

## The Two Witnesses (Part 6)

### The Types

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Given 03-Aug-02; Tape #570

I was bemoaning the fact this morning that, when I started this, I said that it would be two sermons long. Then I say, "Well, maybe one more." And then I keep saying, "Maybe one more." Now I'm at six, and I'm saying, "Maybe one more." Today, it looks like we'll only get through one more verse, and then the next sermon we will go through Revelation 11: 7-13. I think that's doable. I have been doing one or two verses at a time. But I think that, in the seventh sermon, we should be able to go through these seven or eight verses pretty quickly because it's mostly narration about what is going to happen to these two after their witness is finished. So I should be able to go through those pretty quickly and give the pertinent information in one sermon.

Now, to go back one sermon and to just rehearse very quickly, I'm going to try to fly through this; and I want to let you know what we did last time. The last sermon focused on Revelation 11: 4-5 and particularly on what the two olive trees and the two lampstands represent. We went back to Zechariah 4: 11-14 to go over the vision there, because in Revelation 11 it really isn't explained. It's just said that these are the two olive trees and the two lampstands. So, to get the understanding of what Jesus Christ means, by referring us back to Zechariah 4: 11, we need to go back there and see what they were.

What we saw in that vision was that the two olive trees were rooted in the ground, getting the sunlight from God and the rain from God, and the minerals from the soil. They are human beings that are fed, and nourished, and prepared by God; and they produce golden oil. Using I Corinthians 12, I interpreted that as manifestations of the Spirit. It's not actually God's Spirit that they are putting into this bowl. They are using God's Spirit to produce certain works, or certain manifestations of God's Spirit. I said that it looks to me as if that golden oil is mostly *words*. God has always worked through words.

We went to John 6: 63, where Jesus said that the words that He speaks are "spirit, and they are life." So, at this end time, God uses these two olive trees to speak *words* that fill up this golden bowl. And then from the pipes, or tubes, that come out of the golden bowl they go into the various lamps that are arrayed around it. And, thus, they feed the churches. They are then able to, as it were, *light up* as they are supposed to light up—as in Matthew 5: 14-16, where Jesus calls us the lights of the world. This golden oil supplies the lamps whereby the people are able to show their light.

It all begins, of course, with God nourishing these two olive trees; and then the olive trees produce the golden oil—which is available, then, for the people to feed on. And since this is the end time (the last 3 ½ years of this present evil world, as Mr. Armstrong used to say), the church will be going through what you might call a spiritual drought. So these Two Witnesses provide the reservoir by which the church is able to feed—and grow even—throughout this period of dark and drought.

So it's a very important part of God's plan that these Two Witnesses build up this reservoir for the church as their nourishment during this period of time. When we see what is going on here, it looks as if the activity of the church is going to be just about nil during this time. The only ones who are actually *witnessing* before the world for God are these two. Thus, the whole burden of God's Word and testimony will be upon those two. They will first *feed the church*, and then they will *warn the world*.

The other thing that we saw, in Revelation 11:5, is what I kind of euphemistically called their "license to kill." This may be John and James Bond. God tells us twice in this one verse that, if anyone harms them, they can turn around and basically zap whoever it is. If anybody wants to harm them, they must be killed in this manner. So it's very much like the prophets of the Old Testament, who had the power of life and death in their hands.

It seems like 'the church age' at this point has passed, and God has gone into judgment mode. These two prophets then are prophets of judgment and doom. They are on the earth to let people know what's coming. No one is going to stop them. God says these two are going to get their time to get the message out, because they are the only two that God has appointed to do such a thing. So they will get their full 3½ years of warning and preaching to the world.

Now let's try to pick up the pace a little bit and get into Revelation 11:6 and some new material.

Revelation 11:6 These [Two Witnesses] 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.

Like the last two verses, this one has very obvious references to the Old Testament. The first miracle—no rain falling in the days of their prophecy—refers very specifically to Elijah's 3½ year drought that we find there in I Kings 17-18. The second—waters turn to blood—is a very obvious reference again, to the first plague that Moses brought upon Egypt. We find that in Exodus 7:14-25. As I mentioned just a few minutes ago, what we are looking at here is a seeming return to the way God's servants worked before Jesus Christ came—specifically focusing on Elijah's work and Moses' work.

Let's look at a few of these words, or phrases, just to clarify them. Power, again. Often times, when somebody says "these have power," we think in terms of energy. Or that they have a force, or a strength, to do something. But again, like the other time, this is *authority* (not necessarily power, like in terms of electricity). They are given by God the right, or the authority, to make these things happen. In a way, as I've mentioned before, they are given *carte blanche* to do what needs to be done.

