

The Book of Revelation



Measuring the Temple (11:1-2)

- OT Background – Ezek. 40:1-5ff; Zech. 2:1-5
- Why Must John Measure? (compare sealing in Ch. 7)
 - To illustrate protection – The church is protected by God while it is in the midst of unbelievers who persecute it
 - To delineate boundary (Ezek. 42:20)
 - Note those in the outer court are cut off and rejected
 - Does this reference hypocrites of Christianity? Does this reference those who fall away during persecution? Both? *“God promises no protection to those who only make a pretense of coming to serve him (Luke 6:46).”* (Harkrider, 120)
 - Preparing to rebuild and repair
 - The inner heart of the church would be protected but the outer things will be destroyed?

Measuring the Temple (11:1-2)

- What Temple?
 - Temple is a symbol for the church in the NT (1Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:21; 1Pet. 2:5; etc.)
 - The word here used (*naos*) is in reference to the sanctuary proper. A different word (*hieron*) was used in reference to the entire temple.
 - A single court suggests esp. tabernacle imagery (Ex. 27:9)
- How Long Will the Holy City (cf. 21:2; Heb. 12:22f) Be Trampled?
 - 42 months – cf. 1260 days; 3 ½ years; a time, times, and half a times (Dan. 7:25; 9:27; 12:7; Rev. 12:6, 14; 13:5)
 - Background with Elijah's ministry – 3 ½ years of drought and hardship (1Kgs. 17:1-5; James 5:17; Luke 4:25)
 - Being half of 7, we should consider these as a significant, but limited/broken period

The Two Witnesses (11:3-6)

- Also called two olive trees and two lampstands
- OT Background – Zech. 4:1-6, 11-14; Joshua/Zerubbabel
- Who Are They?
 - They represent the church, described in prophetic terms
 - They preach God’s truth to a wicked world
- Why Two Witnesses?
 - Emphasizes the truthful nature of the message (Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Num. 35:30; Matt. 18:16; 1Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28)
 - Illustrates unity in the divine order of the church (cf. Luke 10:1; John 15:26f) – in Zechariah, this was displayed by means of a unification of the priestly and kingly offices
- How Long Will the Two Witnesses Preach?
 - 1260 days – coordinating with the era of persecution

The Two Witnesses (11:3-6)

- Dressed in sackcloth, the garb of mourning and doom (cf. Isaiah's sackcloth in Isa. 20:2)
- God's Spirit will be given to enable God's people to complete their task of testifying (cf. Zech. 4:6).
- God's prophetic word is like a light (John 5:35; 2Pet. 1:19) – could the two witnesses also draw on the OT & the NT? Some think so.
- Yet another backdrop for the two witnesses...
 - “Fire from their mouths” and “rain will not fall” calls to mind Elijah (1Kgs. 17:1; 2Kgs. 1:9-18; cf. also Jer. 5:14)
 - The plagues of verse 6 call to mind Moses and the Egyptian plagues (Ex. 7:17-20)

The Two Witnesses (11:3-6)

- Again, God's supreme power over water and earth is illustrated (v. 6) – “as often as they desire” would be terrifying!
- Rome's claim to dominion is shot down – true power lies with God's people
- In the gospel lies the power of God Who warns of judgment which terrifies those who refuse it. In the gospel lies the power of God's people over her enemies.



Death of the Two Witnesses (11:7-10)

- “Now when they finish their testimony” – nothing stopped them from accomplishing their purpose; this does not mean preaching would never occur again, but that the gospel had been sufficiently proclaimed (Rom. 15:19; Col. 1:6, 23-25; 2Tim. 4:17).
- Killed by a “beast” that “ascends from the bottomless pit” (v. 7) – more description later (Chs. 13, 17), but building on chapter 9 for sure (cf. also Dan. 7:21ff)



Death of the Two Witnesses (11:7-10)

- Bodies unburied – treated with contempt (cf. John 15:18-21; 1Cor. 4:13; Psa. 79:1-7); the public nature of the rejection will be met with a public vindication
- The unregenerate resent those who would “judge” them (John 3:19-21). The bodies are exposed to the elements for an excruciating, but limited period of time (3 ½ days). The wicked rejoice at the calamity of the righteous (e.g., Judg. 16:23; Psa. 13:4; 89:42; John 16:20)



Death of the Two Witnesses (11:7-10)

