

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 13TH, 2024 // REVELATION

THE TEMPLE (REVELATION 11:1-2) THE LITERAL VS. THE FIGURATIVE

When we read this chapter, as many other portions of Revelation, we can view much of what is written from a literal perspective or a figurative perspective.

- Regardless of where we land in how we read this chapter, we must remember that many of these perspectives regarding this chapter are minors (not salvific).

MEASURE, COUNT, AND EXCLUDE...

Still, from an earthly perspective, John is instructed to do these 3 things: measure the temple and its altar, count the people who worship there, and exclude the courtyard.

- This is either a literal representation of the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem or a figurative representation of the Church. The measuring of the Temple proves ownership. (Zechariah 2:1-2)
- The inner court was reserved for Jews, and the outer court was for anyone (the gentiles).
- The measurement of the temple with the exclusion of the courtyard is evidence of the lack of the desire, or will, of unbelievers to yield to the gospel. **If measurement proves ownership, God will eventually give those people over to their desires.**

"...GIVEN TO THE NATIONS..."

There are a few things we can conclude from these two verses:

- We will be protected spiritually.
- We may experience human persecution.
- There will no longer be a need for an "outer court" because of the unbelievers' resistance to the gospel. **The church's growth will cease, but we will still have a place of worship.**

TWO WITNESSES (REVELATION 11:3-6) WHO ARE THEY?

There are multiple schools of thought on who these two witnesses are.

- If these verses are taken literally, there is speculation that the two are a combination of Moses, Elijah, and/or Enoch (Zechariah 4:1-14).
- This could represent two pastors.
- They could be seen figuratively as churches (Revelation 1-3).

WHY TWO?

In Scripture, we always see the "rule of two."

- "In your law it is written that **the testimony of two witnesses is true**" (John 8:17).
- "If he won't listen, take one or two others with you, so that **by the testimony of two or three witnesses every fact may be established**" (Matthew 18:16).
- "Every matter must be established **by the testimony of two or three witnesses**" (2 Corinthians 13:1).

ON WHAT AUTHORITY?

As we read in verse 3, God says He "will grant [His] two witnesses authority." Therefore, they must come with humility because the two witnesses have power and authority over their enemies.

- **These witnesses recognize authority is not theirs, but is given to them, and when confronted with evil, truth prevails.**

MARTYRS FOR THE GOSPEL

When these two entities are referred to as witnesses, the Greek term for witness is *martus*. This is where our term, martyr, is derived.

- These witnesses are **willing and obedient**. They will be clothed in **humility**. They will be permitted to **perform signs, wonders, and plagues**. They will **stand in the face of adversity/persecution and speak boldly in truth**.

ON DISPLAY (REVELATION 11:7-14) SWEET AND BITTER

In the last chapter, John was told to eat the small scroll he was given. This scroll was sweet to the taste and bitter in his stomach, all of which is reminiscent of our relationship with the Word.

- There is sweetness in the testimony we can share as witnesses, but as we read here, there can also be a heavy price.

"WHEN THEY FINISH THEIR TESTIMONY..."

Once the 1260 days are completed, and their opportunity to testify to unbelievers ends, then and only then will they be destroyed.

- **Even when evil has the opportunity to destroy, God is in control** (1 Samuel 18:10; Job 1:12). **Persecution will happen this side of eternity, but we must respond by sharing our testimony regardless of its reception by others.**

THE BEAST

There are some who believe the beast in verse 7 is a political leader, false prophet, or Satan himself. Regardless, the witnesses are killed, and their deaths are celebrated.

- If taken literally, these 2 witnesses are killed in the sight of the world at the hands of the beast.
- If taken figuratively, churches and Christians will be murdered at the hands of the Antichrist.

WHERE WILL THIS TAKE PLACE?

The exact location where this takes place has long been debated by scholars, and where we land largely depends on our opinion of the identity of the witnesses.

- Some believe this location is the physical Jerusalem. Others believe this will take place around the world in areas of immorality (Sodom) and spiritual bondage (Egypt).

A TEMPORARY VICTORY

Once these witnesses are killed, those opposed to God allow their bodies to go unburied for all to see.

They also rejoice and celebrate that these two witnesses are finally gone.

- The enemy is looking for an opportunity and only wants to **steal, kill, and destroy**. (1 Peter 5:8; John 10:10). **Our opposition is waiting for our downfall, and desires to silence the Truth.**
- Their bodies are displayed for a fraction of their time spent prophesying. Then they respond to a loud voice and are resurrected into the clouds. "For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be in the likeness of his resurrection" (Romans 6:5).
- These witnesses proclaim **God's glory through their life, death, and resurrection!**

DIFFERING VIEWS/OPINIONS

Our understanding of the timeline of these events (scrolls, trumpets, bowls) will support a pre, mid, or post tribulation.

- The most important thing here is **not** that we all agree on the minors. It is **not** that we convince our neighbors to see things similarly. **It is to understand what the Word says and to be prepared for when these things happen.**
- **Pre-tribulation:** The view that these are the last two Believers being raptured.
- **Mid-tribulation:** The view that these events are in chronological order.
- **Post-tribulation:** The view that the 7th events happen simultaneously.
- **No matter where we land, the seventh trumpet will sound, and our eternity will begin.**

A GIANT EARTHQUAKE

When this earthquake happens, and v. 13 says, "The survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven," this is alluding to what Paul talks about in Philippians 2:10-11; "every knee will bow."

- In the end, **people may recognize God**, but not in the sense of self-surrender. **Everyone will recognize Him, regardless of belief.**

FINAL TRUMPET (REVELATION 11:15-19)

"...THE WORLD HAS BECOME THE KINGDOM..."

Trumpets usually signify battle in the Bible, and here is no different. We see here the last battle between good and evil.

- Many times in the Bible, the world is referred to as belonging to Satan (2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:2, John 12:31). Even so, the ownership of the world is going to change, and the change will be permanent.

GOD'S WRATH AND JUDGMENT

God is sovereign, eternal, perfect, and absolute. When the time comes, those opposed to God will experience eternal destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Ephesians 5:6).

- For the Believer, we have nothing to fear. God is a perfect judge, and the wrath seen here and in other parts of Revelation will not be experienced by His people.

"THEN THE TEMPLE OF GOD... WAS OPENED"

In v. 19, John records the sight of the ark of the covenant. **The ark represented God's promise and presence.** It had been missing from the Jewish people for 600 years.

- This represents God's presence with His people for the rest of eternity in Heaven. **Do we crave and desire to be in His presence for the rest of eternity; are we excited to see the ark?**

LIFE OF A MARTYR

- Are we willing and obedient?
- Are we clothed in sackcloth?
- Do we share our testimony with others in the face of persecution?
- Are we living a life that exemplifies Jesus, and are we such a threat to our opposition that the enemy would celebrate our departure (Acts 19:13-17)?

REACTION TO GOD'S PERFECTION

- God's wrath and justice are perfect. If we know Him and have a relationship with Jesus, we do not have to fear these things.
- Are we awestruck in the presence of God's miracles, or does the miraculous expose our skepticism?
- Are we excited for our eternity in Heaven, or do we long for the things of the Earth?