

About Last Days witnesses and singers

The closer we approach the *coming, unique, last days*, the more decisive it will be for *us as the church* to become more and more *fully in tune* with God in His perspective and His actions in all of this. It is amazing *how much* His Word and even *Jesus Personally* speaks about this *last time* that is ahead of us: Not without reason, *because we would get raptured beforehand*, neither to frighten us, but to *prepare* us for this time, this culmination of world history where, by the way, (already now!) so many people are living on this planet and have access to the gospel and the bible as never before. It is *this time* which undoubtedly brings great challenges with it, in which everything will be shaken that cannot remain before God (cf. Hebr 12: 26f.), but which *above all* will be characterized by a glory, a revelation of God, a supernatural lifestyle, miracles and acts of power like never before. In which will be fulfilled, what *the exodus of Israel out of Egypt* was only a mere foreshadow of. When God will finally bring *likewise His present, worldwide people* out of a system that enslaves them through sin and keeps them from their true vocation. When, in the midst of judgment and plague, a bride *purified by fire, victoriously gone through desert times*, will emerge, ready for her appearing bridegroom. (Cf. Ezek 20:35ff.; Song 8:5)

On the one hand, the Antichrist will be given power to “make war” with the saints and defeat them in great parts (cf. Rev 13, 7:10, Dan 7:21, 8:24, 12: 7), whereby many believers will not love their lives so much as to even shrink from death. (Cf. Rev 7:14; 12:11; Mt 24: 9.14: “**Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. (...) And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.**”

On the other hand - *as the last verse expresses* - the church of God will also enter into a *spiritual maturity, strength and witnessing power in front of the entire world* like never before!

Among others, by two prophets who - *as back then Moses and Aaron* - will likewise challenge the *coming antichristian ruler, along with his global empire*, with great signs and wonders; whereas God - *as back then in Egypt* - will still *make a difference* as to *protect and preserve* his people. Far beyond that, however, the entire congregation of saints will be an extremely impressive testimony to the existence, nature, and power of the living God, Who, *in the midst of these final “birth pangs”*, will inexorably bring to birth His eternal kingdom!

1. God's witness

The Gentiles “**will trample on the holy city for 42 months. And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.**” They are “**the two olive trees” and the two lampstands, and “they stand before the Lord of the earth.**” If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. They have power to shut up the heavens so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want. Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. Their bodies will lie in the public square of the great city—which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt—where also their Lord was crucified. For three and a half days some from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth. But after the three and a half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on. At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.” (Rev 11: 2-13)

The signs that they are going to perform strongly remind of *Moses* (who *changed the water of the Nile into blood*) and *Elijah* (at whose word *it did not rain for three years and fire fell from the sky in sight of the entire apostate people* – cf. 1 Kings 17:1, 18), in whose spirit and strength they will act (unless the former even come back *personally*), just as *Elisha* and *John the Baptists* already did before them. Thus, *just as in Elijah's lifetime*, also *shortly before Jesus' return* there will be a massive demonstration of divine power and preeminence through *these extraordinarily anointed prophets*; combined with a clear and powerful proclamation of a message of *judgment, repentance and turnaround for eternal salvation* to a world forfeited to the antichrist. Especially in *the city* where already *Jesus* testified to the truth, gave His life and rose from the dead.

Yet, the Bible indicates that these “two witnesses” are much more beyond the individuals mentioned above:

A key verse which literally reveals their identity is Rev 11:4, where it says: **“They are the two olive trees” and the two lampstands, and “they stand before the Lord of the earth.”**

When it comes to *images*, the Bible is always explained best by *itself*; so let's actually look at what these symbols are meaning:

Already the prophet Zechariah sees - *besides a golden candlestick* - also *two olive trees, which however are one*, about which he asks: **“What are these two olive trees”** or **“What are these two branches of the olive trees (...) Then he said, “These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”** (Zech 4: 11-14 ESV)

The term “anointed ones” (literally: “sons of oil”) strongly reminds of the word “Messiah” (Greek: “Christ”). In a sense, therefore, it indicates *His descendants*, who are filled with His Spirit and called by His name, be they “*Messianic*” Jews or “*Christians*”. Especially those who *intimately know and serve their God*.

