Revelation 11:1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

Revelation 11:2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

1 At first glance this section may appear difficult. However when we take what is obvious and clear the remainder becomes clear. The obvious is “...the holy city shall they tread under foot...” Dispensationalists teach that this is speaking about a rebuilt temple that will be constructed prior to a “great tribulation” which they expect.

Actually this is simply a repetition of what Jesus had already said. In Luke chapter 21 Jesus taught of the destruction of Jerusalem that came in A.D. 70. This is obvious for he says in verse 32 “This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.” Just prior to that he said,

Luke 21:24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. [KJV] (emphasis added)

The Lord said this treading of the gentiles would happen to that generation (Mat 23:33, 36; 24:34). John is simply hearing the repeating of what Jesus had already said of what was to happen to Jerusalem and that generation.

John was in the heavenly cloud (see 4:5). Fifteen hundred years prior, Moses received the measurements for the earthly tabernacle in this same cloud (Exo 24:18). John saw the identical things Moses saw and is instructed to measure. John was told to measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. John was not to measure only the temple and altar. He was to measure them that worship therein. The New International Version gives a unique thought to this verse.

Revelation 11:1 I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshipers there. [NIV] (emphasis added)

John was instructed to measure the temple of God, and the altar. The temple was the area within the temple walls. This was called the outer court. The area to be measured was the holy place, and holiest of all.

In the entire structure, outer court and inner areas, were two altars. There were the brazen altar in the outer court and the golden altar in the holy place. The brazen altar received the blood and sacrifices while the golden altar received the incense. Exactly which of these John was to measure is not clearly stated. The verse says the altar was to be measured, not the altars. The next verse explains.

Revelation 11:2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

2 If John were not to measure the court, which is without the temple, then he would not measure the brazen altar for that was where that altar was positioned. John measured the holy place and the altar of incense and the worshipers in this location of the temple. As we saw in the NIV version, he was to count or measure the people in this location. The allusion is from Ezekiel 40-43 where the entire temple was measured (see 40:6, 8, 9-11, 13, 19, 20-24, 27, 28, 32, 35, 47, 48; 41:1-5, 13, 15, 17, etc.

When John was instructed to measure, he was told not to measure the outer court. The reason was that area is given unto the Gentiles. That area would be tread under foot. Only the temple, altar within, and those who worshipped in this dimension would be measured.

In the Old Covenant, the outer court was reserved for the congregation. Only the priests went into the holy place to minister. The Lord was now changing that order. True worshipers move into a new dimension. Today’s worship is in spirit and in truth (Joh 4:23, 24). The Lord is finished with animal sacrifices and outer court worship. That worship system was tread under foot in A.D. 70. Though contemporary teachings say the Lord will rebuild the temple and reinstate animal sacrifices, this cannot be. The dimension in which Jesus instructs us to worship is in spirit and in truth. Returning to animal sacrifice is anti-scriptural.

As kings and priests (Rev 1:6; 5:10) we enter a new realm of worship. Only worship in spirit and truth by the believer is to be measured as a part of God’s temple and purpose. The natural holy city is no longer considered the capital of the people of God. The holy city (Jerusalem), as clearly as John can write and as clearly as the Lord can say it, will the Gentiles tread under foot.

“The outer court (the ‘court of the Gentiles’) accordingly represents apostate Israel (cf. Isa. 1:12), which is to be cut
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off from the number of the faithful Covenant people, God’s dwelling place, St. John, as an authoritative priest of the New Covenant, is commanded to cast out (excommunicate) the unbelievers.”

No longer is the natural Jew numbered with the numbered people of God through natural birth. They must enter into a new, inner court worship. The old form of worship (outer court) was destroyed by the Gentiles when they did tread under foot the city of Jerusalem. There is no question as to what John is here referring. He is not referring to some event that will happen thousands of years later. He is preaching exactly what the Lord preached. Jesus clearly told the people that Jerusalem would be destroyed exactly as Jesus said it would be. It would happen to the generation he spoke. It did happen (Luk 21:24, 32).

Luke 21:24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. (emphasis added)

The natural Jew would be “THRUST OUT” (Luke 13:28) and not be allowed to sit with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophets, while from the east, west, north, and south, people would come and sit down in the kingdom of God (Luk 13:28, 29).

John gave a prophetic time that the holy city would be tread under foot. That time was forty and two months. The true people and worshipers of God (inner court) were to be protected while the city was destroyed.

We appreciate the insight that David Chilton has on this time frame and the way he explains it. Again quoting from Chilton,

“Forty-two months (which equals 1,260 days and three and a half years) is taken from Daniel 7:25, where it symbolizes a limited period during which the wicked are triumphant; it also speaks of a period of wrath and judgment due to apostasy, a reminder of the three and a half years of drought between Elijah’s first appearance and the defeat of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 17-18; cf. James 5:17). Whereas seven is used to represent wholeness and completion, three and a half appears to be a broken seven: sadness, death, and destruction (cf. Dan. 9:24; 12:7; Eve. 12:6, 14; 13:5). The periods of time mentioned in the Trumpets section are arranged chiastically, another indication of their symbolic nature.”