- What is the Great City?
 - “Babylon” (14:8; 16:19; 17:18; 18:10-21)
 - “Egypt” – a land of idols and false gods; a nation that oppressed God’s people; judged by God
 - Jerusalem – “where their Lord was crucified”; called “Sodom” in Isa. 1:10; Jer. 23:14; Ezek. 16
 - Rome – crucifixion was eminently Roman; Roman execution of Jesus asserted Rome’s kingdom to be “greater”; “peoples, tribes, tongues, nations” – the extent of the Roman empire (17:15)
 - Symbolic! Just as there is a “city of God”, there is a “city of Satan.” This is not a geographic reference; it is a symbol! (cf. Zeph. 2:13ff). *“It is Egypt because Rome is also the oppressor as was Egypt—the worldly power which oppressed the people of God. It is Sodom because Rome was a foul and immoral empire as was Sodom a city—worldliness! It is Jerusalem because Rome was an empire of vile and perverted religion.”* (McGuiggan, 154)

Resurrection of the Two Witnesses (11:11-14)

- Resurrection is a demonstration of victory over the forces of evil; *“The Lord, says the text, had raised them from the dead! Here is a resurrection which sets forth the triumph of the Church over her enemy. We ought to have this burned in our memory. Come what may—it only lasts 3 ½ days and then comes the standing on our feet! Come what may—Pharaoh’s army was drowned! Come what may—the three youths came out of the fire! Come what may—the lions’ mouths were shut! Come what may—the tomb was empty just as he said!”* (McGuiggan, 156)
- The resurrection of the two witnesses is patterned after the resurrection of Jesus. Because of their faith, they share in His victory over death.
- OT background in Ezek. 37
- Evil is terrified - death cannot harm the people of God, they cannot be conquered (Josh. 2:9; 1Sam. 4:7f) Their recognition is, by and large, still not repentance (cf. 1Kgs. 17). Even so, perhaps some would change – *“the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church”* (Tertullian)

Resurrection of the Two Witnesses (11:11-14)

- They ascend to heaven (cf. Elijah in 2Kgs. 2:1, 11f)
 - Vindication and exaltation over their enemies
 - Not literal resurrection here; victory after apparent defeat
 - They share in the heavenly Messianic exaltation and reign (Eph. 1:20; 2:6) – this is the opposite of Rev. 6:13
 - God’s enemies will be forced to acknowledge God’s reign in the end
- Earthquake (cf. Isa. 24:19f) – *“The tenth part was not the entire city, suggesting that judgment is only partial; but it will consume the full or complete number that God purposes to slay that is symbolized by the number seven thousand.”* (Harkrider, 127)
- The second woe is past (cf. 8:13)

The 7th Trumpet (11:15-19)

- God's omnipotence & reign are acknowledged; God has defeated the rival kingdom (cf. John 12:31)
- This is a return to the throne scene in chapters 4-5; cf. 7:13ff; very different from the other trumpets which have been ones of judgment, not praise
- NOT the establishment of the kingdom; the kingdom has already been well-established (cf. Rev. 1:9; 2:26f; Col. 1:13). This is an affirmation of the eternal victory of the kingdom of God (17:14; Dan. 2:44; Heb. 12:28).
- Verse 18 echoes Psa. 2 and the Messianic reign; God not only reigns over the church, but over all kingdoms
- "the dead" – unbelievers (Eph. 2:1; 5:14; Col. 2:13)
- Verse 19 ends with a view of the glory of God!

The 7th Trumpet (11:15-19)

- The temple was opened (cf. 4:1; Heb. 10:20) – the Jerusalem temple was never open to outsiders; the ark of the covenant indicates God will not forget His covenant with His people
- A symbol of invitation & comfort to God's people (cf. Matt. 27:51).
- Also a symbol rooted in Roman culture, a declaration of war; Temple of Janus in Rome was open when Rome was at war
 - *“Janus also has a temple at Rome with double doors, which they call the gates of war; for the temple always stands open in time of war, but is closed when peace has come. The latter was a difficult matter, and it rarely happened, since the realm was always engaged in some war, as its increasing size brought it into collision with the barbarous nations which encompassed it round about. But in the time of Augustus it was closed, after he had overthrown Marc Antony; and before that, when Marcus Atilius and Titus Manlius were consuls, it was closed a short time; then war broke out again at once, and it was opened.”* (Plutarch, *Life of King Numa* 20.1-2)

The 7th Trumpet (11:15-19)

Neronian Coin Depicting the
Temple of Janus



Remains of the Temple of
Janus, Rome – Church of San
Nicola in Carcare



The Overall Message

“This insight of the future victory was designed to comfort the church and encourage them to persevere even though at times it may appear that their cause was hopeless...At times the enemy may appear to have the upper hand and to win, but God is ever present to strengthen his people against the foes of righteousness.” (Harkrider, Truth, 118, 130)



**In the end;
GOD WINS**