If we look at the lives of Elijah, and Moses, and others of the prophets, you don't often see them going to God and say, "Now, what should I do at this point? God, you know these guys are really coming on strong; and I'm not sure what I should do." No, they just do whatever it is that needs to be done. Last time, in II Kings 1, we saw actually that when those fifty men and their captain came upon Elijah, he wasn't sitting there and praying at the top of a hill, saying, "Oh,

they're getting close. God, tell me what to do." He just called for fire down from heaven and destroyed them. So, it's much the same as that happening here at the time of the end. These two will have been trained and prepared by God to such an extent that they will know what to do, and they will call upon God.

You don't find Jesus either, for that matter, beseeching God for instruction about what to do. If someone came to Him for healing, He healed him. If someone needed a demon cast out, He cast out the demon. Once one has God's Spirit—and is in line with what God's will is—then these decisions are easy to make. I say "easy," but they come easier than we might think. Maybe I could put it that way, because (as Paul said in I Corinthians 2) we have the mind of Christ. And as we grow, we develop more of that mind of Christ; and we should be able to make decisions as Christ would make them.

So these two, as I've mentioned in some of the earlier sermons, are going to be very much like Christ. They are witnesses of Him, as it says there in verse 3 in the literal translation. And they are, in a way, some of the best representatives of Jesus Christ and His character that will have ever walked this earth. People in the world will see these two people as like Christ, and they will act like Christ as much as any two men can.

Let's also look at the phrase "that no rain falls." Literally, the Greek says "*that the rain may not wet.*" There's a difference there. The English translation says that there is no rain. The Greek says that there may be rain, but it doesn't *wet*. Do you understand the difference? It's not enough. Rain may fall; but it's not enough to break the drought, and it's certainly not enough to give sustenance.

I know that the weathermen talk about rain falling and not hitting the ground. I can't remember the specific word that they use. But you see that on the radar; and often it's a very light green, when they do it on the weather radar. It looks like it's raining, but it's really not. There's rain coming out of the clouds, but before it gets to the ground it evaporates.

So things may be happening, with God keeping the normal processes working. But it doesn't reach the ground. It doesn't affect crops. It doesn't fill the cisterns. There's going to be a drought.

The effect is the same as if there were no rain, but I want you to see that the natural process of things doesn't just stop. It's the effect on human beings that's going to be the same. The effect on animals, the effect on plants, will be the same as if NO rain falls. But the processes God will keep moving so that the earth can exist, and all the things in it that need to occur. So I just thought I'd pass that along. Maybe it's not "no rain," but *insignificant rain*—rain to the point that it might as well not be rain.

It's interesting to note the sins for which God promises a lack of rain. This gives us a clue, I think, about what the Two Witnesses' preaching will focus on. We're going to go back to some of the Old Testament prophecies, and experiences of these prophets, where no rain fell. I think we should start with Elijah and the 3½ year drought that came as a result of his preaching. In I Kings 17, this is when the drought begins, and when Elijah is first introduced. I just want to mention in passing here that the name *Elijah* means *God is YHWH*; and it means basically "God is God." God is the covenant God. God is Ruler and Creator. So, his name witnesses who is the

true God. Just stick that in the back of your mind.

I Kings 17:1 And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab...

By the way, I believe Gilead is a Manassite territory (if I have that right). So that's interesting in itself.

I Kings 17:1-7 "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word." Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook. And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

Pretty severe drought. It got to the point where this wadi completely dried up. And I don't know what Elijah did after that. Well, actually, I do. He went and lived with that widow in Sidon—which is also interesting, because she was a Gentile (probably). When he lived there, the bread and the oil did not run dry. It wasn't exhausted. But this happened for a long time. As we find out in James, it happened for over 3½ years—that this drought continued.

I Kings 18:1 And it came to pass after many days...

That's another interesting thing. "Many days" often means three years or so. If you look and see where it has been used and defined, "many days" is often three years.

I Kings 18:1 And it came to pass after many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year [There he goes.], saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth."

God has now let Elijah know that the drought has just about run its course. He needs to go speak to Ahab. It doesn't say what he needs to tell Ahab, but we get the idea when we finally read what actually happened. He told Ahab to meet him on Mt. Carmel with 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, and he had something to tell them there.

I Kings 18:17 Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?"

Stick that in the back of your mind, because it says later in the book of Revelation that these prophets tormented the people of the earth. That's why they have such a big celebration when they are finally killed. But [here] Elijah himself was thought of the same way.

1 Kings 18:18-21 And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals. Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table." 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 the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word.

They didn't know what to say. Or, maybe they did know what to say, and they were completely ready to follow Baal; and they didn't want to know what Elijah would do if they said so. But here's what happened:

1 Kings 18:22-24 Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; 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 the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God." So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken."