Chilton goes on to show several references to this number found in different ways: 11:2 as forty-two months; 11:3 as twelve hundred and sixty days; 11:9 as three and a half days; 11:11 as three and a half days; 12:6 as twelve hundred and sixty days; and 13:5 as forty-two months. The different ways of projecting the broken seven is prophetic language.

This forty and two months is prophetic language speaking of a broken seven. It must also be stated that the Roman army actually did tread under foot forty and two months (3 1/2 years) the city of Jerusalem. The siege itself lasted over a year. Titus, the son of Vespasian, the emperor, sieged the city shortly after his father became emperor. After the destruction of Jerusalem and destruction of the entire region, Titus left the command of the Roman army at Jerusalem to Terentius Rufus. Three and a half years, or forty and two months, would be a very accurate amount of time for the city to be tread under foot by the Gentiles proven by history.

It is interesting that dispensational teaching says this 3 1/2 year period is the time the great tribulation will come upon the entire planet. Clearly the passage is specific and clear as to whom it will come upon—Jerusalem (Rev 11:2).

Revelation 11:3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

Revelation 11:4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

Revelation 11:5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

Revelation 11:6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

Revelation 11:7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

Revelation 11:8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

Revelation 11:9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

Revelation 11:10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that live upon the earth.

1 Chilton, The Days Of Vengeance, page 273
2 Chilton, The Days Of Vengeance, page 274
3 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book VII, II, 1, page 590
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dwelt on the earth.

Revelation 11:11 And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

Revelation 11:12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

3 As we have previously seen, the number of days these two witnesses will prophesy (a thousand two hundred and threescore days) is identical to the time in verse 2 that the city will be tread under feet (forty and two months). We see this as a direct link. Historically it actually was the same time frame, which Jerusalem was sieged, destroyed, and tread under by the Gentiles. The link would place the witnesses in the time of the generation Jesus came and spoke.

Before we discuss who they were, let’s see a reason why there must be two witnesses. It is a specific law or principle laid out by God. It was necessary to have no less than two witnesses to bring death (Deu 17:6; 19:15). The Lord’s own law demanded there be two witnesses. Before even the Law of Moses could be put to death, two witnesses must come forth! Paul, using the analogy of marriage, teaches this principle (Rom 7:2–6). The Law of Moses must be put to death, but that would require two witnesses.

Who are the two witnesses? Every person attempting to teach this book has come face to face with this question. There are many thoughts of the two names which include Moses, Elijah, John the Baptist, Vespasian and Titus (used as was Nebuchadnezzar Jer 27:6), Apostles John and Peter, John and Paul, Peter and Paul, etc.

A key thought is there are two witnesses, not necessarily two people. They are two olive trees that prophesy, not two prophets. They are two candlesticks, not two people.

Another thought that helps us realize this passage is not speaking about two people is verse 7. The beast made war against these witnesses. Morris makes a good point about the witnesses.

“The two witnesses are clearly not individuals but a mighty host, for the beast will not simply kill them; he will ‘make war’ with them.”

To make war indicates armies on either side, not two individuals. The beast would simply kill two people. He would make war with a multitude.


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What we will see is the two witnesses are the prophets from the Old Testament and the New Testament. Moses was the first prophet of the law and John the Baptist was the final Old Testament prophet.

The prophecy of these witnesses concerned the mourning over Jerusalem (Judaism). This was displayed by their being clothed in sackcloth. Sackcloth was the traditional dress of the prophets from Elijah through John the Baptist symbolizing their mourning over Israel (2 Kings 1:8; Isa. 20:2; Jon. 3:6; Zec. 13:4; Mat. 3:4; Deut. 17:6; Mat. 18:16). Jeremiah chapter 4 gives a prophetic witness against Jerusalem. Jeremiah instructs the people to put on sackcloth and lament for Jerusalem (Jer 4:7, 8).

Moses was instructed by the Lord to write a song that would be a witness against Israel. The song told of the day that the Lord would turn from natural Israel. This song will be studied in chapter 15. The point here is that Moses witnessed against Israel (Deu 31:26).

Deuteronomy 31:26 Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. (emphasis added)

Nearly every prophet spoke of the day of the Lord and the day when the Lord would turn from Jerusalem. These prophets were literally killed in the streets of Jerusalem. Finally John the Baptist arrived. John summed up all the previous prophets and was the culmination of the Old Testament prophetic message. John’s cry and prophetic message was to natural Israel only. John did not minister to the Gentiles (Act 13:24). John the Baptist told Israel to repent. He told the religious system of the “wrath to come” (Mat 3:7). John prophesied that “the axe is laid unto the root of the trees.” Speaking of Judaism, John said, “every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire” (Mat 3:10). John preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. John did not preach a kingdom thousands of years away. John did not preach repentance for sin. John said repent because the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Mat 3:2). What did that mean? It meant the Messiah was at hand.

John’s message was the culmination message of all the prophets – repent, wrath to come, and the kingdom. The natural Jew would not escape the
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axe of the Lord (Mat 3:9, 10).

Rather than the two witnesses being two specific individuals, the passage is far better understood when seen as two groups. Paul spoke of two olive trees that were actually two groups of people. The first was the natural Jew. The second was a grafted olive tree which is all nations (Rom 11:17).

