

# Revelation Lesson 11

Revelation Chapter 11

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**Introduction:** We continue our study of the book of Revelation this week as we cover Chapter 11. The first segment of chapter 11 is a part of what began in the preceding chapter. Here, John is directed to measure, as a surveyor, the Tribulation temple. The remainder of this section then pertains to the ministry of the two witnesses.

The second woe and a great earthquake are noted. Then, the final section of the chapter presents the sounding of the seventh trumpet with the announcement of Christ's impending return.

## I. The Two Witnesses

*Rev 11:1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.*

*Rev 11:2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.*

John describes being given a "reed like unto a rod." Some forms of ancient surveying involved a standardized rod or reed, perhaps of bamboo, which was used as a lengthy 'yardstick' for measuring. He then was directed to, "Rise, and measure the temple of God." The question immediately arises, what temple? When John wrote this book, the Temple of God at Jerusalem had already been destroyed.

Though he has already alluded to the Temple of God in heaven (3:12, 7:15) and will again later in this chapter (verse 19), it is apparent this temple is on earth. In verse 2, it is noted that there is a court (Courtyard) The gentiles will tread the holy city under foot for forty-two months. Consider the temple mount today. It is walled and dominated by 2 existing structures; the Praying Hall of al-Aqusa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, which is near the center of the hill. This temple is no doubt the one constructed during the Tribulation in Jerusalem.

Several significant eschatological portions of Scripture clearly refer to a temple in Jerusalem during the Tribulation. See Daniel 9:26-27 and II Thessalonians 2:4.

*2Th 2:4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*

The fact John was directed to measure (i.e., survey) the temple would hint that it had just been erected. The suggestion is strong that the tribulational temple will not be erected until the Tribulation is underway. The next question is why was John sent to measure it? Was this temple built to the Lord's specifications? Was it built at His direction? Was it built where it was supposed to be? We will return to the question further into our study. He was also directed to measure the "altar, and them that worship therein." Implied is the curiosity in heaven of this new temple at Jerusalem, its new altar, who, and how many were worshiping thereat.

However, John was directed to not measure the courtyard for it was "given unto the Gentiles." Implied is that the temple proper was reserved for the Jews. The courtyard area was open to the gentiles. Heaven evidently was not interested in those dimensions. The statement is then made, "and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." The "they" are the gentiles. Clearly implied is that gentile forces will occupy and control Jerusalem for forty-two months during the Tribulation. The latter is three-and-one-half years. It would seem this period is the last half of the Tribulation.

Daniel 9:24-27 strongly suggests the antichrist makes a peace settlement with Israel at the beginning of the Tribulation only to break it 3 1/2 years later. Thus, the treading under foot of Jerusalem by gentiles apparently is the final half of the Tribulation. This quite evidently refers to what Luke wrote, "and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," in Luke 21:24.

Precisely who these gentiles are is not revealed. However, in light of the current belligerence in Israel today, it might be safely suspected that a significant portion of these gentiles will be Arabs and particularly Palestinians. Clearly implied is the hostile belligerent attitude of those so treading under foot Jerusalem.

*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.*

The speaker of this verse is the same speaker of verses 1-2 and much of the previous chapter which was identified as an angel, (Messenger). Here the speaker refers to "my two witnesses." The personal reference clearly leans toward either the Father or the Son. If the angel of verse 2 is the same as the

mighty angel of 10:1, then it is undoubtedly Jesus Christ. In any event, the heavenly speaker announces, And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. God empowers and sends these two witnesses to prophesy. The immediate question arises, who are these two witnesses?

The phrase literally reads, “the two witnesses of mine,” implying they are known characters. A popular conclusion is that they are Enoch and Elijah because they never suffered death. In collating that fact with Hebrews 9:27, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment,” the conclusion is made that these two must someday face death. Because these two witness will die, the conclusion is that they must be the two. Furthermore, the prophet Malachi foretold that Elijah would come before the great and dreadful day of the Lord in Malachi 4:6. However, the problem with that logic is this: in the Rapture, many will enter heaven without dying. Thus this logic is diminished.

Other names have surfaced such as Moses and Elijah because they appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. The safer conclusion however is that we don't really know who these two individuals are. They may be special preachers which the Lord raises up for the occasion. The fact they will prophesy indicates they are preachers. It has been presumed by many that through their preaching, the 144,000 Jewish preachers are converted. There is no contextual evidence to support that thought. It rather is only from the logic that someone had to preach for the 144,000 to be converted. The church has been taken out via the Rapture. Apparently, God sends these two preachers. Perhaps they are notable biblical characters sent from heaven for the task, maybe Elijah is one. That certainly would be the literal fulfillment of Malachi 4:6.

Their ministry is for “a thousand two hundred and three score days.” The Hebrew calendar was one of a 360 day year. A thousand two hundred and threescore days is precisely three and-one-half years. If we assume their ministry is to preach so that the 144,000 are converted, and if we assume one of the two might be Elijah who was to appear before the worst part of the Tribulation for Israel began, it thus seems that their ministry is during the first half of the Tribulation. Moreover, when their ascension back to heaven happens, there still is much Tribulation remaining. It seems apparent, the ministry of the two witnesses is during the first half of the Tribulation. Moreover, the following context strongly suggests their ministry is in Israel for they fulfill the prophecy of Zechariah 4:2-3 which clearly is related to the land of Israel. Furthermore, their death is in Jerusalem.

