

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 8TH-9TH, 2018 // BOOK OF REVELATION

MEASURING (REV 11:1-2)

JOHN IS STILL ON EARTH, BUT THE SCENE HAS SHIFTED

John is now standing in front of a "temple" and he is given a measuring rod and told to "measure the temple of God and the altar, and count those that worship there."

- **Literally** taken this would indicate that a **temple** will be rebuilt in Jerusalem. **Figuratively** taken this is **God's people** until Jesus comes back (1 Cor. 6:9).

JOHN RECEIVED A "REED"

This represents John recording how many believers are present during the Great Tribulation.

- The reason John is told to measure just the inner court and exclude the outer is because anyone could enter into the outer courts of the temple. Only the inner court held true followers of God.

THE "OUTER COURTS" WILL BE GIVEN AWAY

The angel tells John that the outer court will be "given to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months." "The nations" refers to people that oppose God. This is an indication that many Christians will die during these **42 months**. The "holy city" is either Jerusalem or Christians (figurative).

GOD WILL PROTECT US DURING THIS TIME...KINDA.

During the 42 months of intense suffering (trampling in outer courts), God will spiritually protect those in the "inner court." **We are not promised physical protection, except from God's wrath.**

TWO PROPHETS (REV 11:3-6)

THE "TWO WITNESSES" WITH AUTHORITY

There are 3 main ways to interpret the 2 witnesses of Revelation 11:1. Literally 2 men sent to preach. Either historical prophets brought back or new prophets. **2.** Symbolic of the OT and NT. **3.** The church in whole or in part being prophetic on earth.

TWO WITNESSES ALWAYS AFFIRM THE TRUTH

Throughout the Bible, at least two people confirm the truth because a single person could be disregarded legally (Deut. 17 and 19, Matt. 18, 1Tim. 5).

WITNESS CAN ALSO MEAN MARTYR

Witness in Greek is martyr, where we get our word *martyr*. We will see that these 2 will be true witnesses.

LET US FIRST LOOK AT THE FIGURATIVE APPROACH

In chapters 1-3 only 2 of the 7 churches we studied had full approval from God. Some believe that the 2 witnesses are **churches or a portion of Christianity** that will heavily spread the Gospel and teach of Jesus' coming during 42 months of intense persecution.

- The fact that John calls them "lampstands" in v4 supports this.

NOW, LET US LOOK AT THE LITERAL APPROACH

This will literally be **two men sent from 2 churches (lampstands)**. They are called "olive branches," which in Zech. 4 are said to give oil/light to lampstands. Could this mean these are **2 pastors?**

- Whomever it is, they walk in humility (dressed in sackcloth) and with extreme spiritual power.

FIRE COMES FROM THEIR MOUTHS?

The ministry of these men/churches will be powerful and when opposed, their words are fire that consumes their enemies. This is probably referring to rejection of the Gospel that they're teaching (Matt. 18:18).

- Consume can be translated as eaten down. **Rejecting the truth will lead to destruction.**

PLAGUES WILL BE INFLICTED BY THE WITNESSES

The reason some people believe the 2 witnesses are Elijah, Moses, or Enoch is because of their ability to "close up the sky," turn waters to blood, and "strike the earth with every plague they want."

- It is doubtful these men have come back, but whomever the 2 witnesses are, they will have power to inflict plagues.

BLOOD ON THE STREETS (REV 11:7-10)

REMEMBER THE BITTER/SWEET CALLING?

For 42 months the witnesses will rock the world with their teaching, but in the end they are killed in the streets by "the beast that comes up from the abyss."

- God allows them to complete their mission and **He is sovereign during the whole process.** It's also a **reminder that we're to be faithful even in the face of death.**

THE BEAST THAT "WILL MAKE WAR ON THEM"

There are 2 "beasts" in Revelation, one from the "sea," and one from the "earth." The "beast from the sea" is a political leader (the Antichrist) that will "make war" against the witnesses and eventually kill them.