These are also referred to as two candlesticks. As we have seen (1:20), the candlesticks are the churches. Jesus has already revealed the mystery of the candlesticks to us. Many do not know that Israel in the wilderness was referred to as the church (ekklesia Greek). Some translations do not use “church” in Acts 7:38, but it is the same Greek word found other places translated “church.”

There is more than one witness or light per lampstand. An olive tree does not have only two branches. The tree has a group of branches. The lampstand has a group of lights. These two groups would be first the Old Testament witnesses (prophets). The Old Testament prophets prophesied and gave witness to the end of Jerusalem until the day of Christ. These went to and included John the Baptist. The second witness would be the New Testament witnesses prophesying the end of Moses and that Jesus is Christ (King).

Jesus said in Matthew 24:14 the “end” would come when “this gospel of the kingdom” was preached in all the world (Col 1:23; Rom 1:5) as a “witness.” He said “this gospel.” That would at least include if not mean exactly what he was teaching at that moment -- the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. That was the witness the messengers of Christ were to give. When that event happened it would be the sign to all nations that the Son of man was seated in heaven (Mat 24:30). These who did take this message and preach it were killed in the streets of Jerusalem (Mat 23:34, 35).

Jesus, his people, and the law (covenant) of Moses are all referred to as a witness in the Scriptures (Rev 1:5; Joh 18:37; Act 4:33; 1:8). The law and song of Moses witnessed to Jerusalem in the Old Testament. The apostles and prophets witnessed to Jerusalem in the New Testament. Both witnesses were killed in the streets of the Jerusalem. It does not matter who they were individually or by name. What does matter is their message -- witness. Both gave the same message: that Moses would end with the coming of Christ.

Jesus affirms this truth. He rebuked the Pharisees and religious system and told them they had killed, and would continue to kill, those sent from God to them. He spoke of both Old Testament and New Testament messengers (Mat 23:33-38).

Mat 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Mat 23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. (emphasis added)

It is necessary to know that the message of nearly every Old Testament prophet, including Moses himself, was judgment upon natural Israel and the end of Moses (day of the Lord). Until the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of Moses, the primary message of the New Testament apostles was the end of Moses and the present reign of Christ. Jesus told them to preach that message (Mat 24:14).

Below is a selection of a prophecy from Moses himself. We will study this in more depth later in chapter 15 when we look at the “Song of Moses.”

For now, note that even Moses knew that in the latter days this people would be rejected by the Lord!

Deu 31:29 For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands.

Deu 32:35 To me belongeth vengeance and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.

Deu 32:36 For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left. (emphasis added)

Peter exhorted the natural Jew (Acts 2:14) to save themselves and their families from the destruction to come. This would be that generation (Act 2:40).

The two witnesses are best seen as the Old Testament prophets, culminating with John the Baptist, and the New Testament prophets, prior to and during the destruction of Jerusalem. No one can argue with that. The reason is because this is what John meant.

Revelation 11:4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.
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4 John informs us that these two witnesses are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks (lampstands) standing before the God of the earth. This is an allusion to Zechariah 4:2-7.

To summarize the two olive trees and two candlesticks, we see the olive trees as the supplied anointing for the candlesticks’ light. By seeing the olive trees as the two covenants--Old Covenant coming through Moses and the New Covenant coming through Jesus Christ--we can begin to see the oil (anointing) of their message coming to their prophets. Both Moses and Jesus prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of Moses (law). Their anointing came to their candlesticks which are prophtic lights representing the church of the Old and the church of the New. Both clearly warned and prophesied about the treading of the holy city under the feet of the Gentiles. Because of this message of the kingdom of God, the lights (prophets) were killed.

Revelation 11:5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

Revelation 11:6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

5, 6 These prophets possess powers that are unnatural. The powers of verse 5 come when any man will hurt them. Then again John repeats in the same verse, “...if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.” David prophesied, “Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm” (1Ch 16:22). Jesus said it would be better for a person to be thrown in the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than to offend one of his (Mat 18:16). There is a punishment for harming the lights of the Lord. The enemies of these candlesticks are devoured by fire which proceeds out of their mouth and must in this manner be killed. We immediately think of Elijah calling down fire upon men and devouring them (2Ki 1:10-12). Probably an even better example would be Moses. Korah and all his company were taken into hell after Moses prayed and prophesied concerning them (Num 16:28-33). Herod was smitten by an angel and eaten by worms after he had James killed and planned to kill Peter (Acts 12:1-23). The words of a man or woman of God are powerful -- fire. Note what Jeremiah was told by the Lord speaking of natural Israel.

Jer 5:11 For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me, saith the LORD....

Jer 5:14 Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them. (emphasis added)

In context of this chapter (i.e. treading of Jerusalem under the feet of the Gentiles), this passage in Jeremiah would seem to be the allusion link John is using. The context of Jeremiah 5 is the destruction of Israel by a Gentile nation because of the word of the prophet. The devouring of the nation and the fire is directly associated with the words coming from the mouth of the prophet. The lamp of the candlestick put forth fire, and destruction happened.

We see the plagues upon Egypt. Moses had power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as he will.

