

## Chapter 21

### Somebody's Gotta Do It

Our timeline is still somewhere back in the middle of the Tribulation. We aren't done there yet. As you know, 144,000 young Jewish men have been spreading the Gospel among the world's populace (mostly the Jews) since the beginning of the Tribulation or even before that. We aren't told how long their ministry is to last, but we are informed in Revelation 7 that they will be sealed—protected from the Tribulation's lethality—before the nastiness starts; and later we'll see that all of them live through the entire time of Jacob's trouble. We have also seen that angelic preaching will be a factor in bringing the earth the story about what's really going on—'cause they sure won't be getting the truth on the six o'clock news.

But the highest-profile of Last Days witnesses are two people who prophesy right in the Antichrist's back yard for the whole second half of the Tribulation. John describes them like this: **“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.”** (Revelation 11:3-6)

In context, the speaker here doesn't seem to be Yahshua, though he certainly speaks with His authority. Rather, the “I” who gives power to “my” two witnesses is described as an angel, whom we first meet in the previous chapter: **“I [John] saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices.”** (Revelation 10:1-3) This still sounds like it might be a theophany (an appearance of Yahweh in human or angelic form, like Abram's visitor in Genesis 18—in other words, Yahshua). But I doubt that it is, for he is said to be **“coming down from heaven,”** something the Messiah will not do until the very end of the Tribulation; and in Revelation 10:6 he is heard *swearing by* Yahweh—something Yahshua does not normally do, because in fact, He *is* Yahweh.

The two witnesses, then, are empowered and protected (and, one might say, supervised) by an especially mighty angel—they are his assignment, his responsibility. Does this mean that they themselves could be angels? No, because

unlike the 144,000, these two will be slain when their ministry is completed. **“And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.”** (Revelation 11:8) Angels are immortal, spiritual beings—they do not have bodies that are susceptible to death like us mortals. Therefore we must conclude that these two are definitely men. This verse also pinpoints the place where they’ll be working: Jerusalem.

We next learn that their ministry will last for 1,260 days. There’s that number again, precisely half of the length of the Tribulation. (It is not directly specified when, within the seven-year span, their 1,260 days will fall. But for reasons I’ll explain in a later chapter, I believe they will prophesy from day 1,251 until day 2,511—nine days before the end—i.e., principally during the second half.) If this occurs in the year I think it will (which is a cat I’ll let out of the bag later) day number 1,251 will fall on Nisan 15. That’s significant, because it’s the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread—the day that’s symbolic of the removal of sin, symbolized by yeast, from the household of Israel. This remarkable happenstance is not something I seized upon in order to set the date, either, but rather something I discovered much later—a poetic confirmation.

The two men are clothed in sackcloth, a coarse fabric that indicates that they are in mourning. If I’m right about the timing, they’ll have good reason to mourn: they will begin prophesying precisely three weeks after the Antichrist **“sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that He is God,”** (II Thessalonians 2:4)—twenty one days after the Abomination of Desolation. By that time, virtually all of the believing Jews will have fled from Jerusalem, and the whole world will have been confronted with the devil’s own choice: receive the Mark of the Beast or embrace the headman’s axe.

John next informs us that **“these are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.”** I’ve got reservations about the translation of that last phrase, but before I address that, let’s deal with the source of the imagery. The prophet Zechariah saw a vision almost identical to this: **“And [the angel] 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 at 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 Yahweh to Zerubbabel: “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says Yahweh of hosts....’** The olive trees are the source of the oil, a metaphor for the Spirit of God. In context, Zerubbabel and Joshua, the civil ruler and the high priest during Zechariah’s time, were being told through the prophet that their task, the building of the second temple, would be accomplished not through their strength or skill, but through the power of the *Ruach Qodesh*, the Holy Spirit.

But as Zechariah pressed for more details, the angel revealed that there was to be a later fulfillment—the same two witnesses who would be spoken of by John, men who would also be anointed by God’s Spirit. **“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.’”** (Zechariah 4:2-4, 6, 11-14) Though Zechariah’s account is more detailed, the only significant difference in the two visions seems to be that John mentions two lampstands, while Zechariah speaks of only one. Upon reflection, this makes sense, because while Zerubbabel and Joshua were working as one toward the goal of Israel’s restoration, John’s two witnesses, by contrast, represent two different channels through which the Holy Spirit has done his work throughout the ages. But hold that admittedly enigmatic thought for a moment while I endeavor to point out a potentially important concept that our English translations uniformly miss.