Even earlier it is said in Jer 11:16f. about *YHWH's ever since and eternally chosen people Israel*: **“The Lord called you a thriving olive tree with fruit beautiful in form. (...) The Lord Almighty, who planted you, has decreed disaster for you, because the people of both Israel and Judah have done evil and aroused my anger...”**

Here the olive tree symbolizes *the two houses of Israel*, which, however, separated early in history, with “*Judah*” later returning to the land, other than *the northern kingdom of “Israel or Joseph/Ephraim”*, which remained scattered and mainly merged with the other peoples.

Finally also *the Letter to the Romans* speaks of the noble olive tree *Israel*, to which people from the nations **“have been grafted in among the others”**. (Romans 11:17)

- What altogether makes clear that *this image* always speaks about *a multitude of people*, specifically *God's believing community* - of *on the one hand the Jews* and *on the other hand the nations*.

Similarly, the other image of the *golden, seven-branched candelabrum* is revealed at the end of the Bible, where it is said: **“The mystery (...) of the seven golden lampstands is this:**

The (...) seven lampstands are the seven churches.” (Rev 1,20)

Again here, *the church of God* is meant, His holy people consisting of believing Jews and Gentiles. As Jesus said before: **“You are the light of the world.”** (Mt 5:14)

And: **“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”** (Mt 5,16)

According to these pictures the *two witnesses* are thus *God's saints out of the two “sheep pens”*, which, however, finally **“shall be one flock”** under **“one shepherd.”** (Jn 10:16)

So God already speaks to *Israel* in the past:

““You are my witnesses,” declares the Lord, “and my servant whom I have chosen (...) You are my witnesses,” declares the Lord, “that I am God.” (Is 43, 10-12, cf. 44:8)

- And even *today's, largely unbelieving Israel* is nevertheless already a witness to the whole world for the faithfulness of God and the reliability of His Word, which He obviously fulfills on them as they return to their land and thrive as a nation. (Cf. Ez 36: 20-38)

In parallel, Yeshua also speaks to *His church*: “**you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem (...) and to the ends of the earth.**” (Acts 1: 8)

A witness is someone who really *knows his God* and who himself is a living proof of Him. And despite the many *past and present* negative examples, the church of Jesus, *especially the true, Spirit-filled believers*, are still the greatest testimony to the true, saving God. Those who *already here and now* really “**stand before the Lord of the earth**” (Rev. 11:4), who are thus *radical worshipers*; who got into the habit of living constantly in the sight of God, who fear *Him alone* and not human beings. Who seek to fulfill *His expectations alone* and nothing else.

Accordingly, also *many attributes* of these two witnesses of God are first and foremost *images*: The sackcloth with which they will be clothed, *across the Bible* stands for *humiliation before the Most High, brokenness, penitence and repentance of sin, partly also in the consciousness of threatening divine judgment*. It shows that these *end time witnesses* have truly repented of their sin; have turned away from pride, self-righteousness, lukewarmness and compromise. Out of their own example will thus also call *others* to repentance.

The fire from their mouth which consumes their enemies must not necessarily be meant *more literally* than it is meant concerning Jeremiah, to whom God speaks: “**I will make my words in your mouth a fire and these people the wood it consumes.**” (Jer 5,14)

It does, however, show *the authority, anointing and power of their words*, which will ultimately in *deed* decide on life or death. (Cf. Ps 149: 6-9)

Undoubtedly, YHWH will grant these witnesses (or His *group* of witnesses!) tremendous, long time not seen “*authority*” (Rev. 11:3 *ESV*), which, *where necessary*, will be revealed even in *previously announced natural catastrophes* as they are described *particularly in the last book of the Bible*. As a final consequence of the obstinate impenitence and rebellion against Him, His law and His offer of mercy, which have all been despised in pride for too long.

This, in turn, will trigger the most violent wave of hate and persecution against the true followers of the Messiah that ever existed. Yet, believers will no longer be sneered at as harmless, hypocritical weirdos, but will be taken seriously because of their *God revealing works*; what will *either* radically attract people or repel them from their message about the coming Son of God, Judge and King.

For “**1,260 days**” (Rev. 11: 3), that is *three and a half years*, His witnesses will literally succeed Yeshua in doing their public ministry equal to Him, which will contain great power, innumerable signs and wonders; divine guidance, preservation and inviolability like never before.

Until their mission is completed and they will follow their Lord even in the *final step*: To be killed and resurrected after three and a half days. As an ultimate sign that no one can deny anymore.

