

It is almost impossible to write a study for the internet in which you dot all the "I"s and cross all the "T"s.

If you make the study too detailed, everyone goes to a more exciting room. If you leave out too much, the readers think you are teaching doctrines that are unbiblical. Catch 22 <smile>

So here is the offer. If the Holy Spirit quickens your heart to the possibility that these studies are true and you want to know more, please go to www.fish-house.com and tell them you talked to elskon on the net.

Ask them to please send you a copy of their latest book on Bible prophecy. They will do so for FREE. Make sure you tell them I made the offer or they will bill you for it.

Now for tonight's study on the Two Witnesses.

That most of Revelation is figurative is easily proven. In Rev 1:20, candlesticks=churches. stars=messengers and there are many more such figures in the book.

Words that show a passage should be taken figuratively appear over 80 times in Revelation: Those words are

"like"

"as"

"like unto"

"I was in the spirit"

Biblical visions have never been literal. All of them are figurative.

The Two Witnesses are figurative as well. They are witnesses alright, but they are not two Old Testament come back to life, as is often supposed . . .

Rev 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.

In the Old Testament, people clothed themselves in sackcloth when they were in mourning because of the death of loved ones or when they were faced with a great trial. So these witnesses will be suffering tribulation.

Rev 11:4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

Now we have already mentioned what candlesticks are, but here is the verse . . .

Rev 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

Stars = Angels (messengers)

Candlesticks = Churches

The above isn't creative theology. That's exactly what Rev 1:20 states. Biblically, candlesticks is a symbol for Churches and Stars is a symbol for messengers.

Now if seven candlesticks are seven churches in Rev 1, then two candlesticks in Rev 11 are also churches unless God changes the definition of candlesticks somewhere in between those two verses

Guess what, He didn't. So the Two Witnesses are two Churches.

But which Churches are they? Well there is another figure in that verse that tells us: Olive Trees!

Now olive trees do appear in Zechariah, but we don't go to the Old Testament to find the definition of a New Testament figure when there's a New Testament definition that fits perfectly:

Rom 11:24 For if thou (the Gentile Church) wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree (Israel),

how much more shall these (Jews), which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

Rom 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

Plain as day, the two olive trees are the Jewish People of the Christian Era and the Gentile Church. So those are the Two Witnesses.

Now some say the Jews can't be one of the witnesses because they rejected the Lord. but that is not what the Bible says . . .

Rom 11:28 As concerning the gospel, they (the Jews) are enemies for your (Gentiles) sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.

Notice they are enemies of the Gospel, but still elect.

The Greek words ekloge and eklektos appear 19 times in the New Testament. Both mean divine selection. In every instance, those words refer to God's people and refer to their unshakable redemption in Him.

So the Jews of the Christian Era are elect by the sovereign will of God, just like we are.

Rom 11:29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Were the Jews ever God's chosen people? Of course. Then according to Romans 11, they still are. Now I didn't write the above verses, God did, but I didn't try to interpret them away. I just believed them. <smile>

Now how about those 1260 days they were going to witness? Well the Jews were driven away from their temple site in 688AD. They returned, established the new nation of Israel, and began praying at the wailing wall in 1948.

688AD + 1260 = 1948AD

So the time of the Two Witnesses to the Gentile world is over. Oh, we are here and some still witness, but that prophetic time, as established by God, is indeed over.

As we will see in some future lesson, we are now in Daniel's "the time of the end."

Rev 11:7 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.

Some say that isn't happening? This may be a spiritual death as well as a physical one. Islam is the fastest growing religion on Earth. In England, more Moslems go into mosques than Christians go into churches.

Again estimates vary, but in Europe, the cradle of the Reformation, less than 5% of the population still hold fast to the faith. Their great cathedrals either empty or used as tourist attractions.

Estimates vary, but worldwide, it appears that about 30,000 Christians a week are dying for Jesus' name, mostly murdered by Moslems. If a Saudi native is found to be a Christian in Arabia, he is beheaded.

Millions of Christians have been slaughtered in the Sudan, Indonesia, Nigeria and the Middle East, mostly by Moslems.

With those facts in mind, "shall overcome them, and kill them," makes a little more sense, doesn't it?

I sure am glad Jesus is returning soon. There will be a time of trial at the end and we Christians will be here during it, but the Lord has not forgotten how to protect His Children . . .

Isa 26:20 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

Isa 26:21 For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

Isa 27:1 In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that *is* in the sea.

At the end of this chapter we see another reference to the last trumpet. So we will be here when these events take place.

With the exception of the "hour of trial," I know of very little prophecy that still needs to be fulfilled. Jesus' return is at hand, He is right at the door.