

# **The Measuring Rod and the Two Witnesses**

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

This chapter, although appears to be pretty straightforward, is one of the most debated in Revelation. There is as wide of interpretive view on this passage as any in the book of Revelation. Most of that is because the majority of those that have written on the passage are of the viewpoint that the visions John received were to be taken symbolically – and doing that here is far more difficult than other passages. Our viewpoint is that we believe it literal – and in so doing it is far less difficult to interpret. Everything that happens in this part of John’s vision really happens and happens just exactly as described.

The first 13 verses of this chapter are all part of the same paragraph, and verse 13 clearly states it is the end of the second woe, or the sixth trumpet judgment – that would put the events of this passage in the second half of the Tribulation period. However, chapter 10 and the first 12 verses here comprise the entire 3 ½ years, not just a brief period of which the events of the sixth trumpet take place – so they are seen as a parenthetical event. They could be that, but they are clearly described (at least the last part of it) as events that comprise the end of the “second woe.”

### **I. THE MEASURING OF THE TEMPLE – VS. 1-2**

#### ***A. The instrument***

1. "A reed like unto a rod" – "the reed is commonly grown in the Jordan Valley, and because of its light weight it constitutes a good measuring rod" (Walvoord).
2. The reed would have been about 10 feet long

### ***B. The instructor***

1. "The angel" – this would be the "mighty angel" of the previous chapter
2. It states he "stood saying" – this doesn't mean he was sitting at this point but that he is seen as standing already – it just brings the focus back to the angel

### ***C. The instruction***

1. "Measure the temple of God"
  - a) This is not the same temple that Ezekiel measures in Ezekiel 40 (and following) – although the reed is used there as well. That will be the Millennial Temple that will be built after the end of the Great Tribulation.
  - b) This is the temple in Jerusalem that had been rebuilt at the beginning of the Tribulation period in which the Jews were allowed to worship in again and in which the Antichrist offered the "abomination" on the altar to begin the Great Tribulation period – pointed to, in part, in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

[2 Thessalonians 2:3-4](#)

(3) Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

(4) Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

- c) An interesting thought on this Temple and when it will be rebuilt and whether it will be done before the Rapture of the church:

"...the Jews plan to erect a tent temple like the Tabernacle of Moses, and they are ready to do so at any moment. Everything has been prepared. Once this temporary temple is put up, they will resume the sacrifices and then start building a more permanent structure around and above the temporary one." (article found at <http://christinprophecy.org/articles/the-third-temple/> by Dr. David R. Reagan entitled "The Third Temple")

- d) This part of the measuring deals only with the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies – not the outer court of the Temple
2. Measure "the altar" - This would have been the brazen altar in the outer court – where any one could approach that wanted to offer a sacrifice
  3. Measure "them that worship therein" – it's unclear why they were measured but considering the reed used was 10 feet long

and anything less than that is seen in the culture of the time as “not measuring up” it could be that this was to show to the Gentiles, to the unsaved, unrepentant people in the outer court that they did not, nor could they, “measure up” to the requirements of God and of entrance into His kingdom

4. Verse 2 – John is told not to measure the outer court “for it is given unto the Gentiles” – and they will be in control of “the holy city” for 42 months – 3 ½ years

Luke 21:24

(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.

Daniel 9:27

(27) And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

5. The 42 months (30 days in a month at the time of the writing), 1260 days, or 3 ½ years are mentioned several other times in the Bible in relation to this part of the Tribulation

Daniel 7:25

(25) And he shall speak *great* words against

the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

A "time" is the longest measurable period of time in the Aramaic (one year); "times" is two times a time (two years); and "the dividing of time" is half of a time (half a year) – combined, 3 1/2 years – the same as the 1260 days or 42 months (there were 30 days in the month in their calendar –  $42 \times 30 = 1260$ )

#### Daniel 12:7

(7) And I heard the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that *it shall be* for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these *things* shall be finished.

#### Revelation 12:6

(6) And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days.

#### Revelation 12:14

(14) And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

#### Revelation 13:5

(5) And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months.

