

Revelation Chapter Eleven

Measuring the Tribulational Temple (vv. 1-2)

VERSE 1 Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said (Καὶ ἐδόθη μοι κάλαμος ὅμοιος ῥάβδῳ, λέγων [*conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3s. didomi give; cf. Rev.6:2,4,8,11; 7:2; 8:3; 9:1,3,5; 11:1,2; 13:5,7,14,15; 16:8; 19:8; 20:4 + pro.dat.m.s. ego "me" + noun nom.m.s. kalamos reed (Lk.7:24); staff (Matt.27:29); measuring rod (Rev.11:1); reed pen (3 Jn.13) + adj.nom.m.s. homoios resembling, like + noun dat.f.s. hrabdos rod, staff; as an instrument of punishment (1Cor.4:21); walking stick (Heb. 11:21); symbol of rulership (Heb.1:8); shepherd's authority over sheep (Rev.2;27) + pres.act.part.nom.m.s. lego say*], **"Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it** [Ἐγείρε καὶ μέτρησον τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας ἐν αὐτῷ [*pres.act.imper.2s. egeiro wake up; get up + conj kai + aor.act.ind.2s. metreo measure; take dimensions + art.w/noun acc.m.s. naos temple (inner sanctum) + art.w/noun gen.m.s. theos God + conj kai + art.w/noun acc.nt.s. thusiasterion altar + conj kai + art.w/pres.act.part.acc.m.p. proskuneo worship; worshiper + prep en + pro.loc.m.s. autos it*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 1

1. The vision that began in 10:1 continues through chapter 11.
2. As in chapter 10 with the eating of the little scroll, John acts as a participant and not a mere spectator.
3. John receives a "measuring rod" or literally a "reed" which is a plant with a hollow stalk that was used for measuring because of its light weight.
4. Ezekiel apparently used a reed nine feet in length for measuring (Ezek. 42:16-19).
5. The plant grew in the Jordan Valley sometimes to a height of 15 to 20 feet.
6. The "reed" (*kalmos*) resembled a "staff" or "rod", an implement for walking or leaning.
7. The text does not specify from whom John received the "measuring rod," but it was probably the same person who spoke the words introduced by "saying."
8. The unexpressed agent of the verb "was given" could be God or most probably the angel of chapter 10 who commissioned John to continue with the Revelation of Jesus Christ.
9. The strong angel who last dealt with John in 10:9-11 is the most natural agent to give John a reed and to command him to measure the temple and altar and people in it.
10. No one has entered or left the scene since chapter 10.
11. Only the angel was present to give John the reed, so he must be the one giving him the added instructions in 11:1-2.
12. Some late MSS try to solve this dilemma by inserting the words "and the angel stood" just before the participle "saying," but the reading shows no sign of being original.
13. It is reflected in the KJV version.

14. The angel's word to John is for him to rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and the worshippers in the temple.
15. Once again John receives an invitation to become a participant in the action (cf. 1:12; 5:4; 7:14; 10:9-11; 19:10).
16. He is to perform a symbolic action.
17. It is pretty obvious that obtaining physical dimensions was not the purpose of John's assignment, so a number of interpreters have purposed that the measuring is a symbol for preservation from danger.
18. Similar purposes for measuring in Ezek. 40:2-43:12 and Zech. 2:1-8 support this possibility.
19. Yet this view raises the question, from whom are the temple and its worshippers to be protected?
20. The very next verse tells of the trampling of the city by the Gentiles.
21. No physical dimensions are forthcoming from John's activity (cf. 21:16-17), so "measure" must point to something else.
22. Since the non-measurement of 11:2 symbolizes territory that is profane, the measuring must be a mark of God's favor.
23. In other words, John's measuring distinguishes between God's favor toward the sanctuary, the altar, the their worshippers and His disapproval of all that is of Gentile orientation due to the profanation of the holy city.
24. This distinction shows in the case of the two witnesses who in association with the sanctuary and the altar enjoy God's favor (11:5-6, 11-12) and their Gentile foes who kill them only to see them brought back to life and translated into heaven (11:11) followed by a devastating earthquake.
25. The two witnesses enjoy God's favor but even they are allowed to suffer martyrdom.
26. So the measuring is an object lesson of how entities favored by God will fare during the Gentile occupation and oppression.
27. The noun translated "temple" refers more specifically to the inner sanctum, because v. 2 distinguishes the outer precinct of the temple complex as something separate from it.
28. The inner court of the Herodian temple had a division for the priests where the bronze altar stood, one for the Jews, and one for the women.
29. Between these three and the court of the Gentiles was a low wall erected to keep Gentiles from the inner court.
30. This is the temple that will exist during the 7 year tribulation.
31. The antichrist or false messiah will be permitted to erect an idol of himself in the inner most sanctum (e.g. Most Holy Place) at the very midpoint of the period (cf. Dan. 9:27; 12:11; 2Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:14-15).
32. This allows for a distinction between the physical temple and the worshippers in it.
33. Jesus prophesied with respect to this temple and its desecration (Matt. 24:13).
34. "The altar" must be the one where the people could gather, that being the bronze altar in the court of the sanctuary.
35. References of the noun to the golden altar of incense throughout the book of Revelation poses no problem for this identification, because elsewhere in the book the altar is in heaven and is associated with prayer.
36. That altar corresponds to the golden altar of incense in the Holy Place which was located before the veil separating the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place.
37. In the Most Holy Place was one piece of furniture, the Ark of the Covenant.