What Elijah has set up here is a sign—a sign to show who is the true God. Only the true God would be able to bring fire down from heaven and light up this sacrifice, which is wood but with no fire. So this is what it is. A contest, if you will, between the true God (the God of Israel) and Baal.

1 Kings 18:25-29 Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal [You get a little inkling here of Elijah's personality.], "Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare it first, for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it." So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us!" But there was no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made. And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened." [And

they evidently took him kind of seriously.] So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.

They went for, it must have been, about six hours doing this—jumping around the altar, and cutting themselves with knives, bleeding all over this thing, and praying out loud, and crying, and whatever else they did. But nothing happened.

I Kings 18:30 Then Elijah said to the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him.

They were probably sleeping or doing something, because this thing had gone on for so long. They probably lost interest and kind of wandered away.

I Kings 18:30 And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.

That's kind of interesting. Just from a spiritual sense, what is it that God told John (in the type, in Revelation 11:1) that he was to do first? He was to measure the temple, and the altar, and the worshippers. Now, what is the first thing that Elijah does here? He repairs the altar. He gets things prepared for a proper witness for God, by repairing the altar—preparing it to receive sacrifices and to make sacrifice. I just wanted to add that.

I Kings 18:31 And Elijah took twelve stones...

Now, that's very interesting as well. Here we have the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob again. You can't get away with this identity with Israel.

I Kings 18:31 ...according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name."

In Galatians 6:16, we know that the church itself is called "the Israel of God." So there's an identity here—not just with physical Israel, but with spiritual Israel. The stones that are used to prepare the altar are, in this case, representative of *physical Israel*. And in the time of Revelation, the time of the end, those stones will be made up of *spiritual Israel*.

I Kings 18:32-35 Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces,

and laid it on the wood, and said, "Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood." Then he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time; and he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time. So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.

Notice: This is in the midst of a 3½ year drought. And he wastes, as it were, all this water—to soak the sacrifice, and the wood, and the trench. What is he doing? First of all, he's making sure that everybody understands that, when this sacrifice gets burned up, it's not any man's doing; because no man can burn a sacrifice with this much water on it—basically drowning in it. It would have to be God.

Secondly, he is showing how much God can supply. If he's willing to 'waste' that much water, then he must be pretty sure that God is able to supply the people with the water to break the drought. This was pretty precious stuff at this point, after 3½ years of drought. All the brooks had been dried up. The place was probably brown. And even on Mt. Carmel, which is the greenest part of Israel, it was (at this point, after 3½ years) pretty awful looking, I'm sure. And so here Elijah was—wasting this water.

I Kings 18:36 And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah, the prophet came near and said...

Now, listen to this prayer. It's very simple, very direct, very quick.

I Kings 18:36-38 "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again." [Remember that.] Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench.

This was like a nuclear explosion almost, contained to where not only did the sacrifice burn up but it burned up the entire altar. And it was just "vhoom," and it was gone. The water was gone, and there was just a black spot on the earth, in a hole basically. Did God answer Elijah's prayer to reveal whom the true God was and who His true servant was? Most spectacularly! God left no doubt in these people's minds who was who, and what was what, and how wrong they had been.

I Kings 18:39 Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!"

It's very interesting that Elijah's name means "God is the LORD;" and what they said back to him was "The LORD is God." That's just the actual reverse of Elijah's name. "*Yah is El! Yah is El!*" instead of "*El is Yah.*" It's kind of interesting. Elijah's name was a witness of who the true God was.

I Kings 18:40 And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there.

It sounds like the Two Witnesses—with the power of life and death of any who would go against the true God, and against them. Evidently, it was probably on their mind that they were going to kill Elijah. They had killed all the other prophets of God, so that only Elijah was left. And probably (I'm just trying to think as human beings normally think, who think they have power) they were going to let Elijah do his little show; and, after he failed, they would show the rest of Israel that he was a false prophet and they would kill him.

That's very similar, maybe, to what will happen in the end time. To give the Two Witnesses audience to the world, people will let them try to do their little tricks; and it will come back and bite them, because God is the true God.

But we started this by thinking why there was no rain. The whole scenario, if you have been kind of keeping tabs on this, is idolatry. That is, it is a response to idolatry. Ahab and Jezebel had led Israel into rampant idolatry. That's what he said there in I Kings 18:18. He said, "You've led all Israel into sin. You and your father's house." And Elijah, by this sign, is trying to show Israel how *powerless* their false gods really were. They could do nothing!

