

# Better Way Apostolic Church- Bible Class

## Subject: The Testimony of the Two Witnesses Revelation 11:1-14

### Training for life

When Dean Karnazes completed the 26.5 mile New York Marathon in November 2006, it marked the end of an almost impossible feat of endurance. Karnazes had run 50 marathons in 50 states in 50 days. This exceptional athlete's ultra-endurance feats include: running 350 continuous miles, mountain biking for 24 hours straight, and swimming across San Francisco Bay. The level of fitness requires relentless, dedicated training.

### Spiritual Training

Spiritual fitness, Paul told Timothy, also takes much more than a relax approach to live a God honoring life. In a culture marked by false teaching, alone with extreme forms of self-indulgence and self-denial, Paul wrote: Exercise (**train**) yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come ( 1 Timothy 4:7-8).

Our bodies and our minds are to be dedicated to God and prepared for His service (**Romans 12:1-2**). The goal is not spiritual muscle-flexing but godliness- a life that is pleasing to the Lord. Vigorous study of the Word, focused prayer, and bodily discipline are all part of the process.

How well we train greatly affects how well we run our race for life. Godly exercise is the key to godly character.

### Obedience -Man's Great Power

When J. Wilbur Chapman was in London, he had an opportunity to meet General Booth, who at that time was past 80 years of age. Dr. Chapman listened reverently as the old general spoke of the trials and the conflicts and the victories he had experienced.

The American evangelist then asked the general if he would disclose his secret for success. "He hesitated a second," Dr. Chapman said, "and I saw the tears come into his eyes and steal down his cheeks," and then he said, "I will tell you the secret. God has had all there was of me. There have been men with greater brains than I, men with greater opportunities; but from the day I got the poor of London on my heart, and a vision of what Jesus Christ could do with the poor of London, I made up my mind that He would have all of William Booth there was. And if there is anything of power in the Salvation Army today, it is because God has all the adoration of my heart, all the power of my will, and all the influence of my life."

Dr. Chapman said he went away from that meeting with General Booth knowing "that the greatness of a man's power is the measure of his surrender."

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**The ministry of the witnesses** (vv. 1-6). The place is Jerusalem and the time is the first half of the Tribulation. Israel is worshiping again at its restored temple, built under the protection of the Antichrist, whose true character has not yet been revealed. To spiritualize Revelation 11:1-2 and make the temple refer to the church creates a number of serious problems. For one thing, how could John measure an invisible body of people, even if the church were still on earth? If the temple is the church, then who are the worshipers and what is the altar? And since the church unites Jews and Gentiles in one body (Ephesians 2:11), why are the Gentiles segregated in this temple? It seems wisest to interpret this temple as an actual building in the holy city of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 11:1,18; Daniel 9:24).

**John's measurement of the temple is a symbolic action.** To measure something means to claim it for yourself. When we sold our house, the new owners brought in an architect to measure various areas and recommend possible changes. Had the architect shown up previous to the buyers' commitment, we would have thrown him out. The Lord was saying through John, "I own this city and this temple, and I claim both for Myself!" The Old Testament background is found in Ezekiel 40-41 and Zechariah 2:1-3.

**What John did was especially significant because the Gentiles had taken over Jerusalem.**

Antichrist had broken his agreement with Israel (Daniel 9:27) and now he was about to use the temple for his own diabolical purposes (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). All of this will be elaborated in Revelation 13. "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles," said Jesus, "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). The "times of the Gentiles" began in 606 B.C. when Babylon began to devastate Judah and Jerusalem, and it will continue until Jesus Christ returns to deliver the Holy City and redeem Israel (Zechariah 14).

### **Two Witness**

Note that the two witnesses minister during the first half of the Tribulation (Revelation 11:3; 1,260 days). Jerusalem is then overrun by the Gentiles for forty-two months, the last half of the Tribulation.

Their witness is related to Israel and the temple. How tragic that the power of God and the Word of God will be outside the temple and not within as in former ages. Like the temple that Jesus left, this new house will be desolate (**Matthew 23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. KJV**). These two men are specifically called prophets (Revelation 11:3,6), and I take this to mean prophetic ministry in the Old Testament sense, calling the nations to repent and return to the true God of Israel.

**Revelation 11:3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.**

**Revelation 11:6 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.**

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Not only do these witnesses declare God's words, but they also do God's works and perform miracles of judgment, **reminding us of both Moses and Elijah** (Exodus 7:14-18; 1 Kings 17:1 ff; 2 Kings 1:1-12). Some students cite Malachi 4:5-6 as evidence that one of the witnesses may be Elijah, but Jesus applied that prophecy to John the Baptist (Matthew 17:10-13). John the Baptist, however, denied that he was Elijah returned to earth (John 1:21,25; also Luke 1:16-17). This confusion may be explained in part by realizing that throughout Israel's history, God sent special messengers - "Elijahs" - to call His people to repentance; so in this sense, Malachi's prophecy will be fulfilled by the witnesses.

