

Genuine Jehovah Witnesses!

Revelation 11:1-6; 7:1-8; 14:1-5

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- **God is never without a witness! Every man has the universal witness of creation.**
 - Psalm 19:1-3-- *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard."*
 - Romans 1:18-20-- *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse."*
- **The truth of the gospel is special revelation which cannot be ascertained by looking at nature.**
 - We need to know and understand some truths concerning Jesus in order to be saved.
 - Romans 10:9-- *"confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead"*
 - Romans 10:10, 12-13-- *"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him, for whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."*
 - But to understand the gospel, we need another human being to explain it.
 - Romans 10:14-15, 17-- *"How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?...For faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*
- **During the Tribulation, a multitude of people will come to faith in Christ.**
 - Revelation 7:9-10-- *"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'"*
 - Revelation 7:14-- *"These are the ones who came out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."*
- **Before the "great and awesome day of the Lord", there will be an outpouring of the Spirit of God**
 - Joel 2:28-32-- *"And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on my menservants and maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood, fire, pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls."*
 - This prophecy was partially fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, but no geophysical or astronomical changes occurred.
 - The prophecy will be fully fulfilled in the days prior to God pouring out His wrath upon the world during the second half of the tribulation period.

Genuine Jehovah Witnesses

A. The Two Witnesses

- Revelation 11:1-6-- *“Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, ‘Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they shall tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months. And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.’ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.”*

1. Textual Clues as to Their Identity.

- a. **The two witnesses are the “two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.”**

- 1) Imagery is from Zechariah 4.

- Zechariah 4:1-7-- *“Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. And he said to me, ‘What do you see?’ So I said, ‘I am looking and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. Two olive trees are by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other at its left.’ So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, ‘What are these, my lord?’... So he answered and said to me: ‘This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And He shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of “Grace, grace to it!””*
- Zechariah 4:11-12-- *“two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?... and What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains”*
- Zechariah 4:14-- *“These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.”*

- 2) The vision has both a near and far fulfillment.

- a) The near fulfillment relates to Zerubbabel, the Governor, and Joshua, the High Priest, rebuilding the second temple after the Babylonian captivity.
- b) The far fulfillment are to two witnesses in Revelation 11, who will have some connection to the temple during the tribulation, and will minister to the nation of Israel.

- b. **The two witnesses will be empowered by God.** Revelation 11:3-- *“I will give power to my two witnesses.”*

- c. **They will minister for 1,260 days or 3 ½ prophetic years.** Their ministry will begin prior to the middle of the tribulation and will end prior to the end of the tribulation.

- 1) Their death occurs before the seventh Trumpet Judgment sounds

- Revelation 11:14-15-- *“The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly. Then the seventh angel sounded: And there was loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.’”*

- 2) The Seventh Trumpet unleashes the last seven Bowl Judgments that will be rapidly poured out at the end of the Tribulation before the return of Jesus Christ.

- d. **They will be clothed in sackcloth, a sign of mourning for sin and of impending judgment.**

- e. **These two witnesses will be invincible until their God-given mission is complete.**

- Revelation 11:5-- *“If anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devour their enemies. If anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.”*

- f. **The two will possess supernatural power to perform miracles.**
- Revelation 11:6-- *"have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all the plagues, as often as they desire."*
- g. **Their mission will be twofold:**
- 1) "Prophecy" — Revelation 11:3 Preaching and warning people of impending judgment
 - 2) "Testify" — Sharing the gospel
 - Revelation 11:7-- *"When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them."*

2. Specific Speculation as to Their Identity

a. Most agree that ELIJAH will be one of the two.

