

# Revelation 11:1-14—The Two Witnesses

## Revision and Setting the Scene

1. The next prophetic event, the next future event to happen, according to the bible, is the Rapture, when all the true believers are suddenly caught up to meet Jesus in the air and taken to Heaven to be with Jesus. There we will be spared from the horrors of the 7 year Tribulation which will start soon after.
2. The tribulation is for seven years, and it is split into two halves. Each half of this 7 year period is variously described as 3 1/2 years, “times, time and half a time,” 42 months, or 1260 days in different places in the bible. But you might say, hang on, 1260 days is not exactly 3 1/2 years. Well that is true if we are using the current Gregorian calendar, which has close to 365 days per year. However, we need to remember that the Tribulation is an event foretold or prophesied in the book of Daniel, which was written about two and a half thousand years ago. Back then, when Daniel received the visions from God, the calendar in use was the Babylonian calendar, which had 360 days in one year. So if you do the maths, it’s 360 days times 3.5 years, which equals 1260 days. So, when we read 1260 days or 42 months in the book of Revelation, like we will today, we understand that it’s just another way of saying half of seven years or 3 1/2 years. I’m just explaining this now so you will understand it when we read the chapter.
3. The purpose of the 7 year Tribulation is twofold. Firstly, it is all about God work to bring the nation of Israel to national repentance. The spiritual blindness that the Israelites are currently experiencing will be removed and many of the Jews will believe by the end of the 7 year Tribulation period. Also to do with Israel is the 144,000 Jewish evangelists that God will anoint, seal and protect, who will evangelise the whole world and be used to bring about the greatest revival the world has ever seen, in the darkest days the world has ever seen. We learned about them in Revelation 7.

The second purpose of the 7 year Tribulation period is judgement of a world in rebellion against God. God uses a series of judgements or plagues to bring the world to its knees and see clearly the decision between light and dark, good and evil, eternal life with God in Heaven and eternal separation from God in Hell. As usual God shows mercy in judgement, God always gives people a second chance.

4. The start, middle and finish of the 7 year Tribulation period is clearly set out in Daniel 9:27.

Daniel 9:27 NLT paraphrase

The ruler will **make a treaty with the people for a period of one set of seven [7 years]**, but after **half** this time, he will put an end to the sacrifices and offerings. And as a climax to all his terrible deeds, he will set up a sacrilegious object that causes desecration, until the fate decreed for this defiler is finally poured out on him.

Firstly, the Tribulation starts when this world ruler, a man who promises peace, a man who everyone trusts, a man who can talk almost anyone into anything, a man who will have amazing powers to deceive, will confirm a seven year peace treaty with Israel (**the people**). Obviously, this could never have happened before May 14, 1948, because Israel did not exist as a nation. But all that changed with Israel

becoming a nation again in May 14, 1948. What is even more obvious since then, and especially in the last 20 years or so, is the constant push for peace. The bible says that in the future there will be a man who has the power to broker peace between Israel and the whole world. The process has already started, but there are still many obstacles and problems to world peace which are seemingly unsolvable presently. But one day, the conditions will be right, and the antichrist will be revealed when he confirms a seven year peace treaty between Israel and the whole world.