As much as those prophets of Baal jumped about and cut themselves, it was totally ineffectual. But Elijah made it harder for himself—harder for God, let's say—by putting the water on, and putting the trench there so that the water couldn't escape, drowning the wood in water. Only the sovereign God could overcome obstacles like that. And He did! Only the Sovereign God is Almighty. He could do whatever He needed to do, to get it across to these people who the true God is.

So there was no rain in Israel because they were practicing idolaters. They needed to see, needed to go through this trial of drought to bring them about. We could go to Amos 4 and see that God does that there as well. But let's go back to Leviticus 26, and we'll see that this is one of the curses for disobedience and idolatry—particularly idolatry and Sabbath breaking. It tends to push God's buttons to make it very dry, as a warning.

Leviticus 26:1-2, 14, 19 "You shall not make idols for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a sacred pillar shall you rear up for yourselves; nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it; for I am the LORD your God. You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I am the LORD."...."But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments"...."I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like

bronze."

That basically means that He will shut up the heavens, and He will keep the earth from producing. Maybe one is the result of the other; but it's pretty dire. Let's go now to Deuteronomy 28—another chapter of blessings and cursings. We'll see a very similar thing here.

Deuteronomy 28:15 "But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you."

Deuteronomy 28:23-24 "And your heavens which are over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron. The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed."

Here specifically lack of rain is given upon failure to fully obey God's commandments and statutes.

Jeremiah 14:22 Are there any among the idols of the nations that can cause rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Are You not He, O LORD our God? Therefore we will wait for You, since You have made all these.

This is another connection between idolatry and rain, basically saying that idols are *powerless* to control the heavens. These signs that we see (rain being given in due season, or no rain being sent when it's necessary) can indeed be blessings from God, or warnings from God—whichever way it works out. Only God is able to manipulate these things to these ends. So, we shouldn't take these things lightly. This is very pointed.

Haggai 1:7-11 Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the LORD. "You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?" says the LORD of hosts. "Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands."

This is very, very pointed. When our ways do *not* please God, He says that He sends drought. And they were practicing a form of idolatry. They were worshipping *themselves*. They were worshipping their *houses*. They were worshipping the *works of their own hands*. And, basically,

they were ignoring God. They were putting God's work second, or third, or last.

They were going up and getting the finest for themselves and not giving a hoot about God's house, which still laid in ruins after Nebuchadnezzar had come through many years before. God's house was still sitting there, with nothing happening. How long the people had been back, I'm not sure at this point. But they should have done His work first, because that was why He'd sent them back. The original command from the king was to go back and build a house to God, and that's what they should have gotten to. Even [though it was] the command of a foreign emperor, it doesn't matter. It was from God, and that was what they were supposed to do. So God took affront to it, and really 'gave it to them'—to get them back on the ball.

Zechariah 10:1-3 Ask the LORD for rain in the time of the latter rain. The LORD will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain, grass in the field for everyone. For the idols speak delusion; the diviners envision lies, and tell false dreams; they comfort in vain. Therefore the people wend their way like sheep; they are in trouble because there is no shepherd. "My anger is kindled against the shepherds, and I will punish the goatherds. For the LORD of hosts will visit His flock, the house of Judah, and will make them as His royal horse in the battle."

I went here because this shows that those who ask for it—sincerely—will get the rain that God promises. These people were obviously worshipping God. He wouldn't hear, or answer their prayers, if they were idolaters. So this is showing that it works the other way as well. If we do right, if we ask Him in sincerity and humility, He will give the rain in due season.

And you see, at the end of verse 2 and the beginning of verse 3 there, that God promised to punish the shepherds—a type of the ministry, or leaders in civil government—for leading their sheep into idolatry, and false ways, and lies and deceptions that won't produce any good for them—either now, or in the long run. So He is going to make His point; and one of the ways that He does this is by drought, lack of rain.

If these Old Testament passages make any indication of what the Two Witnesses will be preaching, just because of this thing of there being no rain, it will be very much like what Elijah was talking about. "You people have been serving false gods. We need to show you who the true God is." They'll be saying something very similar to, "The LORD, He is God."

Revelation 11: 6 also has another miracle, or curse, in it. That is, the one where water is turned to blood. This is obviously one of the miracles, or plagues, of Moses upon the Egyptians. To me, this one is not as blatantly pointed as the one on the withholding of rain. But there are some things that we can pull from the context here that may reveal a few possible reasons for this particular plague.

Exodus 7:14-15 So the LORD said to Moses: "Pharaoh's heart is hard; he refuses to let the people go. Go to Pharaoh in the morning, when he goes out to the water, and you shall stand by the river's bank to meet

him; and the rod which was turned to a serpent you shall take in your hand."

