

Measuring The Temple

Revelation 11 Notes

Measuring The Temple (vss. 1-3)

- Until John was given the little book and told to eat it, his active participation in the revelation had been confined to writing what he saw and heard. Now he is given a reed like a rod and told to measure the temple, altar and worshipers. The Greek word here for "temple" is the sanctuary and not the temple with its buildings, courts and porches (cf. John 2:14). As reflected in the book of Hebrews, the tabernacle was a type of the church (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21).
- The sanctuary in John's vision had only one court, which was not measured, i.e., protected or separated from the common. It was left out, or literally "cast out." The word meant cast out by force and was used by Jesus (Matthew 22:13; 25:30), Paul (Galatians 4:30) and John (3 John 10). It can also mean to leave out of consideration or to remove from favor, as it is used here. This court, left out of or cast out from God's protecting care, had been given to the nations -- the Gentiles or heathen.
- The measured temple and its worshipers probably represent those faithful to God, those untouched by the world and the court without symbolizes the worldly or unfaithful to the church. When the "holy city" is mentioned elsewhere in Revelation, it is the New Jerusalem. Since the holy city is symbolic, the holy city is our spiritual Jerusalem. The vision indicates that although the faithful are numbered and measured, thus protected by the Lord, nevertheless the church will be despised and rejected of the Gentiles and trodden under foot for 42 months. This number represents a broken period of time, a period of trial, persecution and oppression.
- The two witnesses that prophesied included the apostles and prophets of the apostolic era, for by the Spirit they spoke the word of prophecy. This testimony would continue in the word held and proclaimed by the saints (Ephesians 2:20; 3:5; 4:11-12). The clothing represents mourning. They lamented the treading under foot of the holy city and their own oppression from enemies of truth.

The Two Witnesses (vss. 4-14)

- The lampstands support the light and the olive trees provide the oil for the lamps. God's witnesses would support and hold forth the light of truth (Philippians 2:15). God would support His witnesses as they

encouraged the saints and testified to the inhabitants of the earth concerning the grace and truth of God.

- In the same way as Elijah and Jeremiah were commanded (2 Kings 1:10-14; Jeremiah 5:14; 20:9), His witnesses had the assurance that in the midst of all opposition their witnessing should not be stopped: they would have power to prevail until the testimony should be finished.
- No power could destroy these nor prevent their completing the work God sent them to accomplish. The powers exerted by Moses, Elijah and Jeremiah were vested in the witnesses, to the end that God's cause should achieve its goal.
- The beast will not assume a leading role until chapters 13 and 17. There he is identified as a great, imperial world power standing in opposition to the kingdom of God. The beast makes war with the witnesses, overcoming and killing them; but this is not done until they have finished their testimony. The gospel was preached in all the world and was confirmed by God through the Holy Spirit (Colossians 1:23; Mark 16:17-20).
- John uses the phrase, "the great city," seven more times (16:19; 17:18; 18:10, 16, 18-19, 21), and in each case the context makes it clear that Rome is intended. Sodom, Egypt and Jerusalem all figuratively contribute a portion of wickedness to the city.
- The fact that the "great city" is Rome is shown by the fact that the bodies of the witnesses were to be seen by all the inhabitants of the earth. However, Rome cannot even be stated without qualification. Like the monster, the great city is a myth which John intends to use to delineate the true nature of Roman imperial power. Rome is simply the latest embodiment of something that is a recurrent feature of human history. The "great city" is the spiritual home of those John dubs "inhabitants of earth."
- The rejoicing of the ungodly merry-makers was short-lived; the rejoicing of wickedness is always short-lived. God revived them and those who saw the act feared as they beheld the power of God (cf. 2 Kings 13:21; Ezekiel 37:10).
- The Lord who had commissioned the two witnesses raises their dead bodies and calls them to heaven, indicating a total and complete victory for His word of truth. As the Lord ascended in a cloud of glory (Acts 1:9), so do these. The enemies beheld the resurrection and ascension of the witnesses and could testify to its victory.
- In indignation at the treatment of His witnesses, God's judgment is manifested in the great earthquake that destroyed a tenth part of the city and life seven thousand dead. Although many explanations have been offered concerning the city and the remnant, this tenth likely

indicates a partial or restrained judgment, and the seven thousand a full, complete number, commensurate with the wisdom and demands of God. The reaction may indicate that with the collapse of the great city and its entrenched paganism there was a movement toward God; but there appears to be no more than this.

The Last Trumpet (vss. 15-19)

- The victory of Christ and His witnesses accomplished the defeat of the world and its powers. This conflict will be the major theme of the next section of the prophecy. The sounding of the seventh trumpet serves as a prelude to what follows, as the opening of the seventh seal served as a prelude to the sounding of the trumpets.
- The earth had been made to tremble; the things earthly had been shaken that the things which were unshakeable might remain (Hebrews 12:27-28). The kingdom of prophecy was now a definite realization among men (Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14), for at the defeat of His enemies God had taken His power and rule over the world.
- The nations in their wrath tried to break in pieces the bond between God and His anointed by putting His Son to death. However, the Lord raised Him from the dead and exalted Him (Psalm 2:3-6; Acts 4:25; 13:33). The prophets who had looked for and foretold the coming of the King and His kingdom of promise now have their reward in seeing their prophecies fulfilled. These have had a part in God's great plan, which was a mystery until the kingdom was come and its nature and king were revealed.
- As this section began with the door opened in heaven to reveal the throne that rules the universe (4:1), so now it ends with the temple in heaven opened that all might behold the ark which rested there. This assured His people that He would remember and keep His covenant with them. All of this anticipates what is to come in the next section (chapters 12-22) as the prophecies of the little book are unfolded and carried out.