We see parallel phrases in Revelation and Zechariah that explain the function or position of the two witnesses. John describes them as **“standing before the God of the earth.”** Zack says the two anointed ones **“stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.”** Through their use of capitalizations (which aren’t there in the original languages), the translators have implied that the two witness are standing before or beside Yahweh. While this is undoubtedly true in a metaphorical sense, considering their power and authority come directly from the Almighty, it may not be what these passages actually mean to say.

Because of the most common and most damaging systematic mistranslation in the Bible, we have become accustomed to seeing “the LORD” and mentally saying, *Oh, it means God*. But the word usually translated “the LORD” doesn’t mean “God” or “deity”; it doesn’t even mean “lord.” It’s a *name*—the personal name of the Supreme Deity—*YHWH*, transliterated Yahweh, Yahuweh, Yahveh, or Jehovah. It’s never proper to translate a proper name as if it were a word (YHWH means “I am”), yet we in our ignorance have done something even worse 7,000 times in our English Bibles. We have *substituted* it with a word with an entirely different meaning—6,868 times rendering Yahweh as “the LORD” and another 132 times substituting *adonay* (which means “lord”) for Yahweh in the actual Hebrew text. That’s something like going through all of our American history textbooks, taking out “Abraham Lincoln” and inserting the phrase “the Sixteenth President,” or worse, “The Commander in Chief of the Union Army.”

What word did Zechariah use? It wasn’t YHWH; it was *’adon*, from an unused Hebrew root meaning to rule. It is defined: sovereign, i.e., controller (human or divine): lord, master, owner. If Zack had meant to convey “God,” he

surely could have found a better word to use (e.g. *el* or *elohim*). If he had meant “Yahweh,” my guess is that he would have *said* YHWH.

The story is pretty much the same in the Greek of the Revelation. There the word is *theos*, which can mean either God or god, that is, either the supreme Divinity or something that someone considers a substitute for Him. (Figuratively, even a magistrate can be called *theos*.) The word is used of false gods as well as the Real One; it’s even used of Satan: “...**The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not...**” (II Corinthians 4:4, KJV)

Now ask yourself this: when the two witnesses appear at about the middle of the Tribulation, who is “lord of the whole earth?” Who is the god of this world, the sovereign, the controller? In the ultimate sense, it’s Yahweh, of course. But at the moment, He has given man what he wanted—for the first time in six thousand years God has purposely taken his hands off the wheel. Satan is steering now—through his ventriloquist’s dummy, the Antichrist, and his false prophet. This trinity of terror, for the moment, is the “god of the earth.” Granted, this is a recent and temporary development: the situation only became “official” on day 1,230 of the Tribulation. The two witnesses are “prophesying” right in the face of the Antichrist, at the height of his power. They’re like mosquitoes at his picnic: he’d love to brush them away but they just keep buzzing around his head, making his life miserable, constantly reminding him that there really is a God and he ain’t It.

So why doesn’t the Antichrist simply have them picked up and executed? After all, it’s not like these two have taken the Mark or anything: they’re clearly outlaws, and he’d have no qualms about setting an example by killing them. The answer is something of an embarrassment for the world leader: *he can’t*. It isn’t for lack of effort, you understand, but every time he sends his goon squad out to get them, they come back in body bags, burnt to cinders. John explains: “**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.**” (Revelation 11:5) It can be logically assumed that neither the Antichrist nor the false prophet will personally confront them (yet), because we find *them* still alive and causing trouble at the very end of the Tribulation. I can see hints of angelic protection into their time of ministry as well—the “mighty angel” from Revelation 10 and 11 protecting them while they sleep, shielding them from long-distance weapons, accidents, the common cold, etc. Or there may be another, more provocative explanation, something I’ll explain shortly.

