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Keeping Time On God's Prophetic Clock

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The Coming of Elijah

by Bob Glaze

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

—Revelation 11:3–12



“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days ...”

(Revelation 11:3)



It is not unlike John to leave us with a great mystery. Certainly, he is only quoting what the angel—most certainly Christ—said, but he surely could have relieved many a Bible student the challenge of identifying these two witnesses. Is it necessary to identify them, or is there some message in their identity? Most Bible students tend to agree that there is a possibility of three Bible characters from which to choose. Each of the three has his own peculiarities, and with

good reason. The three personalities most often identified are Enoch, Moses, and Elijah. We will briefly examine each as to their possible place in this prophecy.

First we must examine the testimony of Enoch. In [Genesis 5:24](#), we read these words: “**And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.**” Excluding Cain and Abel, Enoch was the seventh generation from creation. He walked the earth for a relatively short time compared to his lineage, only 365 years. Yet in his short life he was contemporary with Adam for 322 years, and was translated only sixty-nine years

before Noah's birth. What stories must he have heard from the first man on Earth; the man who witnessed the Garden of Eden in its perfect sinless state. He listened as Adam told him how he named every living thing—even the dinosaur. He shared in Adam's joy of how God walked and fellowshiped with him and the mother of all mankind, Eve. How they must have shared with tears of sorrow as he related how he and Eve failed the Creator and allowed sin to enter into the world. How they lost their first two sons—one to murder, and the other to banishment—after their own banishment from the Garden. Perhaps even joining Adam in a trip to see the Garden Gate that was guarded by cherubims and a flaming sword. Perhaps he could even see the "tree of life."

Then the joy of a new son, Seth—a new beginning. He listened as Adam related how the plan of redemption, through the death of God's Son, was promised. These things must have endeared Enoch to his Maker. How he must have loved the walk with God as Adam once had.

Enoch's father, Jared, lived a total of 962 years—435 years after Enoch's translation. Enoch's son, Methuselah, lived for 969 years, the oldest recorded living being in the Bible. Enoch walked with his son for 300 years before he was translated.

Enoch knew every man in his Genesis family through his grandson, Lamech, who lived to be 777 years old. Although he never met Noah, the only other person in his lineage prior to the Flood, he and God must have discussed him many times. We know this because of the name he and God picked for his son—Methuselah. His name means, "When he is dead it shall be sent." That name was a message to those who had ears to hear. The message could have only one meaning—"When he died the Flood would come."

Those who believe that Enoch will be one of the two witnesses arrived at their conclusion because of several clues. However, we must be reminded that similarity is not identity in any of the possibilities.

First, Enoch was translated alive and did not die ([Gen. 5:24](#)). While walking with God one day, he simply disappeared. He vanished without a clue. Had his family been warned about the possibility of this? Did they gather a search

party to look for him? I believe we can find the answer to those questions in his name, Enoch.

Most Bible scholars agree that Enoch means "initiated or dedicated." Initiated or dedicated to what? Certainly his name was prophetic. In order for him to receive this name, his father must have known that God had a purpose for his son. So we must assume that God also talked with Jared. The term "dedicated" has the same meaning as the word "sanctified," which we use today. It means to set apart for a particular purpose or task. It does not mean to be perfect or flawless, but simply reserved for something special.

The church building is sanctified, or set apart for a particular purpose—that being reserved for the use of the meeting place of the body of Christ. So, Enoch was dedicated from birth to represent something, or someone. From Enoch's birth



God began to prepare him for what his mission in life was to be. God walked with him on a continuous basis, instructed him, and prepared him for his destiny. If he were to represent others, he must be special. The other word used to describe his name was "initiated." *Webster's Dictionary* gives this as one definition of initiation: "The rites, ceremonies, ordeals, or instructions with which one is made a member of a sect or society." It also carries the idea of setting a precedent. Enoch was therefore chosen to set a precedent of becoming the first of many in a future society. Therefore, many believe that Enoch, who was "translated that he should not see death" ([Heb. 11:5](#)), is

a picture of that society of believers in the Church Age who will also be translated or raptured when the Lord returns for His Church. In [1 Thessalonians 5:9](#), Paul says: "For God hath not appointed us to wrath." God always removes His godly remnant prior to judgment. The judgment to come was the judgment of the Flood. Noah and his family are believed to represent Israel being brought through the Tribulation in the Ark of Jesus.