The New Testament example is Jesus, who taught us to pray “thy kingdom come.” Though often we do not understand what we are praying, “thy kingdom come” is a prayer of plagues. It is definitely imprecatory in nature. As we pray, fire comes out of our mouths. We are saying, “Whatever may be necessary for his kingdom to come, then so be it.” When one kingdom comes upon another, there is violence (i.e. World Wars, etc.) (see discussion on imprecatory 6:9-11). Jesus said, “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force” (Matthew 11:12).

Revelation 11:7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

7 Here we have the first mention of the beast. Who is the beast? Matthew Henry refers to the beast as “the great instrument of the devil, [who] would war against them, with force and violence for a time.”

Commentator after commentator says the beast is the antichrist (see discussion 8:8, 9, we will also devote an entire chapter to the study of the antichrist). The word “antichrist” (antichristos Strong’s #500) is never used in the book of

5 Bible Research Systems, Matthew Henry’s Commentary
Revelation. Not one of the multitude of commentaries that say this beast is the antichrist refer to an “antichrist” scripture in the Revelation or in any other book of the Bible. There is a reason. The reason is that interpretation would be impossible to prove using Scripture.

Antichrist is a major teaching of the dispensationalist’s. Rarely do we hear a dispensational teacher properly speak of antichrist. They say antichrist will come one day. The Bible says there are already many antichrist (1Jh 2:18). The Bible says they have been around since before the turn of the first century (prior to A.D. 100). The Dispensationalists say that antichrist is a man who will rebuild the Roman Empire. The Bible says antichrist is a system that denies that Jesus Christ is the son and came in the flesh (1Jn 2:22, 23; 4:2, 3). In John’s day antichrist was Judaism. It still is today as is every belief system that denies Jesus is the Son and Christ who came in the flesh.

Also some interpretations say the beast is the devil / Satan. This also would be difficult to prove scripturally. Satan / devil is never called the beast in the Revelation. John always refers to him as the dragon in the Revelation.

The word beast (therion Greek) means a dangerous animal. The word will be used 28 more times in the Revelation referring to no less than three different beasts. To which beast then does John here refer? We find the answer when John tells us it is the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit. One beast (13:1) will rise up out of the sea. Another beast (13:11) will come up out of the earth. Finally we find it. Another beast will “ascend out of the bottomless pit.”

Rev 17:8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (emphasis added)

The passage from Revelation 17 is extremely interesting and complex. Here is what Matthew Henry says and is Biblically and historically accurate.

“This beast was seven heads, seven mountains, the seven hills on which Rome stands; and seven kings, seven sorts of government. Five were gone by when this prophecy was written; one was then in being; the other was yet to come.”

This beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit was the Roman Empire. Because of the clarity of the passage (Rev 17), dispensational teachings must agree it is Rome. However, they say that a new Roman Empire will arise. This is to keep with their futuristic doctrine. They say this and, at the same time, say Jesus could come tomorrow with no new Roman Empire in existence. According to scriptures, there will never be another Roman Empire.

Rome was the last world power. The fourth world power spoken of in Daniel 2 as “the fourth kingdom... strong as iron... part of potter’s clay, and part of iron” was the Roman Empire. In the days of that kingdom (ancient Rome) the Lord God “set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed” (Dan 2:44). It was in the days of that Roman kingdom that Jesus Christ came, ministered, was crucified and buried, and ascended in the clouds to become the King of kings. In those days the Stone came.

The beast of Revelation 11:7 is the same beast that is in Revelation 17. The beast is the Roman Empire. We will study Revelation 17 and this beast more at the appropriate time.

The Roman Empire historically did make war against them -- Old Testament prophets (natural Israel) and New Testament prophets (Christians). The beast shall overcome them, and kill them (11:7). The Roman Empire historically destroyed Israel. It seemed to be dead. Also historically the Roman Empire attempted to destroy Christianity. Below are quotes from Foxe’s Christian Martyrs of the World concerning those days.

Foxe records of James and other apostles and prophets:

“When this James was brought to the tribunal seat, he that brought him... was in such sort moved within heart and conscience that as he went to the execution he confessed himself also, of his own accord, to be a Christian. And so were they led forth together, where in the way he desired of James to forgive him what he had done. After James... said ‘Peace be to thee, brother;' and kissed him. And both were beheaded together, A.D. 36.”

“Thomas preached to the Parthians, Medes, Persians, Carmanians, Hyrcanian, Bactrians, and Magizns. He was killed in Calaminia, India.”