What is the “**fire [that] proceeds from their mouth?**” I’ve heard of bad breath, but this is ridiculous. My guess is that this is simply a metaphor for their verbal commands—lethal commands that their angel carries out. If you’re thinking that this seems a little harsh—administering the death penalty before the attackers have been found guilty in a fair trial before a judge and jury, remember the

Mosaic Law: **“Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall put away the evil from among you.”** (Deuteronomy 17:6-7)

Two witnesses, and the angel makes three. Note that the whole point of them being there is to **“put away the evil from among”** the people.

What do these two witnesses do that makes people want to kill them? I get the feeling, though it isn't explicitly stated in the text, that these two aren't primarily there to preach the gospel, try to convert souls, or bring about repentance. Those functions are being nicely handled by the 144,000 and the angelic evangelists. No, these guys are there to pronounce God's judgment on the Antichrist and his pet snake, Satan—and anybody who worships them. That's why they're seen **“standing before the ‘god’ of the earth.”** It's like Moses and Aaron going in before Pharaoh—the most powerful single individual on earth at the time—and telling (not asking) him to let the Israelite slaves go or suffer the consequences. It's the height of temerity, merely annoying at first, but then the plagues come, progressively inconvenient, frustrating, expensive, dangerous, terrifying, and deadly.

In modern and familiar terms, try to envision a couple of oddly dressed “Jesus people” appearing one day out of the blue—camped out on the south lawn of the White House. Nobody knows how they got there, but they're telling the President and the rest of the country that the crops are going to fail and the economy is going to crash because of his evil policies. (I'm not speaking of any particular president here, but if the shoe fits....) It doesn't matter who the President sends out there to make them stop—Marines, Special Forces, Girl Scouts—everybody who tries dies. So eventually they settle into a verbal war of attrition. The “most powerful man in the world” has no choice but to let them stay there in his back yard spouting their vituperative imprecations against him. He's mortified and embarrassed, but he's also powerless to do anything about it. Okay: now multiply that picture by a hundred and you have some idea of the kind of consternation the two witnesses will cause.

Normally such behavior would precipitate an instant cult following—the two witnesses would become heroes in the eyes of the self-styled free thinkers of the land. But not this time. The Antichrist won't be the only one getting tormented. The whole world will end up hating them because the two witnesses aren't just talking—they're *doing*: **“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.”** (Revelation 11:6) Although we aren't specifically told, I believe that this drought will be worldwide, or at least extremely widespread in the eastern hemisphere. We shall soon be exploring

prophecies that talk about both the Nile and Euphrates Rivers drying up. The Nile cannot dry up as long as Central Africa is getting rain, and likewise, the Euphrates drains a huge portion of the Middle East. You do the math.

I must save the discussion about the deaths of the witnesses (and what they do for an encore) for a future chapter, but consider this: **“And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them [i.e., their corpses], make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.”** (Revelation 11:10) It’s like a scene out of the *Wizard of Oz*: ding-dong, the wicked witch is dead. I don’t care how unpopular you might be; that’s not a normal reaction. Look at what happened when Yasser Arafat died: the godfather of modern terrorism was eulogized as the father of his country, a great and noble leader. The western media swept under the rug that he died of AIDS, that he had thousands of murders to his credit, and that he had stolen as much as six billion dollars from his own people. The two witnesses won’t be similarly hailed in the press as freedom fighters. Their deaths will be universally celebrated. The only rational conclusions I can draw are (1) the drought and plagues they caused *did* affect the entire world, and (2) **“those who dwell on the earth”** know and believe that these two guys were responsible for sending them.

What’s absolutely clear is that being one of these witnesses is a thankless job—the worst career imaginable. Somebody’s gotta do it, I suppose, but it’s definitely not a job for the thin-skinned or timid. The lost world will detest them, and the new believers won’t like them much better, for the equal-opportunity plagues they bring upon the earth will make life harder for everyone, the neoEkklesia as well as the lost. Though the Tribulation saints may appreciate God’s reasons for sending his witnesses, they still won’t like them very much.

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To my mind, the least important fact we can try to discern about the two witnesses is their identity. But because the Bible definitely names one of them, there is automatically a raging controversy concerning the other. We aren’t told who he is, so it may not matter all that much. Still, we were given lots of hints, and I know you’re dying of curiosity, so I’ll tell you what I think (for what it’s worth).

