

Rev 11:1-2 (NIV)

- 1) Once more, we see John actually participating in the vision that he is currently experiencing.
- 2) We are still in the interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets.
- 3) Further, we are, as we will see, about one-halfway thru the tribulation
 - a) Additionally, with the appearance shortly of the two witnesses, we will begin what Christ calls the great tribulation.
- 4) We have varying opinions among scholars as to why John measures the temple and, for that matter, what the temple he is measuring actually is.
- 5) One problem with using a word like temple in this context and with so little explanation associated, is that it has been used so many times throughout scripture with various meanings.
 - a) God's dwelling place.
 - b) Temple building compound in Jerusalem.
 - c) The people of Israel.
 - d) The church.
- 6) To keep from getting too far from the point, I have chosen to use Bruce Metzger's explanation of this section of the verse.

“How should we take John's statement when he says that he was given a measuring rod and told to "measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there" (11:1)? This certainly cannot refer to the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, for when John is writing in the 90s it had been lying in ruins for some twenty years after the Roman armies under Titus had sacked the city in A.D. 70. There is no longer an altar and, of course, no one could measure (that is, count) those who worship there.

Consequently, it appears that here John is using symbolic language and speaks of the temple, not as a building, but as God's people. Measuring is done in order to build and repair, and John is given a measuring rod so that he can restore and revive the church.

Such a spiritualized use of the word temple to represent the Christian church is found elsewhere in the New Testament. The apostle Paul, for example, asks the Corinthian believers, "Do you not know that you are God's temple?" (1 Cor. 3:16). Later, he says directly, "We are the temple of the living God" (2 Cor. 6:16). Furthermore, according to Peter, Christians are living stones, built into a spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:5). Thus, the whole church is growing "into a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:21).

John is told to measure only the inner court of the temple: "Do not measure the court outside the temple . . . for it is given over to the nations" (11:2). Those on the outside are the persecutors of the church, who "will trample over the holy city for forty-two months"

Metzger, Bruce M. *Breaking the Code - Participant's Book: Understanding the Book of Revelation* (pp. 68-69). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

1) Continuing in verse 3 we read.

Rev 11:3-6 (NIV)

2) The statement regarding the measuring concludes with:

And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.

- 3) One must assume here that the speaker is now God since He would be the one to grant such authority.
- 4) The connection of the two witnesses to the previous measuring of the temple is clearly that they are here to proclaim His message of judgment during this final time.
- 5) This dovetails nicely with Metzger's comment: "Measuring is done in order to build and repair, and John is given a measuring rod so that he can restore and revive the church."
- 6) A few commentators put forth that these "witnesses" are movements.
 - a) There are strong arguments against this, and I mention it only for information.
- 7) There are two.
 - a) Here we recall that throughout, the bible requires the testimony of two people to confirm a fact or verify truth.
 - b) This was given in the original law in Duet 17:6 and 19:15.

Deut 19:15 (NIV)

- c) It is confirmed in several places in the New Testament as well and by the Lord himself in

Matt 18:15-16 (NIV)

- 8) A couple of points for clarity here.
 - a) First, the word witness is from the word from which we get our word martyr.
 - b) Second, we need to be sure to think of the word prophesy as meaning "to speak forth," to "proclaim," or "to preach" – not a revelation of future events.
- 9) I think first, and foremost the responsibility of these two witnesses will be to preach the gospel, calling people to repentance and faith in Christ.

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- 10) Additionally, they will proclaim to the world that the disasters occurring during the last half of the Tribulation are the judgments of God.
- 11) They are to warn all who will listen that God's final outpouring of judgment and eternal hell is coming quickly.
- 12) The period of their ministry is the last half of the Tribulation – 1260 days.
 - a) And, by the way, as if matters were not severe enough in the world at this point, these two prophets invoke a draught that last for the entire 3.5 years (1260 days).
- 13) Wearing of sackcloth is a symbol of mourning, distress, humility, and grief.
- 14) The idea of these men being clothed in sackcloth is indicative of their attitude.
- 15) It is one of mourning and distress over the world that is in tribulation and is unwilling to see what is coming and repent.
 - a) Again, this is likely symbolic – when they appear they will not actually be wearing sackcloth.
- 16) So, who are these men? John is told to call them
“...two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth”
- 17) The phrase “olive trees and lampstand” phraseology comes from Zechariah’s prophesy in Zech chapter 4.
- 18) Together, they symbolize the light of revival – lampstands provide the place from which the lamp gives forth its light and the olive oil provides the fuel for the light.
- 19) The actual identity of these preachers is the source of much debate and there are no indications here that would allow us to say who they are with absolute certainty.
- 20) One theory is that they are Enoch and Elijah, because both had been taken to heaven without dying (Gen 5:24; 2 Kings 2:11).
- 21) Another puts forth that they are Moses and Elijah, because both bear much resemblance to Moses and Elijah.
 - a) The two witnesses could:
 - i) consume their enemies with fire (11:5; as did Elijah in 2 Kings 1:10-14)
 - ii) shut the skies so that no rain would fall (11:6; as did Elijah in 1 Kings 17:1,7)
 - iii) turn river and oceans into blood, and send plagues (as did Moses in Ex 7-11)
 - iv) Moses and Elijah also both appeared with Christ at his transfiguration (see Matt 17:1-7).
 - v) Jewish tradition anticipates that Moses and Elijah will return before the end (see Deut 18:15-18; Mal 4:5-6).
 - b) Of course, the power to do these miraculous things came from God so this does not make this an absolute identity of these two prophets.