5. Another thing that we will learn about the 7 year tribulation Period is that the antichrist, or false or imitation christ, will include in his peace treaty permission for the Jewish temple to be rebuilt in Jerusalem. But Daniel 9:27 clearly shows that the so-called man of peace, the antichrist, will break his promises to Israel and will turn against them. Based on Daniel 9:27 and other scriptures in the New Testament, we learn that the antichrist will show his true colours half way through, or 3 1/2 years, into the tribulation. Instead of being a man of peace, he causes war. Instead of being for the Jewish people, he attacks them and desecrates the temple he allowed them to build. He will set up an image of himself and declare himself to be god. God will allow him to prosper for the remaining 3 1/2 years until Jesus comes back and destroys him.
6. Again, what splits the tribulation into two halves is a dramatic event foretold by Daniel, Jesus and Paul. The antichrist desecrates the temple and proclaims himself to be God. At the same time, he will cause mankind to take the mark, a symbol of loyalty to himself, but more importantly, the power within Him—Satan. Yes, the antichrist will be indwelt or possessed by Satan himself. This apparently peace loving leader will be revealed as being pure evil, full of deception and the father of lies. If you don't worship him and take his mark you will die. If you do worship him and take his mark you are doomed to eternity in hell—you will have sealed your eternal destiny. We have already learned in Revelation 7, and other places, that many, many tribulation saints, those who come to Christ during the Tribulation, will be martyred or killed during these awful seven years.
7. The bible also tells us that during the last half of the tribulation, the final 3 1/2 years, 42 months or 1260 days, the nation of Israel will be supernaturally sheltered and protected by God in the area that is now Jordan, and the city of Jerusalem will be trampled or treated with contempt until Jesus comes back to claim the earth for His own.
8. Then, after Jesus comes back at the end of the 7 year Tribulation, there is the 1,000 year or millennial reign of Jesus on the earth. This is when Jesus restores the earth to be like the original creation, like the garden of Eden. Also, He will rule over all the earth and we will rule and reign with Him for 1,000 years.
9. After the 1,000 year Millennial reign of Jesus Christ, the old earth and heavens are destroyed or dissolved and Jesus creates the new heavens and the new earth and all believers enter into eternity future with Jesus.

So with this brief introduction to the book of Revelation and the tribulation, we will read Revelation chapter 11, which is yet another a vignette or story which in this case tells us about two very special men, sent by God during the Tribulation, to warn the world about this terrible antichrist so that they will not be deceived. Basically, they start their ministry in Jerusalem on the day that the peace treaty is confirmed, and are killed by

the antichrist halfway through the 7 years. In other words, they minister and warn people about this false messiah for the first three and a half years of the tribulation. Then, at the halfway point, only once they have finished the work God gave them to do, God allows them to be killed by the antichrist, and then they rise again and ascend into heaven. Let's learn about these two amazing people, who they are, what they do, their message, how they are killed, and how God resurrects them after three and a half days of being dead and their bodies decomposing on the streets.

### **Revelation 11:1-14 NKJV**

#### ***The Two Witnesses***

Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. <sup>2</sup> But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months. <sup>3</sup> And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

<sup>4</sup> These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. <sup>5</sup> And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. <sup>6</sup> These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

#### ***The Witnesses Killed***

<sup>7</sup> When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. <sup>8</sup> And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. <sup>9</sup> Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. <sup>10</sup> And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

#### ***The Witnesses Resurrected***

<sup>11</sup> Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. <sup>12</sup> And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. <sup>13</sup> In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.

