

## The Two Witnesses



### SABBATH—MAY 4

God's enemies  
couldn't stop His people  
from sharing Bible truth.

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Revelation 11:3–6; Revelation 11:3; *The Great Controversy*, chapters 12–17.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “The grass dies, and the flowers fall. But the word of our God will live forever” (Isaiah 40:8, ICB).

**THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES** attacked loyal Christians. But God's enemies couldn't stop His people from sharing Bible truth. One of these brave Christians was William Tyndale. Tyndale translated the Bible into English. God's enemies put Tyndale on trial for his faith. During the trial, one of the judges asked Tyndale who helped him the most to share Bible truth. Tyndale thought about the question. Then he said, “The Bishop of Durham.” The Bishop was the head of the church in the English city of Durham. Tyndale's answer shocked the judges.

Tyndale explained that the bishop bought a large amount of Tyndale's Bibles and burned them in public. The Catholic bishop didn't know how much his buying the Bibles helped the Protestants. You see, the bishop bought the Bibles for a very high price. With the extra money Tyndale earned, he printed far more Bibles than the bishop burned.

This week, we will study what happened to the Bible during the French Revolution. During this time, much blood was spilled in the streets of France. The guillotine was put in Paris's public square. The guillotine is a special razor that chops off people's heads. Thousands of people were killed. The French also announced that God was dead. But France could not destroy the Bible or its message.

## TWO WITNESSES (Revelation 11:3–6)

**Read Revelation 11:3–6. List five things about the two witnesses that you discover in these verses.**

In Zechariah 4, Zechariah saw two olive trees. The trees stood next to a gold lampstand. One tree stood to the right of the lampstand. The other tree stood to the left side of the lampstand. We find this same word picture in Revelation 11. Zechariah learns that the two olive trees “ ‘stand for two men. They have been appointed [chosen] to serve the Lord of all the earth’ ” (Zechariah 4:14, ICB). The olive trees drip oil into the lampstand so that it always shines with light. This idea helps us remember Psalm 119:105. In this verse, the poet compares the Bible to a lamp. He writes, “Your word is like [the same as] a lamp that shows me the way. It is like a light that guides me” (NIV). Oil is a word picture for the Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4:2, 6). In Revelation 11, God’s two witnesses fill the whole earth with truth, the same as a lamp fills a room with light.

God’s two witnesses can warn us about things that will happen in the future. God’s two witnesses can keep rain from falling. They can turn water to blood. They can fill the earth with disease and trouble. Elijah spoke for God to Israel. Elijah said no rain would fall on Israel. In answer to his prayer, no rain fell for 3½ years (James 5:17). The special messengers who served the god Baal could not make it rain (1 Kings 17, 18). Then Elijah prayed to God, and the rain came. Moses also spoke for God. God used Moses in a powerful way. Moses caused much trouble and disease in Egypt. Moses turned the water to blood because Pharaoh refused to let God’s people go free (Exodus 7).

Anyone who attacks and destroys the Bible will be destroyed with fire. God announces to His messenger Jeremiah: “ ‘So, Jeremiah, the words I give you will be like [the same as] fire. And these people will be like wood the fire burns up’ ” (Jeremiah 5:14, ICB). The Bible warns that anyone who rejects its sayings will be destroyed with fire. That’s why Bible truth is the same as fire in the mouth of God’s special messengers and witnesses.

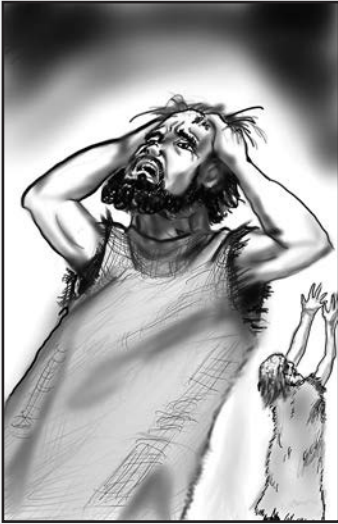
So, who are these two powerful witnesses of Revelation 11? They are the Old and New Testaments. They communicate God’s truth to everyone on earth.