Accordingly, in the following time of *great tribulation*, when the Antichrist will rule for *three and a half years*, *numerous believers* are likely to be killed (cf. Rev 5:10, 20:4, Dan 12:7), who will then possibly *likewise* be denied a funeral until Jesus finally comes again, they are resurrected and taken up towards Him.

The “*great city*”, in which their bodies will lie, reminds of “**Babylon the Great**” (Rev. 14: 8), who sits at “*many waters*” - standing for “**peoples, multitudes, nations and languages**” (Rev 17:15); which is therefore a *worldwide, godless, on false religion based system*, which applies *even to the Jerusalem in which Jesus died*.

And about which it is said, “**I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs** (in Greek *the same word* as for “**witnesses**”!) **of Jesus.**” (Rev 17:6 *ESV*)

Nevertheless, this whole promise, even the expression that the Antichrist will “**wage war**” with them (Rev 13:7), shows that the church at that time will not merely be *anxious and weak*, but a *mature, purified bride, baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire*, who has learned to fight spiritually and who dreads death just as little as *Stephen* did back then. (Cf. Act 7)

2. A “New Song”

Looked at in a *merely human perspective* it is apparently *incompatible*, but the word of God implies that *at this very time of great distress and darkness*, a holy people will concurrently *raise their voices and sing to Him* full of joy and jubilation. That *even prior to that* God will release a “new song” from heaven in which His saints on earth will attune to *the perspective of the Most High on all this*. Agreeing with the view of heaven, which is not impressed by the *setting kingdom of darkness*, but by the *onrushing kingdom of God* – including its *bodily returning king*. Which knows, whatever is still awaiting us here on earth right now, our life is safely hidden with God in the Messiah, who is *just about to appear* in the glory and power of the Father with millions of angels, and turn the tide for eternity in a moment! *Only* in this perspective focused on victory - *despite all patient enduring* - all the following scriptures make sense, which testify to struggle, affliction, but also to a last day’s people, who *in all of this* set up a “new song” in accordance with heaven, which only *will release God’s last judgments* and, associated with it, *the coming of the king*. Which will literally *draw and move* Yeshua to head out and do what only He is worthy and capable of doing, moved by the song of His *most eagerly awaiting bride*.

May we *join in this song* while **“The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!”**

And let the one who hears say, “Come!”“ (Rev. 22:17) *Know, love, and long for* our Beloved – *including all His facets!* Lift up our head when we start seeing all this taking place:

“See, the Lord is going to lay waste the earth and devastate it; he will ruin its face and scatter its inhabitants (...) The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore earth’s inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left. (...) So will it be on the earth and among the nations, as when an olive tree is beaten, or as when gleanings are left after the grape harvest.

They raise their voices, they shout for joy; from the west they acclaim the Lord’s majesty. Therefore in the east give glory to the Lord; exalt the name of the Lord, the God of Israel, in the islands of the sea. From the ends of the earth we hear singing: “Glory to the Righteous One.”

But I said, “I waste away, I waste away! Woe to me! The treacherous betray! With treachery the treacherous betray!” (...) The floodgates of the heavens are opened, the foundations of the earth shake. The earth is broken up, the earth is split asunder, the earth is violently shaken. The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion that it falls–never to rise again.

In that day the Lord will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below. They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days. The moon will be dismayed, the sun ashamed; for the Lord Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before its elders–with great glory.” (Is 24, cf. Rev 19:19ff., Mt 24:29f., Is 25:1f., 26:8ff.)

Yeshua is not only *the lamb*, but also *the lion*, and already Isaiah - *in a single scripture* - prophetically brings together both of His attributes in a fascinating way; indicating both His *first coming as humble priest* and His *second coming as Judge and King*:

“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his teaching the islands will put their hope.” (...)
See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you.”

Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you islands, and all who live in them. Let the wilderness and its towns

raise their voices; let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice. Let the people of Sela sing for joy; let them shout from the mountaintops. Let them give glory to the Lord and proclaim his praise in the islands. The Lord will march out like a champion, like a warrior he will stir up his zeal; with a shout he will raise the battle cry and will triumph over his enemies.

“For a long time I have kept silent, I have been quiet and held myself back. But now, like a woman in childbirth, I cry out, I gasp and pant. I will lay waste the mountains and hills and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn rivers into islands and dry up the pools. I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth.