Just think of the movie [The Ten Commandments] with Charlton Heston and Yul Brunner. They are down by the riverside. Yul Brunner is doing his duty as high priest of the religion. He's going to purify the waters of the Nile. There's the great idol there, spewing out the water. And Moses and Aaron come up, and they do this.

Exodus 7:16-17 And you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness;" but indeed, until now you would not hear! Thus says the LORD: "By this you shall know that I am the LORD."

That's very interesting. Didn't we say, in one of the first sermons, that this is how things happen? We only find out after such things like this occur what God really wants us to learn, and by them we understand who the true God is. It's very much like what happened with Elijah and the 450 prophets of Baal.

Exodus 7:17-19 "Behold, I will strike the waters which are in the river with the rod that is in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood. And the fish that are in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink the water of the river." Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood.

Notice that it wasn't just the Nile. It was all the water in these particular pieces of the landscape.

Exodus 7:19-20 And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in buckets of wood and pitchers of stone." [Notice how far it went!] And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the LORD commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And the waters that were in the river were turned to blood.

Now, I get the impression from the movie that this just kind of went out from Aaron's rod and slowly overtook the whole land. But from the Bible I get the impression that it was just about immediate. He struck the waters, and [immediately] they all turned to blood. That would have been an incredible sight.

Exodus 7:21-25 The fish that were in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was

blood throughout all the land of Egypt. [That's very significant. He said that twice.] Then the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments [They copycat the miracle, so to speak.]; and Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said. And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. Neither was his heart moved by this. So all the Egyptians dug all around the river for water to drink, because they could not drink of the water of the river. And seven days passed after the LORD had struck the river.

It doesn't say that, when they dug by the river, that they got clean water; but I imagine they did—because we couldn't go seven days without water. If the vessels that they had filled with water had turned to blood, they wouldn't have had any water to drink. So God must have given them this 'out' But they really had to work for their water, to get it. So it's a very interesting scenario that we have here.

These are the things that I've distilled out of this that may be reasons for turning water to blood. The first is found in the very first sentence of this section. Pharaoh's heart is hard, and he refuses to let the people go. God would give this kind of plague because of obstinate rebellion against Him. He hates a stubborn and froward heart. He's said that in many places. He desires in us a soft, pliable, yielding heart. He wants to take out of us the heart of stone and to give us a heart of flesh. He wants us to be receptive to Him. He wants us to be yielded and submitting to Him.

Psalms 95:7-11 For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. [This is who He is talking to here, now.] Today, if you will hear His voice: "Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, when your fathers tested Me; they tried Me, though they saw My work. For forty years I was grieved with that generation, and said, 'It is a people who go astray in their hearts, and they do not know My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'"

Then Paul, or whoever is the author of Hebrews, says in chapter 4 that their bodies were strewn in the wilderness. They died. And all this was the result of a hard heart, a heart that would not yield to God. Just as it kept all but two (as far as we understand) out of the Promised Land—Joshua and Caleb—so this hard heart can keep *us* from God's Kingdom. *If* God sees this in any extent (and it's certainly very visible in the world—this hardness of heart, this stubborn obstinate refusal to obey God), *then* He promises something like this turning the waters to blood.

In Exodus 7:17, just like the other miracle that Elijah did, this turning the waters to blood reveals the true God. In this case, the Egyptian magicians were in some way able to counterfeit it. I don't know how. It was a trick. That's kind of the sense of verse 22, when it says that they did so with their enchantments or their secret arts. It was a magician's trick, and they were able to convince Pharaoh that they could duplicate this turning the waters to blood. I don't

know how they did it. It doesn't say.

But this type of plague should reveal the true God to anyone who sees it. This is very much contrary to nature, the natural order of things. That is, for something like water (which is pure, drinkable, brings life, cleans us up) to suddenly turn to this mass of blood (which stinks, the fish could not live in the blood, and it just defiled everything). It is the true God who is the Provider of all things. He's the One who gives fresh water to drink. He also supplied the fish and whatever else depended upon the waters of the Nile.

Psalms 65:9 You [God] visit the earth and water it, You greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; You provide their grain, for so You have prepared it.

God, being God—the Master of His Creation—can also turn it to blood, unless it reveals Him as Creator and Provider. As I began to mention just a minute ago, there's another thing that this may be pointing at. In this case, blood is a sign of death and defilement. Normally we think of Leviticus 17, where the life is in the blood. But, in this case, water represents life. You can't drink blood and be nourished by it (unless you are a vampire, and those really don't exist). We drink water. Water is what fills us. It gives us the energy that we need. It lubricates us and does all these other things. We can't live without water. We can live without food for a lot longer than we can live without water.