**In Revelation 11, God’s two witnesses fill the whole earth with truth, the same as a lamp fills a room with light.**

## 1,260 DAYS (Revelation 11:3)

**Compare Revelation 11:3 and Revelation 12:5, 6, 14, 15 with Daniel 7:25. These verses use different numbers to talk about the same time in history. What same time in history are all of these verses talking about?**



**During the 1,260 years, God's two witnesses (the Old and New Testaments) are compared to people who wear clothes that show they are sad.**

God gives strength to His two witnesses to “tell what they know. They will speak for God for 1,260 days (42 months). They will be dressed in clothes made from the hair of animals [rough clothes people wear to show they are sad]” (Revelation 11:3, NLV). The 1,260 days are the same as 42 months. During this time, God will give control of Jerusalem “to the nations [people groups] who do not know God. They will walk over all the Holy City to wreck it for 42 months” (Revelation 11:2, NLV). The nations are God’s enemies. They try to destroy Bible truth for 1,260 days (42 months x 30 days in a Jewish month = 1,260 days, or years. Each day in end-time messages equals one real year). As we saw yesterday, God’s two witnesses are the Old and New Testaments. These two witnesses announce God’s anger against the ones who try to destroy Bible truth.

As we learned in lesson 4, Daniel 7:25 says the little-horn power will become strong after the Kingdom of Rome breaks up. The little horn power will hurt God’s people “for a time, times, and half a time (three and a half years)” (Daniel 7:25, NLV). A “time” is one real year (360 days), and “times” means “two times” or two real years. So, three and a half times or years equals 1,260 days, which is the same as 1,260 real years.

Revelation 12:6, 13 says that God’s people will be hurt for 1,260 days. Revelation 12:14 talks about a time, times, and half a time (or 3½ years). Revelation 13:5 talks about 42 months. Do you see that Revelation 11:2, 3 talks about both the 42 months and the 1,260 days? All these special time messages talk in different ways about the same time in history.

From A.D. 538 to A.D. 1798, the Roman Catholic Church attacked anyone who honored Bible truth. During this time, the church replaced God’s commandments with its own teachings. During these 1,260 years, God’s two witnesses (the Old and New Testaments) are compared to people who wear clothes that show they are sad. These clothes help us to see that the Protestants who believed in Bible truth suffered deeply for their faith during the 1,260 years.

**THE TWO WITNESSES ARE KILLED (Revelation 11:7–9)**

**Read Revelation 11:7–9. What do these verses say will happen to God’s two witnesses, the Old and New Testaments?**

In A.D. 538, the Kingdom of Rome lost its power. The king of Rome at the time was Justinian. Justinian gave control to Pope Vigilius. The church controlled both religion and governments for a long time. Then, on February 10, 1798, Napoleon ordered General Berthier to march into Rome. Berthier made Pope Pius the 6th a prisoner. Berthier brought Pope Pius to France, where he died. The books of Daniel and Revelation said the church’s control would end after 1,260 days or real years. History shows us that is what happened. For sure, we can trust the Bible!

After 1798, a new enemy attacked the Bible. This enemy was the wild beast power that came from the hole with no bottom. This power fought against Bible truth during the French Revolution, which started in 1789. Who was this power? The power is a symbol for the teaching that there is no God. This belief started during the French Revolution.

During the French Revolution, the government replaced Christianity with the worship of human ideas. Another name for human ideas is reason. So, the French worshiped reason the same as a god. France celebrated the Festival of Reason on November 10, 1793. Churches across France were turned into Reason’s temples. A woman was chosen to be the living symbol of the god. The French people burned Bibles in the streets. The leaders said there was no God. Satan used evil men to “kill” God’s two witnesses. The Bible says, “Their dead bodies will lie in the street of Jerusalem. It is where their Lord was nailed to a cross. The city is sometimes called Sodom and Egypt” (Revelation 11:8, NLV).

