

## REVELATION 11.1-19

**Act Three, Scene Three (continued):** Preparation for and the sounding of the seventh trumpet:  
10.1-11.19

- (11.1) Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff,  
and I was told,  
    "Rise and measure  
        the temple of God and  
        the altar and those who worship there,  
(2) but do not measure the court outside the temple;  
        leave that out,  
            for it is given over to the nations,  
            and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.

*John is told to take a rod and measure the temple (Ezek 40-48), the altar and those worshipping  
He is told not to measure the outer court  
for it is given to the nations  
who will trample the holy city for forty-two months*

*Five differing interpretations of these verses*

*(1) Dispensational futurist*

*the measuring takes place during the "great tribulation" which occurs just prior to the Lord's "second coming" (note: this understanding of Revelation requires three "second comings")*

*FIRST "second coming: He comes to rapture His church either prior to or in the middle of the "great tribulation"*

*SECOND "second coming": He comes following the "great tribulation" to set up a literal 1000 year reign*

*THIRD "second coming": He returns after the thousand years to judge the living and the dead)*

*the Temple and altar refer to a restored literal Temple in which believing Jews worship and are under the Lord's protection*

*the "outer court" refers to Gentiles who are persecuting the believing Jews and trampling a literal Jerusalem for a literal forty-two months (during the first or second half of the "great tribulation")*

*(2) Preterist*

*these verses portray events occurring in 70 AD when Jerusalem is trampled on by the Romans for forty-two months*

*the worshipers in the Temple and before the altar are true believers, who having been "saved"*

*either by fleeing Jerusalem, as Jesus warned them to do  
or by remaining faithful despite their suffering*

*(3) Modified futurist*

*these verses are taken figuratively*

*the worshipers in the symbolic Temple and before the symbolic altar are Jewish believers who had been "measured" - that is, saved*

*the symbolic outer court and Temple are Jewish unbelievers who suffer as a literal (!)  
Jerusalem is trampled by invading armies*

*both groups of Jews (believers and unbelievers) undergo persecution or suffering for a literal forty-two months during the great tribulation that occurs just prior to the Lord's return*

*(4) A second modified futurist interpretation  
the worshipers in the Temple and before the altar are true believers (Jew & Gentile) who are under the Lord's protection  
those in the outer court are the professing but apostate church*

*(5) An acted-out parable  
the measured temple and altar symbolically depict the victorious, invincible church  
the outer court also represents true believers who have been "left out" in the world  
they are not yet a part of the church triumphant  
they are members of the church militant - true believers who faithfully endure persecution during "forty-two months" (which spans all of the history between the first and final coming of Christ)*

*I am persuaded against the background of Scripture and particularly the message of Revelation, that the fifth view is correct*

*What is the TEMPLE?*

*note that John is to measure the TEMPLE, the ALTAR and the WORSHIPERS  
if we understand the measuring of the Temple and altar with a rod to be dimensional measurement, how are we to understand the measuring of worshipers?  
John's measuring is not for the purpose of gaining a record of dimensions  
John's measuring, from a literary viewpoint, appears to correspond to the sealing of the 144,000 in Rev 7, which is found between the opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> seals,  
just as Rev 10 and 11 comes between the sounding of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> trumpets  
the Temple is where God dwells in the midst of His people  
in John 2.19-21 Christ calls His resurrected body the true Temple  
and by grace through faith you are told . . .  
I Cor 3.16, you "are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you"  
Eph 2.21-22, "you are . . . a holy temple in the Lord"  
thus equating as one the Temple, altar & worshipers  
Jesus (John 2.19-21) is the Temple, which is why at the end of Revelation there is no Temple in His new creation, and we by grace through faith live both now and forever in His Temple  
note that in Revelation the only other reference to the Temple is in Rev 11.19, which speaks of the end-time heavenly Temple - Revelation, in referring to the Temple, never refers to the Temple in Jerusalem (which by the time John wrote had been destroyed)*