Water also has the ability to clean us. We use it every day. I know that I use gallons and gallons of it in the shower, just cleaning my body; and it's not even that dirty. We have a clean fetish here in this country that is beyond what most nations and peoples have had throughout history. And the only ones that I have read of in my readings of history that have even come close are the Egyptians. They had a clean fetish. They wanted to bathe often, several times a day. And if they didn't bathe fully, they had ablutions that would clean parts of their bodies to make them pure. It was part of their religion.

When this water was turned to blood, they could not clean themselves for seven days. Notice that it was seven days when one had to go without an omission of blood, the women especially. Their length of time when they were defiled in the wilderness after their customary impurity, as it said, was seven days. And so God made this particular miracle, or plague, last for seven days. The whole length of that impurity was to show how *impure* the Egyptians actually were.

When we say that somebody is a bloody man, or that they shed blood, it means that he is a killer. It means that death has occurred. This is my own interpretation, but I think this particular first plague was a foreshadowing of the death of thousands—maybe millions—of Egyptians. That really came to pass with the tenth plague, when the firstborn were killed. No blood was shed. As far as I know, they just died by some sort of God-inspired sickness. I don't know what it was. The Death Angel came over, and they died. But this first plague was a foreshadowing of all the blood that was necessary to bring His people out of this world.

It may even have been a foreshadowing of the blood of Jesus Christ that was necessary to free mankind. It is by His blood that we are forgiven, and justified, and brought into God's presence.

This amount of blood—in gallons and multiple millions of gallons of blood—would be an awful but very striking sign of what it takes to forgive sin; and, of course, Egypt was full of it—specifically, idolatry again.

It makes a very interesting thought about why these particular curses. (1) Lack of rain and (2) water turned to blood are the ones that the Two Witnesses are shown doing in this prophecy. So I just thought I'd drop that into your laps, so you could think about it. There are, it says, other miracles that they do. It doesn't say specifically but these two are the ones that God highlights. So we see *idolatry, not knowing the true God, and the need for forgiveness*. These are the things that the world actually needs to hear, and to be shown by these miracles.

So overall these miracles show just how far the world is from God and why the judgment of Christ as He returns has to happen. And remember these are witnesses. These are men that come to warn the world, to give them the knowledge that they need so that they can have some understanding of what's going on, so that they are without excuse before the throne of God when they finally come before it. These witnesses tell them—by these signs, as well as through words (I'm sure)—that they are utterly rebellious against God. They don't know Him. They need to know Him. They need to know Him quick! They are utterly defiled and sentenced to death unless something happens. It's very scary. And then they are given this *carte blanche* authority to do whatever is necessary. These are not going to be fun times, especially if things like this happen around the world in any frequency.

It's also notable that both of these plagues have to do with water. *Water* is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. One is the lack of it, and the other is the defiling of it. In a way, as I've said, these signs show the spiritual state of mankind. They either reject God totally—meaning the lack of rain. Or they twist and defile what they accept of His truth, and they turn it into an abomination—which is symbolized, I think, by the water turning to blood. There's water there, but it is defiled.

Revelation 11:4-6 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.

I read those again because there are clear references to *types* there. Types of things that happened in the Old Testament. Types of people that served God in the Old Testament. Types of visions that occurred in the Old Testament. There's constant looking back to the Old Testament and to the prophets and what they did to give us clues about these Two Witnesses. So, to me these identifications with the miracles that Elijah and Moses did mean that we should look back into the Old Testament for clues about these Two Witnesses; and we've done that.

Certain things, like these miracles, have forced many commentators to conclude that they will literally be these two prophets—Elijah and Moses. But God has *never* worked that way! God has never resurrected somebody from way in the past, and brought them to a time that they knew

nothing about, and given them this authority to preach. Every time God acts, He uses someone from that particular time—from that particular era—who has grown up in that particular milieu, that particular environment, so that they are prepared for the work that they need to do. So I cannot see that Moses and Elijah will be resurrected and brought to do this work. They would be 'fish out of water.' They would have no idea of what was going on.

Some have said Enoch and Elijah, because Enoch and Elijah were both translated; and their deaths are very unknown. It doesn't say how they died, where they are buried, how long they lived necessarily. Their deaths are unrecorded. And in verse 4, here's another one. It specifically compares them to Zerubbabel and Joshua. In the first couple of sermons I said that they are very much like John and James, the sons of Zebedee, in the way they have that fiery zeal and this wanting to go out and do a great work for God.

As you know, as I've mentioned, my own view is that the Two Witnesses are actual men of the time. Not resurrected saints, not angels from heaven, not prophets brought back after living in heaven for a few thousand years. These are all things that people have thought that they might be. But they will fulfill types, or roles, or patterns that God has used in the past to proclaim His Word and to pronounce His judgments.

