



WHO ARE THE TWO WITNESSES IN REVELATION?

WHAT HAPPENS BOTH ON EARTH AND IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM?



OLIVE TREE



LAMPSTAND

Revelation 11:3-6 tells us of "two witnesses", meaning two humans, two spirits, or two groups, that will prophesy and spread God's message for 1,260 days (symbolically) or literally 1,260 years. A spiritual battle also occurs with the beast killing them. Keep in mind the beast in from the Abyss--the spiritual world.

Revelation 11 (NIV)

3 And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." 4 They are "the two olive trees" and the two lampstands, and "they stand before the Lord of the earth." 5 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. 6 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.

Revelation 11 and Zechariah 4 should be read in conjunction with Ezekiel 37 and Daniel 12. These are describing many of the same events. Many people have speculated about the Two Witnesses that are killed by the beast (Baal) and then live--symbolized as two olive trees and two lampstands--in Revelation 11. Much of the language is the same as Zechariah 4, and Ezekiel 37 which Ezekiel clearly refers to Jews brought back by God to Israel in the end times. Some believe the two in Revelation 11 are literally Enoch and Elijah. The most likely explanation includes both events in the spiritual world and on earth two groups of people, meaning Christians helping the Jewish Remnant escape Islamic countries after 1948.

**ENOCH, MOSES, ELIJAH, OR TWO GROUPS OF GOD’S PEOPLE?
OR IS IT MICHAEL AND GABRIEL THE ARCHANGELS?
OR IS IT BOTH SPIRITUAL AND ON EARTH?**

Early Christians, such as Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Hippolytus of Rome, concluded that the Two Witnesses would be Enoch and Elijah, prophets who did not die because God “took” them. Others have proposed Moses as one of the witnesses, for his ability to turn water into blood and the power to plague the earth.

Modern theologians, such as John Walvoord of the Dallas Theological Seminary have furthered the point of individualism by comparing the “two lampstands” and the “two olive trees” of Revelation 11 to the two golden pipes and two olive trees/branches of Zechariah 4. But Zechariah saw the two as already being active in 520 BC. Revelation was not written until some 600 years later.

By the identification of the two olive branches as “two anointed ones” or “two sons of the oil”, in Zechariah, this reinforces the literalist interpretation that the two witnesses are two people. But the literalist would have trouble explaining why they were already active in 520 BC!! Walvoord also pointed out that because the Revelation passage does not specifically identify who the two witnesses are, it would be safer to conclude that they are not related to any previous historical character.

The two witnesses have been interpreted as representing the Church or a similar concept. The 1599 Geneva Study Bible has asserted that the two witnesses are the exclusive purview of the church. Matthew Henry's Complete Commentary on the Whole Bible gives one church interpretation as consisting of believing Jews and that of the Gentiles.

John Wesley in his commentary on Revelation 11 suggests a more spiritual, almost ambiguous, application. Ross Taylor's Verse by Verse Commentary on Revelation clearly defines the Church as the "two olive trees and the two lampstands."

Most likely, the two witnesses on earth can be identified as Israel and the Christian Church. The olive tree in the Scripture signifies Israel. The “witness of the Church” is signified by the two lampstands, whose identity was disclosed by the seven golden lampstands (i.e., candlesticks) revealed in Revelation 1-3 as the “churches.” Revelation 1:19-20 makes clear the golden lampstands are churches and not a single person. But there is a second dimension--the spiritual world as well. We have to explain how the beast from the Abyss was able to overpower them and kill them (temporarily).

Revelation 1: 19-20 (NIV)

19 “Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. 20 The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

GABRIEL AND MICHAEL ARE THE "TWO WITNESSES" IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

The prophecies of the two witnesses have an earthy (human) component and a spiritual (angelic) component simultaneously. Gabriel and Michael are the only two named angels in the Bible (other than Satan/Lucifer). Gabriel and Michael are the only two "archangels." The two witnesses are active at the time Israel was restored in 1948, and have an impact on earthly events during the three and one half years of Operation Ezra and Nehemiah (1948-1951), when Jews held in Islamic countries were miraculously airlifted to Israel after being trapped since 1948. Yet Zechariah (520 BC) saw the spiritual two witnesses as active even then in his vision. The two witnesses actions are coming from the angels Michael and Gabriel.