*What is the ALTAR?*

*it is the place of sacrifice  
it is where we as priests of God now worship  
note: Heb 9.11-14, 13.10-16, Rom 12.1-2  
Jesus offered up His blood, once and for all, on the heavenly Altar  
and we as priests offer ourselves up as living sacrifices to God  
note: to anticipate a rebuilding of a literal Temple in a literal Jerusalem with the offering up of literal sacrifice flies in the face of all we are taught in the NT, especially in Hebrews*

*Who are the WORSHIPERS?*

*all who by grace through faith have embraced Jesus as Creator, Savior, Lord and King*

*What is the OUTER COURT?*

*note that both the outer court and the HOLY CITY will be trampled upon*

*what is the HOLY CITY?*

*the "holy city" in Revelation does not refer to Jerusalem (as it does most often in the rest of Scripture)*

*the "holy city" in Revelation refers to the city of God (21.2, 10; note also 3.12)*

*in the OT the outer court was where God-fearing Gentiles worshiped the Lord*

*so why is it left unmeasured?*

*Johnson: "This section [Rev 11.1-13] corresponds to the visions of the 144,000 and the international multitude in Rev 7 in its*

*PLACEMENT (between the sixth and seventh of a series),*

*THEME (protection of the church amid suffering), and*

*TWOFOLD STRUCTURE*

*[144,000 and the great multitude;*

*the Temple (along with the altar) and the outer court].*

*The visions of Rev 11, however, nuance their portrait of God's protective care with greater complexity.*

*The measuring of the sanctuary (11.1) and the invincibility of the two witnesses (we shall see) until their testifying task is done (11.5) reaffirm the promise of Rev 7: God will let nothing separate His people from His love.*

*However, the prohibition against measuring the outer court [as well as the holy city], leaving [them] vulnerable to trampling by the Gentiles (11.2), and the beast's slaughter of the witnesses (11.7) show that God promises not to spare us from all suffering but to secure our faith fast amid suffering."*

*Again, note this theme in Revelation: Just as Christ gained the victory through suffering and death, so likewise, He tells us that His people, His church, will also gain the victory through suffering and even death (John 15.20, "A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will keep yours.")*

*To what do the FORTY-TWO MONTHS refer?*

*this time period was viewed by the Jews as*

*(1) a general time of trial for believers*

*(2) the Babylonian captivity*

*(3) the time that must pass before Israel experiences a final redemption*

*note that no Jewish understanding of forty-two months suggests a literal span of time*

*however, those who hold to preterist view point out that the siege of Jerusalem by the*

*Romans lasted for 3½ years (67-70 AD)*

*looking back, Daniel speaks in Dan 7.25 of "a time, times and half a time" during which the fourth beast -*

*a fourth and concluding world empire arrayed against the Lord and His people -*

*will speak against the Most High and "wear out" the saints*

*looking ahead we find in Rev 12 that the woman (whom we shall see represents the church) was in the wilderness for 1,260 days (v 6), that is for a time, times and half a time (v 14), during which the Lord nourishes her (vs 6, 14) and protects her (v 15-16)*

*Revelation interchangeably uses the time designations of “forty-two months,” “1,260 days.” and “a time, times and half a time”*

*Numbers in Revelation are important, but, as we have seen, they are not meant to be understood literally*

*there are literally seven churches, but they represent, symbolically, all churches*

*the Holy Spirit is depicted as the “seven spirits” of God*

*the seven seals, seven trumpets, seven thunders, and seven bowls represent God’s seven-fold judgment of the “earth-dwellers”*

*the 144,000 are the church militant*

*the “thirds” impacted by the judgments of the trumpets represent the limited aspects of God’s judgment of the “earth-dwellers”*

*likewise, “forty-two months” is not to be understood as a literal span of time*

*all these numbers are symbolic and are best understood against the background of the OT’s symbolic use of numbers*