Let’s start with what we know. Four hundred years before Yahshua’s first-century advent, Malachi recorded this intriguing prophecy: **“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Yahweh. 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.”** (Malachi 4:5-6) The Jews of Yahshua’s

day were well aware of this prophecy, and when it became apparent to some of them that Yahshua was indeed **“the Son of the Living God,”** (Matthew 16:16) the Messiah explained that if the nation of Israel had been willing to accept Him as their Messiah (though He knew they would not) the prophecy would have been fulfilled in the person and ministry of John the Baptist. **“Assuredly, I [Yahshua] say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. 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.”** (Matthew 11:11-14) John was murdered before Christ’s crucifixion. He was the last of the Old Covenant prophets.

John’s self-stated task was to prepare the hearts of the people of Israel to receive their Messiah. **“Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, ‘I am not the Christ.’ And they asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the Prophet?’ [See Deuteronomy 18:18] And he answered, ‘No.’ Then they said to him, ‘Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself? He said: ‘I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Make straight the way of Yahweh,” as the prophet Isaiah said.”** (John 1:19-23) The fact that John didn’t realize he was potentially fulfilling the prophesied role of Elijah at the Messiah’s first-century advent—as predicted in Isaiah 40:3—doesn’t make it any less true.

Here for the umpteenth time we see the Messiah being referred to as Yahweh, something today’s neo-Gnostics choke on. In pointing this out, John the Baptist was following an old family tradition: truth. Zechariah the priest had prophesied at the birth of his son John, **“You, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord [He’s talking about Yahweh—who would be incarnate in Yahshua] to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”** (Luke 1:76-79) Giving light and guidance is the role of the true Messiah; that’s why Satan likes the name “Lucifer”—the light bearer—so much. John preached repentance, a change of mind and direction from darkness to light that would surely **“turn the hearts of the fathers to the children”** and vice versa.

Like his prototype, Elijah, and his antitype, the first witness of Revelation, John was always careful to be as soft-spoken, diplomatic, and politically correct as any class-5 hurricane. **“He [John] said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, ‘Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as**

our father.” For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.... I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.” (Luke 3:7-9, 16-17)

Needless to say, John’s preaching style tended to separate the room into two groups: (1) those who were ready to repent, and (2) those who were ready to kill him. He was saying what Yahweh had told him to—just like the prophets of old. But as Yahshua’s ministry progressed, John saw less and less of his own prophecies in Him. And he began to wonder, “Is Yahshua really the Coming One, or should I look for another?” The Messiah put his qualms to rest by demonstrating his divinity: curing the blind, deaf, leprous, and crippled, and even raising the dead. But he never did tell John what we now know: his prophecies were true, but they were for another time, when Messiah would return to rule His earth with a scepter of iron. John’s message, then, was indistinguishable from that of the two witnesses: the Messiah is coming. He will separate those who are His from those who are not, and will punish those who reject Him. Repent!

But in John’s day the nation of Israel did not change their mind, leaving Yahweh with no choice but to **“strike the earth with a curse,”** which is the message of the “third Elijah,” the first of the two witnesses of Revelation. As far as I’m concerned, though, it’s more coincidence than confirmation that Elijah performed one of the same miracles that the two witnesses will: the withholding of rain upon the earth. **“Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, ‘As Yahweh, God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.’** (I Kings 17:1) God is not restricted as to whom He can empower to do what. If He wants to send a drought, He doesn’t necessarily need Elijah; if He wants to turn water into blood, He doesn’t *have to* use Moses.

To my mind, the following passage is more to the point in explaining why Yahweh would bring Elijah back into the picture: **“So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. And Elijah came to all the people, and said, ‘How long will you falter between two opinions? If Yahweh is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.’ But the people answered him not a word. Then Elijah said to the people, ‘I alone am left a prophet of Yahweh; but Baal’s prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it. Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of Yahweh; and the God who answers by fire, He is God.’ So all the people answered and said, ‘It is well spoken.”** (I Kings 18:20-24) The issue here

isn't Yahweh's "answer by fire," something He did on that day and is perfectly willing to do again. Rather, it's forcing the world to make a choice, to get off the fence. *You're impressed with the Antichrist? Fine—follow him. If he's really god, like he says, let's see him bring you some rain.*