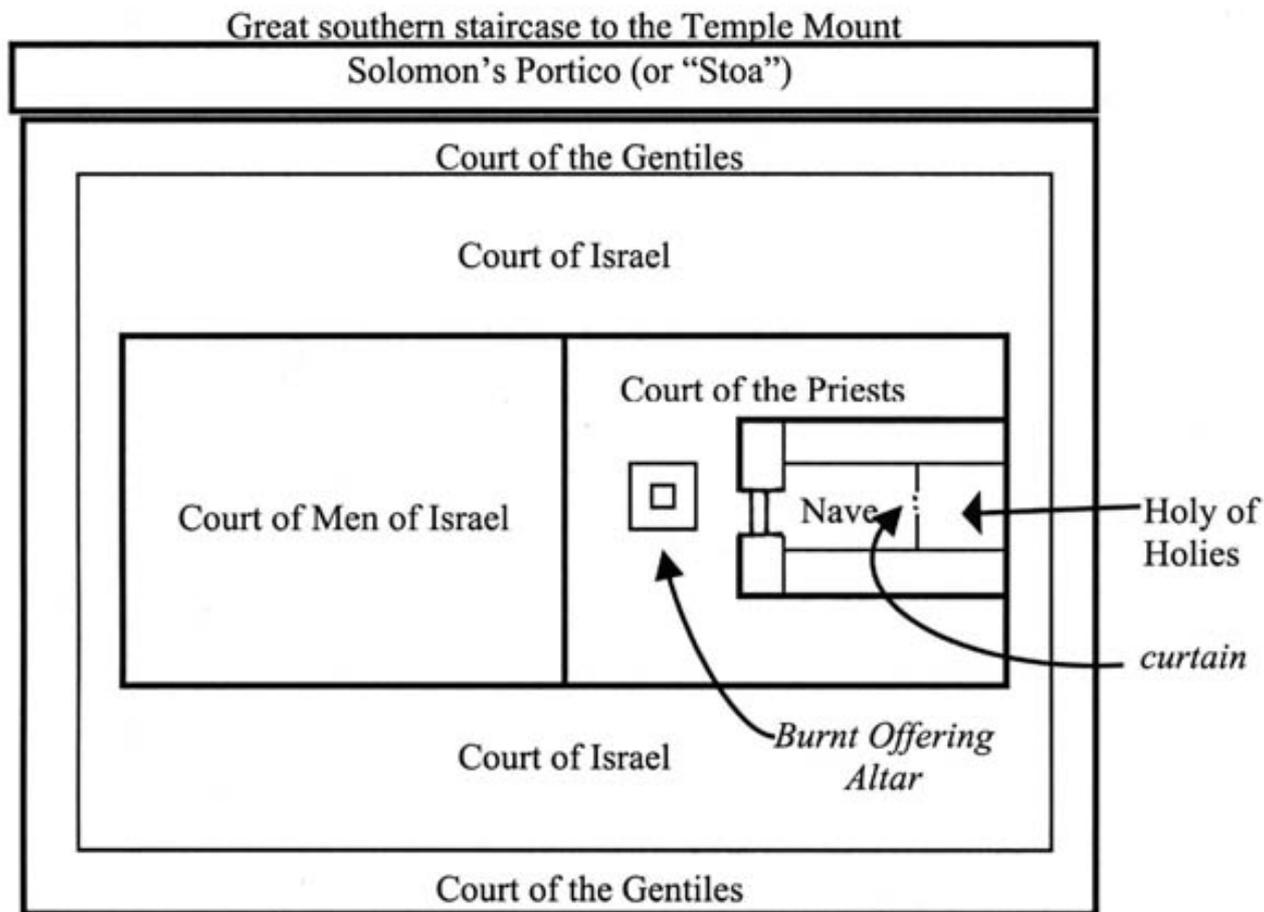
<sup>14</sup> The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

## **The Tribulation Temple**

### **Revelation 11:1-2 NKJV**

Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. <sup>2</sup> But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.

Before I explain the first two verses, it's important that we remember the purpose of the temple in the Jewish nation and the Jewish religion. In Judaism, the temple represented God's presence. It was where the glory of God dwelt in a visible form, the shekinah glory of God dwelling or remaining above the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies.



It was where sacrifices were made; sheep, cattle, goats, birds, grain, oil and salt, all pointing to the future work of the promised Saviour who would be called, "The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). The sacrifice of animals and the shedding of blood for the forgiveness of sins was the focus of the whole law. It all pointed to our need for a Saviour, someone who would be the payment for our sins, someone who would take the punishment our sins deserved by dying in our place as a substitutionary sacrifice. In the old testament sacrifices, the guilty people would lay their hands on the head of the innocent animal and confess their sins before they killed it. Their sins were symbolically transferred to the innocent animal who would die in their place. It's a picture of the innocent being condemned so the guilty can go free. It's a picture of God judging sin without judging the sinner.

To this very day, the nation of Israel, as a whole, with relatively few exceptions, continues to reject Jesus as their Messiah, as their Saviour. Therefore, they still think that they need to keep the law with all its rules and rituals. The religious Jews are increasingly pushing hard to get the temple rebuilt. Today, many of the preparations are already complete, including; the clothing, the various altars, the golden menorah or candle stick, the animals, the priestly training etc.

We need to look at Revelation chapter 11 as a part of the fulfilment of several of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the nation of Israel to understand it correctly.

Firstly, God has kept His promise to bring the people of Israel, who were scattered all over the world, back into the land of Israel as promised in the first part of the prophecy in Isaiah 11:11-12.

Isaiah 11:11-12 NLT paraphrase

In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to bring back the remnant of his people—

those who remain in Assyria and northern Egypt;

in southern Egypt, Ethiopia, and Elam;

in Babylonia, Hamath, and all the distant coastlands.

<sup>12</sup> He will raise a flag among the nations

and assemble the exiles of Israel.

He will gather the scattered people of Judah

from the ends of the earth.