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22) Also, as we see in verse 5, these men had some other awesome and terrifying powers that have not been seen in apostles or others:

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.

Rev 11:7-10 (NIV)

- 1) Some of your translations may have the phrase “make war with them.”
 - a) This is actually what the Greek indicates.
 - b) There are two words – one is war or fight the other is possibly translated make.
 - c) I think the emphasis here may be that this was not just that the beast attacked and killed them but that they fought back as well.
 - d) This is obviously not a critical item but, one that should be considered.
- 2) Moving on to the beast himself. This is the first of 36 references to the beast that we will see in the remainder of our study.
- 3) We will see more detailed information about the beast in chapters 13 and 17, he is the Antichrist and is a world ruler.
- 4) Coming from the Abyss indicates that his power emanates from Satan.
- 5) We must look squarely at what happens here – God allows them to be killed!
- 6) However, He is still in control of this entire situation.
- 7) The reason they were allowed to be killed we must assume, is that God’s appointed time (1260 days) for their preaching had ended.
- 8) Secondly, since this is the introduction of the Antichrist, what better way to start your career as a world ruler than to overcome and destroy two prophets of God.
 - a) We know “the people of the earth” (again non-believers) hated them because of their calls to repentance and conviction of hearts.
- 9) After they are killed, their bodies are left to rot in the street of the great city – Jerusalem.
- 10) There are some interesting observations we must make about this seemingly gross situation.
 - a) In the ancient world, exposing an enemy’s dead body was the ultimate way of dishonoring and desecrating them.
 - b) In Deut 21, we read:

Deut 21:22-23 (NIV)

- c) Applied here, I would take it that this desecrates the city of Jerusalem.
- 11) When these events take place, God’s city Jerusalem will be so full of evil that it will be figuratively called Sodom and Egypt.

12) The literal translation of this verse is interesting:

Rev 11:8-9 (YLT)

8 and their dead bodies [are] upon the broad-place of the great city (that is called spiritually Sodom, and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified,) YLT

13) Sodom represents the epitome of sexual sin and idolatry.

14) Egypt represents the height of persecution and hatred of God's people.

15) Both Sodom and Egypt had been destroyed by God's power.

16) Verses 9 and 10 show the general condition of the peoples of this world during this time of tribulation.

17) Ironically, this is the only mention of rejoicing in all of Revelation.

18) The sinners will be happy because these two men are gone.

19) Those who declared God's judgments, tormented them with miraculous powers, and messages.

20) Those who condemned their sin and proclaiming God's impending judgment are dead.

21) This emotional response graphically reflects the finality of their rejection.

22) There are those who look at this situation differently and we at least need to look at this aspect.

23) Mid-tribulationists base much of their view on these verses.

a) They believe that the church will be raptured after three and a half years of the Tribulation, at the sounding of the seventh trumpet

b) According to this view, the church will face persecution for the first three and a half years of the seven-year Tribulation period.

c) In the second half of the Tribulation, the Antichrist and those who chose to follow him will be the target of God's wrath.

d) Mid-tribulationists also believe that the book of Revelation is chronological, so that this rapture will occur halfway through the years of tribulation.

e) The pre-tribulationists take the voice from heaven in 4:1 telling John to "come up here" to be a reference to the rapture of the believers.

f) Mid-tribulationists see the two witnesses as representing the believers being raptured at the midpoint of the Tribulation, calling the two witnesses to "come up."

24) Those who believe that the book of Revelation is cyclical (that is, the visions are repetitions of one another, intensifying as they go) may see this as the rapture of the church.

- a) They would say, however, that the Rapture will occur at the end of the Tribulation rather than in the middle, for this event occurs just before the last trumpet.
- 25) Some suggest that this is comparable to Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezek 37:1-14), a vision of the spiritual regeneration of Israel.
 - a) If these two witnesses represent the Jews, then this event pictures the salvation of the Jews.

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Rev 11:11-12 (NIV)

- 1) Similar to Christ remaining dead for 3 days and then His resurrection so it is with these two prophets.
- 2) Obviously, the rejoicing and gift giving came to a screeching halt when this occurred.
- 3) The world will probably think – “oh no, here we go again” thinking they would begin preaching once more.
- 4) However, their time here was finished.
- 5) God had appointed that they would preach for 1260 days and that was it.
 - a) This was very emphatic – the number of days was stated twice.
- 6) This is another and one of the final opportunity passed for hearing and repenting of their sinful ways.

Rev 11:13-14

13 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. 14 The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.

- 1) The return of the prophets to heaven is marked by an earthquake destroying 1/10th of the city of Jerusalem.
- 2) According to one source, the Greek word used for people in the 7000 people were killed statement had a specific meaning.
 - a) It literally means “names of men.”
 - b) The unusual phrase may mean that those who were killed were prominent people – perhaps leaders in the Antichrist’s world government.
 - c) Interesting thought at any rate.

- 3) The fact is that the survivors will be terrified.
 - a) The survivors connected the events of the past few days with earthquake and realized what was happening.
- 4) Text says, “and gave glory to the God of heaven.”
 - a) This is understood to mean a mark of genuine repentance.
 - b) MacArthur comments on this:

This passage, then, describes the reality of the salvation of Jews in Jerusalem, as God fulfills His pledge of blessing for Israel

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- 5) For the rest of the unbelieving world, the passage ends with a sobering reminder:
 - 14 The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.