We must also examine the spiritual world aspect of the two witnesses. The way the Bible describes them, they cannot be human. If we understand they are two angels greatly favored by God, the prophecies of their actions are much easier to understand. The Bible verses describe them as clearly superhuman. Zechariah saw them in action already serving the Lord (Zechariah 4:14 *"These are the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth"*) and Zechariah was written some 600 years before Revelation.

Revelation 11:4 (NIV)

They are "the two olive trees" and the two lampstands, and "they stand before the Lord of the earth."

Zechariah 4:11-14 (NIV)

Then I asked the angel, "What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?" Again I asked him, "What are these two olive branches beside the two gold pipes that pour out golden oil?" He replied, "Do you not know what these are?" "No, my lord," I said. So he said, "These are the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth."

By the time Zechariah wrote this about 520 BC, Enoch, Moses and Elijah had already lived. In reality, there are no two humans that are so special that they could qualify to be spoken of as "the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth."

Consider not only where these two stand, but the "anointing of God" (the Holy Spirit) flows through them. How many prophets in the Bible ever qualified for a "global ministry" and that could torment the whole earth with prophecy for 1260 days/years?

No human prophets ever had fire come out of their mouths. God could give these powers to anyone He chooses. But how many humans did God equip this way so far that we know of? There have been none.

Revelation 11:5-6 (NIV)

"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."

MICHAEL BATTLES SATAN AND PROTECTS ISRAEL

Michael has many battles with Satan and other demonic princes. Jude tells us Michael fought with Satan for the body of Moses. When Jude wrote *"But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses"*, Jude was referring to the Testament of Moses, which is not canon Bible text, but Jude thought it as scripturally correct.

Jude 1:8-9 (NIV)

In the very same way, on the strength of their dreams these ungodly people pollute their own bodies, reject authority and heap abuse on celestial beings. But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

In the spiritual realm Michael played a large role forcing Satan to be removed from heaven.

Revelation 12:7-9 (NIV)

Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Michael stood with Gabriel to struggle against the demonic princes of Persia and Greece. These are kingdoms number four and five in the "Seven Heads" of the beast. They followed Baal of Babylon—the third head. Baal is the "prince who is to come" in Daniel 9:26-27. Baal was sent to Sheol—the Abyss. Baal was the both third and eighth head. Baal "comes out of the seven" and "has a fatal wound that is healed" (Revelation chapters 13-17).

1. Egypt
2. Assyria
3. Babylon >> Sheol >> Baal the Beast
4. Persia
5. Seleucid Greeks
6. Rome
7. Demonic King—rules only a short time {Abaddon from the Abyss}
8. Beast {Babylon demon Baal released from the Abyss}

Daniel 10:12-14 (NIV)

Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

Daniel 10:20-21 (NIV)

So he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince.)

Daniel described the demise of the little horn king (Islamic caliph Umar the rider on the black horse in Revelation 6) in Daniel 11:36 with events running through Daniel 12:1. The 1260 days/years of prophecy are from 688 AD (the abominations on the Temple Mount--the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque set up by Umar) until Israel was restored in 1948. Michael arises (? arises from being dead) and delivers the Jews from the holocaust. This was a "time, times and half a time" from when the abomination was set up in 688.

Daniel 11:45 (NIV)

He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

Daniel 12:1 (NIV)

At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered.

Daniel 12:7 (NIV)

The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, “It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed.”

In Revelation 11:3, the two witnesses prophesy for 1260 days/years, the same time frame as in Daniel 12:7. This again is from 688 AD to 1948 AD. The Holy City (Jerusalem) was trampled by Muslim control until 1967, which is 42 months from 688 (1278.4 years/days)

Revelation 11:1-4 (NIV)

I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, “Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, with its worshipers. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They 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.”

In Islam Baal slanders the true Gabriel. Islam believes it was the spirit "Gabriel" (really the demonic beast Baal) that appeared to Mohammad and gave him the Qur'an. The beast slanders "and those who live in heaven."