Their garments of sackcloth suggest the austere garment often worn by Hebrew prophets of old. See Isaiah 20:2, Jeremiah 4:8, and Daniel 9:3. It may be that their appearance, in what clearly is ancient garb of Old Testament prophets, may further authenticate them to the modern Israeli mind to pay heed to their message.

*Jer 4:8 For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the LORD is not turned back from us.*

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

*Rev 11:5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.*

The divine speaker then announces, "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth". The reference clearly is to Zechariah 4:2-3.

*Zec 4:2 And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof:*

*Zec 4:3 And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.*

There, the prophet indicated that the ministry of these was "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." The phrase, "standing before the God of the earth" (literally, 'which stand before the Lord,') implies the heavenly origin of them. This lends credence to the position they are sent from heaven. Moreover, their Hebrew character and ministry in the land of Israel are clearly implied from the reference to Zechariah.

In verse 5, these two witnesses plainly have supernatural abilities; for if any man hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies. Yet, the fact they die as noted in verse 7 indicates their humanity. God gives them supernatural ability to protect themselves and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

*Rev 11:6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to*

*blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.*

They are given further miraculous powers for these have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. Their ministries are to this degree similar to that of Elijah (I Kings 17:1) and Moses and the plagues of Exodus. This has caused some to think that Elijah and Moses are their true identities.

Their miraculous powers are evidently to provide protection until their ministry is complete, and to authenticate their divine mission, thus convincing hearers to listen. They apparently perform these miracles from within the confines of the State of Israel.

*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.*

*Rev 11:8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.*

This is the first mention in Revelation of the 'beast.' This clearly is a reference to the antichrist. Moreover, this is the only reference to the beast's ascent from the bottomless pit (abyss), indicating his satanic character. The completion of the testimony of the two witnesses is not further defined. However, it might be suggested that once the 144,000 Jews that are sealed by God have been converted and prepared, the ministry of the two witnesses is complete.

We find in verse 8 that their death apparently takes place in Jerusalem, And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. The final phrase makes clear the identity of Jerusalem. Sodom in Scripture is universally reflective of great sin, and Egypt is of the world.

The Holy Spirit thus alludes to the wicked and worldly character of Jerusalem. There are only rare times throughout the course of history that this great city has been truly godly. The greater majority of the time, it has been wicked. That certainly is true to the present.

*Rev 11:9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.*

*Rev 11:10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them,*

*and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.*

John goes on to describe, how the people all over the world shall see the bodies of the 2 prophets lay dead for 3 ½ days, with no unconcern about a decent burial. The obvious reference is to 'on-the spot,' live-television-coverage broadcast by satellite all over the world. It is noteworthy that only in recent years has such capabilities become available. With the advent of modern news coverage, the stage has been further set for the Day of the Lord.

Precisely why they lie dead for three-and-one-half days is not noted. However, what is apparent is the hatred of an unbelieving world toward these men of God. It may also be presumed that their death takes place at some point after the beast has seized control of Jerusalem at the midpoint of the Tribulation, breaking his peace treaty with Israel. Meanwhile, the nations of the earth openly celebrate at the death of these heavenly antagonists. In fashion similar to the celebration of Christmas, they send gifts one to another with great festivity.

It just may be that the time of their death is near Christmas. It seems apparent that the two witnesses, though operating in Israel, had the ability to send plagues over wide areas of the earth and the world knew it.

*Rev 11:11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.*

*Rev 11:12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.*

After three-and-one-half days, "the spirit of life from God entered into the 2 dead prophets, and they stood upon their feet." God clearly gives them a physical and visible resurrection. His Spirit of life restores them to life. To an unbelieving world, this causes "great fear" to fall upon all which see them, perhaps again by worldwide, satellite, television news.

In fashion, perhaps reminiscent of the Rapture, a voice from heaven calls unto them saying, "Come up hither." Like unto our Lord's ascension, they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them as they went. If there was any question as to their divine source, in plain view of their enemies, they ascend back to heaven.

*Rev 11:13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to*

*the God of heaven.*

*Rev 11:14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.*

At what evidently the same time the 2 prophet's ascended came a great earthquake, toppling a tenth of the city and killing 7000 men. The city in all likelihood is Jerusalem. One-tenth of the city is destroyed and seven thousand people perish therein. John goes on to note, that the remnant were afraid, and gave glory to the God of heaven. The word translated as remnant (loipov loipos) literally means 'the rest,' or 'the others.' Thus, the remnant in this context apparently are the remainder of surviving Jews in Jerusalem. Through the witnessing of the two witnesses and the 144,000, it seems that the significant proportion of Jews both in the land and perhaps many throughout the world give glory to God.