It's very rare that God springs something on us that He's not done in the past, or that He's not alluded to at least or prophesied that it will occur. He's very consistent. He works the same way. And that's one way that we can have faith in God, because we know this is always the way He works. Anything that doesn't fit the pattern, we can be suspicious about, because God's mind is the same. It says that He doesn't change these things. Jesus Christ—the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Now, God has worked in pairs from the very beginning. The ultimate type is the Father and the Son. They are a dynamic duo—the ultimate Dynamic Duo. God the Father and the Son (the Spokesman, the Logos, the One who appears and speaks and manages the affairs). But the Father is always there—giving His guidance and sitting on His throne governing. Like I said, that's the ultimate pair. "Two." "Couple," if you want. We usually use that in terms of male and female, but it means the same thing. They always work together.

When He created mankind, He created them as a pair—a male and female; and they do their work together to build a family. There are various other pairings in the Bible of prophets, kings, priests, or whatever the combination is throughout the Old Testament. I want to establish a principle here very quickly.

Deuteronomy 19:15 "One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.

God needed two witnesses to convict the world of sin here, at this time. They will be speaking the same thing. They will be backing it up with miracles and signs. This is the way He works. He follows His own law. His own law says that you need *two* witnesses, so He provides them—two witnesses at the end time. So let's look at a couple of these pairs.

Exodus 6:28-7:2 And it came to pass, on the day the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, that the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "I am the LORD. Speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you." But Moses said before the LORD, "Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh heed me?" So the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land."

Exodus 7:6-7 Then Moses and Aaron did so; just as the LORD commanded them, so they did. And Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.

He's not against using old codgers if He has to. Who knows whether He will in this case? It doesn't matter. Like Elijah, and Moses, and all those other prophets, they will have the energy to do what they need to do for the 3 ½ years that they are supposed to do it. So here we have our first pairing—Moses and Aaron. They function as *leader and spokesman*, much like God the Father and God the Son. Later they were paired as *prophet and high priest*, and they fulfilled those jobs.

Let's go to Exodus 17 and we'll see another pair. This one also has to do with Moses.

Exodus 17:8-10 Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men and go out, fight Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand." [That's interesting. "A reed like a rod." I'll just leave that where it is.] Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

Exodus 17:13 So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

Here, Joshua just appears out of nowhere. This is the first occurrence of Joshua's name. And it is Moses telling him, basically, "Why don't you be my general?" So here we have another pair, of Moses and Joshua— *leader and general*, and later *leader and protégé*. And it says in Deuteronomy 34 that, after Moses died, that Joshua was filled with all the wisdom of Moses.

Joshua 24:29-31 Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being one hundred and ten years old. And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Serah, which is in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the

works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.

Joshua 24:33 And Eleazar the son of Aaron died. They buried him in a hill belonging to Phinehas his son, which was given to him in the mountains of Ephraim.

Here's another pair—Joshua and Eleazar, the high priest. As leader and high priest, they function very much the same way as Moses and Aaron did. But this time it was a very critical period in their history, when they were founding the land of Israel and putting the tribes in their places. It was very critical in a time of God's purpose that this be done in a certain way. God chose these leaders to do these specific functions—a *leader and general*, and the other one as *high priest and teacher* of the people. And it says that while these two lived, and somewhat after their deaths, Israel did okay. Then we get into the book of the Judges, and things just went all to pieces.

It's worth noting, just for a moment, that Elijah was a solitary man. He had no one to help him in his work. Elisha came along a little bit later, but he was just the next one to go on. There's no indication in the Book that they worked together in any capacity for very long; while Moses, on the other hand, always worked with another person—whether it was Aaron, or whether it was Joshua.

Another interesting note is that at the time of Judah's fall, when things were going to pieces there, God had three prophets at work. He had *Jeremiah* in Jerusalem. He had *Daniel* in the court at Babylon, right there at Nebuchadnezzar's side. And He also had *Ezekiel* among the people, the captives by the river Chebar. So at that time nobody was without a witness. God provided witnesses. These three didn't actually work together; but, in a way, they did. They just didn't know it.

Another one is found in Ezra 5. We have to go all the way towards the end of the Old Testament period before we get another pairing. This one is pretty obvious.

Ezra 5:1 Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo...

It's interesting that they appeared about the same time, but they are not the ones that I am talking about.

Ezra 5:1-2 ...prophets, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them. So Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak rose up and began to build the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them, helping them.