Okay, so we know from Malachi that Elijah is one of the two witnesses. Who's the other one? It seems obvious to many, but it isn't. Consider this: **"Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him...."** Oooh! There's a clue, right? **"Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah....' And His disciples asked Him, saying, 'Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?' 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.' Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist."** (Matthew 17:1-4, 10-13, cf. Mark 9:1-13, Luke 9:27-36)

Here we are, getting a glimpse of the future glory of Yahshua. Moses and Elijah have been invited as honored guests, representing the law and the prophets—the heart of the Jewish scriptural experience. And naturally, knowing of the Malachi prediction, His disciples ask Yahshua about Elijah. Makes perfect sense: they'd just met him—which is something nobody had done for almost nine hundred years. It is at this point that many folks leap to a conclusion: Moses must be the second witness! He's seen here hanging out with Elijah. And remember, one of the plagues mentioned in Revelation 11 is that **"they have power over waters to turn them to blood."** That's something Moses did (Exodus 7:14-25). 'Course, so did Pharaoh's magicians, but who's counting?

The evidence that Moses is the second witness, then, is purely circumstantial (which is *not* to say it's neither compelling nor true). That's to be expected, since like I said, the Bible doesn't tell us who mystery guest number two is. But in the interests of being thorough, we need to find out if there's anything that might disqualify the Great Liberator from consideration. And to my mind there is.

As we saw in our chapter on the rapture of the Church, Elijah is practically unique among men in one respect: he never died, but was taken up to heaven alive before the very eyes of his astonished protégé. Now, factor in this: **"As it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many."** (Hebrews 9:27-28) Just as it is patently absurd for Christ to die multiple times to atone for our multiple sins, so it is nonsense to suggest that Adam's curse should visit our mortal bodies more than once apiece. (I'm

obviously not including miracles, medical resuscitations and “near-death experiences” here, but only actual physical death, the final separation of the soul from the body.) In Elijah’s case, there’s no reason Yahweh couldn’t—without contradicting Himself—give the prophet the task of announcing God’s judgment on the Antichrist, to his face. Not a fun assignment, but you’ve got to admit, there’s no one in history better qualified to do it.

Moses, too, was pretty good at getting into the king’s face, but there’s one slight problem with him: unlike Elijah, he died. **“Moses the servant of Yahweh died there in the land of Moab.... Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died.”** (Deuteronomy 34:5,7) Yes, but couldn’t Yahweh dig him up, give him a new mortal body, and send him back into the fray? Sure He could, but you’d think that if He were going to make that kind of departure from His standard operating procedure, He might have given us some sort of hint. Besides, if He did, the “you’re-gonna-die-once” passage in Hebrews would be rendered moot. God would have been goofing up His own illustration—not likely.

Fans of the Moses theory point out that there will be a whole generation of Christians who will not taste physical death, but who will instead be raptured. And they’re right, of course. But take a closer look at the Hebrews 9 passage. The context emphasizes not that mortal men must die, but that that they will *not die more than one time*—just as Christ was **“offered [only] once to bear the sins of many.”** In other words, nobody’s mortal body dies twice.

So once again I find myself at odds with the majority of expositors, godly and learned people who insist that witness number two is Moses. But at least this time there’s a sizable minority who have come to the same conclusion I have: the second witness isn’t Moses, but he *is* named in scripture. His name is Enoch.

*Who?* Enoch doesn’t have a terribly big role in the Bible, just a couple of walk-on vignettes. But they’re more significant than their brevity might lead you to believe. He was the father of the oldest man in the Bible, but more important to our present line of inquiry is the fact that he, like Elijah, did not die, but was “translated.” **“Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.”** (Genesis 5:21-25) This was at a time (before the flood) when men were routinely living to 800 or 900 years of age. As in Elijah’s case, we can safely assume there were eyewitnesses to Enoch’s departure, because if he’d just turned up missing, his contemporaries would have naturally concluded that he’d either died somewhere else or packed up and moved away. The cryptic language is just what you’d expect, however, if Enoch were “raptured.” It was a unique event—there wasn’t even a word for it.

Enoch wasn't known for Elijah-style miracles, but for his words and his walk. Jude (the brother of James and half-brother of Yahshua) records this sound bite (and I do mean *bite*): **"Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, 'Behold, Yahweh 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...."** A last-days prophecy from an antediluvian patriarch! And *you* thought God was making this up as he went along. (Just kidding.) Jude wasn't quoting from the Old Covenant canon, but apparently from an apocryphal work called *The Book of Enoch*, an influential Hebrew-language text of which no less than eleven fragments were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Although considered pseudepigrapha (or "false writing") today, it was held in high regard—maybe even inspired—by such early Church fathers as Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria. Makes you wonder if maybe we missed something.