38. In the Holy Place was the Table of Showbread, the golden Lampstand, and the golden Altar of Incense.
39. The physical dimensions of the Most Holy Place and the Bronze Altar are given in the OT.
40. The tribulational temple will no doubt correspond to those dimensions.
41. Since the focus here is upon the Most Holy Place as noted by the noun *naos*, the bronze altar and the worshippers it may be surmised that during the first half of the tribulation that temple ritual will revived along with the correct meaning of the reality behind the ritual.
42. This will also be the fruit of the prophetic ministry of the two witnesses.
43. God will favor this worship keeping it operational during the first half of the tribulation before it is replaced by the worship of the Antichrist.
44. The message of the bronze altar is the message of the cross which the Jews will be open to during the tribulation.
45. The Bronze Altar is where all of the Levitical sacrifices were performed.
46. Again, it speaks of the Cross and the doctrines of soteriology.
47. The Most Holy Place speaks of heaven and access thereto.
48. The bronze altar is where the people gather and where the ancient ritual will be revived.
49. A regenerate priesthood will be put in place during the first half of the tribulation when God removes Jacob's blindness with respect to Who and What Christ is.
50. The combination of "measure" with "the worshippers" is a figure of speech called "zeugma" (Bullinger).
51. This is defined as a verb governing more than one object, which does not fit the verbal idea.
52. The verb "to measure" (*metreo*) is appropriate for inanimate objects, but not for a congregation.
53. The appropriate verb would be "count" or "number."
54. These worshippers in John's vision represent a future adjusted remnant in Israel who will come to saving faith and worship God in spirit and truth in the first half of the tribulation.
55. They will be the people who come to saving faith under the ministry of the two witnesses whose ministry is detailed in verses 3 thru 12.
56. Also, remember that this company will include those Jews who will constitute the 144,000 of chapter 7.
57. Their converts will be people who come to saving faith in the 2nd half of the tribulation.
58. Only priests could enter the Holy Place and Most Holy Place of the temple.
59. The people gathered in the outer court where the Bronze Altar was situated.

VERSE 2 "Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it

(καὶ τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν ἔξωθεν τοῦ ναοῦ ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν καὶ μὴ αὐτὴν μετρήσης [*conj kai + art.w/noun acc.f.s. aule courtyard, court (outer) art.w/adj./adv. exothen outside + art.w/noun gen.m.s. nasos temple (inner) + aor.act.imper.2s. ekballo throw out; leave out + conj kai + neg me + pro.acc.f.s. aute "it" + aor.act.imper.2s. metero measure*], **for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months** [ὅτι ἐδόθη τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν πατήσουσιν μῆνας τεσσαράκοντα [καὶ] δύο [*conj hoti for (reason) + aor.pass.ind.3s. didomi give + art.w/noun dat.nt.p. ethnos nation + conj kai*

+ *art.w/noun acc.f.s. polis city* + *art/w/adj.acc.f.s. hagios holy* + *fut.act.ind.3p. pateo step on;*
“tread” + *noun acc.m.p. men month* + *adj.acc.m.p. tesserakonta forty* + *conj kai* + *adj.acc.m.p.*
duo two]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 2