Revelation 13:6 (NIV)

It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven.

GABRIEL HERALDS THE MESSIAH, AND PROTECTS THE FOLLOWERS OF THE MESSIAH--THE CHURCH

Gabriel was sent to Zechariah, John the Baptist's father to tell of John the Baptist..

Luke 1:18-20 (NIV)

Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years."

The angel said to him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time."

Gabriel was sent to Mary to tell her about the Messiah, Jesus.

Luke 1:26-28 (NIV)

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

THE TWO WITNESSES ARE KILLED BY THE BEAST FROM THE ABYSS

The two witnesses are killed by the beast from the Abyss. They lie in the square of the great city--which is Mecca. On earth, Jews were trapped in all Islamic countries, including Jerusalem. Mecca is home to the Kaaba and where the beast has this throne. This is the spiritual world. Michael and Gabriel had to fight the prince of Persia for 21 days, and then the prince of Greece. The beast (Baal) is much stronger than the princes of Persia and Greece (Satan "gave the beast his power, and his throne and great authority"), so Baal could overpower Michael and Gabriel for three and one half years/days from 1948-1951. God had to intervene to bring Michael and Gabriel back to life. On earth, by 1951 Operation Ezra and Nehemiah was complete, and more than one million Jews trapped in Islamic countries (and Jerusalem "*where also their Lord was crucified*") made it out safely to Israel.

Revelation 13:2 (NIV)

The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.

Revelation 11:7-12 (NIV)

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.

UNDERSTANDING THE EVENTS ON EARTH--OPERATION EZRA AND NEHEMIAH 1948-1951

While Gabriel and Michael are overpowered by the beast, events were also happening on earth with Operation Ezra and Nehemiah.

According to Codex Alexandrinus, Codex Vaticanus, and Codex Ephraemi, as the oldest manuscripts, as well as early church theologians such as Arethas of Caesarea, the original Greek text of Revelation 11:8 uses the singular word 'body' instead of 'bodies', whereas later the text switches back to using the plural form 'bodies' in verse 9. The plural v. singular ambiguity is reinforced in Rev. 11:5 where the original Greek text of the oldest manuscripts uses the singular term 'mouth' instead of 'mouths' in the plural.

Therefore, verse 11:5 reads: "If any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies," and verse 11:8 reads "And their dead body shall lie in the street of the great city"

Since the original Greek text requires that the "two" witnesses have one common i.e. shared mouth, and one shared dead body, and if interpreted literally, therefore "they" would have to be just a single person.

However, this literal one body should be interpreted as Christians and Jews as groups "grafted in among the others", "and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root", as Paul writes in Romans 11:

Romans 11: 13-20 (NIV)

13 I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry 14 in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. 15 For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? 16 If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.

17 If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, 18 do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you.

19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." 20 Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

JEWES WERE "SLAIN" AND "IN GRAVES" BEFORE RETURNING TO ISRAEL

Revelation 11 describes the two witnesses: 1) killed, 2) given breath by God, 3) coming alive, 4) rising to their feet, and 5) being taken up to Heaven in the clouds after three and one half days (symbolic days, or literal years).

Ezekiel 37 and Daniel 12:1-4 (those that sleep in the dust come to life) describe the Jews trapped in enemy (Islamic) countries as being 1) slain, 2) given breath by God, 3) coming alive, 4) rising to their feet, and 5) taken from their graves to Israel as God opened the graves. Ezekiel describes their number as a vast army.

Revelation 11: 7-12 (NIV)

7 Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. **8** 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. **9** For three and a half days some from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. **10** 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.

11 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. **12** 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.

Ezekiel 37: 9-14 (NIV)

9 Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'"

10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army. **11** Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.'

12 Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. **13** Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them.

14 I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.'

EZEKIEL 37 LANGUAGE IS VERY SIMILAR TO REVELATION 11—IS IT THE SAME EVENT?

- ✓ The dry bones are the people of Israel, cut off from Israel with no hope
- ✓ They are "slain"
- ✓ They are dead in graves
- ✓ God's breath entered them
- ✓ They came to life
- ✓ They stood on their feet
- ✓ They were a vast army
- ✓ They went back to Israel in the end times

Ezekiel 37:11 makes clear this is about Jews without hope returning to Israel in the end times: Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.'"