Enoch sounds upset, doesn't he? (Just like you and I should be.) The content of his message—first delivered to the sinful multitudes a generation before Noah—is precisely what we might expect from the second witness of Revelation. First, he warns that Yahweh is coming (in the person of Yahshua, the Messiah). Second, God is bringing his saints (*hagios*: set-apart ones) with him (there's another nail in the post-trib coffin). These saints are gathered in groups of ten thousand. (Considering how many people have inhabited this planet thus far, I was kind of hoping for "millions." On the other hand, we aren't told *how many* ten-thousands. To Enoch, this probably sounded like a huge number.)

Third, the purpose of his coming is to "execute judgment." Upon whom? Upon "all who are ungodly." The word rendered "convict" ("convince," in the KJV) is the Greek *exelegcho*, from *ex*, "out of," and *elegcho*, meaning to confute, admonish, convict, convince, tell a fault, rebuke, or reprove. *Exelegcho*, by implication, means to punish. I take that to mean that the two witnesses will tell the world—everybody who's "ungodly" from the Antichrist on down—why they're being punished: the ungodly things they do, the ungodly way they do them (even "religious" things), and their blasphemies against Yahweh. Then they will announce whatever plagues strike their fancy, and the angels of the Bowl Judgments will cause them to come to pass (stopping the rain, turning water into blood, and unleashing a variety of unnamed afflictions—see Revelation 11:6).

Enoch goes on to describe the ungodly. **"These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage."** That sounds exactly like Daniel's description of the Antichrist. Jude then provides the lesson for our times: **"But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own**

**ungodly lusts.”** (Jude 14-18) When we are confronted with people in increasing numbers who mock God and flaunt their sinful lifestyles, we shouldn't be shocked or dismayed; it is merely a reminder that the end is approaching, that the time is short. These things should be the strings around our fingers, helping us remember that we are but pilgrims in this unholy land. Don't get too comfortable.

And before I forget, let's revisit John's and Zechariah's "lampstand" metaphor. Whether we're talking about Zerubbabel and Joshua or the two witnesses of Revelation, the lampstands are vehicles which provide illumination—truth—in the world; their energy source is the Holy Spirit, symbolized by olive oil. But if you'll recall, while Zechariah saw one lampstand, John's witnesses are described as *two* lamps: **“These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands.”** (Revelation 11:4) Unless I'm mistaken, this is confirmation of the Enoch hypothesis. Zerubbabel and Joshua were one lampstand: they shined forth truth together from the perspective of Israel. But though Elijah was a Jew, Enoch was not. Though in the godly line leading from Seth to Noah, he lived before Abraham. Enoch thus represents the other “olive branch” or conduit through which the Holy Spirit provided light to the world—the gentiles. While God brought salvation to mankind through the Jews, He never turned His back on us who were not born children of Abraham. We were always part of His plan. Granted, we gentile believers are only wild branches that have been grafted into the trunk, but we are drawing our sustenance from the same holy source. These two lampstands are, perhaps, the equivalent of giving the Antichrist “both barrels.” The prophecies and plagues being pronounced against his kingdom cannot be dismissed as some kind of “mere Jewish sorcery.” The two witnesses, a Jew and a gentile, represent all of mankind when they curse the “god of this world.”

By the way, why do you suppose Yahweh arranged for two godly men (and only two) to be translated (raptured) without suffering death, to “exit stage right” from history, as it were, to wait in the wings for their last and greatest scene? It's because of the last-minute timing He has planned for the rapture. Think about it. If the rapture of the Church had taken place sometime early within the two thousand year span of time between the first advent of Christ and the second (something Yahshua never specifically ruled out), there would have been (theoretically) plenty of time for a new generation of saints to discover Yahshua, search the scriptures, and mature enough for two of them to be chosen for the incredibly tough role the script calls for. But now we're out of time. At this late date it seems to me that if the rapture were to take place as soon as the next Feast of Trumpets there would hardly be enough time left to convert, educate, and grow a sufficiently thick skin on two new believers. And the closer we get to the beginning of the seventh millennium—at the Feast of Tabernacles 2033, if my observations are valid—the more unlikely it becomes that anyone converted after

the rapture could look the devil straight in the eye without flinching, as the two witnesses will have to do. Don't get me wrong; it's not that Yahweh *couldn't* do it like that. It's just that He's told us He's going to accomplish His purposes another way—with Elijah and (if I'm right) Enoch. It puts a whole new wrinkle in the saying **“He has made everything beautiful in its time.”** (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