“Simon, brother of Jude and James the younger, who were all the sons of Mary Cleophas and Alpheus, was Bishop of 6 Bible Research Systems, Matthew Henry’s Commentary

7 Foxe’s Christian Martyrs of the World, page 5-8
8 Ibid
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Jerusalem after James. He was crucified in Egypt during the reign of the Roman emperor Trajan.\textsuperscript{9}

“Mark, the first Bishop of Alexandria, preached the gospel in Egypt. He was burned and buried in a place named Bucolus during Trajan’s reign.”\textsuperscript{10}

“Bartholomew is said to have preached in India and translated the gospel of Matthew into their tongue. He was beaten, crucified, and beheaded in Albinopolis, Armenia.”\textsuperscript{11}

“Andre, Peter’s brother, preached to the Scythians, Sogdians, and the Saca in Sebastopolis, Ethiopia, in the year A.D. 80. He was crucified by Aegeas, the governor of the Edessenes, and buried in Patrae, in Archaia.”\textsuperscript{12}

“Matthew wrote his gospel to the Jews in the Hebrew tongue. After he had converted Ethiopia and all Egypt, Hircanus the king sent someone to kill him with a spear.”\textsuperscript{13}

“After years of preaching to the barbarous nations, Philip was stoned and crucified in Hierapolis, Phrygia, and buried there with his daughter.”\textsuperscript{14}

“Of James, the brother of the Lord... During Passover the scribes and Pharisees put James on top of the temple, calling out to him, ‘You just man, whom we all ought to obey, this people is going astray after Jesus, who was crucified.’ And James answered, ‘Why do you ask me of Jesus the Son of Man? He sits on the right hand of the Most High, and shall come in the clouds of heaven’...then went up and threw James off the temple. But James wasn’t killed by the fall... But one of the men there - a fuller - took the instrument he used to beat cloth and hit James on the head, killing him.”\textsuperscript{15}

“Why did the Roman emperors and senate persecute the Christians so? First of all, they didn’t understand that Christ’s kingdom is not a temporal kingdom and they feared for their powerful leadership roles if too many citizens followed Christ. Secondly, Christians despised the false Roman gods, preferring to worship only the true, living God. Whatever happened in Rome - famine, disease, earthquake, wars, bad weather - was blamed on the Christians who defied the Roman gods.

Death was not considered enough punishment for the Christians, who were subjected to the cruelest treatment possible. They were whipped, disemboweled, torn apart, and stoned. Plates of hot iron were laid on them; they were strangled, eaten by wild animals, hung, and tossed on the horns of bulls. After they were dead, their bodies were piled in heaps and left to rot without burial. Nevertheless, the Church continued to grow, deeply rooted in the doctrine of the apostles and watered with the blood of the saints.”\textsuperscript{16}

Tried as the beast did to destroy the Old Testament prophecies concerning the kingdom of God and the New Testament prophecies

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concerning the kingdom of God, it could not. The beast did overcome them and did kill them. Yet today those prophecies live for the kingdom is come.

Revelation 11:8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

Revelation 11:9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

Revelation 11:10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

Revelation 11:11 And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

8-11 There is no doubt of the city to which John here refers. We know Jerusalem was where also our Lord was crucified. What we now learn is John connects Jerusalem to Sodom and Egypt. There is no secret or covering of exactly what he means. He means both Sodom and Egypt were judged of God. Egypt was judged by plagues, plunder, death of first born, and destruction of their army. Egypt was laid desolate. Sodom was laid desolate by hail fire and brimstone, so much so that it cannot be found. The Lord God destroyed both. This is what happened to the great city where our lord was crucified.

The dead bodies of the two witnesses shall lie in the street of that great city (Mat 23:37, 38). As Egypt and Sodom were left desolate, so would Jerusalem be desolate. Jesus said it would because Jerusalem killed prophets (Luk 13:33-35). Stephen understood the message and preached it to the Sanhedrin prior to his own stoning and death at Jerusalem (Act 7:52, 56, 57).

John says they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half. As we learned in verse 2, three and an half is a prophetic number which is also written as forty-two months, twelve hundred and sixty days, and three and a half years (see discussion 11:2). It was a prophetic time where the wicked appeared to triumph, God’s wrath came, and judgment happened. Seven is God’s number for completion (seven trumpets, seven seals, seven vials, seven days of creation). Three and a half was something incomplete or a broken seven (sadness,
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death, and destruction). We also saw that it was the length of time Jerusalem was actually historically trodden under foot. That is what this chapter is about (v. 1, 2). When the blood of the righteous accumulated to the necessary amounts, vengeance happened (Mat 23:34, 35; Rev 6:11).

It was after three days and an half that God raised them bringing fear. It was when all the predetermined righteous blood shed upon the earth came to a predetermined place that God executed vengeance. At that time judgment came upon that city spiritually called Sodom and Egypt where our Lord was crucified.

The bodies of the two witnesses, Old Covenant and New, would seem to lay unburied. There was no finality to their deaths. It seemed Rome could kill as many lights as it wanted to kill, and nothing was done about their being killed. It seemed God didn’t care or even note they were slain. Instead of their deaths being sad and remorseful, people rejoiced and celebrated. The head of John the Baptist was brought upon a platter to the party of Herod (Mat 14:8-11). John’s blood was absorbed into the earth. Luke 23:12 tells us how Herod and Pilate became friends the very day they crucified Christ Jesus. Chilton writes,

“At Christ’s death all manner of people rejoiced and mocked: the rulers, the priests, the competing religious factions, the Roman soldiers, the servants, the criminals; all joined in celebrating his death (cf. Matt. 27:27-31, 39-44; Mark 15:29-32; Luke 22:63-65; 23:8-12, 35-39); all sided with the Beast against the Lamb (John 19:15).”

