



Session 12 ■ Special Interest Topic 2

The Two Witnesses as Followers of Jesus

Jesus is the faithful witness (chapter 1:5; 3:14) and his faithful followers witness to him both by the word they proclaim and the testimony of their lives (12:11; 17:6). They witness to him as the Word of God (19:13). As with their Lord and Master, they are called to be faithful in difficult times (2:11; 6:9-10; 24). The message God gives in Revelation is identified as the word of God and the testimony of Jesus (1:2, 9). Witnessing to Jesus is the reason given in Revelation for the followers of Jesus being persecuted (2:13; 6:9; 12:11; 17:6; 20:4).

In chapter 11:3 they are likened to two lampstands that stand before the lord of the earth. In chapter 1:20 the seven churches are likened to seven lampstands, each church bearing witness to Jesus the light of the world.

Jesus said “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first....No servant is greater than his master” John 15:18-20.

1. Their experience of being put to death occurs in the context of the sixth trumpet. In Chapter 9:13-21 the sixth trumpet sounds. The seventh trumpet sounds in Chapter 11:15.
2. They are likened to two olive trees and two lampstands: an allusion to Zechariah 4, where the two anointed ones are portrayed as Joshua (the high priest) and Zerubbabel (the governor).
Jesus is both a King and a Priest, as are his followers (see Revelation 1:6; 5:10).
3. The trampling on the Holy City (another way John uses to describe the followers of Jesus) for 42 months (see Revelation 11:2) is now described as the two witnesses prophesying for 1260 days (see Revelation 11:3), but dressed in sackcloth, a symbol of humility. They are not honoured by the world.
After the resurrection and ascension of Jesus they prophesied for 1260 days or three and a half prophetic years (11:3; 12:5-6). Jesus is believed to have had a prophetic ministry of three and a half literal years. The 1260 days refer to the middle period between the ascension of Jesus and the end time.
4. **Their enemies can be destroyed by fire** (see Revelation 11:5). God used fire to defeat the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel and give victory to Elijah. God also used drought to punish Israel in answer to the words of Elijah (see Revelation 11:6).
Fire is used to deceive by the Lamb-like beast from the earth (see Revelation 13:13). This will be used to counterfeit the genuine worldwide preaching of the gospel by the followers of Jesus. **The fire of Pentecost (see Acts 2:1-3) will be counterfeited as an end-time deception.**
5. God sent plagues upon the Egyptians at the time of the Exodus when he honoured the prophet Moses. These plagues involved turning water into blood (see Revelation 11:6). **The followers of Jesus will find that at the end time, God will also bring judgment upon their opponents with plagues. These will include turning water into blood (see Revelation 16:3-6)**

6. When Jesus finished his testimony, the powers of state and false religion united to put him to death. Revelation shows that this experience will also occur to his faithful followers (see Revelation 13 and 17).
The finishing of their testimony is connected to the finishing of the gospel declaration to the world (see Revelation 10:7; 11:7). It is then that the beast from the bottomless pit arises to attack and kill them (see Revelation 11:7).
7. The imagery used to describe their death is connected to the death of Jesus. Revelation 11:8, 9 says “...where also our Lord was crucified...” What is about to happen to the two witnesses has already happened to their Lord when He was crucified in Jerusalem. The great city (religion that has gone wrong) is likened to Jerusalem.
It is a form of religion that has become immoral, like Sodom, and defiant of the true God, like Pharaoh in Egypt who opposed Moses.
8. Luke 23:12 records that Pilate and Herod reconciled their differences and became friends at the crucifixion of Jesus.
The inhabitants of the earth (a term used consistently by John to describe those who oppose the followers of Jesus) gloat, celebrate and send each other gifts because of the death of the two witnesses (see Revelation 11:10).
9. The imagery used to describe their resurrection is connected to the resurrection of Jesus: ascending to heaven in a cloud (see Revelation 11:12). Revelation 11:19 talks about the viewing of the Most Holy Place.
10. Their exaltation occurs just prior to the taking of the kingdom by God when the seventh trumpet sounds (see Revelation 11:15).

It is the purpose and function of the followers of Jesus to bring to the world the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ through their faithful witness. “They overcame him (the serpent, devil or accuser) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death” (see Revelation 12:11).