So here is another duo—Zerubbabel and Joshua. One was the governor, the leader of the people. The other one was high priest. And it was they who were commissioned to bring the people together and, with these prophets, get the building of the temple done. We saw that,

after the people came back to Judah, they didn't do their work. So God had to raise up these prophets—*Haggai and Zechariah*. And He also raised up *Zerubbabel and Joshua* to do this work and get the temple completed; and they did. They had to. They were reestablishing the people of Judah in the land. They were getting the temple done so that the Messiah could come back to be born in a land of Jews where there was a functioning temple.

John 3:28 "You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.'"

John 3:30-31 "He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all..."

John 3:32 "And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony."

He is a witness. That's what a witness does. A witness testifies. He gives testimony.

John 3:33 "He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true."

That sounds very, very much like what Elijah preached on Mount Carmel—that the LORD, He is God.

John 3:35-36 "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Another clue to the preaching of the Two Witnesses. They'll be preaching judgment. You either have God abiding in you, or you don't. If you don't, watch out! So we have *Jesus and John the Baptist*, which you might say goes right back to God and His prophet, or His forerunner. And it's very interesting that John the Baptist is very clearly identified with Elijah.

Mark 6:7 And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power.

Here we have Christ's disciples—later His apostles—being made into types of His Two Witnesses. And remember that I mentioned John and James, the sons of Zebedee, who had this fire in their belly to be witnesses for God. (Another couple of types of end time witnesses.)

Acts 12:25-13:1-2 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark. Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was

called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

Another two witnesses that were to go among the Gentiles and preach this testimony of God to give them the truth. They were so effective in Lystra, in chapter 14 (if you want to read that later), that they were thought to be Zeus and Hermes. That's the effect their preaching had upon the people.

Malachi 4:1-2 "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up," says the LORD of hosts, "That will leave them neither root nor branch. But you who fear My name the Son of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves."

I think that will be a great part of the message of the Two Witnesses. "Look, there are two ways. There is the great Day of the Lord that is coming, and watch out if you are sinful and rebelling against God. If you want, you can change. You can turn. You can repent. And the Son of Righteousness (obviously, Jesus Christ) will heal you—will convert you, will make you whole, will make you one of His. And you will prosper. And your life, then, will be eternal once that happens." Now notice what he tells them here:

Malachi 4:4-6 "Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. 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 the fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse [or, utter destruction]."

Look who is mentioned: Moses and Elijah. They seem to be the two main types that we are dealing with here. They are separated by 500 years in their physical lives, but their work goes together at the end time. That is, their different works.

Moses seems to be a prototype prophet and leader. Actually, The Prophet—Jesus Christ—was modeled after Moses. He is intimately connected, and has been since he died, with the law and with the judgments. When you talk of Moses, immediately the law comes to mind. He was the one who received the Ten Commandments from God. And so he seems to have that law, judgment, administrative-type of strength.

Now, Elijah is the prototype herald of God. He's the one that announces. "God is coming. This is the true God." He's a forerunner, a spokesman that warns of approaching judgment, a fiery

preacher of repentance and righteousness. Like it says there in Malachi 3:1:

Malachi 3:1 "Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant."

It's obviously speaking there about His first coming, but there are intimations of the second.

Malachi 3:2 "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears?"

That's obviously a reference to His second coming, and that is part of the message of these Two Witnesses.

Matthew 17:1-5 [This is obviously the Transfiguration.] Now after six days Jesus took [Notice who He takes.] 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, [Guess who.] Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. 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." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

What He was doing here was showing that there was one greater than Moses and Elijah. But I'd like to mention that this is very similar to the two olive trees standing beside the candlestick in Zechariah 4:11-14. Maybe this was put in here this way to give us a clue about the personalities and the responsibilities, the preaching, the miracles, etc. that the Two Witnesses will do. That one of these Two Witnesses will be very much like Moses in the way that he approaches things. The other one will be very much like Elijah.

The one who is Moses I believe will be what we would say "the leader" of the two. He will, I think, have the strengths of a governor—of one who can command men, of one who can organize and get things done, move people towards a goal. And the other, though subordinate to him, will be a fiery preacher. He'll be the one that will be front and center to the public in most cases, just like Aaron was before Moses. Or, in a way, just like John the Baptist was—how fiery his preaching was. He attracted great crowds with his fiery preaching, but he was actually the 'warm up act' for a far greater One.

That's how I see these Two Witnesses. One like Moses, and the other a spokesman like Elijah. In this way, these are like Moses and Aaron. However, the Aaron figure will be more vocal and assertive—like Elijah or John the Baptist. That's just how I see them. But they'll be the

culmination of many of these other types and patterns, because in a way this is the pinnacle of God's witness to the world—especially at this time, if not for all time. Then, once they prepare the way, Jesus Christ can come and do the real witnessing.