During the days of the great slaughters of Christians throughout the Roman Empire, Christians would lay dead in the streets all across the land.

The three days and an half reminds us of the three and a half years of ministry by Jesus Christ. It also reminds us of the three days he was in the ground prior to his resurrection. Jesus finished his work upon earth, but his destiny was yet complete. He must ascend and be the Son of man and King of kings. Though his resurrection was finished, resurrection itself was incomplete. He would be the firstborn among many (Rom 8:29) and the first resurrected from the dead (Act 26:23; 1Th 4:16). It would appear that the whore and the beast had killed the Christ. The enemy would rejoice and make merry because these two prophets had tormented them. True light from the candlesticks of God did torment the wicked and especially the wicked religious world. The wicked desired to destroy the lights.

After three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered in to the two witnesses after being dead. Of course Jesus was taken up in the clouds, but this was 40 days after his resurrection (Acts 1:3). Thus we know we are not speaking of the resurrection of Jesus. If we can see the “3 1/2” as something incomplete or broken, we will see that death is not final. Jesus ministered 3 1/2 years, but that was not his final purpose. Jesus was in the earth three days and then resurrected, but that was not his final purpose. Death to the lights of God is not the final purpose either. There is resurrection!

Though the two witnesses/candlesticks appeared to be dead, death cannot hold them. They arise to be witnesses in the clouds against the city and the beast.

Heb 10:28 He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

Heb 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

Hebrews 12:1 tells us that the witnesses have ascended and now are as a cloud compassed about.

Revelation 11:12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

12 Jerusalem and its religious idolatry “which spiritually are called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified” is the enemy. The beast (any system attempting to be the world power or kingdom) is our enemy. Our enemies are destroyed, yet the church lives on and on. Of course both these enemies -- Judaism and Rome -- were destroyed.

Revelation 11:13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Revelation 11:14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

13, 14 Earthquake is a prophetic term symbolizing a massive destruction. It is frequently used by the prophets and is used to describe the destruction of Jerusalem. Isaiah 29 is an allusion

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17 Chilton, The Days Of Vengeance, page 282
18 Foxe’s Christian Martyrs of the World, page 8, 9
for the **earthquake** (Isa 29:6; Eze 38:19).

The **earthquake** links to the “universal de-creation” discussed in Revelation 6:12-14 and 8:12. This is the prophetic means of describing the end of a society. The Lord God terminates a society because of its idolatry. The **earthquake** is a part of the descriptive language describing destruction. Jesus told the religious idolatry system in Jerusalem when he would destroy it. It would be when they had killed, crucified, scourged and persecuted from city to city those whom he would send. That generation would be the generation to experience the house left desolate. This would be the termination of the society of Israel led by its capital city Jerusalem (Mat 23:34-38).

By remaining in the context of the chapter as we here project, we do not miss the **earthquake**. The context is in three sections. These sections are “the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months” (11:2), the ministry of the “two witnesses,” and “the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” We cannot help but see that John is speaking about the prophetic **earthquake** of Jerusalem which terminated that idolatrous society.

*Revelation 11:14* The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

14 Concerning the **woe**, see our discussion on 7:13-14; 8:12-13. The woes which Jesus gave were all to apostate Israel and that religious, idolatrous generation (Mat 23:13-29, 36). The first **woe** (9:12) concerned demons and the devil himself being released upon the land. They caused those who were not sealed with the seal of God in their foreheads to be in such torment that they wished they were dead (Rev 9:12).

Here we have the ending of the **second woe**, which clearly was the treading under foot of the holy city, the city where our Lord was crucified, and the destruction by the earthquake. This is the **second woe**.

It is interesting that John speaks of three woes (9:12). Actually there were three invasions upon Israel concerning its final destruction. First, Cestius came with a **woe**. The **second woe** would be the invasion of Vespasian. Vespasian was “hand picked” by Nero to destroy the Jews. Nero’s command was to punish and destroy the Jews. The **third woe** came quickly. Vespasian was made emperor and went to Rome. He sent his son Titus with the Roman army to take Jerusalem. The **third woe** now comes.

*Revelation 11:15* And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

*Revelation 11:16* And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

*Revelation 11:17* Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

*Revelation 11:18* And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

15 What does the **kingdoms of this world** are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his **Christ** mean? It is an allusion to Daniel 2 and 7. Daniel 2:44, 45 tells us the exact “days” in which the **kingdom** will be established. As studied earlier this time would be the days of the fourth world power of which Daniel spoke in Daniel 2. This was the Roman Empire. Daniel 7:13, 14 tells of the King, who is the Son of man, receiving the kingdom (Dan 2:44, 45).

**Woe** number three declared the **kingdoms of this world** are become the kingdoms of our **Lord**, and of his **Christ**. By this sign, i.e. the destruction of Jerusalem, they would know that the age (“world” in the King James) of Moses had ended. Now he, the Son of man, was in heaven -- throne of God (Mat 24:30). The sign happened to that A.D. 70 generation.

To place this verse into a dispensation thousands of years later is a grave injustice toward our King. The Son of man received his kingdom at ascension, and he is the King of kings. The passage in Daniel 7:13, 14 does not depict a gradual acquiring of his kingdom. The Scripture says, “And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that ALL PEOPLE, NATIONS, AND LANGUAGES, SHOULD SERVE HIM.”