This is literally happening before our very eyes, especially since 1948.

Another amazing fulfilment of prophecy is that the nation of Israel was literally reborn in a day, historically May 14, 1948, as foretold or predicted in:

Isaiah 66:8 NLT paraphrase

<sup>7</sup> “Before the birth pains even begin,

Jerusalem gives birth to a son.

<sup>8</sup> Who has ever seen anything as strange as this?

Who ever heard of such a thing?

Has a nation ever been born in a single day?

Has a country ever come forth in a mere moment?

But by the time Jerusalem’s birth pains begin,

her children will be born.

The picture is that the baby comes so quickly that there is not even time for the birth pangs (contractions or labour) to begin. One day the nation of Israel didn’t exist, then the next day it did, because of a very close united nations vote. It was a miracle when you consider just how much the world has always hated Israel.

Another amazing prophecy regarding the nation of Israel is Ezekiel 37, which gives a two part prediction of not only the regathering of Israel, but also the spiritual awakening of the nation, where they will, as a nation, receive Jesus as their Messiah. The first part of the prophecy, the physical regathering and establishing the nation has already been fulfilled. The second part, the recognising of Jesus as their Messiah, will be fulfilled by the end of the 7 year Tribulation when Jesus comes back to earth.

I point out all these fulfilled prophecies to show that we are close to the end of the church age, and that the events foretold in Revelation chapter 11 fit into the plan God has for Israel which is already unfolding.

Another thing to be aware of, in order to properly understand Revelation 11, is that Israel, in their misguided zeal to attain righteousness by the keeping of the law, will end up embracing the antichrist as their Messiah.

Romans 10:1-4 NLT paraphrase

Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is for the people of Israel to be saved. <sup>2</sup> I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is

misdirected zeal. <sup>3</sup> **For they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself. Refusing to accept God's way, they cling to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law.** <sup>4</sup> For Christ has already accomplished the purpose for which the law was given. As a result, all who believe in him are made right with God.

*Therefore, temple built in the first half of the tribulation will be a curse to the people of Israel, because they will be continuing to ignore Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for the payment of all sins for all time.*

Hebrews 9:26b NLT paraphrase

But now, once for all time, He [Jesus] has appeared at the end of the age to remove sin by his own death as a sacrifice.

Jesus said that the Jews will accept the antichrist as their messiah because they rejected Him. This is always the way. If we reject the truth, then we will believe the lie.

John 5:43 NKJV

I [Jesus] have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.

Most likely they will initially receive the antichrist as a political saviour, someone who was able to bring peace and prosperity to the nation—this is what they wanted from Jesus when He came the first time—physical deliverance from their enemies. They will also be fooled by the offer of being able to rebuild the temple and will also be deceived by his lying wonders.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 NLT paraphrase

This man will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles. <sup>10</sup> He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them.

However, the illusion will be shattered when the antichrist reveals his true satanic identity when he turns against the Jews halfway, or 3 1/2 years, into the tribulation. When the antichrist defiles or desecrates the holy of holies, the place where the ark of the covenant with the mercy seat on top is kept, they will know that they have been deceived, and God will use this to continue to turn the nation to Him. The two witnesses we will learn about today are a very important part of this plan. The people of Israel will recognise that everything that the witnesses said was true, and that they really were prophets sent by God.

**Revelation 11:1-2 NKJV**

**Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. <sup>2</sup> But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.**

v 1 **A reed like a measuring rod... Rise and measure the temple of God:**

Why would the angel ask John to **Rise and measure the temple of God**? Sometimes in the Old Testament, the idea of measuring communicates ownership, protection, and preservation. When Habakkuk prophesied, *He stood and measured the earth*

