

**The Twitter Commentary on Revelation**  
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**Revelation Chapter 11**

**Rev 11:1-13 Introduction–**

The chapter division here is not natural, the story of Revelation 10 continues.

11:1-13 continues and elaborates on the scene in 10:8-11.

This passage has multiple parallels to chapter 10 and also 9:13-21.

Structure: 1) Measuring temple (1-2), 2) Identity of the 2 witnesses (3-6), 3) Death, resurrection and ascension (7-13).

John's "prophesying again" (10:11) is elaborated in 11:1-6, and 11:11-13. But it brings bitter experience in 11:7-10.

The two witnesses themselves also have a "prophesying again" (11:3-6 and 11:11-13).

**Rev 11:1–**

"Was given" is a divine passive, a way of referring to God without saying or writing His name.

The measuring in this passage is parallel to that of Rev 21:11-16.

This scene is also parallel to Ezekiel's vision of a restored temple in Jerusalem (Ezek 43:7-9).

There is a possible allusion to the Day of Atonement in the references to Lev 16 and Ezek 40.

**Rev 11:1-2–**

The final proclamation of the gospel includes a message regarding the heavenly sanctuary.

The Greek word for "temple" here (*naos*) normally describes the innermost part of the temple.

In contrast with Ezek 40:17-19, only the temple complex itself is measured.

It is likely that the “court outside” is the one where the altar of burnt offering was, not the Court of the Gentiles.

The altar in verse 1 must be the altar of incense (Exod 28:43; 30:1-10, etc.; Rev 8:3-5)

The opening word of verse 2 is best translated “and” rather than “but.” The excluding is part of the measuring.

“Excluding” means the judgment process at the end will distinguish true from professed followers of God.

### **Rev 11:2–**

The language here reminds of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cent. temple, where Gentile presence was limited to the outer court.

The word “trample” recalls the fate of the wicked (Rev 14:20; 19:15) and the times of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24).

The trampling of Rev 11 and Luke 21 is grounded in Daniel (7:25; 8:13) and anticipates Rev 13:5-7, 15-17.

“Trampling” for 42 months anticipates the activities of the sea beast (Rev 13:5-7, cf. Dan 7:19, 23 and 8:9-13).

The “holy city” represents all who are in relation to Jesus in the NT era. They are a new Israel.

The 1260 days (Rev 11:3; 12:6), 42 months (11:2; 13:5) and three times and a half (12:14) describe the same period of time.

The contrast between “holy city” and 42 months anticipates the contrast between Babylon and Jerusalem later in the book.

### **11:1-2 Conclusion--**

The “measuring” is present in John’s experience, but the “trampling” is future.

In the NT the temple of God is associated with Jesus Himself (John 2:19-21; Matt 12:6).

In the NT, temple language is used for the heavenly sanctuary, the church and the body.

The temple here is almost certainly the heavenly temple (see also Rev 4-5; 7:15-17; 8:3-5; 11:19; 15:5-8).

The final presentation of the gospel to the world will make reference to the heavenly sanctuary/temple.

The final proclamation of the gospel will contain features that make it uniquely relevant at the End.

**Rev 11:3-6 Introduction--**

“Witness” in Greek is primarily used for witness in a legal sense, but can also be translated “martyrs.”

There are a number of parallels between the two witnesses and the ministry of Christ.

There are a number of parallels between the two witnesses and the beasts of chapter 13.

In Revelation the appearance and history of new characters is given before they act at the time of the vision (Rev 1:12-16; 13:1-7).

The time of this description is during the 1260 days of Daniel’s prophecy and before the Time of the End (10:6-7).

The two witnesses fulfill the command to “prophesy again” in Rev 10:11 (cf. 11:3, 6, 10).

The concept of “two witnesses” recalls the OT legal system (Deut 19:15).

**Rev 11:3–**

The voice speaking here in the first person is the voice from heaven (Rev 10:4, 8-11).

“I will give.” Is in future tense from the perspective of 10:8-11, and is a Hebraic form implying divine authority.

The 1260 days is the same period as the 42 months in verse 2. See also Rev 12:6 and 13:5.

The two witnesses are doing God’s work during the same period when God’s holy city is trodden down (11:2).

**Rev 11:4–**

The images of lampstands and olive trees suggest that the two witnesses represent the church, God’s people.

The most important OT allusion to this verse is Zech 4. The two witnesses help restore the heavenly temple of 11:1-2.

The two witnesses have a long history before the death and resurrection described in 11:7-13.

**Rev 11:5–**

In the Greek the two witnesses have one mouth, one prophecy, one testimony and one body, stressing their unity (cf. 11:5-8).

This verse alludes to the Elijah stories of 1 Kings 18 and 2 Kings 1.