- If we take the figurative approach, a great number of Christians will be killed by the Antichrist.

DEAD BODIES IN THE "MAIN STREET"

From the figurative approach, these are dead Christians in various cities throughout the world. From the literal, the 2 witnesses are murdered in the new Babylon. For 3 ½ days the world will watch and celebrate over the deaths of the witnesses. The refusal to bury them is a sign of disrespect.

THE LOCATION IS A SOURCE OF DEBATE

This happens in the "great city which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt." Wherever this city is, it represents immorality (Sodom) and spiritual bondage (Egypt). The "great city" could also mean opposition to God in general.

- "Where they crucified the Lord" is a metaphor for killing Christianity, not literally Jerusalem.

RISING (REV 11:11-14)

ECHOES OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

The witnesses will be dead for 3 days as people celebrate. We learn the celebration is premature because "the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet." The figurative approach to the 2 witnesses cause many to believe this is a mid-tribulation rapture.

ANOTHER VIEW IS THIS IS UNIQUE TO MARTYRS

Some believe there will be a resurrection of the martyrs shortly before all believers are raptured up. I personally believe this is more than likely 2 literal men that are killed and resurrected by God as their enemies watch in "great fear."

ASCENSION AND A VIOLENT EARTHQUAKE

A "loud voice from heaven" told the men to "come up here" after they resurrected. As they were ascending, very similarly to Jesus, a "violent earthquake took place." The earthquake is also reminiscent of Christ's resurrection, but will destroy a tenth of the city and 7000 people will be killed (Rev. 16:17-21?).

"THE SURVIVORS...GAVE GLORY TO GOD"

This is probably not conversion, but out of extreme fear they acknowledged God (Phil. 2:10-11). We must remember that "every knee will bow," whether voluntarily or involuntarily.

- After this, John's vantage point returns to a heavenly one.

THE END? (REV 11:15-19)

"THE THIRD WOE IS COMING SOON!"

When the Bible says, "take note," we should pay attention. The Mighty Angel proclaimed that the end would come after the 7th trumpet, and here it does, but we still have a lot of story left to tell.

- Trumpets can signify battle and the 7th trumpet signals the final battle between good and evil.

JOHN'S VANTAGE POINT RETURNS TO HEAVEN

Now John will record in detail from an earthly perspective what's happening during the Great Tribulation.

- One may view chapters 6-11 as the heavenly perspective of the GT, and chapters 12-18 as the earthly perspective.

THE "LOUD VOICES IN HEAVEN"

John records a roar of voices praising in heaven as time on earth has run its course. The 1st line shows that ownership of the earth is about to change hands.

- **The earth has always "belonged" to Satan, but that time is coming to an end.** The 2nd line shows that **this change will be permanent.**

THE ELDERS FALL FACEDOWN

Their posture from sitting on their thrones has changed to falling face first to worship. They do this because the time for judging evil has begun.

- Good will be rewarded and evil will be destroyed. This will begin with the Bowls of Wrath (Rev. 16) that will be poured out very rapidly.

"...AND THEN THE ARK OF THE COVENANT APPEARED"

Ch. 11 ends with imagery of the ark of the covenant that had been lost since 586 B.C.

- The ark represents the **promise** God has always had with mankind. **We learn that God will reveal all the things to us we don't presently comprehend. We see that all that has been stolen will be returned to us!**

STEAL, KILL, DESTROY (JOHN 10:10)

We have all made mistakes that have cost us dearly, or we have had evil done to us that has robbed us of possessions, loved ones, or our contentment. We often ask, "God, when will peace come? Will I ever have joy again? When will the things taken from us be returned?" Sometimes the hardest thing to do as a Christian is to trust God's timing. God knows that the enemy comes and steals things that are valuable to us. **Revelation 11 reminds us that the reign of the thief is getting short! One day the rightful King will take back what has been stolen and reward those who are faithful!**