

"THE BOOK OF REVELATION"

Chapter Eleven

As the interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets continues, two more visions are seen. The first involves John himself as he is given a reed and told to **measure the temple of God, the altar, and those worshipping there**. He is instructed, however, not to measure the court outside the temple, for it has been given to the Gentiles who will tread underfoot the holy city for forty-two months (1-2). This vision may illustrate that while the city of Jerusalem will undergo great persecution during the Jewish War, which lasted about 3 1/2 years (42 months), the true temple of God will not be destroyed (the church, cf. 1Co 3:16; Ep 2:19-22).

Then there is the vision of the **two witnesses**, which falls into three sections. With power they prophesy 1,260 days (42 months), clothed in sackcloth. Identified as the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the throne of God, they have the power to devour with fire from their mouths those who wish to harm them. They also have power to stop the rain during the days of their prophesying, to turn water to blood, and to strike the earth with plagues (3-6). But when their testimony is completed, the beast from the bottomless pit makes war with them and kills them. For three and half days their bodies lie in the street of the great city that is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt (where Jesus was crucified, i.e., Jerusalem). Those who had been tormented by the two prophets rejoice, make merry and exchange gifts (7-10). However, after three and a half days they are raised to life and ascend into heaven, bringing great fear on those who saw them. In the same hour a great earthquake occurs in which a tenth of the city fell and 7000 men were killed. The rest were afraid and gave glory to God (11-13).

The two witnesses are reminiscent of Moses and Elijah, also Joshua and Zerubbabel (cf. Zec 3-4) perhaps even John the Baptist and Jesus, but I do not believe they portend two literal persons. Rather, they represent the witness of the church, with the number two signifying the strength of their witness (e.g., "two or more witnesses"). When their testimony is completed, there will be a time of persecution by "the beast" (later identified as Rome, Re 17:7-17) and those of "the great city" (already identified as Jerusalem, Re 11:8). However, the witnesses (i.e., the church) will be victorious, symbolized by their resurrection and ascension to heaven.

The interlude ended, it is time for the third woe and final trumpet. As **the seventh angel sounded**, loud voices in heaven proclaimed *"The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"* The twenty-four elders then fell on their faces and worshiped God, giving thanks to Him for having taken His great power and reigned. While the nations were angry, His wrath has come. So also has the time come for the dead to be judged (which may refer to the martyrs, who were now vindicated, cf. Re 6:9-11), His servants the prophets and the saints to be rewarded, and for the destruction of those who destroy the earth. Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, with the ark of the covenant in the temple, accompanied by lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake and hail (15-19).

The physical temple in Jerusalem, which along with the ark (that had

disappeared long before) was once the focal point of God's worship and reign, is no more. Now the temple and the ark are seen in heaven, perhaps symbolizing that the worship and reign of God has become universal rather than localized in a physical city and nation (cf. [Jn 4:20-24](#)).

We have reached **the climax of the first half of the Revelation**, in which we have been shown judgment against unbelieving Israel, especially the city of Jerusalem. Through the visions of the seven seals and seven trumpets we learn of the arsenal at God's disposal: conquest, war, famine, pestilence, natural calamities, moral decay, external invasion. Just as God used such instruments in His dealings with the nations in the Old Testament, so His Son would use His power to reign over the nations with a rod of iron (cf. [Re 1:5](#); [2:27](#); [3:21](#)). Truly, *"The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"* ([Re 11:15](#)). The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, as foretold by Jesus in **Matthew 24**, **Mark 13**, and **Luke 21**, exemplified the power of His reign over the nations. His victory over Rome described later in Revelation will confirm His power and dominion as King of kings and Lord of lords (cf. [Re 17:14](#)).

We have also seen visions designed to comfort the saints being oppressed by their enemies, especially martyrs. God has taken notice of their suffering, and while persecution may temporarily be their lot, victory will ultimately be theirs! Those who suffer death at the hands of their enemies are promised salvation and the blessing of being in the presence and care of the Lord. Nothing can totally stop their witness, and nothing can keep God from remaining true to His covenant with them!

