

Who are the two witnesses?

“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth.” Revelation 11,3;

The Bible says nothing directly about the identity and origin of the two witnesses. Their story bears a striking resemblance to that of Jesus. Their three-and-a-half-year public ministry to all nations is the same length as Jesus’ public ministry among the Jews. After three and a half years, they will be executed like Jesus, and like him, they will be raised on the third day. Their ascension into heaven in a cloud is also similar (Rev 11:11–12). Paul writes about Jesus’ origin in his letter to the Romans: *“Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the descendants of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”* (Rom 1:3–4)

Jesus himself suggests that he comes from heaven:

“Saying, What think you of Christ? whose son is he? They said unto him, The son of David. He said unto them, How then does David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit on my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool? If David then called him Lord, how is he his son? 46And no man was able to answer him a word, neither dared any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.” (Matthew 22:42–45)

What about the identities of the two witnesses? Could one of them really be Moses? We can find the answer here by realizing that Moses died and was buried. Jude's letter mentions Moses' body, over which Satan contended with the archangel Michael. The Apostle Paul writes that: *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* This means that whoever has died has already been paid for their sin. If Moses were one of the two witnesses who must die in a manner similar to Jesus, then he would likely be the first person to die twice before the coming of God's kingdom in power. Yet the second death is not mentioned until Revelation (Rev 20:5), in connection with God's judgment of all, after a thousand years of God's reign. So in the case of Moses, this would be a contradiction and perhaps even a violation of the principle of justice. The answer to the question regarding the identification of the two witnesses must be sought in Jesus' words to the apostles during his transfiguration on the mountain. *"And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come? 11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elijah truly shall first come, and restore all things. 12 But I say unto you, That Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they desired. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. 13 Then the disciples understood that he spoke unto them of John the Baptist."* (Mt 17:10–13)

Here, Jesus says that Elijah has already come in the person of John the Baptist. The name Elijah is used here as a symbol of the mission that Elijah is to fulfill, according to the prophet

Malachi, whom Jesus quotes (Mal 3:23–24; Mal 4:5–6¹). “Elijah” is a person with a mission, a task to “restore all things,” a person who could be anyone God chooses. The same can be expected in the case of Moses, who brought the law. That is his mission. Is it even possible to determine who will actually fulfill the roles of both witnesses, and is it even important?

This is important because it is an extraordinary example of God’s justice and also helps us understand the significance of the role of a witness. We already know that the word “martyrs” means witness, witness of blood, and martyr. It is written that the two witnesses will prophesy for three and a half years. Why, then, are they not referred to as two prophets? Because their primary role is to bear witness. To what? Let’s say, to what happened during their lifetime. But how much can one person experience during their short life? Even if they lived to be 120 years old, would that be enough to bear witness in a dispute that has been going on since Adam and Eve? Hardly. For God to bring the entire dispute to a close, humanity must be made aware of the living testimony regarding the role the serpent played in the dispute between God and His adversary in Eden, and the development of humanity leading up to the Flood and beyond. People have the right to know the truth. So that they can freely decide whose side of the dispute they want to take. Of course, this would mean that both witnesses would have to live much

¹ Some Czech and foreign-language translations divide the Book of Malachi into four chapters; therefore, to be on the safe side, we are also listing the verses quoted by Jesus in both types of translations.

longer than the normal human lifespan. Where would such people come from? Does anyone like that even exist? ... They do. There are two people. Enoch and Elijah. Regarding Enoch, it is literally stated: *“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”* (Heb 11:5)

The second man who was taken up to God is Elijah: *“And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for you, before I be taken away from you. And Elisha said, I pray you, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and separated them both; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”* (2 Kings 2:9, 11)

How can we be sure that it is indeed them, Enoch and Elijah?

1. Neither of them died, even though they were born with original sin. And yet God said that every human being must die, because our first parents fell into death, and with them all their descendants. This includes Enoch and Elijah. Their martyrdom at the end of their mission will fulfill this law of God.
2. Both were taken up to God.
3. Both can bear witness to times long past.
4. Both will ascend into heaven before the eyes of the whole world, thereby fulfilling Jesus' somewhat obscure words: *“No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven—the Son of Man, who is in heaven.”*

Why can we say that they descended to earth? It is said of them: *“These are the two olive trees, and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.”* (Rev 11:4), which is a clear reference to the prophecy of Zechariah (Zech 4:11–14): *“... Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the lampstand and upon its left side? And I answered again, and said unto him, What are these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes pour out the golden oil? And he answered me and said, Know you not what these are? And I said, No, my lord. Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”*

And in Revelation (Rev 10:1–4) we read: *“And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little scroll open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.”*

That mighty angel (messenger) bears certain characteristics, such as those of Jesus as described at the Transfiguration on the mountain and in Daniel’s description of the man clothed in linen (Daniel, chapter 10). The two feet shining like bronze are the two witnesses who descended from heaven; one goes

to God's people—that is the foot standing on the earth—and the other stands in the sea of nations².

Enoch and Elijah are thus the only ones who fulfill all the requirements to testify against God's adversary here on earth. They are direct witnesses of times long past. Originally sons of man, they were taken up to heaven so that they might not know death, and they will descend to earth as the Son of Man of whom Jesus spoke, so that after their resurrection they may be taken up to heaven, just as Jesus was. Their martyrdom also fulfills God's law that every person must die for sin³.

² *“And he said unto me, The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.”*

³ Even those from the Great Multitude who emerge from the great tribulation cleansed of sin will undergo a trial that borders on death. Just as when Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his only son, God stopped his hand at the last moment, and it was regarded as if the sacrifice had been made.