There's also another intriguing line of inquiry bound up in the idea that only two “old timers” were raptured. It's possible (SF8) that the “ministry” of Elijah and Enoch is performed while they're clothed in their immortal, “spiritual” bodies, such as the one in which Yahshua spent forty days, after His resurrection. That would help to explain how no one could kill them, no matter how much they wanted to. This theory would of course require that they re-assumed the mortal state when their task was done, so that they might be “killed” for a few days. Rotten job, but like I said, somebody's gotta do it.

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By this point, at the fulcrum of the Tribulation, all the secrets have been divulged, all the subterfuges have been revealed, all the lines have been drawn in the sand. Satan has been evicted from heaven. He knows he's got only a short time left. And now the hapless inhabitants of planet earth are going to receive his personal and undivided attention until Yahweh says, “Enough.”

The Antichrist's one-world government is a reality, in theory if not quite in practice. Every nation on the globe (save one) officially acknowledges his suzerainty, though their “local” governments still function much as they had previously. Just as Colorado and Maine have state governments that function independently while they acquiesce to the Federal Government of the United States of America, so will Canada and Mozambique and hundreds of other nations owe their allegiance to the United States of Earth. Since this is the stepchild of the United Nations, one might have expected its world headquarters to be located in New York, but the Antichrist will find this city completely unacceptable—especially considering America's post-war status as a second-rate power, broken as much by internal dissent as by nuclear devastation. No, there is only one suitable place for the Antichrist's capital: Jerusalem, the most coveted city on earth. But the Palestinians are dead and the Jews have fled, making the place a no-man's land of sorts, fit only for politicians and warriors. Considering the recent history of the place, the irony is stunning.

Here and there all over the globe, small pockets of new believers have gone “underground” (sometimes literally) in hopes of avoiding the Antichrist's state police and outlasting his reign of terror. The only remotely organized resistance,

strangely enough, is occurring right under the Antichrist's nose. The duly elected government of Israel is alone in the world in refusing to sign the accords making him king of the world. Or more accurately, the government is unable to raise a quorum—the vast majority of the Knesset members who are still alive are AWOL, having joined the impromptu rebellion. This doesn't stop the Antichrist from achieving official unanimity, of course: he simply appoints a new government reminiscent of Hitler's Vichy France. It's not real, but the reality of the situation never makes the six o'clock news: with no apparent leader and no stated agenda, a large contingent of the Israeli populace has instinctively refused to honor the new world leader, refused to receive his Mark of allegiance, and refused to bow to his image. The moment the Antichrist announced his divine aspirations, millions of Jews, as if on cue, spontaneously grabbed their families and fled from their homes in Israel. They're now hiding out in the Negev, the Gaza strip, in the badlands of the newly-depopulated Jordan, or who knows where. Even with all their sophisticated electronics, the Antichrist's techno-wizards don't really know where they are. The army he sent out in pursuit were never heard from again—they were simply swallowed by the desert.

The Jews have fled simply because they have come to terms with the reality of Yahweh. They now realize that they have kept themselves estranged from Him for the last two thousand years, and they long to reestablish the relationship their nation once had with their God. Like the Israelites under the Judges, they are crying out to Yahweh to deliver them. And deliver them He shall.

But since much of the prophetic detail concerning this time is recorded in the New Covenant scriptures, the Jews are only dimly aware of what to expect. Of course, that doesn't stop them from cheering for the two witnesses who have suddenly shown up like ants at the Antichrist's picnic. The media will drool over the chance to "expose" these two horrible men. They'll air TV documentaries about the plagues they cause and the gruesome fiery deaths of the poor unfortunates who try to apprehend them. But they'll do their best to suppress part of the story: these two enemies of political correctness incessantly talk about Christ, the Messiah, Yahshua, Jesus—and His impending return. The editors have to work overtime to glean usable sound bites from these two uncooperative weirdoes.