**Rev 11:6–**

Allusion to the three and a half years of drought that preceded the showdown on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 17:1).

Allusion to Moses, who turned water into blood at the time of the Exodus (Exod 7:17-21).

**Rev 11:3-6 Conclusion–**

At least two witnesses were required for capital punishment and property transfers in the OT (Deut 17:6-7; Jer 32:8-12).

After the witnesses finish their work, Jesus returns, the wicked are executed and He resumes full authority on earth.

The two witnesses are the righteous counterparts of the mouth and tail of the evil forces at the End (see Rev 9:19).

The two witnesses are understood as real persons, or as symbolic of church and/or Scripture.

The two witnesses represent Moses and Elijah, symbolic of the Law and the Prophets as understood in John's day.

The OT witnesses to Jesus as does the witness of the apostles, so the OT and the NT may be in view here.

Seeing the two witnesses as the OT and NT is a natural extension of the original meaning in John's day.

Sanctuary imagery in 11:1-4 suggests the two witnesses represent the people of God, the church.

The language of Jerusalem (holy city– 11:2) is applied to the church in the New Testament.

Witnessing is the primary task of the church, and trees often represent the church as well (Rev 7:1-3; 8:7; 9:4).

The two witnesses parallel the mouth and tail (Rev 9:19) and the land beast (13:11-18).

The two witnesses seem to represent both the church and the Bible.

The two witnesses as church illustrate the final proclamation of the gospel (11:11-13, cf. 14:6-7).

The two witnesses as Bible would highlight both the rejection and renewed prominence of the Bible in the modern age.

The passage highlights the role of the Bible and/or people of God in the course of Christian history.

The fire from the mouth of the witnesses could illustrate the dangers of ignoring or disrespecting the Word of God.

#### **Rev 11:7-13 Introduction–**

Verses 3-6 are part of Daniel’s time prophecies, 7-13 are after their close.

#### **Rev 11:7–**

After the two witnesses finish their testimony (close of 1260 “days”), the events of 11:7-13 follow in their order.

This verse introduces the “time of the end” (Dan 11:35, 40; 12:4, 9), the final preaching of the gospel (Matt 24:14).

The beast from the abyss is a new figure in the book, with no clear parallel outside Revelation (cf. 17:8).

The beast from the abyss is either Satan or an earthly power controlled by Satan (cf. Rev 9:1; 17:8; 20:1-3).

There is an allusion in this passage to the little horn of Dan 7:21.

Is the beast from the abyss parallel to the beast from the sea (Rev 13:1-10) or the locusts from the abyss (Rev 9:1-11)?

The beast comes up at the close of the witnesses’ testimony, the end of the 1260 days.

The overcoming of the two witnesses may imply a spiritual as well as literal death.

One historical option for interpreting the beast coming up from the abyss is the events of the French Revolution.

**Rev 11:8–**

“Their bodies” is actually singular, the witnesses are a single entity, never separated.

The great city, later on Babylon, is contrasted with the holy city of verse 2. Represents opposition to God.

Sodom was renowned for self-indulgence, luxury, and immorality (Gen 18-19; Ezek 16:46-58; 2 Pet 2:7-8).

Egypt is particularly associated with atheism (Exod 5:2) because of its self-sufficiency.

Sodom, Egypt and Babylon represent all earthly powers who hear but reject the gospel.

The place of crucifixion is either a reference to the city of Jerusalem or specifically to the experience of the cross.

**Rev 11:9–**

There is a day to year equivalence in Hebrew thinking illustrated in this passage (Rev 11:3, 9).

The two witnesses dressing in sackcloth is here intensified by death and the exposure of their bodies.

This verse recalls the nations, languages and peoples of 10:11, elaborating John’s “bitterness” in 10:9-10.

**Rev 11:10–**

“Those who live on the earth” is a phrase that consistently refers to the wicked in Revelation.

The gift-giving is a possible allusion to the Esther story (Esth 9:19, 22) and also the cross (Luke 23:12).

The witnesses as tormentors recalls the OT stories about Elijah and Ahab (1 Kings 18:17; 21:20; 22:8).

**Rev 11:11–**

The tenses shift here from future to past, signaling a new vision that adds information to the one of 10:1-7.

The resurrection of the two witnesses recalls Gen 2:7.

A likely allusion to Ezek 37:9-10.

Resurrection of the witnesses could refer to revival of the Bible after the French Revolution (1789-1816 and beyond).

The “fear” connects this passage with Rev 14:7, the final proclamation of the gospel.

**Rev 11:12–**

The ascension of the two witnesses associates the final gospel with heaven– the sanctuary and the judgment.

This verse recalls the ascension of Jesus right after He sent out witnesses (Acts 1:8-11).