1. John was not to measure the outer court.
2. The outer court was an uncovered yard outside a house.
3. Usually there were two courts, an outer one between the door and the street and an inner one surrounded by buildings (cf. Lk. 1:22; Mk. 14:66).
4. The reference here is to the outer court, outside the main sanctuary, but still within the general temple precincts.
5. By divine design this area was abandoned to the unbelieving nations.
6. Gentiles could enter this area but not the inner court(s).
7. The distinction in the measuring and non-measuring is between believing Jews and unbelieving Gentiles associated with the city of Jerusalem during the first half of the Tribulation.
8. The verb translated “leave out” in the directive to John is used in the NT of repudiation (cf. Lk. 4:29; 13:28; 20:15; Jn. 6:37; 9:34-35; Acts 7:58).
9. It denotes the absence of favor (cf. Matt. 22:13; 25:30; 3 Jn 10).
10. To remain unmeasured amounts to the exclusion from divine favor.
11. The speaker (angel) proceeds to cite the reason for the exclusion.
12. The causal “for” reveals that the outer court of the tribulation temple sees a lot of Gentile traffic.
13. During the first half of the tribulation or for the first 42 months of the seven year tribulation Gentiles “will tread the holy city” of Jerusalem.
14. The noun “Gentiles” refers to all peoples outside the Jewish race and is used here in the same fashion as in 11:18 (cf. 14:8; 19:15; 20:3).
15. On the whole this group of visitors is unbelieving and hostile to the God of Israel and her new found faith.
16. The “holy city” is the literal modern city of Jerusalem.
17. If the temple is on earth the city must be on earth.
18. Currently there is no temple, but that will change between now and the tribulation.
19. There is no indication as to exactly when the tribulation temple will be erected, but it must be in the first half of the tribulation, that we can say for certain.
20. This cannot be the heavenly Jerusalem as it has no temple (cf. Rev. 21:22).
21. A little later in this chapter, further evidence that this is the earthly Jerusalem surfaces in the identification of the city with the one where the Lord was crucified (11:8).
22. The objection that the Romans destroyed the city some 25 years before John wrote is offset by the fact that there are prophecies that tell of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a third commonwealth in time for the events leading up to Christ’s return.
23. The issue of the forty-two months” revolves around whether it is in reference to the first or second half of the 7 year tribulation.
24. Seven years equates to eight-four months, half of which is forty-two months.
25. Other expressions of time are employed in Revelation that are the equivalent to the forty-two months.

26. There are the 1260 days (11:3; 12:6), the enigmatic “times and time and half a time” (12:14), and the other mention of the forty-two months (13:5).
27. The literal understanding of the forty-two months is based on the interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27 which deals with the prophecy of the seventy weeks of years culminating in the establishment of the messianic kingdom.
28. The first half of the tribulation, calculated here as forty-two months, will be a time when Jewish worship will proceed as indicated by the measuring of the sanctuary, the bronze altar, and the worshippers.
29. If this denotes divine favor, then the worship must be in accordance with the Law of Moses both in form and in substance.
30. This worship will not be corrupted by false theological assumptions.
31. This worship will come to an abrupt halt when the Beast establishes his image in the Most Holy Place (cf. Dan. 9:27; 2Thess. 2:4).
32. Jewish control in Jerusalem is not absolute during the first three and one half years, even as it is not absolute during pre-Rapture times beginning with the establishment of the Jewish state in 1948.
33. The measuring and the non-measuring is simultaneous.
34. A continuation of Jewish worship while the rest of the city is tread on by Gentile visitors is not impossible.
35. Even today Gentiles visit the holy city for a variety of reasons (tourism, business, diplomacy, etc.).
36. Even during the period of the ministry of the two witnesses and the intense Gentile (and Jewish) opposition to their activity, the temple will enjoy the re-establishment of bonafide worship.
37. Only as a result of a treaty sponsored by the Antichrist at the midpoint will this worship be shut down.
38. This interpretation is consistent with the symbolic significance of John’s measuring and non-measuring.
39. During the final forty-two months the symbolism would be that of non-measuring of all the items specified in verses 1 and 2.
40. Gentile intrusion into the holy city began in Roman times and continues to the 2nd Advent and is duly noted in Jesus’ expression in Lk. 21:24: “and they (Jewish people) will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”
41. The expression “and they will tread under foot” (fut.act.ind.3p. *pateo*) does not require utter destruction or domination of the city by Gentile peoples.
42. It only requires a Gentile presence in the city that is characterized by negative volition.
43. We know there will be an influx of believing Jews migrating to the State of Israel during this time, principally from the US (cf. Jer. 50:28 “There is a sound of fugitives and refugees from the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God, vengeance for His temple.”