*so note:*

*Rev 11.2 (“forty-two months),*

*11.3 (“1,260 days”),*

*12.6 (“1,260 days”) and*

*12.14 (“time, times and half a time”)*

*all refer to an attack against believers, against the church*

*further note that Rev 11.8 at least suggests the possibility that the “forty-two months” of trampling the outer court, of the holy city, of believers, of the church, began with the crucifixion of Christ*

*and again, looking ahead, in Rev 13 it is for a period of “forty-two months” that the beast attacks with fury the people of God, “making war on the saints and [conquering] them” (13.7)*

*and thus we conclude, in keeping with the pattern we have seen repeatedly in Revelation, the periods of “forty-two months,” of “1,260 days,” of “a time, times and half of time” are not to be understood literally; they all refer to the span of time between Christ’s crucifixion and His triumphant return*

*why the differing terms? I would think for literary purposes*

*So . . . for an extended period of time, beginning with our Lord’s crucifixion, the church is both protected from apostasy, for they even now live in God’s Holy Temple, while undergoing persecution and suffering at the hands of the nations trampling upon the outer court, the holy city, the Lord’s two witnesses, His church, His covenant people*

*Now, note again: “the court outside the Temple” . . .*

*it was not a place viewed negatively*

*it was were the “God-fearing” Gentiles were allowed to worship God*

*therefore, “the court outside the Temple” may well speak of God’s true people, who, along with the “holy city” are vulnerable to being “trampled” by the unbelieving nations for “forty-two months”, which corresponds to the church age extending from the first coming of Christ until He comes again*

(3) And I will grant authority to my TWO WITNESSES,  
and they will prophesy for 1,260 days,  
clothed in sackcloth."

(4) These are  
the two olive trees and  
the two lampstands  
that stand before the Lord of the earth.

*Who are these two witnesses who will prophesy for 1,260 days (which is forty-two months, or a time, times, and half a time)?*

*Now note*

*if the Temple, altar, outer court and holy city are all symbolic of the church  
if the length of their career is tied to the symbolic length of time the nations trample upon  
the outer court and holy city*

*if the two olive trees and two lampstands of v 4 are clearly symbolic  
then it would appear that these two witnesses are also symbolic  
symbolic of what?*

*symbolic of the church, the lampstand of God blazing brightly in this sin-darkened  
world: Luke 24.48, Acts 1.8*

*Jesus is the Light of the World; and He has told us that as His followers, we are  
now, as His witnesses, the light of the world*

*In Revelation, who are God's witnesses?*

*Jesus is THE faithful witness (1.5), but so are*

*John (1.2)*

*Antipas (2.13)*

*the martyrs ("martyr" means "witness")*

*those who hold to the testimony of Jesus (19.10), and thus . . .*

*you and me - "You are my witnesses" (Luke 24.48, Acts 1.8)*

*Why two - two witnesses, two olive trees, two lampstands*

*two is the number of witnesses required to establish a reliable witness (Deut 19.15, Matt  
18.16) - remember Jesus sending out His disciples in pairs*

*these two witnesses recall Zechariah's lampstand fueled by two olive trees*

*the two olive trees of Zechariah represent "the two anointed ones who stand by the  
Lord of the whole earth."*

*in the context of Zechariah these two olive trees were Zerubbabel, a descendant of  
David, who led in the rebuilding of the Temple, and Joshua, the high priest  
both prefigure the coming Servant of the Lord, the One Who unites the royal and  
priestly offices*

*now in Revelation these two olive trees, which in Zechariah anticipates the coming of  
Christ, fuel the reliable witness of these two lampstands*

*in Revelation lampstands are the church blazing brightly with its witness to Christ  
remember that in Revelation and throughout Scripture the people of God, as in  
Zechariah, serve as priests and kings*

*why only two instead of seven?*

*is it because only two of the seven churches (Smyrna and Philadelphia) to which  
John writes are found to be without fault?*

*more likely, as we shall see, these two witnesses reminds us of Moses and Elijah*

*Note that these two witnesses are dressed in sackcloth*

*sackcloth represents mourning - their message is a call to repentance in light of God's  
temporal and final judgments*

*their sackcloth corresponds to the bitterness experienced by John when he called upon in  
10.11 to prophesy against "peoples, nations, languages and kings"*

(5) And if anyone would harm them,  
 fire pours from their mouth  
 and consumes their foes.

