

Revelation 11 part 1

This is a pretty complicated chapter. We won't have time to finish today even though I've really scaled down my notes and just hit highlights from what I've learned. There is a lot here that is taken, historically, as symbolic. I want to share this with you from Torah Class because it is the way I have felt for a long time and I was glad to have someone else feel that way.

It is that in times past, and now, the danger for God's people has not been in misunderstanding biblical symbolism, but rather in not taking the prophecies literally enough. The vast majority of Jews in Christ's day missed who He was because they didn't take the Messianic prophecies literally enough. Their Messiah is to be human **and** divine? Impossible. He is going to come from Nazareth? Nothing good comes from Nazareth. He is going to give Israel freedom and yet he'll be hanged on a tree, cursed by God, and pierced? Preposterous. Israel's Savior will be a Lamb and a Lion at the same time? Absurd. But in hindsight the precision of these prophecies is astonishing; and they were anything but symbolic. With that in mind, let's begin. Tom Bradford – Torah Class.com

So, the first question is what temple?

Revelation 11 I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, with its worshipers. ² But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months.

There are multiple theories on what temple this is. Is it a real temple or symbolic. If it is symbolic, what does it represent? Believers and unbelievers? Messianic Jews and non-believing Jews? The measurement would then not be of a structure, but a count of people. If we take it as a literal structure, it isn't the temple that Herod built. By this time Rome has destroyed that temple. That happened in 70 AD, this is at least 10 years after that and it isn't looking back or even present. It is clearly looking ahead at events which haven't happened yet. Some theories are that this is yet another temple built during the time of trial that will reinstate sacrifice and the anti-Christ will demand to be worshipped in this temple. Or is this yet another temple after that one is destroyed that is untainted by evil and will be where Christ reigns for 1000 years.

John was given a reed like a measuring rod, but we don't know how big it was. We can guess that it is like Ezekiel's. The closest thing we have to go on is Ezekiel's measuring rod in chapters 40-42, and that rod is around 9 feet long and I doubt that Ezekiel's and John's measuring rods should be compared. What John is asked to measure is NOT the [entire] Temple, but rather only the sanctuary portion of the Temple and the altar area; that is, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies and the Altar of Burnt Offering that is in front of the entry into the sanctuary. The Greek word often erroneously translated as Temple is *naos* and it only refers to the inner sanctum and nowhere else.

The literal thing here is that if John was given a reed so he could measure the inner sanctum, it is to tell us that there is a real inner sanctum. This is a real temple, not a symbol. There will be a purpose for us in all this measuring that is revealed later. But it is a real thing. It is like when Jesus asks for breakfast and eats with His disciples after the resurrection. He does it to prove he's not a ghost. He's a real person. Measuring the inner sanctum with a real reed tells us it is real.

In the first and second temples the outer court was for gentiles to observe. The inner courts were for Jewish men and Jewish women. It would seem that this is the same. The court for the gentiles wasn't to be measured because there is something unsacred about what is going on. Israel is overrun with gentiles. They appear to have some control over the city and they trample it for 42 months. We can infer that there is some kind of mob situation going on and the inner sanctum really is some sort of sanctuary.

Ok, 42 months. There's a ton of conflicting interpretations of this. The months were based on the Jewish calendar which is based on moon cycles. Their months are specifically 29.5 days, but their calendars round that out so one month has 29 days and the next has 30. However, when you talk about months alone, it is pretty generally accepted that you count months as 30 days. You round up from that 29.5. That actually gives us 1260 days which is the same days that the two witnesses will prophesy. Is there a connection between the 42 months and the days of prophesy? Maybe. Also, 42 months is 3.5 years, which is half of seven. Some people see this as the midpoint of a seven year tribulation period, but it also clearly indicates an incomplete period of time. Seven is complete. 3.5 is half of that, but it isn't necessarily indicating that you have to add another 42 months until some completion happens. It is telling you that this is incomplete.

³ And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." ⁴ They are "the two olive trees" and the two lampstands, and "they stand before the Lord of the earth."^[a] ⁵ If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. ⁶ They have power to shut up the heavens so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.

Why two witnesses?

Who are the two witnesses? ^{CJB}Deuteronomy 19:15 ¹⁵ ***"One witness alone will not be sufficient to convict a person of any offense or sin of any kind; the matter will be established only if there are two or three witnesses testifying against him."***

God is going to judge the people and the city. God is one witness, and these 2 human witnesses make the total number 3 witnesses. The people and the city are about to be condemned; therefore a minimum of two witnesses against them (plus God as the 3rd) is required by Torah Law.

Who are the two witnesses?

1st, they aren't named. There is nothing to prevent God from raising up two new prophets for Israel. They don't have to be the return of an old prophet from Tanakh. They are wearing sack cloth which is a call for repentance. It seems God is still holding out hope for repentance from people. He's that good. The two olive trees are a reference to prophets from Zechariah. And the lampstands are menorah. They give light to Israel.

There are lots of reasons to think that one of them is Elijah or Eliyahu. ^{CJB} Malachi 3:23 ***Look, I will send to you Eliyahu the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible Day of ADONAI.*** The fire that kills their enemies and authority over rain are reminiscent of Elijah. The other reason is that he never died and it is prophesied that Elijah will come before the coming of the messiah. That happened the first time in John the Baptist, that he was a type of Elijah, but now is this the real Elijah?

Some people think of Moses because of the blood and plagues. That sure sounds like Moses, but Moses died. His bones were buried.

Moses and Elijah appeared to Jesus at the transfiguration. Yet, another reason to think that it is Moses and Elijah. However, these two witnesses are both about to be killed by the beast that comes up from the Abyss. So, Elijah never died. He was taken up. Moses did die. He could easily be resurrected from the dust of his bones. Another option is that one of the witnesses is Enoch. He is the only other guy in the Tanakh that didn't die. ^{JB} Hebrews 9:27 *Just as human beings have to die once, but after this comes judgment* or in its more familiar form found in the KJV: ^{KJV} Hebrews 9:27 *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.* Or, it could be two totally different people. Fun to wonder though, isn't it? One reason to think that it is someone who is already in heaven is the present tense. ^{CJB} Revelation 11:4 *These are the two olive trees and the two menorahs standing before the Lord of the earth.* They are standing before Him now.

Yet another theory is that the two witnesses are the Old and New Testaments. Another theory is that the Olive trees are the Jews and Gentiles and that the lampstands are the Old and New Testaments.