

Revelation 11

Revelation 11:1-2 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. [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 is given a reed measuring stick and instructed to measure the temple, the altar, and the people that worship there (v.1)

The temple spoken of here is the tribulation temple. Thus, the temple has obviously been rebuilt by the middle of the tribulation.

We know this temple is the tribulation temple because of verse 2. The Gentiles has control over it for forty two months in which is 3-1/2 years of the Great Tribulation period.

There will not be a temple in the New Jerusalem, because God will dwell among men (Revelation 21:22)

John is instructed to leave out the courtyard, because it is given to (controlled by) the Gentiles (the nations) for 42 months (v.2)...

The antichrist comes to power and he'll make peace with the Jews, and all will seem well, but approximately 3 ½ years into the tribulation period, the antichrist will break his covenant with Israel and take possession of the temple for forty-two months (3 ½ years).

He will then set himself up as god to be worshipped by all men, as prophesied in the Scripture (the abomination of desolation)

Daniel 9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

2 Thessalonians 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.

This is the second half of the tribulation (the last half of Daniel's 70th week), known as "great tribulation" or "the time of Jacob's trouble"

Jeremiah 30: 7 Alas for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.

The antichrist may temporarily occupy the temple and Jerusalem, but Christ will repossess it at His coming!

Revelation 19:11-16 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. [14] And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. [15] And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. [16] And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

The two witnesses

Revelation 11:3-6 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. [4] These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. [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. [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.

The two men are also represented by the two olive trees and two candlesticks mentioned in verse 4. The two olive trees represent the abundance of the oil of anointing on these two men of God. When we 1st began this study of Revelation we spoke about the candlesticks representing the church. The church has already been raptured back around chapter 4. So here, the candlesticks represent these two witnesses who represent the church.

Two witnesses will prophesy in sackcloth, which indicates a sign of mourning and a call to repentance. As representatives of God, they come in great authority and boldness:

They have power to execute anybody who attempts to harm them (v.5)

They have power to shut the heavens from rain and cause a drought (v.6)

They have power to turn the waters to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues (v.6)

They have power to bring plagues on the earth (v.6)

There has been much debate and great diversity regarding the identity of the two witnesses:

Some say they are Elijah and Moses: (Notes from Vintage Bible College)

There are several scriptures on which this view rests.

1. It is predicted in Malachi 3:1-3; 4:5-6 that Elijah would come before the second advent to prepare the way for the Messiah.
2. Elijah did not experience physical death (2 Kings 2:9-11) and thus could return and experience death as the witnesses do.
3. The witnesses have the same sign as was given to Elijah in regard to the rain (1 Kings 17:1; Revelation 11:6).
4. The period of drought in Elijah's day (1 Kings 17:1) was of the same duration as the time of the ministry of the witnesses (Revelation 11:3).
5. Elijah was one of the two who appeared at the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:3) .

"Many identify one of the witnesses as Moses. Several reasons are given to support this interpretation.

1. Moses appeared with Elijah at the transfiguration (Matthew 17:3) when the death of Christ was discussed.

2. The ministry of Moses when turning waters into blood (Exodus 7:19-20) is the same of that of the witnesses (Revelation 11:6).
3. Deuteronomy 18:15-19 requires the reappearance of Moses. (4) The body of Moses was preserved by God so that he might be restored (Deuteronomy 34:5-6; Jude 9).

Thus the law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah) would be joining in witness unto Christ during the announcement of the coming king."

Some would identify one as Enoch.

Several reasons are given to support this.

1. Enoch was translated as not seeing death (Genesis 5:24).
2. Both Elijah and Enoch would have put on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:53) at the time of their translation, but Christ is the only one who now has immortality (1 Timothy 6:16). Therefore these two were preserved without experiencing immortality that they might return to die.
3. Enoch was a prophet of judgment, as was Elijah (Jude 14-15) and this corresponds to the ministry of the two witnesses, for they prophesy in the sign of judgment - sackcloth (Revelation 11:3).
4. In Revelation 11:4 the word 'standing' suggests that they were already there in John's day, and must be two people who have already been translated. Thus, it is held, only Elijah and Enoch could meet this requirement."

The fact remains that nobody knows the identity of the two witnesses because they are not named and Their identities are not as important as their ministry.

A better interpretation would seem to be that the two witnesses represent two last-day prophets who perform their ministries in the spirit and power of Elijah and Moses. These names are not provided, and they should not be identified with any previous biblical character. The place of the execution of these witnesses is Jerusalem. The remarkable effectiveness of their ministry may be observed in the universal rejoicing which follows their deaths (v.10)."

The death and resurrection of the two witnesses

Revelation 11:7-12 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. 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. [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. 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. 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. 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.

The antichrist breaks his covenant with the Jews and make his move to take possession of the temple (2 Thessalonians 2:4), but he is confronted by the two witnesses who oppose him (v.4-6)

The antichrist (the beast of the bottomless pit v.7) ultimately kills the witnesses, whose bodies lay dead in the street (v.8-9)

Notice that the people over the entire earth rejoice that the witnesses are dead (v.10)

The witnesses preached, but men refuse to listen and repent.

In verse 11 the two witnesses are publicly resurrected from the dead and caught up into heaven however the entire earth does not see the witnesses resurrected as the bible says great fear fell upon them which saw them.

Revelation 11:13-14 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. [14] The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

After the two witnesses resurrect and ascend into heaven immediately, a great earthquake occurs and destroys a tenth of Jerusalem, killing 7,000 people. This produces great fear of God as they do not know what to expect next and out of fear, the people glorify God.

The seventh trumpet

Revelation 11:15-19 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. [16] And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, [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. [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. [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.

Vs. 15 is pointing towards what is going to happen around chapter 19 at the return of Christ to earth (Revelation 19:11).

Worship and rejoicing in heaven takes place when this announcement is heard. (v.16)

More judgment are to come as we can see from vs. 19 as there were lightnings, voices, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail to come.

This includes the third woe and seven vials of judgment yet remaining to be poured out on the earth.