If anyone would harm them,  
 this is how he is doomed to be killed.

(6) They have the power to shut the sky,  
 that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and  
 they have power over the waters  
 to turn them into blood and  
 to strike the earth with every kind of plague,  
 as often as they desire.

*In keeping with their witness to the Lord, which would include a call to repentance and a warning  
 of temporal and eternal judgment*

*the Lord protects them*

*note (with appreciation to Johnson):*

*enemies assault the church 42 months - the holy city is trampled by Gentiles (11.1-2)*

*the church is protected by God for 1,260 day - the two witnesses prophesy,  
 and their opponents cannot harm them (11.3)*

*the church is protected by God for 1,260 days - as we shall see in 12.6, 14-17;  
 for the woman is nourished in the wilderness and the dragon cannot destroy her*

*enemies assault the church 42 months - the beast wields his authority in blasphemy  
 against God and warring against His saints (13.5-7)*

*through them the Lord brings his "Egyptian-like" plagues upon those who would harm  
 them*

*the first four seals*

*the first four trumpets*

*like Elijah,*

*through them the Lord brings the "Egyptian-like" plague of drought*

*through them the Lord pours out His fire of temporal judgment*

*Mt Carmel*

*the messengers sent by Ahaziah to summon Elijah*

*like Moses, through them the Lord, as He did in Egypt, brings upon them the misery  
 associated with water being turned into blood*

*2 Cor 2.14-16 - When the church faithfully proclaims the Gospel, it is both an aroma of life and  
 an aroma of death*

*its witness is a call to repentance, to an obedient faith,*

*and a warning of temporal & eternal judgment*

*to believe and embrace the message of the two witnesses, of the church, is to be  
 saved*

*to reject the message of the two witnesses, of the church,*

*is to be damned - to suffer the "Egyptian-like" plagues prefigured by the  
 first four seals and first four trumpets*

*to suffer the final judgment prefigured by the opening of the seventh seal,  
 and as we shall see, by the sounding of the seventh trumpet*

*Some suggest that these are two literal prophets who appear during a time of final tribulation -  
 but that is clearly out of step with Revelation's use of symbolic figures*

- (7) And when they have finished their testimony,  
 the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will  
 make war on them and  
 conquer them and  
 kill them,

*There will come a time when the church appears to be utterly defeated*

*The beast from the bottomless pit will make war on them, conquer, and kill them*

*Beale: "THE beast's spirit had stood behind the earthly persecutors throughout history, and at the end he will manifest himself openly to defeat the church finally." (note 1 Jn 2.18 and 4.3)*

*Beale: "This arising from the abyss has primary reference to his actual earthly appearance at the end of the church age, when he will attempt to exterminate the church but himself be destroyed by Christ at the parousia (17.8-14)."*

*compare:*

*11.7: "when they finish their testimony, the beast . . . rises from the bottomless pit."*

*17.8: "the beast . . . is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction."*

*20.7-10: "and when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from prison. . . . to gather [nations] for battle . . . [against] the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, and the devil was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur."*

*Which again identifies these two witnesses as the church*

*Rev 11.7, "the beast will make war on them and conquer them and kill them."*

*Rev 13.7, "[the beast] was allowed to make war ON THE SAINTS, and to conquer them."*

*Remember the Lord's answer to the martyr's question in 6.10 concerning how long it would be before He will judge and avenge their blood?*

*"How long?" "Until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been." (6.11)*

*with the "killing" of the two witnesses, with the apparent defeat of the church, that time seems to be near (2 Thess 2.1-12}*

- (8) and their dead bodies will lie in the street  
 of the great city that symbolically is called  
 Sodom and  
 Egypt,  
 where their Lord was crucified.