Revelation 11 is easier to understand when read with Ezekiel 37 and 39.

GOD SAYS: "COME UP HERE", "COME OUT OF HER"

Revelation 11:12 says God told the dead bodies to "Come up here."

Revelation 11:12 (NIV)

"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."

This is very similar language to Revelation 18:4, when God says "Come out of her, my people" and brings his people out of Babylon (the Islamic world) before destruction in the end times.

Revelation 18: 1-6 (NIV)

1 After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. 2 With a mighty voice he shouted:

"'Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!' She has become a dwelling for demons and a haunt for every impure spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable animal.

3 For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries."

4 Then I heard another voice from heaven say: **'Come out of her, my people,'** so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; 5 for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes.

6 Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Pour her a double portion from her own cup.

Both of these Biblical phrases in Revelation have language that is very similar to the actual manifesto Zionists used to bring 180,000 trapped Jews out of Baghdad in 1951:

*O, Zion, flee, daughter of Babylon,
Jews! Israel is calling you — Come out of Babylon!*

	Revelation 11	Ezekiel 37
Event	Beast attacks, overpowers them, "Killed"	Living Jews cut off with no hope to return to Israel, "Slain"
Buried?	Not Buried	"In Graves"
Location	Figuratively Sodom, Egypt and where also their Lord was crucified	Out of the many nations where they have gone, gathered them from the countries of their enemies
How Many	2 Olive Trees and 2 Lampstands	Vast Army
God's Action	Breathed into the Dead	Breathed into the Dead
Next Event	They Came to Life	They Came to Life
Next Event	Rose to their Feet	Rose to their Feet
Command	"Come Up Here"	"I will bring you back to the land of Israel"
Final Event	Went up to Heaven in a cloud while enemies watched	Went to restored Israel
Time	3 1/2 Days	Unknown

COMBINING EZEKIEL 37 AND REVELATION 11 FOR A COMPLETE PICTURE ON EARTH

1. Dispersed living Jews cut off with no hope of return to Israel (Ez)
2. Occurs in the last days (Both)
3. The Beast is attacking and overpowering them (Rev)
4. From many nations, from the countries of their enemies (Ez 37, 39)
5. A vast number of people (Ez)
6. God breathes on them (Both)
7. They come to life (Both)
8. They stand on their feet (Both)
9. Time is 3 1/2 days—[years] (Rev)
10. God says: “Come Up Here” (Rev)
11. They travel in the clouds (Rev)
12. They safely return to Israel in the last days (Ez)
13. Their enemies are terrified (Rev)
14. Earthquake with 7,000 killed (Rev)

The time frame is 3 ½ years from May 1948 until December 1951.

THE PROMISE OF ELIJAH PROPHECY HAS BEEN FULFILLED (MALACHI 4:5-6)

Malachi gives a future prophecy that mentions Elijah specifically. To this day, Jewish Seders include an empty chair at the table in anticipation that Elijah will return to herald the Messiah in fulfillment of Malachi’s word. I have had discussions with Orthodox Jews who claim that because Malachi was not fulfilled before Jesus appeared, he could not have been the Messiah. So how was Malachi fulfilled at the time of Jesus? Some Christians believe this prophecy will be fulfilled in the end times. But it has been fulfilled already.

Jesus makes clear Elijah has come, and this prophecy was fulfilled by John the Baptist. Thus Elijah need not return again—unless God wills.

Malachi 4: 5-6 (NIV)

4 “Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel. 5 See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.”

Specifically related to Malachi 4:5-6 are Matthew 11:7-14 and Matthew 17:10-13. John the Baptist denied he was Elijah in a physical sense. But Jesus said in Matthew 11:14 that John the Baptist was really the Elijah. Jesus also said in Matthew 17:12-13 that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished; then the disciples understood that Jesus spoke to them of John the Baptist.

Matthew 11: 7-14 (NIV)

7 As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? **8** If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. **9** Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. **10** This is the one about whom it is written:

**"I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you."**

11 Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

12 From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people have been raiding it. **13** For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. **14** And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. **15** Whoever has ears, let them hear."