- 1) God promised to send Elijah before the *"great and dreadful day of the Lord."*
 - Malachi 4:5-6-- *"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."*
- 2) Some of the miracles the two perform fit Elijah's profile.
 - a) Withholding of rain at his command.
 - 1 Kings 17:1-- *"As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word."*
 - James 5:17-- *"it did not rain on the land for three years and six months."*
 - b) Fire protection from God
 - 2 Kings 1:10-- *"Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, 'If I am a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men.' And fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty."*

b. Two Major Candidates for the other witness

1) Enoch

- a) He is one of two in the Old Testament that never died.
 - Genesis 5:24-- *"And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him."*
- b) Enoch had prophesied concerning impending judgment
 - Jude 14-15-- *"Behold, the LORD comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."*
- c) Problems:
 - (1) Enoch is a gentile prior to Abraham, and thus not identified with Israel
 - (2) Purpose of Enoch's translation was so that he would not experience death. Hebrews 11:5

2) Moses

- a) Both the Old Testament and Jewish tradition expected Moses and Elijah to return in the future.
 - Deuteronomy 18:15-- *"The LORD your God will raise up a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear."*
 - John 1:21-- *"And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the Prophet?' And he answered, 'No'"*

- b) Moses and Elijah were both present at the transfiguration of Christ.
- c) The miracles of the plagues are identical with those performed by Moses: Water of the Nile turned to blood (Exodus 7:17-21) and announcing the various plagues on Egypt (Exodus 7-12)
- d) A resurrected Moses as one of the witnesses may shed some light on Jude 9 as to why the devil disputed with the Michael over the body of Moses.
- e) Moses and Elijah together represent the entire Old Testament to the Jewish nation.
- f) Problem: Hebrews 9:27—*“As it is appointed unto men to die once, but after this the judgment.”*
 - (1) Moses died and was buried by God
 - (2) Not an iron-clad rule, but exceptions exist: Lazarus, Jarius’ daughter, Dorcas, Believers at the rapture of the church.

B. The 144,000 Sealed Witnesses.

- Revelation 7:1-8-- *“After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, ‘Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.’ And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed: of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed.”*
 - Revelation 14:1-5-- *“Then I looked and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father’s name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.”*
1. **They are Jewish in descent.**
 2. **They are “redeemed from the earth”**
 - a. Perhaps coming to Christ through the ministry of the Two Witnesses
 - b. They are sealed before the unleashing of God’s judgment, which means they came to Christ during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period.
 3. **They have the “seal of the living God” on them.**
 - a. Revelation 14:1 states that the seal or identifying mark is *“having the Father’s name written on their foreheads.”*
 - b. They will be ministering during the same time the Antichrist and false prophet will be forcing people to receive his mark, 666, on their foreheads or hands.
 4. **The “seal of the Living God” guarantees their protection from the wrath of God and from Satan during the tribulation.**

- Revelation 9:4-- *“they were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.”*
5. **The 144,000 are “servants of our God”.**
 - a. Their mission will be to evangelize the lost
 - b. They will serve the Lord without distractions.
 - Revelation 14:4-- *“the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins.”*
 - 1 Corinthians 7:29-- *“the time is short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none”*
 - 1 Corinthians 7:32-- *“I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord.”*
 - 1 Corinthians 7:35-- *“you may serve the LORD without distractions.”*
 - c. While the two witnesses appear to be confined to Jerusalem and Israel, the 144,000 will fan out throughout the world to share the gospel with everyone before God’s final outpouring of His wrath.

C. Genuine Jehovah Witnesses NOW: You and I

1. **We’ve been redeemed, sealed with the Holy Spirit, and are now Christ’s purchased possession.**
 - Ephesians 1:13-14-- *“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”*
 - 2 Timothy 2:19-- *“Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: The Lord knows those who are His, and Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”*
2. **As the servants of the Lord, we are...**
 - a. **To gently, humbly, patiently teach and instruct.**
 - 2 Timothy 2:24-26-- *“must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in the opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.”*
 - b. **To be ready to give a defense for what we believe**
 - 1 Peter 3:15-16-- *“Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear, having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.”*
 - c. **To be sharing the good news of reconciliation and redemption**
 - 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 -- *“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.”*
 - d. **To be His witnesses in our Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and then the world.**
 - Acts 1:8-- *“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*
 - e. **To go into all the world to preach the gospel**
 - Mark 16:15 -- *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”*