Even then, some of their seditious propaganda will get through. Some leaks out because the newsies simply don't understand what the witnesses are talking about. For example, when asked point blank by the world's most respected news anchors how their God (a deity the witnesses refer to as Yahweh or Yahshua) fits into all this, they quote: **"As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."** (John 1:12-13) What does that

*mean*, anyway? It's utter gibberish to those aligned with the new world order. But to the Tribulation saints—people who want to follow Yahweh even if they don't quite know how, even if His name is a new and unfamiliar epiphany to them—it means hope and inner peace in a time of madness and death. To “**believe in his name**” is to be born anew into a divergent reality—not into the human race but into the very family of God.

The media monarchs are proud as peacocks for having summoned the courage to talk face to face with these religious terrorists (a phenomenon known as the “Geraldo Effect”), and thrilled with their subsequent Nielsen numbers. In reality, they're in no particular danger as long as they don't try to assassinate anything more tangible than the witnesses' character. After patiently explaining who Yahweh/Yahshua is to the ignorant elite, Elijah and Enoch—in the same tactful and diplomatic way they had when they'd walked the earth in centuries past—announce that unless the world repents, it will receive no rain. And only their word will bring it back. This, of course, is brushed off as the ravings of a matched pair of lunatics for a few weeks—until it becomes apparent that all over the globe, no precipitation is falling. That can't happen, the experts insist, because it has *never* happened. When the news people confront Elijah with that bit of information, he smiles, shrugs, and says, “If you say so.”

Months pass with no rain, and the world turns desperate. But the scientists have discovered the source of the problem, and it *isn't* these two nutcases in Jerusalem: the sun's energy output has suddenly and inexplicably increased, they say, and that, combined with an ozone layer torn to shreds by the recent nuclear holocaust, has changed the earth's weather patterns. *You two are frauds! You have no power to curse the earth. And there's no @#!\$%& reason we should repent from anything!* The indomitable human spirit announces an all-out push to develop new sources of fresh water. The main thrust, ironically, is something of which Israel was the world's foremost supplier until the war began: water desalination technology.

This time it's Enoch who answers (that's *Mister Enoch*, to you). *You can deny our signs all you want, but you cannot deny the power of the Living God. Because this ungodly generation has refused to turn from its ungodly ways, I declare that all the fresh water in Europe this week will turn to blood. Next week, the same thing will happen in South America. The week after that, let's say...Asia—no, North America. East of the Rockies. We'll save Asia for week number four, and America west of the Rockies for week five. There is blood on your hands, O Earth. Now there will be blood on your lips as well. Repent—turn to Yahweh!*

The scientists' skepticism is shaken somewhat when the next month plays out exactly as Enoch had said it would. They immediately set out to pinpoint some natural explanation for this latest round of ecological disasters—and try to figure

out how these two ecstasies could guess what's coming with such uncanny accuracy. *One thing's for sure: this isn't the judgment of God, as they claim. It can't be. Everybody knows there is no God but Lucifer!*

Sorry to pop your bubble, guys, but actually, the Creator's name is Yahweh. Lucifer is nothing but a creature. And Yahweh's patience with a world that refuses to return His love—that even refuses to acknowledge His existence—is wearing thin. But there are a few bright spots. Gentiles are beginning to wake up from the nightmare they invited into the world, and many of them are turning to Yahshua as a result—even though they are bringing down a death sentence upon themselves for doing so.

And what about the Jews, this miniscule fraction of one percent of the earth's population, this minority that looms so large in the mind of God and man alike? It is as Yahshua said less than a week before He offered Himself up as their perfect Passover Lamb, **"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of Yahweh!'"** (Luke 13:34-35) Israel has *never* said those words in the entire two millennia since **"He who comes in the name of Yahweh"** came—and left. But as they hide in the wilderness from the wrath of Satan and the Antichrist, as they ponder the implications of all that has come to pass, they will slowly, inexorably, come to the realization that they were wrong. The time *will* come when they will say with a whole heart: **"Blessed is Yahshua, who comes in the name of Yahweh!"**