This happened at ascension (see discussion 5:10-14). Revelation 4 and 5 was the inauguration of the King, the Son of man. He instructed his
disciples to know he was in heaven, or on the throne, (Mat 24:30) when they witnessed the tribulation of those days (Mat 24:29). The end of the age or the end of the society of Moses came. The kingdom had changed. This was the great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. Hallelujah!

Revelation 11:16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God;

Revelation 11:17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

Revelation 11:18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

16-18 The NIV version translates verse 17 saying, “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.”

By beginning with the last phrase, we will more quickly grasp what the praise and worship was about. The Lord God Almighty.... shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. Again, the sign that the Son of man was in heaven (on the throne) was the tribulation of those days or the destruction of Jerusalem. When this destruction was evident, the great voice declared, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord.” The twenty-four elders worshipped God Saying, “We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.” The Lord had taken his great power and reigned! This included destroying them, which destroy the earth. Earth, as noted over and over, is ge (Greek) and means “soil or region.” The word does not mean the earth as we think planet. It means an area or a region or a land.

Josephus, in his historic writings, never blamed Rome for destroying the land (earth) of Israel. He always saw the Jews as the cause. Speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem Josephus writes,

“…for that it was a seditious temper of our own that destroyed it; and that they were the tyrants among the Jews who brought the Roman power upon us, who unwillingly attacked us, and occasioned the burning of our holy temple; Titus Caesar, who destroyed it, is himself a witness, who, during the entire war, pitied the people who were kept under by the seditious, and did often voluntarily delay the taking of the city…”

Also the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints. In Revelation 6:10, the souls under the altar “cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” The souls wanted vengeance. Their reward was vengeance. Notice again what the Lord Jesus said concerning this time of vengeance recorded in Luke 21.

Luk 21:20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

Luk 21:21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

Luk 21:22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. (emphasis added)

The nations were angry because thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged. Why do nations hate Jesus Christ so passionately? Why do they use his name in profanity but never use other names in profanity (Buddha, Mohammed, etc.)? Why does every nation attack Christianity but seem to approve other “religions”? The reason is spiritual. The Son of man will judge all. No other belief declares it will judge the nations. Christianity proclaims that Jesus is King and Lord and will judge the nations. The nations hate him and are angry.

Revelation 11:19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.

19 With the end of Moses and temple worship, the true temple of God was opened in heaven. At this point the natural temple in Jerusalem will shortly be destroyed. His testament no longer exists in the natural temple. It now resides in the true and heavenly temple. Chilton writes,

“Here is summed up the theological significance of the fall of Israel: It meant that the Temple of God in heaven was opened (Matt. 27:51; Eph. 2:19-22; Heb. 8:1-6; 9:8). The earthly Temple is gone, and now only the true Temple...”

19 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Preface, page 427, 428
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remains. God’s Temple is revealed to be the Church; and now the ark of his covenant appeared in his Temple, as God’s indwelling presence is manifested there (Eph. 3:22).”

And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail. All these are prophetic terms meant to relay the mood of the King. It is meant to emphasize the cloud. Throughout Scripture we read such qualities like these about God. Also we read other qualities. We read, “For our God is a consuming fire” (Heb 12:29). And we read, “…for God is love” (1Jo 4:8). We read of his mercy, and we read of his wrath. As we have seen in the context of this chapter, “…the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months,” the killing of the “two witnesses,” and “the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come,” the King’s mood is wrath with the “holy city.” It and any nation rebelling against him can expect lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Contemporary Theological View(s)
1. Revelation 11:1 ....measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

Dispensationalists do not believe this is a reference to Herod’s temple (natural temple). Herod’s temple was the last historical Jewish temple. It was the temple that the Romans destroyed and the one that Jesus said would be completely de-stoned (Mat 24:2). It was the temple that the Gentiles did “tread under foot.” Though true and historic, this does not matter to the Dispensationalists. Dake says,

“This temple is not Herod’s temple for that one was destroyed some twenty-five years before this vision at the destruction of Jerusalem, 70 A.D. Again, this temple cannot be the Millennial temple as described in Ezek. 40-48, because that will not be built until Christ comes to earth, Zech. 6:12, 13. The temple here is the one to be rebuilt by the Jews before Daniel’s Seventieth Week. It will be destroyed at the end of the tribulation, either by the earthquake under the seventh vial (16:18, 19), or by the armies of Antichrist at the taking of Jerusalem, Zech. 14:1-5.”

For a discussion on the temple, see Contemporary Teachings Volume 1 of The Stone Cometh. Condensing a complicated dispensational theology, the Dispensationalists say that there will be two more temples built. One will be built just prior to the tribulation. According to that doctrine, it is this one, which they say John is speaking here. The other temple will be built after the tribulation in the form of Ezekiel’s vision in Ezekiel 40-48. In both temples, the reason for the temples is to reinstate animal sacrifices. That doesn’t sound that bad to some unless we know what the Bible says. With that system, the way to worship the Lord is by animal sacrifices and not by the Spirit. The only way to worship God is by the Spirit and truth (Joh 4:23).