POINTS TO PONDER

- * The remaining visions in the interlude between the sounding of the sixth and seventh trumpets, and what happens when the seven trumpet sounds
- * The significance of these visions, and possible explanations of what they mean as we summarize what we have seen in the first half of the book of Revelation

OUTLINE

I. MEASURING THE TEMPLE OF GOD (1-2)

A. THE COMMAND TO MEASURE THE TEMPLE AND ITS OCCUPANTS (1)

1. John is given a reed like a measuring rod
2. Told to measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there

B. THE COMMAND NOT TO MEASURE THE OUTER COURT (2)

1. Told not to measure the court outside the temple
2. For it has been given to the Gentiles, who will tread the holy city under foot forty-two months

II. THE TWO WITNESSES (3-14)

A. PROPHESYING FOR 1260 DAYS (3-6)

1. Two witnesses given power to prophesy, clothed in sackcloth
2. Identified as the two olive trees and two lampstands standing before God
3. Those trying to harm them are devoured by fire from their mouths
4. Having power:
 - a. To shut heaven so no rain falls during their prophesying
 - b. To turn water to blood
 - c. To strike the earth with plagues as they desire

B. KILLED AND DEAD FOR THREE AND A HALF DAYS (7-10)

1. Their testimony finished, the beast will kill them
 - a. The beast that ascends from the bottomless pit
 - b. Who will make war against them and overcome them
2. Their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city
 - a. Spiritually called Sodom and Egypt
 - b. Where our Lord was crucified
3. The peoples, tribes, tongues, and nation who dwell on the earth
 - a. Will see their bodies three and a half days
 - b. Will not allow them to be put into graves
 - c. Will rejoice over them, make merry, and exchange gifts, because the two prophets had tormented those who dwell on the earth

C. RAISED AND ASCENDED TO HEAVEN (11-14)

1. After three and a half days, the breath of life from God entered them
2. They stood, and great fear fell on those who saw them
3. A loud voice from heaven tells them to "Come up here"
4. They ascend to heaven in a cloud as their enemies saw them
5. In that same hour there was an earthquake
 - a. A tenth of the city fell
 - b. Seven thousand men were killed
 - c. The rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven
6. The second woe is past; the third woe is coming quickly

III. THE SEVENTH TRUMPET: THE KINGDOM PROCLAIMED (15-19)

A. VICTORY PROCLAIMED (15)

1. The seventh angel sounded his trumpet and there were loud voices in heaven
2. Saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

B. THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS WORSHIP GOD (16-18)

1. The elders fell on their faces and worshiped God
2. Giving thanks to the Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come
3. Because He has taken His great power and reigned
4. The nations were angry, and His wrath has come
5. The time has come
 - a. That the dead should be judged
 - b. That His servants the prophets, the saints, and those who fear His name, should be rewarded
 - c. That He should destroy those who destroy the earth

C. THE TEMPLE OF GOD OPENED IN HEAVEN (19)

1. The temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple
2. There were lightnings, noises, thundering, an earthquake, and great hail

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the main points of this chapter?**
 - Measuring the temple of God (1-2)
 - The two witnesses (3-14)
 - The seventh trumpet: the kingdom proclaimed (15-19)
- 2) What was John given and told to measure? (1)**
 - A reed like a measuring rod; the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there
- 3) What was he told to leave out? Why? (2)**
 - The court outside the temple
 - It has been given to the Gentiles who will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months
- 4) What were the two witnesses to do? (3)**
 - Prophecy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth
- 5) How are they identified? (4)**
 - As the two olive trees and two lampstands standing before God
- 6) What happens to those who try to harm them during this time of prophesying? (5)**
 - They are devoured by fire from their mouth
- 7) What power do these two witnesses have? (6)**
 - To shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy
 - To turn water to blood
 - To strike the earth with plagues, as often as they desire
- 8) What will happen when they finish their testimony? (7)**
 - The beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war with them and kill them
- 9) Where will their dead bodies lie? (8)**
 - In the street of the great city spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where Jesus was crucified
- 10) How long will people see their dead bodies? (9)**
 - Three and a half days
- 11) How will those on the earth react to their deaths? Why? (10)**
 - They will rejoice, make merry, exchange gifts
 - Because the two prophets had tormented them
- 12) What happened to the two witnesses after three and a half days? (11-12)**
 - The breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet
 - A loud voice from heaven called them to come up and they ascended to heaven in a cloud

13) What happened in that same hour? (13)

- A great earthquake, in which 1/10 of the city fell and seven thousand men were killed
- The rest were afraid and gave glory to God

14) What was heard when the seventh angel sounded his trumpet? (15)

- Loud voices in heaven saying "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

15) What did the twenty-four elders do? (16)

- Fell on their faces and worshiped God

16) For what did they give thanks? (17)

- The Lord God Almighty took His great power and reigned

17) As expressed in their praise, what had come? (18)

- His wrath
- The time of the dead, that they should be judged
- That He should reward His servants the prophets and the saints
- That He should destroy those who destroy the earth

18) What was then opened in heaven, and what was seen in it? (19)

- The temple of God; the ark of the covenant

19) What then followed? (19)

- Lightnings, noises, thundering, an earthquake, and great hail