This passage and Rev 14:6-7 seem to be referring to the same event– the final proclamation of the gospel.

**Rev 11:13–**

This earthquake occurs at the same time as the ascension of verse 12 and parallels the one in Rev 6:12.

The great city’s fall here anticipates the full and final fall described in Rev 16:17 - 18:24.

7000 alludes to the story of Elijah (1 Kgs 19:18). The “fear” and “glory” echo the call of Rev 14:7.

The 7000 “people” are actually “names of men” in Greek, so the emphasis here is on character.

Rev 11:11-13 needs to be read in parallel with 14:6-7 and 16:9. The “remnant” clearly repents here.

**Rev 11:11-13 Conclusion–**

Building on Joel 2:28 - 3:17, the arrival of the “spirit” (Rev 11:11) precipitates the final war (11:13, cf. 9:16-19).

**Rev 11:1-13 Conclusion–**

The climax of this passage is the final proclamation of the gospel in the closing days of earth’s history.

**Rev 10:1 - 11:13 Conclusion–**

Structure: Vision (10:1-7), Explanation (10:8 - 11:10), New Vision (11:11-13).

**Rev 10:1 - 11:10–**

Structure of Explanation: 1) John's day (10:8-10), 2) all that follows (10:11), 3) 1260 (11:1-6), 4) events after 1260 (11:7-10).

**Rev 11:1-13 Spiritual Lessons–**

1) The majority is not always right, and 2) nothing unites people like opposition to God and His people.

**Rev 11:14–**

Makes clear that the second woe (sixth trumpet) runs from 9:13 - 11:13.

**Rev 11:15-18 Introduction–**

The seventh trumpet is enveloped by verses 14 and 19 and is thus four verses long.

The seventh trumpet runs from the close of probation (Rev 10:7) to the Second Coming (11:15).

The main verbs mostly express a past tense in relation to the time of the vision, the seventh trumpet.

**Rev 11:15–**

Follows the events of 11:1-13 and signals the close of probation (cf. Rev 10:7).

The loud voices or noises here parallel Rev 4:5; 8:5; 11:19; and 16:18 somewhat.

The kingdom, promised in OT, and inaugurated in NT, now comes visibly and finally into history.

"Of our Lord and of His Christ" alludes to Psalm 2, which anticipates the future worldwide dominion of the "Son."

**Rev 11:16–**

The 24 elders were introduced in 4:4 and appear at decisive points throughout the book.

**Rev 11:17–**

"Who is and who was" drops the third part of the earlier three-part formulas (cf. Rev 1:4, 8; 4:8).

"Begun to reign" is an inceptive aorist, which focuses on the beginning of an action rather than the whole.

**Rev 11:18-19 Introduction–**

This passage is the major turning point between the first and second halves of the Book of Revelation.

This is a duodirectional passage, it both concludes the trumpets and organizes the second half of the book.

#### **Rev 11:18–**

The five major elements of this verse anticipate the structure of Rev 12-22.

The five major elements of the verse are in two clusters; two concerning wrath and three related to time.

The anger of the nations connects with Rev 12:17, the key verse of chapters 12-14.

The wrath of God anticipates Rev 15:1, which introduces the seven last plagues of Rev 16 (also 17 and 18).

The central theme of Rev 12-18 is the final battle between God and the nations of the world.

"The time to judge the dead" anticipates chapter 20 and the millennium (cf. Rev 20:12).

"The time to reward the saints" anticipates the New Jerusalem section of chapters 21 and 22 (cf. 22:12).

The destruction of "the destroyers of the earth" anticipates chapter 19 (cf. 19:2).

In the five phrases of this verse the author has given, in a nutshell, the structure of the material that will follow.

This verse divides the second half of Rev into four parts: 12-14, 15-18, 19-20 and 21-22.

#### **Rev 11:15-18 Conclusion–**

This passage is duodirectional, setting the seventh trumpet as the key to the second half of the book.

Revelation 11:15-18 teaches us that the primary focus of the last half of the Apocalypse is on the End.

#### **Lessons from the Seven Trumpets–**

- 1) Human probation does not remain open forever.
- 2) Positive and negative judgment are both necessary to set things right in an unjust world.

3) The seals and trumpets assure us that God is active in the world even when we don't see it.

**Rev 11:19–**

Reference to the ark of the covenant makes this a new sanctuary introduction scene (for chapters 12-14).

The ark includes the mercy seat, the ten commandments and is involved in the covenant and the Day of Atonement.

The ark particularly highlights the strong focus on the ten commandments in Rev 12-14.

The close of this verse is a theophany, paralleling other decisive points in the book (Rev 4:5; 8:5; 16:18).

**Rev 11:19 - 12:2–**

A common allusion to Isa 66:6-7 links these verses together across chapter lines.