Ministry of the Two Witnesses (vv. 3-13)

VERSE 3 "And I will grant *authority* to my two witnesses (καὶ δώσω τοῖς δυσὶν μάρτυσίν μου [*conj kai + fut.act.ind.1s. didomi give; “grant” + art.w/adj.dat.m.p. duo two +*

noun dat.m.p. martus witness + pro.gen.m.s. ego "My], and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth [καὶ προφητεύουσιν ἡμέρας χιλίας διακοσίας ἑξήκοντα περιβεβλημένοι σάκκουσ [conj kai + fut.act.ind.3p. propheteuo prophesy + noun acc.f.p. hemera day + adj.acc.f.p. chilos thousand + adj.acc.f.p. diakosioi two hundred + adj.acc.f.p. ezeconta sixty + perf.mid.part.nom.m.p. periballo clothe + noun acc.m.p. sakkos haircloth; worn by mourners and prophets])."

ANALYSIS: VERSE 3

1. In the second half of the tribulation, the Gentile authority represented by the leader of the revived Roman empire, will tread under foot not only the city of Jerusalem ("the holy city"), but will tread under foot the temple proper, including the inner sanctum.
2. The language of verse 2 anticipates Gentile intrusion into the city but not the temple.
3. The areas of the temple reserved for Jewish access is what John measured in his vision.
4. This area and its worshippers represent that which is favored by God.
5. This suggests that the Jewish worship which is suspended by the Gentile authority is honoring to God and not merely the old ritual without reality that so characterized the Jewish worship at the 1st Advent.
6. So the forty-two months of verse 2 relates to the first half of the tribulation and not to the second half as some think.
7. The connection between the temple and the two witnesses of verses 3-13 is not immediately apparent, but the connection of the two entities by a simple *kai* ("and") requires some kind of relationship.
8. That relationship is implied rather than made explicit.
9. The forty-two months of verse 2 is the same as the 1260 days of verse 3.
10. Jewish sovereignty over the rebuilt temple prevails during the first half of the tribulation.
11. How are we to account for the spiritual dynamic of the temple worship considering the fact that the Jews remain in a state of unbelief with respect to their true Messiah all the way to the close of the church age (i.e., the Rapture)?
12. Those who serve the temple (i.e. priests) and those who worship there in spirit and truth are the product or fruit of the ministry of the two witnesses during the first half of the tribulation.
13. Previously in this book we surmised the ministry of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists (chap. 7) during the second half of the tribulation is the fruit of the ministry of the two prophets.
14. We also concluded from that chapter that the Gentile multitude seen in heaven at the very end of the seven years is the fruit of the ministry of the 144,000.
15. The existence of a tribulational temple during the greater part of the tribulation is in view in verses 1 and 2 of this chapter.
16. It is not apparent from this reference to the temple that it has a prior existence to the seven years.
17. It could be built in the very last days of the church age just before the Rapture as many teach.
18. But it could be that the temple will be quickly set up soon after the Rapture.
19. The forty-two months of verse 2 is simply a prophetic reference to a Gentile presence in Jerusalem similar to what exists today.

