, NC but what New Orleans or San Francisco or Seattle.

And aren't there other cities where the prophetic word is already silent.



Revelation 11:11



- But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.

V. 11 is a beautiful picture of the reaction of the world when they realize the resurrection of the dead is real.

The two witnesses represent all true believers who will be resurrected when the final trump sounds and the dead in Christ rise first.



Revelation 11:12



- Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here!” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them.

Come Up Here

At the 7th trumpet the dead in Christ rise first and the elect of God are raptured to meet in the Lord Jesus in the air and so shall we forever be with our Lord.

1 Thess. 4:16-17