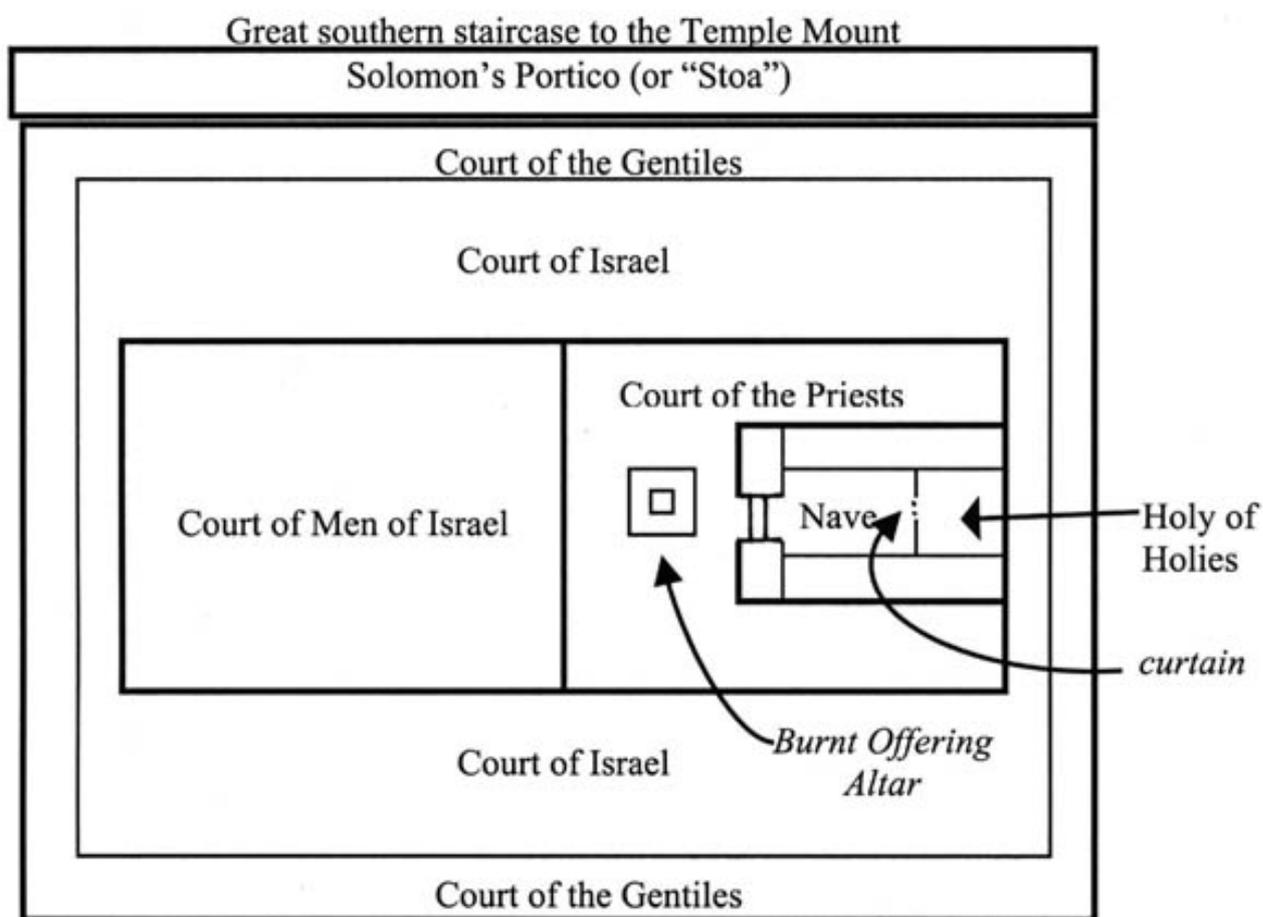
(Habakkuk 3:6), the idea was that the Lord owned the earth and could do with it as He pleased. When this temple is measured, it shows that God knows its every dimension, and He is in charge.

This concept that *God is in charge* is one of the glorious, mighty themes of the Book of Revelation. Revelation 11:17 again uses the title *Almighty* for God. The Greek word for *Almighty* is *pantokrater*, and it describes “the one who has his hand on everything.” Nine out of the ten times this word is used in the New Testament, it is used in Revelation.

Guzik, “This temple build during the 7 year Tribulation will be the scene of great horror and great glory, but God is in charge, working through both the good and bad actions of man.”

**Application:** God is in charge. God is in control. The events in Revelation confirm that God is in control of world events, no matter how badly things may look from our view point. Can we believe that the same thing is true for us personally? Can we trust that God is Almighty in our lives? That He has His hand on everything? That we don’t need to worry about anything?

v 1 **The temple of God:** As we mentioned before, this is the temple that will be build by the Jews at the start of the Tribulation, and will therefore allow or cause the fulfilment of what Daniel, Jesus, and Paul said regarding the *abomination of desolation* (look at the temple diagram to see where the holy of holies is).