Instead of relating the ministry of the witnesses to Moses and Elijah, the angel who spoke to John connected their ministry with Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest (Zechariah 4). These two men helped to reestablish Israel in Palestine and to rebuild the temple. It was a discouraging task, and the Gentiles made it even more difficult; but God provided the special power they needed to get the work done. This truth is an encouragement to God's servants in all ages, for the work of the Lord is never easy.

Here is 18 facts identify the 2 witness:

1. They are two men, not covenants, dispensation, etc. Revelation 11:3
2. They are Christ witness Vs. 3
3. They will be given power in the future when they come to the earth. Vs.3 This does not require them to be men who have already exercised this power.
4. They will be prophets (v 3,10)
5. They will prophesy the last 42 months, 1260 days, 31/2 years of this age. V 2-3 12:6, 14 13:5 Dan. 7:25 12:7
6. They will be clothed in sackcloth v.3
7. They are symbolized by two olive trees and two candlesticks which stand before God v.4 Zech. 4:11-14
8. They were already in heaven when Zechariah prophesied, about 500 years before Christ (Zech.4;11-14).
9. John saw them in heaven about 96 A.D. so whoever they are they are two men translated to reside in heaven at least 500 years before Christ. This would exclude John the Baptist, John the Apostle, and every other man living after 500 B.C.
10. They will be invincible for 31/2 years of their ministry (5-7).
11. They will have power to destroy their enemies the same way their enemies seek to destroy them v.5 .
12. They will be able to cause fire to come out of their mouths to devour their enemies v.5 .
13. They will have power to stop rain all the days of their prophecy v.6.
14. They will have power to turn the water into blood and smite the earth with plagues as often as they will v.6.
15. When the 1260 days of ministry is finished the supernatural angelic spirit out of the abyss will use the human Antichrist to kill them. V.7.

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16. Since it is appointed unto men once to die (Heb. 9:27). It is certain that they are two men who have never died so that they can die at the hands of the Antichrist in the future. This excludes Moses or any other man who has already died as one of the witness.
17. They will remain dead for 3 1/2 days and they will be resurrected. The further proves that they will not be resurrected, immortal men when they come from heaven to begin their ministry.
18. There would seem to be only two men in the Bible who could fulfil these facts about the two witnesses. They are Enoch and Elijah.

## **Obedience**

**The martyrdom of the witnesses** (vv. 7-10). This comes only when they have finished their testimony. God's obedient servants are immortal until their work is done. "The beast" (Antichrist) is now in power and wants to take over the temple; but he cannot succeed until the two witnesses are out of the way. God will permit him to slay them, for no one will be able to make war against "the beast" and win (Revelation 13:4).

The witnesses will not even be permitted decent burial (Psalms 79:1-3).

**1 O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.**

**2 The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.**

**3 Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them.**

But even this indecency will be used by God to bear witness to mankind. No doubt the TV cameras in Jerusalem will transmit the scene to people around the world, and the news analysts will discuss its significance. The earth-dwellers will rejoice at their enemies' removal and will celebrate a "satanic Christmas" by sending gifts to one another. It thus would appear that the power of the two witnesses will not be limited to Jerusalem, but that they will be able to cause things to happen in other parts of the world.

**In the middle the Devil will turn on you:**

**These two prophets will definitely have a relationship with Israel; and the world,** for the most part, has not approved of the nation Israel. In the middle of the Tribulation, "the beast" will turn against Israel and begin to persecute the Jews. The two witnesses will not be around to protect the nation and a frightening anti-Semitic movement will ensue.

**Jerusalem is called a "great city" (Revelation 11:8); and from a human viewpoint, this is a true statement.** But God looks at men and nations from a spiritual viewpoint.

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**To Him, Jerusalem will be considered as polluted and worldly as Sodom and as rebellious and proud as Egypt.**

**The resurrection of the witnesses** (vv. 11-14). Miraculously, the two witnesses are not only raised from the dead, but caught up into heaven! God rescues them from their enemies and gives a solemn witness to the watching world. The world's great joy suddenly becomes great fear. (Note the word great in Revelation 11, repeated eight times.)

**Are we to interpret the three-and-a-half days literally?** Or does the phrase simply mean "after a short time"? It seems too specific to mean that. Does it symbolize a longer period, say three-and-a-half years? It is not likely that two dead bodies would be kept lying in a city street for more than three years. Perhaps this is a picture of a rapture of all the saints in the midst of the Tribulation, and the three-and-a-half years covers the first half of the period. If so, then what is symbolized by the death of the two witnesses? This interpretation solves one problem only to create another.

These days appear to be literal days, just as the forty-two months in Revelation 11:2 are literal months. The Bible does not explain why this length of time was chosen and it is useless for us to speculate.

**Our Lord's friends watched Him ascend to heaven (Acts 1:9-12), but the witnesses' enemies will see them resurrected and will be shaken with fear.** Their fear will increase when a great earthquake occurs, killing 7,000 men and destroying a tenth part of Jerusalem. A great earthquake occurred when the sixth seal was opened (Revelation 6:12), and there will be a greater one when the seventh vial is poured out (Revelation 16:18-20).