This is truly a frightening and dangerous doctrine. What can the blood of animals possibly do today (Heb 10:29; 13:20; 1Pe 1:18, 19)? Add to this the need to circumcise our children, an extremely questionable doctrine appears. If temple worship is reinstated so will circumcision be reinstated. In this we find a doctrine that Paul condemns. Temple reestablishment means circumcision. There is to be no confidence in circumcision ever again (Phi 3:3; Col 2:11; 3:11; Tit 1:10).

Hal Lindsey writes that the reestablishment of the nation of Israel in 1948 was the fig tree prophecy of Jesus in Matthew 24:32. He states (quoted following) that he and “many scholars who have studied Bible prophecy all their lives believe that this is so.” This appears to be the belief that the temple (of Revelation 11) would be rebuilt forty years from 1948. Of course it was not.

“But the most important sign in Matthew has to be the restoration of the Jews to the land in the rebirth of Israel. Even the figure of speech ‘fig tree’ has been a historic symbol of national Israel. When the Jewish people, after nearly 2000 years of exile, under relentless persecution, became a nation again on 14 May, 1948 the ‘fig tree’ put forth its first leaves.

“Jesus said that this would indicate that he was ‘at the door,’ ready to return. Then he said, ‘Truly I say to you this generation will not pass away until all these things take place’ (Matthew 24:34 NASB).

“What generation? Obviously, in context, the generation that would see the signs—chief among them the rebirth of Israel. A generation in the Bible is something like forty years. If this is a correct deduction, then within forty years or so of 1948, all these things could take place. Many scholars who have studied Bible prophecy all their lives believe that

20 Chilton, The Days of Vengeance, page 291
Hal Lindsey said it was obvious, in context, that the generation of 1948 would experience all this. He was obviously wrong. That entire doctrine is wrong. Amazingly, though obviously wrong (false), people continue to listen to him concerning eschatology. I ask, “Why?”

Of course, the dispensationalist’s new prediction is that the “rapture” will happen in the year 2000 or so. This would mean that a magnificent temple must be rebuilt within the next two years (as I write). It also means that the new Roman world empire must be established before the year 2000. For the rapture to happen, according to that doctrine, both the empire and temple must be established. Though it will not happen, people will continue to listen to them. Why?

The temple was destroyed under the feet of the Gentiles in A.D. 70. No one can disprove that!

2. Revelation 11:3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

There is division in the dispensational camp on the identity of these witnesses. It matters little who they are. It is what they do that matters. Most all Dispensationalists believe one of them is Elijah. This belief is drawn from a verse in Malachi.

Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

They are still looking for Elijah though Jesus said he had already come in the form of John the Baptist (Mat 11:13-15; Mar 9:11-13). Jesus said that John the Baptist was the Elijah who was to come. That is what Jesus said. The dispensational and contemporary teaching says Elijah is yet to come. He will come as one of these prophets. Van Impe says,

“This prediction is corroborated by the fact that Elijah did not die a physical death but was taken up into heaven by a whirlwind and a chariot of fire (see 2 Kings 2:9-11).”

The division among the contemporaries comes on the identity of the second witness. Some say it will be Enoch because he never died (Gen 5:24 and Heb 11:5). Others think it will be Moses. Van Impe says,

“Personally, I believe that Moses will be the other witness because he appeared with Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration (see Matthew 17:1-8).... The preview indicates that, when the day finally arrives, Moses and Elijah

22 Hal Lindsey, The Late Great Planet Earth, page 43
23 Dr. Jack Van Impe, Revelation Revealed, page 148-149
Revelation 11:10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

Recently a new interpretation of this verse has come forth. It is very interesting and very worrisome to find interpreters who interpret Scriptures totally different than the apostles. Dr. Gary G. Cohen says,

“This will be a world news event, and cameras shall by satellite transmit TV pictures of their decaying bodies the world over.”

“Someone has suggested that the modern medium of television makes possible the fulfillment of Revelation 11:9. The only way in which people all over the world could see two bodies lying in the streets of a city over a three-day period of time would be through the medium of television; in fact, in recent years it has been possible by the launching of television satellites for many parts of the world to view the same sight at the same time. This is one more indication that we are coming closer to the end of the age, because it would have been humanly impossible just a few years ago for the entire world to see these two witnesses in the streets at a given moment of time.”

This is contemporary theology, meaning an interpretation and theology of today. Can one imagine the first century church interpreting this passage this way (previous quote)? This was not the way the first century interpreted this passage.

As we noted, the gospel was being preached in the entire world. What this means is that the believers were preaching the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. The prophets of Moses also preached the termination of the age of Moses. All that happened is that those who preached and prophesied this were killed in the streets all over the known world. These are not two people. They are two olive trees and two candlesticks. They are not two people. They are two witnesses against Israel.

The prophets of Israel and the New Testament Church are the olive trees. The prophets of Israel and the church are the candlesticks. The two witnesses are the church and the Old Testament prophet.

28 Dr. Gary G. Cohen, Revelation Visualized, page 176
29 Tim LaHaye, Revelation Illustrated & Made Plain, page 154