It is announced in verse 14, The second woe is past; and behold, the third woe cometh quickly. It would seem the parenthetical portion introduced in 10:1 is now complete. The sequential thought flow is again begun, if only briefly. Precisely what the second woe is has not been clearly noted. It would seem that the parenthetical portion ending with the earthquake at Jerusalem lightens in comparison with the first woe noted in 9:1-12. It may well be the second woe was the sounding of the sixth trumpet as described in 9:13-21.

The third will be consummated in the seventh trumpet about to sound. That will quite evidently be the return of Christ at the battle of Armageddon. An alternate view may be that the third woe is the collective judgments of the soon following seven vial judgments. Or, the second woe may be the seven thunder judgments of which we know nothing. The latter is most likely.

## **II. The Seventh Trumpet**

*Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

It is at this point that the "seventh angel sounded." Some have endeavored to link this seventh trumpet with the last trump noted in I Corinthians 15:54. They therefore arrive at the conclusion of a mid-tribulation Rapture.

*1Co 15:54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*

Several comments bear making. There is absolutely no contextual connection between that which Paul wrote there and here. Trumpets were a common form of signaling of the first century. . The last trump of I Corinthians 15:54, in all likelihood, is simply the final signal of the church age. It is the call signal of the termination of the age. There is no connection contextually or otherwise with the seven trumpets judgments of Revelation.

Moreover, as will be apparent, the sounding of the seventh trumpet is near the end of the Tribulation. Though seven vial judgments await, their execution will be rapid. It is apparent there is but a short time until Armageddon. The Rapture at this time would be at some nondescript point in the latter stages of the Tribulation. It really makes no sense. With the sounding of the seventh trumpet, "there were great voices in heaven." As in Revelation 4:5, these voices may be indicative of heavenly officers sounding out orders to the armies of heaven. The time to move out and seize control of the earth is not far off.

Final preparations in heaven toward that end get underway. The heavenly voices announce, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." The sounding of the seventh trumpet is the announcement that Jesus Christ is about to seize control of the nations of the earth. This clearly heralds His impending return in glory at Armageddon as will be noted in greater detail in 14:10-20 and 19:11-21. The beginning of the end is at hand. The seventh trumpet is the signal thereof.

*Rev 11:16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,*

*Rev 11:17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.*

The twenty-four elders of the church age acknowledge the eternity of God and praise Him as He is about to forcibly seize control of the earth. The reign of Jesus Christ upon the earth is about to begin. They know it and exalt the name of God thereby.

*Rev 11:18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.*



What follows evidently is a continuation of the acclamation of the twenty-four elders. They acknowledge that the “nations were angry.” The thought literally is ‘the nations were angered.’ This no doubt parallels and dovetails with Psalm 2:1 ff. As the nations perceive that Christ is about to return and seize control, they are enraged thereby. This may be part of their motivation for assembling in Israel in the plains of Esdraelon and neighboring areas to fight against Him, prior to Armageddon. In contrast, the elders acknowledge that His wrath is come. As detailed in 19:11-21, Jesus is about to return in wrath as mentioned in II Thessalonians 1:8: “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The reference to “the time of the dead” may refer in general to the several resurrections which will take place at that time and as noted in Daniel 12:1-2. This, in all likelihood, is when Israel will be resurrected to be judged, “some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Moreover, the rewards for righteous Jews now resurrected will be given as noted “and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great.”

Though the church has already received its rewards in heaven at the Bema whilst the Tribulation raged below, now after Armageddon, Israel will be resurrected for their judgment. Those saved Old Testament saints, including the prophets of old (and others small and great who feared His name) will at this time receive their rewards. This may take place in the interval of time mentioned by Daniel after the completion of the final 1,290 days. See Daniel 12:11-12.

*Dan 12:11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.*

*Dan 12:12 Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.*

Finally, the twenty-four elders praise God in that He is about to “destroy them which destroy the earth.” As Jesus Christ is about to return in wrath and judgment, He will destroy the wicked under the leadership of the antichrist who have for so long corrupted the earth.

*Rev 11:19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.*

Reference is again made at this time to the Temple in heaven. As the seventh trumpet has sounded and Christ's return is near at hand, John was given a glimpse into the Temple in heaven. "And the temple of God was opened in heaven." What may be implied is the opening of a door to the innermost sanctum, the holy of holies of the heavenly Temple.

John records, "and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." To paraphrase, John saw therein the ark of the covenant. The word translated as testament (diayhkh diatheke) is more frequently rendered as 'covenant.' The thought is one and the same. It would seem that the ark of the covenant seen there by John is not the physical ark constructed by Moses, but rather the heavenly antetype thereof. This is apparently where the heavenly mercy seat is located whereon the precious blood of Christ was sprinkled, thus propitiating God's righteous wrath against our sin.

With the opening of the door to the holy of holies in heaven allowing John a glimpse therein, "there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." There is similarity to what was recorded in 4:5. See notes thereto. However, the earthquake and great hail are quite apparently on the earth. These closely parallel the seventh vial judgment as noted in 16:17-21. It may be that these voices, thunderings, earthquake, and hail are a brief preview of the final vial judgments about to be cast upon the earth in rapid sequence.

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*Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

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