- (9) For three and a half days some from the  
 peoples and  
 tribes and  
 languages and  
 nations will  
 gaze at their dead bodies and  
 refuse to let them be placed in a tomb,

- (10) and those who dwell on the earth will  
 rejoice over them and  
 make merry and  
 exchange presents,  
 because these two prophets had been a torment  
 to those who dwell on the earth.

*And with the silencing of the church, the unbelievers will rejoice  
 Their disdain for the church and its people is illustrated by them leaving the bodies of the two  
 witnesses unburied  
 Those who rejoice are identified as being citizens of the "great city" which is described as being  
 like Sodom  
 like Egypt  
 like the city where the Lord was crucified  
 which is not a reference to Jerusalem  
 but a further identification of the "great city" with not only Sodom and Egypt, but  
 also with those who rejoiced with the mob who demanded our Lord's  
 crucifixion  
 now the citizens of the "great city" rejoice because the beast (like Rome, the fourth  
 beast in Daniel, crucified Christ) has "killed" the church  
 note that He is called "their" Lord  
 He is sovereign over all  
 whether or not they acknowledge Him  
 The "great city" represents "those who dwell on the earth"  
 such language in Revelation refers not to all earth dwellers, but to those who are of the  
 earth, as opposed to those who are citizens of heaven  
 "those who dwell on the earth" are those who oppose the Lord and persecute His people  
 note that those to whom John first wrote may well have identified the "great city" as Rome  
 those who worship Caesar instead of the One, True King  
 "We have no king but Caesar!"  
 Those who rejoice are found throughout the world – peoples, tribes, languages, nations  
 their rejoicing is symbolized by their making merry and exchanging presents (the opposite  
 of Esther 9.22; Kent: "sort of a anti-Purim celebration)  
 their rejoicing is because those who tormented them (by speaking the truth) are dead*

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- (11) But after the three and a half days  
 a breath of life from God entered them, and  
 they stood up on their feet, and  
 great fear fell on 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,  
 and their enemies watched them.  
 (13) And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and  
 a tenth of the city fell.  
 Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and  
 the rest  
 were terrified and  
 gave glory to the God of heaven.  
 (14) The SECOND WOE has passed;  
 behold, the THIRD WOE is soon to come.

So . . .

*do these verses describe the bodily resurrection of believers?  
 do these verses describe the church's restoration on earth? (Ezekiel 37.1-10, for example)*

*does the partial judgment of the city  
a tenth of the city destroyed  
only 7000 killed*

*show that there is still time for the rebellious to repent - those who  
were terrified and  
gave glory to the God of heaven?*

*I'd love to be convinced that these verses describe  
the restoration of the church as an even more effective witness in the world  
so that God's partial judgment causes people to repent and believe*

*But . . . 1 Cor 15.24-25 and Rev 20.11-21.4*

*both indicate that the abolition of death occurs at Christ's final coming*

*So I am persuaded these verses are speaking of the rapture of the church just prior to our Lord's return*

*which is not a secret rapture  
but is viewed by all the church's enemies*

*All this takes place three and half days after THE beast (11.7) rises from the pit and appears to eradicate the church*

*for three and a half years the witnesses serve as a powerful witness  
then for three and a half days the church appears to have been eradicated  
what do we make of this contrast in time period?*

*Johnson: "A later vision magnifies this symbolic contrast between the long period (one thousand years) in which Satan's desire to destroy the saints is chained and frustrated (Rev 20.2-3) and the 'short time' (20.3) in which he finally assembles an international conspiracy to eradicate 'the camp of the saints and the beloved city' - only to have is rebel band consumed by God's lightning bolts (20.7-10)."*

*Following the church's rapture there is a great earthquake*

*this is the same language used in 6.12-17 with the opening of the sixth seal and just prior to the opening of the seventh seal*

*God gives one last temporal demonstration of the coming final judgment  
it terrifies the enemies of God, so that they are forced to glorify God - to bend the knee  
and confess with their tongues that Jesus is Lord*

*but their confession is not that of a whole-hearted embracing of Christ*

*Nebuchadnezzar made such a confession in Daniel 2 - but Daniel 3 demonstrates  
that it was not a confession of whole-hearted belief*

*in 1 Sam 6.5 the Philistines gave glory to God in hopes He would remove His Hand  
of judgment from them*

*Prov 1.24-32*

*Now the second woe passes, and is immediately followed by the third and final woe with the blowing of the seventh and final trumpet*

(15) Then the SEVENTH angel blew his trumpet,  
and there were loud voices in heaven, saying,

"The kingdom of the world  
has become the kingdom  
of our Lord and  
of his Christ,

and He shall reign forever and ever."