These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them. But those who trust in idols, who say to images, ‘You are our gods,’ will be turned back in utter shame.” (Is 42: 1-17)

Like the previous passages, also *the following* testify to the unique connection between a singing, praising congregation and the divine release of judgment that accompanies Jesus' coming. A radical separation of wheat and chaff. So that while *the one* will curse **“the God of heaven because of their pains”** in rebellious impenitence (Rev. 16:11), *the others* – *despite all hardships and temptations to take offense on their God* – will overcome and (like Job - cf. Job 2:9f.) unswervingly hold fast to the *faith in His love and absolute goodness*; worship Him – *for His own sake* – and call out to Him in a passion and devotion like never before. In a bridal love that holds back nothing anymore from the *approaching rider on the white horse*.

“For the director of music. To the tune of “Lilies.” (...) A maskil. A wedding song.

My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer. You are the most excellent of men and your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever. Gird your sword on your side, you mighty one; clothe yourself with splendor and majesty. In your majesty ride forth victoriously in the cause of truth, humility and justice; let your right hand achieve awesome deeds. Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king’s enemies; let the nations fall beneath your feet. Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.” (Ps. 45: 1-7)

A “*new song*” always expresses “*something new*”. Thus also *God's work* and *Jesus Himself* will be revealed in a completely new way in this time. As a consequence thereof many false “images of Jesus” (or *only partially correct ones* - since *Jesus' nature of compassionate, meek love* is and remains eternally the same - cf. Heb 13:8), *which we have made up by ourselves without involving the whole word of God*, will crumble, and many will yet *reverentially ask* concerning Him:

“Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.” (Ps 24:8)

“Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson?

Who is this, robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of his strength?

“It is I, proclaiming victory, mighty to save.”

Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress?

“I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing. It was for me the day of vengeance; the year for me to redeem had come.

I looked, but there was no one to help, I was appalled that no one gave support; so my own arm achieved salvation for me, and my own wrath sustained me. I trampled the nations in my anger; in my wrath I made them drunk and poured their blood on the ground.”

I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the Lord has done for us– yes, the many good things he has done for Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses.” (Isa 63: 1-7)

Just as *essentially even here again the last verse*, finally also all the quotations below *even literally* testify to this *new song*, which goes far beyond what we *so far* usually *sing out, express and confess* in our congregational worship; that will holistically embrace *the true Jesus* in a whole new way.

- Standing with Him *specifically also in His judgments!*

The One Who is called **“Faithful and True”** (Rev 19:11); Who will *come back* as **“king of Israel”** (Jn 1:49, 12:13), as **“king of the Jews”** (Mark 15: 2), as Whom the Church however didn’t want to worship Him for most of the time, but *Who He nevertheless is*. Into His city of Jerusalem (cf. Ps 132:13f., Ez 37:28, 43:6f., Is 2:10, 60f., 62:1-7, Jer 3:17, Zech 2:14-16; 8:22, 14:14-9, Joel 4:20f.,...), as the Father speaks, **“I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain.” I will proclaim the Lord’s decree: He said to me, “You are my son; today I have become your father. Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will break them with a rod of iron; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”** (Ps 2: 6-9)

Who, *especially in the coming affliction* (cf. Zech 12:3, 14:2f.), will once again *be proved holy through His covenant people Israel* in the sight of the entire world. (Cf. Ezek 36:23) Who will nevertheless still have *in all nations* a people that has accepted Him as the One the Bible describes Him as from beginning to end, and *for that very reason* will have a full “yes” to Him and His actions. That will *not only with its head, but also with all its heart and mind* coincide when the Spirit calls:

“Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The Lord has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations. He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music (...), for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.” (Ps 98)

“Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise his name; (...) Let all creation rejoice before the Lord, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness.” (Ps. 96)

“Praise the Lord. Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of his faithful people. (...) May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword (= the word of God! - Eph 6:17) in their hands, to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron, to carry out the sentence written against them— this is the glory of all his faithful people. Praise the Lord.” (Ps 149)

“And when he had taken it (the sealed book/scroll of judgement), the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God’s people. And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.” (Rev. 5, 8-10)

“Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads. And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. (...) I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like a son of man with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. ” (Rev 14, 1-14)