Why Sodom and Egypt? Egypt worshiped many gods but rejected the God of heaven (Exodus 5:2). Sodom is a symbol for terrible evil. During the French Revolution, the leaders ‘killed’ God’s two witnesses with their laws against religion. So, France behaved the same as Sodom and Egypt. Revelation 11:9 says that no one buried God’s two witnesses for 3½ days (3½ real years). During the French Revolution, the French rejected God for about 3½ years, starting on November 26, 1793. On that day, laws were passed against religion. These laws continued until June 17, 1797. On that day, the government removed the laws.



**During the French Revolution, the government replaced Christianity with the worship of human ideas.**

## THE TWO WITNESSES WAKE UP FROM THE DEAD (Revelation 11:11)

**Read Revelation 11:11. What does this verse say would happen to the Bible?**

At the end of the French Revolution, the Bible “woke up” from the dead. Of course, this language is a word picture that shows us what happened to the Bible. After the French Revolution, people everywhere started to study the Bible. This study gave them new spiritual life. People saw that the Bible become powerful again in the lives of many men, women, and children. Then the people in France were filled with respect for the Bible. At the end of the 1700s, men and women traveled to faraway lands to share the Good News. One of these men was William Carey. Carey traveled to India. He translated the Bible into many Indian languages. Protestant churches sent Bible workers around the globe.

Bible truth entered many countries very quickly after the French Revolution. The success of Bible workers didn’t happen because of luck or chance. The Bible is the living Word of God. During the French Revolution, many people thought that Bible truth was “dead.” But the Bible continued living in the hearts of people. After the French Revolution, the Bible came back to life, just as Revelation 11:11 promised.

“Voltaire was a thinker who didn’t believe in God. Voltaire bragged, ‘I am tired of hearing people talk about how 12 men started the Christian religion. I will prove that one man is enough to destroy it.’ Many years have passed since Voltaire died. Millions of people have joined in the war against the Bible. But have they destroyed the Bible? No. Maybe there were only a hundred Bibles in Voltaire’s time. But now there are 10,000, yes, 100,000 copies of the Bible.’ ”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 288, adapted.



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**Read Psalm 119:89 and Psalm 111:7, 8. What do these verses tell us about the Bible? Why can we trust it?**

People may attack Bible truth. They may try to stop other people from believing it. But the Bible will never be destroyed. Sad to say, many Christians today wonder if parts of the Bible are true. We must not let these false ideas about the Bible trick us. The Bible is “alive” today. The Bible talks to human hearts. It gives new life to people who will follow its teachings.

**GOD'S TRUTH WINS! (Revelation 11:15–18)**

Revelation 11 starts with Satan's plan to use the French Revolution to destroy the Christian faith and belief in God. Revelation 11 ends with God's kingdom winning the fight against Satan and his evil angels. This chapter gives hope to everyone who suffers for Jesus and Bible truth.

**What happens at the end of time when the 7th angel blows his trumpet? Read Revelation 11:15–18 for the answer.**

At the end of time, Jesus wins. Satan loses. All the kingdoms on this earth are given to Jesus. We should remember this Bible truth and follow this helpful advice: "Every law or rule that men make will be destroyed. But Bible truth will continue forever."—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 288, adapted.

**Read Revelation 11:19. John saw something that was opened in heaven. What was it? Also, what else did John see in it when he looked up into heaven?**

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John saw the temple of God in heaven. The temple was open. John saw inside the Most Holy Place. There, John saw the Ark of God's Promise. In Old Testament times, the holy tent and the temple in Jerusalem were copies of the temple in heaven. God's light shone between two gold angels that were on top of the cover on the Ark of God's Promise. The light was a sign that God was in the tent or the temple. Inside the ark was God's law. We know that keeping God's law doesn't save us. Only God's mercy saves us because of our faith in Jesus. At the same time, our obedience to God's law shows that our faith is real. God's law will judge us (James 2:12). This Bible truth is very important for us to understand in the end times (Revelation 12:17; Revelation 14:12).