20. The treading under foot of verse 2 does not require the absence of Jewish sovereignty in the holy city.
21. At the midpoint of the tribulation the Jewish leadership will transfer all sovereignty to the King of the West in a treaty willingly entered into.
22. The first person of the verb “I will give” along with the pronoun “My” indicates that God begins speaking at this point in John’s vision.
23. Either Christ or God the Father is in view here, probably the former.
24. Under the OT legal system two witnesses were required to secure a conviction.
25. Jesus also made the number two a minimum to establish a conviction in connection with church discipline (Matt. 18:16).
26. Paul also required a plurality of witnesses to validate a judgment (2Cor. 13:1; 1Tim. 5:19).
27. The two witnesses here, though, are two prophetic voices ministering during the tribulation.
28. Who are they?
29. Some take the number as symbolic of the church.
30. The church has no part in the tribulation as the pre-tribulation Rapture of the body of Christ precludes this.
31. These interpreters affirm that the Beast would hardly make war with just two people (cf. 11:7) and that since people around the world will witness their deaths (cf. 11:9) this works against it being just two men.
32. Refutation of the symbolic interpretation is easy to establish.
33. Only individuals can wear sackcloth (cf. 11:3).
34. The description represents two individuals possessing specific powers similar to that two ancient prophets (cf. 11:5-6), namely Moses and Elijah.
35. The plural “they will prophesy” is against a corporate entity doing the witnessing.
36. The description of the two witnesses is too detailed for them to be representative of a corporate body.
37. The corporate view would require that all believers of the first half of the tribulation undergo martyrdom leaving no believers on the earth, which is totally preposterous.
38. The ancient church, including such men as Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Hippolytus, identified the two witnesses as Enoch and Elijah.
39. The main reason for doing so was the fact that neither died a normal death but was taken from this life apart from the usual process (Gen. 5:24; 2Kgs. 2:11).
40. The necessity for all men to die (cf. Heb. 9:27) supposedly requires the return of these two to earth to experience death.
41. This position is subject to refutation in that it is not warranted to say that all men must die once.
42. Those alive at the Rapture will not experience physical death (cf. 1Thess. 4:17).
43. A further difficulty with the Enoch aspect of this view is that he does not meet the criteria assigned to the two witnesses with respect to a ministry accompanied by miracles.
44. Also Enoch was a Gentile and not a Jew.
45. The two witnesses will minister to the Jewish people living in the land just after the Rapture.
46. A view easier to defend makes the two witnesses Moses and Elijah.
47. Elijah called fire down from heaven (2Kgs. 1:10).
48. Elijah called for no rain for a period of time (1Kgs. 17:1; cf. Lk. 4:25; Jam. 5:17).
49. Moses turned water into blood and struck the earth with plagues (Ex. 7:14-11:10; esp. 7:14-18; 8:12).

50. Also Mal. 4:5 predicted the return of Elijah ‘before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD.’
51. Deut. 16:15,18 predicted the coming of a prophet like Moses.
52. The two figures seen with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration in preview of the second coming of Christ were Moses and Elijah (Matt. 17:3).
53. The mystery surrounding Moses’ death (Deut. 34:5-6; Jude 9) and the transfer of Elijah (2Kgs. 2:11) may or may not offer corroboration for this view.
54. This view is not without its objections.
55. One is that John the Baptist fulfilled Malachi’s prophecy about Elijah’s second appearing.
56. The response is that he did not restore all things as required by this prophecy.
57. Another objection is that Moses did die albeit under unusual circumstances.
58. Moses’ death and the absence of a body for burial was intended as a type of Christ’s death and the inability of anyone to produce a body.
59. Two deaths for the same person is rare but not unheard of (Paul died a martyr’s death twice!).
60. Examples exist in the OT and the NT of individuals who were raised from the dead (Lazarus, Paul, etc.).
61. The remaining question has to do with whether these two men are brought back or are simply contemporaries of the times in which they minister.
62. For them to be contemporaneous with the people they minister to they themselves would have no time in which to be prepared intellectually and spiritually, since all believers are removed from the earth at the outset of the tribulation.
63. The language of verse 3 is that these two men prophesy the full 1260 days, no more, and no less.
64. These two men suddenly appear in the land of Israel, like John the Baptist, and rapidly secure the attention of the Jews, and the nations at large.
65. During the lull before the really horrific seal judgments of the latter first half of the tribulation kick in they are able to get positive volition among their own race ready to handle the balance of the tribulation.
66. Basically they will evangelize and prophesy with respect to the times.
67. They will inform the Jews of the things that are coming to pass.
68. Whatever they teach will come to pass precisely as spoken.
69. God will resuscitate Moses and Elijah and they will appear dressed in sackcloth.
70. Sackcloth represents mourning and austerity.
71. It is the overt token of the prophet who stands apart and aloof from the corruption of this time.