## What is the abomination of desolation?

- The prophet Daniel told us the Antichrist will break his covenant with the Jewish people, bringing sacrifice and offerings to an end. This Antichrist will defile the temple by setting something abominable in the Holy of Holies (Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11).
- Jesus said to look for an abomination standing in the holy place, which would be the unmistakable or pivotal sign that the season of God's wrath was upon the earth (Matthew 24:15–16 and 24:21).
- Paul told us that the Antichrist would sit in the temple as God (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4).

It makes sense that Christians get excited when they see efforts to rebuild the temple because it points to the fulfilment of prophecy, especially the scriptures we just read and also Revelation 11. At the same time, we need to understand that the basic impulse, reason or motive behind rebuilding the temple—the desire to have a place to sacrifice for sin—is not of God at all. As we read before, Christians believe that all sacrifice for sin was finished at the cross, and any further sacrifice for sin is an offence to God, because it denies the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

## The outer court of the temple

v 2 **But leave out the court which is outside the temple:** The outer court did not need not be measured because it has been **given to the Gentiles**. Very likely this is because the outer courts of this rebuilt temple include the Islamic Dome of the Rock shrine, which currently stands on the temple mount and is a point of great contention between Jews and Muslims.

What happened is that, when the Romans conquered Jerusalem in a.d. 70 they destroyed the city so completely that the foundations of the old temple are not easily found. Most have long assumed that the Dome of the Rock shrine stands on the place of the old temple. But new research gives much evidence that the temple may have stood to the north where the Dome of the spirits gazebo is today, and that if the temple were to be rebuilt at its old place, the Dome of the Rock shrine would be in its outer courts. If this is the case, then it would explain why the angel told John **leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles**.

Underneath this gazebo is flat bedrock. It is where they think the Holy of Holies was located for the original temple. It makes sense because it lines up with the Eastern gate.

v 2 **And they will tread the holy city underfoot:** The **holy city** (Jerusalem) will be **tread underfoot** for a period of **forty-two months**, which equals 1260 days (three and one-half years). This trampling, or treating with contempt, of Jerusalem by the Gentiles takes place in the last half of the final seven year period described by Daniel 11:26–27—when the Antichrist pours out his fury on the people of Israel (as described in Revelation 12:13–17 and Matthew 24:15–28).

## The role or ministry of the two witnesses

### Revelation 11:3-6 NKJV

**3 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”**

**4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. 6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.**

v 3 **My two witnesses:** This introduces two of, to me, the most interesting characters of Revelation, the **two witnesses**. What will their ministry be like?

- It will be prophetic (**they will prophesy**)

- They will preach and demonstrate repentance (that's what it means to be **clothed in sackcloth**)

- Their ministry will be effective (**I will give power**).

v 4 **These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands:** What does this mean? As usual, we have to cross reference to find where this picture comes from. In this case it comes from Zechariah 4:2–3 and 4:14. Zechariah sees this vision of a lampstand with lamps supplied with oil directly through pipes coming from two olive trees. The lampstand was the usual menorah or candle stick with seven branches or candles that was always kept burning in the temple. What is different is the trees. Usually the priests had to continually top up the oil to keep the lamps burning, but here, in this vision, there is a continuous supply of oil from the two trees. The trees are identified as the anointed ones, originally Zerubabel and Joshua at the time, as they were used of God to rebuild the temple after returning from the Babylonian captivity, the temple that was renovated by Herod and was in use at the time of Jesus. But here in Revelation 11, the anointed ones are the two witnesses who are preaching against the building of this new temple which will be built during the first part of the tribulation.

What it means is that the witnesses have a continual empowering from the Holy Spirit. There is an application here for us today.

### Zechariah 4:6b NKJV

Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,  
Says the Lord of hosts.

Guzik comments: “**Might** focuses on *collective* strength, the resources of a group or army. **Power** focuses on individual strength. God says, “not by the resources of many or one, but by My Spirit. It will not be by your cleverness, your ability, or your physical strength that the temple will be rebuilt, but by the Spirit of God.””