Matthew 17: 10-13 (NIV)

10 The disciples asked him, "Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?"

11 Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. **12** But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." **13** Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist.

A brief look at the ministry of John the Baptist reveals many notable ways that he was "Elijah." First, God predicted John's work as being like that of Elijah (Luke 1:17). Second, he dressed like Elijah (2 Kings 1:8 and Matthew 3:4). Third, like Elijah, John the Baptist preached in the wilderness (Matthew 3:1). Fourth, both men preached a message of repentance. Fifth, both men withstood kings and had high-profile enemies (1 Kings 18:17 and Matthew 14:3).

Some argue that John the Baptist was not the Elijah to come because John himself said that he was not Elijah. "And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not'" (John 1:21). There is a simple explanation for this apparent contradiction. Because Elijah had never died (2 Kings 2:11), many first-century rabbis taught that Elijah was still alive and would reappear before the Messiah's arrival.

When John denied being the physical Elijah, he was countering the idea that he was the actual Elijah who had been taken to heaven. There is no contradiction, then, simply a humble prophet giving an honest opinion of himself. John rejected the honor, yet Jesus credited John as the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy regarding the return of Elijah.

In Luke 1:11-17, we learn that the angel Gabriel told Zechariah, John's father, that John would fulfill Malachi 4:6, stating that he would go before the Lord "in the spirit and power of Elijah."

Luke 1:11-17 (NIV)

11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. 12 When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. 13 But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. 14 He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth,

15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. 16 He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Finally, John the Baptist did not apply Malachi 4:6 to himself, but instead quoted Isaiah 40:3 to explain his purpose. Some have concluded from this fact that John did not realize he was Elijah. However, this is extremely unlikely, since Zacharias would surely have told John of Gabriel's reference to Malachi 4:5-6. It is also noteworthy that Isaiah 40:3 is parallel in thought to Malachi 3:1 (which is closely related to Malachi 4:5-6).

In Mark 1:1-5, Mark quotes Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3 together to explain John's ministry, introducing the quotations with the words, "As it is written in Isaiah the prophet." These facts indicate that John saw the "voice" in Isaiah 40:3 as a humbler way of expressing the same functional role as described in Malachi, and that he realized he was to function in that role "in the spirit and power of Elijah."

Mark 1: 1-8 (NIV)

1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, 2 as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way"— 3 "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"

4 And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

6 John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And this was his message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

GOD SAYS: “NOT LEAVING ANY BEHIND”

Ezekiel 39: 27-29 (NIV)

27 When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will be proved holy through them in the sight of many nations.

28 Then they will know that I am the Lord their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind. 29 I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the people of Israel, declares the Sovereign Lord.”

The return of the Jews from their graves is nearly complete. In 2016 less than 1% remain in enemy Islamic countries when compared to when Israel was born in 1948, and the Revelation 11 prophecy began to be fulfilled.

Islamic Country or Territory	1948 Jewish population	1967 Jewish population	1948-1967 reduction	2015 Jewish population	1948-2015 reduction
Aden	8,000	0	-100%	0	-100%
Afghanistan	5,000	500	-90%	0	-100%
Algeria	140,000	1,000	-99%	0	-100%
Bahrain	1,000	0	-100%	0	-100%
Egypt	80,000	500	-99%	100	-100%
Iran	175,000	60,000	-66%	4,000	-98%
Iraq	180,000	500	-100%	50	-100%
Lebanon	20,000	2,000	-90%	1,000	-95%
Libya	44,000	50	-100%	50	-100%
Morocco	265,000	31,000	-88%	2,000	-99%
Pakistan	2,500	250	-90%	0	-100%
Palestine	10,000	0	-100%	0	-100%
Sudan	1,500	0	-100%	0	-100%
Syria	30,000	4,000	-87%	100	-100%
Tunisia	102,000	8,000	-92%	800	-99%
Turkey	80,000	20,000	-75%	5,000	-94%
Yemen	61,000	500	-99%	40	-100%
Totals	1,205,000	128,300	-89%	13,140	-99%