If we accept Enoch as one of the two witnesses, then are we violating his precedent of representing the Church Age saints at the Rapture? The saints removed at the Rapture certainly do not return for a physical death, but they accompany Christ at His triumph at the Battle of Armageddon, then continue on

to “rule and reign” with Him during the Millennium.

The next possibility we have to deal with is Moses as one of the witnesses. Does he fit the description of either of the two witnesses, or do we have only circumstantial evidence? As God prepared a man, Joseph, to guide Israel to safety into Egypt, He also prepared a man, Moses, to guide them out of harm’s way and deliver them to safety in the Promised Land.

Moses was also a man sanctified and prepared by God for a particular task. God’s plan within a plan not only preserved His people within a pagan culture, but preserved His man within the chief pagan’s house of protection. God’s use of Egypt proves that He is in charge and places kings where He will. Moses grew in strength and knowledge as the son of a pharaoh’s daughter. Then, at an appointed time, God revealed to Moses his Hebrew heritage. He allowed Moses to see an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, and Moses killed the Egyptian. He became afraid and fled to Midian. He had received his education at the head of Egypt; now he would receive his wisdom at the feet of God.

In Midian, Moses completed his second forty years of preparation and was now commissioned to return for His people. He returned to Egypt with God-given powers and skills to convince Pharaoh to allow God’s people to leave Egypt and return to Mt. Sinai. He was given his brother Aaron to be his voice—but he was only used as a staff bearer. It seemed Moses could speak after all. The miracles Moses performed in Egypt are comparable to those the witnesses will perform during the Tribulation, and may lend credence to the possibility of his being one of the witnesses.

Verse 6 of our text says: “... and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.” Although God could give the two witnesses miracle-working powers, especially for the Tribulation, these are similar to Moses’ power in Egypt. In [Exodus 7:19](#), we see that Moses instructed Aaron to smite the waters of the river and they turned to blood. The Egyptians dug wells all around the river for drinking water. How successful they were, we don’t know. He then brought about a series of plagues and diseases upon Egypt that were unprecedented. These awful things came and went at Moses’ command ([Exod. 8: 13](#)). God honored Moses’ word because he was speaking for Him. Although the Bible does not record Moses ever withholding the rain—he did command the skies to drop hail with fire, and it was honored. I suppose whether you command it to hail, or not to rain, it would be about the same.

In [Deuteronomy 18:15](#) we read about Moses and a future event: “**The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet**

from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.” Does Moses here mean that it is he, or someone like him that will reappear in some future event? Some believe that the term “like unto me” would preclude Moses.

Another reason for Moses possibly being one of the witnesses is in the mysterious way he was buried. [Deuteronomy 34:6](#) says: “**And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.**” Was God preserving Moses’ body in a special way to resurrect him for some future prophetic event? Or is the reason found in [Jude 9](#): “**Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.**” Why would the devil be interested in the body of Moses? Could it be that the devil wanted to use Moses’ body to somehow frighten or discourage Israel as they crossed the Jordan? Perhaps the devil thought he could prevent Moses from future appearances by destroying his body. Maybe he just wanted to abuse Moses’ body to get some form of satisfaction and victory over the one who caused him so much humiliation. After an animal has killed its prey, it will often play with it and mutilate the body as if to celebrate its victory. Whatever the reason, the devil was evidently unsuccessful. He was not successful over Moses in life, and he was not victorious over him in death. We know of one instance for certain that he will reappear.