When we trust in our own resources—whether they be small or great in the eyes of man—then we don't enjoy the full supply of the Spirit. God wants His supply and our reliance on the Holy Spirit to be *continual*.

The two witnesses will be characterised by their continual reliance on the Holy Spirit.

Guzik comments: “**Anointed ones** is literally *sons of oil*. In Hebrew, the idiom “the son of” something means that the person is radically characterised by that thing. For example, the *sons of Belial* totally represent their pagan god Belial. In contrast, these two witnesses in Revelation 11 are so characterised by the ministry and the power of the Holy Spirit that they are *sons of oil*.”

They will need to be trusting God because they will face very stiff opposition. God has given them a very tough gig. But in the same way, we are also helpless without God's power in our lives. Think about what Paul prayed in:

Ephesians 6:19-20 NLT paraphrase

And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God's mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike. <sup>20</sup> I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God's ambassador. So pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should.

We should be committing every part of our lives to God every day. Why? Because with God we can do nothing of eternal value.

v 5 **And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies:** The two witnesses have special protection from God, similar to Elijah's in 2 Kings 1.

v 6 **These have power to shut heaven ... they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire:** The two witnesses have the power to bring both drought and plague, similar to the power Elijah (James 5:17–18) and Moses (Exodus 7–12) had. It seems to indicate that it won't rain in Israel for the full three and a half years that they will be prophesying.

## The death of the two witnesses

Revelation 11:7-10 NKJV

**7 When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. 9 Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. 10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.**

v 7 **Make war against them, overcome them, and kill them:** The two witnesses are killed by the **beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit**.

**Who is this beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit?** Revelation 9:11 shows us that it is most likely Satan himself, who will indwell the antichrist. But notice that the ministry of the two witnesses is *not* cut short. They fully accomplish their God given task (**when they finish their testimony**). Satan is only given the authority to kill them once their work is done.

### Application:

Thanks be to God that we cannot be taken off of this earth until we **finish** our **testimony**. We are indestructible until the day God calls us home. The devil does not have power over our lives. We are witnesses of the Lord, and He will protect us until our testimony is finished.

Application: This passage illustrates the difference between being a *witness* and giving *testimony*. *Witness* is not something we do; it is something we are. Giving *testimony* is what a witness says and does.

v 8 **And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified:** The two witnesses are killed in the city of Jerusalem, which is described in three illustrative terms.

- As **Sodom**, speaking of immorality
- As **Egypt**, speaking of oppression and slavery
- As **the great city**, a term often applied to *Babylon*, the headquarters of Antichrist (Revelation 16:19, 17:18, 18:10, 18:16, 18:18, 18:19, 18:21)

If, during the first three and a half years, Jerusalem's leadership is in league with the Antichrist, it is easy to see how these titles apply. Any city in love with the Antichrist, or entering into a covenant with him, could easily be called **Sodom, Egypt**, and Babylon.

v 10 **Those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another:** The earth saw and rejoiced over the deaths of the two witnesses. The fact that their death and resurrection (v 12) is seen by all **people, tribes, tongues, and nations** is a prophecy of modern mass media.

It is amazing—and not far-fetched at all—to think of a live, worldwide broadcast on news channels and over the internet, “Live from Jerusalem,” and seeing the amazing scene described here taking place. Bible commentators who lived more than 40 years ago struggled with this scripture, saying that it must be allegorical, that it must not mean what it says, because it's impossible for the whole world to physically see the same thing at the same time. But once again, the Bible is confirmed to be true. Prophecy always has a literal fulfilment. God knew that when this event happens, satellites would have been invented and it would have been absolutely normal for the whole world to be able to watch events live from all over the world.

The idea is also that the world treats these two witnesses in a humiliating manner. Nothing has changed. God's prophets have always been poorly treated by those they served. Either you love God and love His messengers or ambassadors, or, you hate God and therefore hate His messengers or ambassadors.

v 10 **Make merry, and send gifts to one another:** This just goes to show how deep the rebellion against God went. They hated God and they hated His messengers. Remember that Jesus clearly warned us that the world would hate us because it first hated Him. God in His mercy warns them, tells them of His love, sends His only son to die for the sins of the whole world, only to have the world spit in His face and totally reject Him. It is completely understandable that the world deserves to be judged. God is righteous and fair when He punishes those unbelievers who dwell on the earth.