**Compare the French Revolution with the picture of the end of time in Revelation 11. How are they different? What lessons does Revelation 11 have for us today?**



**Revelation 11 ends with God's kingdom winning the fight against Satan and his evil angels.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** “The church and the government outlawed the Bible. Church leaders changed its teachings. Men and demons worked together to keep people from learning Bible truth. God’s enemies hunted the ones who were brave enough to announce Bible truth. These brave souls were hurt, put into prison, or killed for their faith. Some of these Protestants were forced to run to the mountains for safety. They hid in caves and in holes in the earth. At this time, God’s two witnesses preached in clothes that people wear to show they are sad. [This word picture shows us that God’s loyal followers continued to share Bible truth during hard times.] God’s two witnesses continued to preach for 1,260 years. In the worst times, God had servants who loved Him and the Bible. God gave these loyal servants wisdom and strength to announce His truth during this time.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pages 267, 268, adapted.

“France rejected God and outlawed the Bible. Evil men and demons celebrated. They finally got what they wanted after so long: a kingdom free from God’s law. . . . God removed much of His Holy Spirit. God’s Spirit keeps Satan from doing terrible things. Satan’s only joy is in destroying human life. God allowed Satan to do his work. Many people in France chose to serve Satan and fight against God. When God removed His Spirit, they suffered many evil things because of their choice. The land filled with crimes that are too awful to write about. Towns and cities were ruined. The people of France cried out in pain as if an earthquake shook their whole country. The leaders did not believe in God or His law. They outlawed religion. They did not respect the law, the family, government, or the church.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 286, adapted.



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### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What does the French Revolution teach us about the worldwide war between good and evil?
- ② Someone wrote: “We are free to make our own rules.” How does this idea help explain why some people reject God? How does this idea also help explain some things that happened in the French Revolution?
- ③ In the Book of Revelation, John saw the temple in heaven. How does the temple in John’s dream help us understand things that will happen in the end times?

## ONE ANGEL, FOUR TIMES

Few people can say they've seen an angel for sure. Oyele says he's seen an angel four times.

Oyele left his family for three years to help build a 250-mile (400 kilometer) road between the cities of Mocuba and Nampula in Mozambique. The work was hard. Oyele did many things to relax that he knew broke God's law.

Oyele got drunk after work. Several strangers came to him and asked if he knew that the Bible taught that the Sabbath was the seventh day of the week. Oyele was convinced the strangers were wrong. Oyele said, "Show me from the Bible."

The strangers told Oyele they were Seventh-day Adventists. They opened the Bible and read the fourth commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8, NKJV). Then they turned to Ezekiel 20:20 and read, "Keep my Sabbaths holy. They will be a sign between me and you. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God" (ICB).

Oyele read the verses again and again during the next few days. He wondered if he was reading the real truth from God. Oyele had gone to church since he was a boy. But he never noticed the Sabbath verses before.

While Oyele prayed, a shining angel appeared at night over the house where he stayed. The angel said, "Stay strong! You are on the correct road." The next night, Oyele saw the angel again. The angel said, "Stay strong! You are on the correct road." The same thing happened the third night. Oyele went to a Seventh-day Adventist church the next Sabbath. After that, Oyele worshiped every week with Adventists.

Soon Oyele's work contract was finished. Oyele went home. To his surprise, he learned that his wife and children had joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Oyele had not communicated with them during the three years he was away. Then Oyele's wife learned that he had been going to a Seventh-day Adventist church. She was as surprised as he was.

Oyele wasn't sure what to do. Now that Oyele was home, he went to the Adventist church on Saturdays and his childhood church on Sundays. The angel appeared for a fourth time. The angel said, "What you are studying about the Sabbath is God's truth." Oyele decided to become an Adventist right away.

Only a few Seventh-day Adventists live near Oyele. God blesses Oyele's efforts to share the Good News that Jesus is coming soon. Oyele has helped start three house churches. He says, "Share the Good News about Jesus with people, even if they're drunk. God is the one who changes our hearts. God is getting many people ready to accept the Good News. These people are waiting for you to touch their hearts."

## INSIDE *Story*

by NELSON CINCO REIS CHITAONGA



The angel said,  
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