The next reason to consider Moses is his appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration. [Matthew 17:1–5](#) says: “

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

These verses, as well as [Mark 9](#) and [Luke 9](#), are a description of Christ, Elijah, and Moses in a discussion about Christ’s future kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven, which was being offered to Israel. Here Christ is imbued with all His godly attributes which is witnessed by the Apostles. Israel ultimately

refused this Messiah, which was Christ, and therefore delayed the Kingdom until after the Church Age and the Tribulation.

The Kingdom of Heaven, or the Millennium, is now yet future. Therefore, with the Kingdom of Heaven being rejected by Israel, Christ turned to the Gentiles and inaugurated the Kingdom of God—a spiritual kingdom with Jesus Christ as King of those who accept Him as their Savior. Moses' attendance at this time shows that he will be involved in the Kingdom of Heaven. He would have been involved immediately; however, the Kingdom was rejected. Will he be one of the two witnesses of Revelation 11? He certainly has all the earmarks of one of the two. He was at the Mount of Transfiguration for a purpose. If the purpose was not fulfilled at that time, must he fulfill it at some future time? Moses is a good candidate for one of the two witnesses.

The last possibility we must examine is Elijah. Most agree that he will be one of the two witnesses for several reasons. Elijah first appears in 1 Kings 17. He immediately fits the type of Revelation 13 by announcing that it will not rain for the next three and a half years, the exact length of the first half of the Great Tribulation. This seems to be a fulfillment of a warning given by Moses in [Deuteronomy 11:17](#). Moses tells the Hebrews that if they are not careful to turn away from other gods, **“then the LORD’s wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.”** Elijah has the same power in 1 Kings as the witnesses will have in Revelation 13.

Some believe that Elijah will be one of the witnesses because he never experienced physical death. As he was talking to Elisha, his protégé in [2 Kings 2:9–11](#), **“there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”** He was taken alive in the flesh for a reason. Many believe the reason being that God would bring him back at a future date to take part in a future event. There is nothing in Scripture that is there by accident or as filler. God had a purpose for every word. He had a purpose for taking Elijah alive.

Another reason is that it is predicted in [Malachi 3:1–3; 4:5–6](#), that Elijah would return before the coming of the Messiah. Some believe that John the Baptist is the one promised in Malachi, therefore he would be Elijah. Jesus even gave that indication in [Matthew 11:10](#): **“For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.”** But if John the Baptist was Elijah, then he couldn't be the witness in Revelation 11. However, we then read in [Matthew 11:13–14](#): **“For all the**

prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.” But they did not receive John's message, therefore, according to Jesus, he was not Elijah, only his representative.

Then Elijah was at the Transfiguration with Jesus and Moses. This was after John's death, so I suppose Elijah is still a good candidate for Revelation 11. If Moses is one of the witnesses, then Elijah most certainly should be.

In conclusion, since John in Revelation 11 does not name these witnesses, we must rely on the scriptural evidences, if possible, to identify these two. The main reason many believe that Enoch cannot be a witness is because he represents the church and its Rapture. Very plausible. Some say he cannot return and die because [Hebrews 9:27](#) stated that: **“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”** This cannot be used because Jesus Himself set a precedent in raising Lazarus from the dead. It is further believed that Enoch was a prophet of judgment as were the two witnesses. He may still qualify.

Moses is an excellent nominee because he fits the description of the powers of the witnesses and has in fact already experienced them. He was present at the Transfiguration, and his body was preserved for a possible reappearing. He also is mentioned as the giver of the law in connection with the Day of the Lord.

Elijah is the most likely to be one of the two witnesses. He was a prophet of judgment and was taken without seeing death—which may not be necessary. He too has experienced similar miracles, even the three and a half-year drought corresponds. He was present at the Transfiguration and was prophesied to be a vital part of the Day of the Lord ([Mal. 4](#)). We have already discussed that John the Baptist was not Elias (Elijah), therefore, he still has a mission.

This is in no way an adequate discussion of the mystery. Identity may be attained by elimination. Remember, similarity is not identity. Just think—there are those who don't believe any of the three are meant. They believe the two witnesses are simply two who are yet to be named.

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