Application: As Jesus said, “If they hate Me then they will also hate you.”

John 7:7 NKJV

The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil.

John 15:18-21 NLT paraphrase

“If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. <sup>19</sup> The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you. <sup>20</sup> Do you remember what I told you? ‘A slave is not greater than the master.’ Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you. <sup>21</sup> They will do all this to you because of me, for they have rejected the one who sent me.

So get used to being hated, mocked and ridiculed for your witness and testimony for God. Expect it. Embrace it. Be proud of it. Jesus embraced the disgrace and shame, and so did His disciples.

Acts 5:40-42 NLT paraphrase

The others accepted his advice. They called in the apostles and had them flogged. Then they ordered them never again to speak in the name of Jesus, and they let them go.

<sup>41</sup> The apostles left the high council rejoicing that God had counted them worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus. <sup>42</sup> And every day, in the Temple and from house to house, they continued to teach and preach this message: "Jesus is the Messiah."

v 10 **Because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth:** *The preaching of these two witnesses and their call to repentance was a torment for many, because they could not stand to hear the truth while they loved their lie.* Don't be surprised when some people have a very negative reaction to the gospel. Because of their commitment to do evil and live for themselves, when they hear the truth, it really bothers them.

## **The resurrection of the two witnesses after being dead for 3 1/2 days**

Revelation 11:11-14 NKJV

<sup>11</sup> Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. <sup>12</sup> And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. <sup>13</sup> In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.

<sup>14</sup> The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

v 11 **Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.**

As this happens before the eyes of the watching world, the enemies of these two witnesses are horrified and astonished.

v 12 **Come up here:** The earth was not worthy of these two witnesses, so God simply calls them home, and **they ascended to heaven in a cloud.**

When a nation is about to go to war with another nation, they first recall their ambassadors before they attack. This is what is happening here. God's ambassadors, the two witnesses are removed, and the worst judgements ever to come upon the earth will soon follow. God has shown mercy up to this point, but the time for mercy is almost over. God's patience is running out.

v 13 **In the same hour there was a great earthquake:** An earthquake brings judgment, and moves many to give glory to God. But it remains to be seen if this will become true repentance unto salvation.

## Who are these two witnesses?

Firstly, who they are must not be terribly important, or we would have been told exactly who they are! However, generally speaking, most people think that the two witnesses are Elijah and Moses. Why?

### **Some think Elijah is one of the witnesses because:**

1. His ministry seems like one of these two witnesses — calling people to come back to God and causing it to not rain for 3 1/2 years (2 Kings 1 and James 5:17–18)
2. He was carried up to heaven (2 Kings 2:11)
3. Enemies of Elijah were destroyed by fire (2 Kings 1)
4. It is specifically prophesied that Elijah will return before the end of the age (Malachi 4:5–6)
5. Elijah had a unique “conference” with Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1–6)

### **Some think Moses is one of the witnesses because:**

1. His ministry seems like one of these witnesses, e.g. turning water to blood and other plagues (Exodus 7:20–21)
2. God seems to have a special purpose for the body of Moses that Satan wanted to defeat (Jude 9)
3. The enemies of Moses were destroyed by fire (Numbers 16:35)
4. Moses had a unique “conference” with Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1–6)

### **Application** (Jon Courson)

These witnesses are examples of what you can be in the last days in which we live. You're to share the gospel with people. Yes, you'll be beat up emotionally and verbally, ostracised, left out, not invited to the party. But you know what will happen? Three and a half days later, you'll rise. There will be a spring in your step and joy in your heart as you find yourself soaring emotionally. Truly, gang, there is nothing, nothing, nothing like sharing your faith. Even if you're put down, beat up, left out, you'll find yourself revived.

If you feel your relationship with the Lord is stagnant or tedious—witness. I guarantee, like the two witnesses in Revelation 11, you'll be caught up into heavenly places. Witnessing is the single most important way I have found to see my own faith revived and renewed.

Jesus didn't tell us to preach the gospel because He wants us to be miserable. On the contrary, He said, “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.” (see Luke 6:38).