*With the blowing of the seventh trumpet, the third and final woe, we first hear loud voices in heaven singing the triumph of the Lord*

*The Lord always reigns*

*but for many His reign is not understood, for it is not seen  
but now, the Lord's reign is clearly manifested for all to see*

*All the kingdoms of the world are now His*

*Satan once reigned as prince of this world but no longer*

*Look at Psalm 2*

*the peoples and kings and rulers taking counsel against the Lord are now defeated  
for, as the Lord in Psalm 2 promised, His Son now reigns over all the earth, for He has  
broken the rebellious with His rod of iron  
they have perished in their way  
they have felt His wrath  
and now, all will serve the Lord, will kiss the Son*

*Note that the song sung in heaven depicts both the Lord and His Christ as sovereign over all  
And furthermore - He (the Lord and His Christ) will reign forever and ever (thank you, Handel!)  
Our prayer, "Your Kingdom come", has now been fully answered  
And, as we shall see, the prayers of the martyrs beneath the altar, will be fully answered*

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(16) And the twenty-four elders

who sit on their thrones before God

fell on their faces and

worshiped God, (17) saying,

"We give thanks to You, Lord God Almighty,

Who is and

Who was,

for You have

taken Your great power and

begun to reign.

(18) The nations raged,  
but Your wrath came,

and the time

for the dead to be judged, and

for rewarding Your servants,

the prophets and saints, and

those who fear Your name,

both small and great, and

for destroying the destroyers of the earth."

*The twenty-four elders, the angelic representatives of God's covenant people  
who sit on thrones before God  
fall on their faces, worship, and give thanks to Him*

*To whom do they give thanks?*

*to the Lord God Almighty - to the One Who sovereignly rules over all  
to Him Who is and Who was*

*but not to Him Who is coming (Rev 1.8) - for He has come  
and He has come to take His power and to reign*

*Again, we hear Psalm 2 in the background  
 the nations may have raged against Him and His  
 but now the time of wrath has come  
     the dead will be judged  
 and, praise God, the time for rewarding His servant has come  
     His servants  
     His prophets  
     His saints  
     all who fear His Name - both small and great  
 And for what do they give thanks?  
     that He has destroyed the destroyers of the earth  
     we are to pray for sinners to be saved  
     but we are also to pray for God's righteous judgment to be executed*

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(19) Then God's temple in heaven was opened,  
     and the ark of his covenant was seen within His temple.  
 There were  
     flashes of lightning,  
     rumblings,  
     peals of thunder,  
     an earthquake, and  
     heavy hail.

*And now, wonders of wonders  
 God's temple is open  
 the Ark of the His covenant is seen  
     the Ark of the Holy of Holies which could be entered only once a year by the High  
     Priest  
     the Ark where God promised: Exodus 25.22, "There I will meet with you, and from  
     above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark  
     of the testimony, I will speak with you."  
 we will be in direct and intimate contact with the King of kings and Lord of lords  
 But also, with heaven open and the Ark of the Lord revealed, there will be judgment  
     as we have seen before and will see again: flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of  
     thunder, an earthquake and heavy hail  
     4.5, from the throne  
     8.5, opening of the seventh seal  
     16.18, pouring out of the seventh bowl*

*Johnson: "The vision of the opened temple in heaven prepares us for a new cycle of visions that pierce to the heart of the cosmic conflict of the ages, the battle between Christ the woman's seed and Satan, the ancient serpent-dragon."*