## II. THE TWO WITNESSES – VS. 3-12

***A. These two witnesses lived and prophesied and preached and worked for the entire time of the second half of the Tribulation. When all of the destruction was going on they were there pointing to God – it is this 3 ½ year ministry that caused much of the anger on the part of the Antichrist and what would have been the cause of much of the anger he demonstrated toward God. Shows the power of preaching against sin.***



NOTE – this material is taken from Willmington's Guide to the Bible – notes on Revelation

## ***B. The ministry of the witnesses of God (11:3-14)***

1. Their identity: we cannot be certain and so speculation is all that we can give
2. Their ministry
  - a) To prophesy in sackcloth before men as God's anointed candlesticks – vs. 3-4
  - b) To destroy their enemies in the same manner that their enemies would attempt to destroy them – vs. 5
  - c) To prevent rain for three and a half years – vs. 6a
  - d) To turn waters into blood – vs. 6b
  - e) To smite the earth with every kind of plague – vs. 6c
3. Their death
  - a) The antichrist is finally allowed to kill them – vs. 7
  - b) The word "beast" is first mentioned here in 11:7. There are thirty-five other references to him in Revelation. It should also be noted that he could not kill the witnesses until "they shall have finished their testimonies." Satan cannot touch one hair on the head of the most humble saint until God gives him specific permission (see Job 1:12; 2:6).

NOTE: (Not found in Willmington's book) – the beast here is most likely that

mentioned in 13:1-3

- c) These two, like Paul, finished their testimonies (2 Tim. 4:7). Contrast this with Belshazzar's sad death (Dan. 5:26).

2 Timothy 4:7

(7) I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith:

Daniel 5:26

(26) This *is* the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.

- d) To show his contempt for them, he refuses to permit their dead bodies to be buried, but leaves them to rot in the streets of Jerusalem – vs. 8
- e) The dead bodies of these two prophets are viewed by all the nations of the world in a three-and-a-half-day period – vs. 9 – (not in Wilmington's – if I'm correct, and there is no electricity and no communication at this point, at least as we know it, then this verse isn't describing that they will be seen by everyone on earth, but rather that all the people's of the earth are gathered in Israel for the Battle of Armageddon – what's left of them)
- f) All the earth celebrates their deaths through a hellish Christmas; men actually send gifts to each other. This is the only reference to the word *rejoice* in the entire tribulation. Vs. 10
- g) Their bodies will be on display in Jerusalem (11:8). It is called Sodom because of its

immorality, and Egypt because of its worldliness.

4. Their resurrection (here the word "great" appears three times)



- a) A great voice calls them up to heaven (Rev. 11:12).
- b) A great fear falls upon those who witness this (Rev. 11:11)
- c) A great earthquake levels one-tenth of Jerusalem and kills 7000 prominent men (Rev. 11:13).

John Phillips writes:

"Death cannot hold them, and they arise from the grave. John tells us that they have a triumphant resurrection. He says, 'And after three days and a 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.' Picture the scene—the sun-drenched streets of Jerusalem, the holiday crowds flown in from the ends of the earth for a firsthand look at the corpses of these detested men, the troops in the beast's uniform, the temple police. There they are: devilish men from every kingdom under heaven, come to dance and feast at the triumph of the beast. And then it happens! As the crowds strain at the police cordon to peer curiously at the two dead bodies, there comes a sudden change.

Their color changes from cadaverous hue to the blooming, rosy glow of youth. Those stiff, stark limbs—they bend, they move! Oh, what a sight! They rise! The crowds fall back, break, and form again.

They also have a triumphant rapture. John says, '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.' But will these evil men repent when faced with this, the greatest of all miracles? Not a bit of it! 'Father Abraham!' cried the rich man from the flames of a lost eternity. 'Father Abraham... if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.' Back came the solemn reply, 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead' (Lk. 16:30, 31). And here not just one, but two arise, and repentance is the

farthest thing from the minds of men."  
(*Exploring Revelation*, p. 158)

—Wilmington's Guide to the Bible

### **III. THE END OF THE SIXTH TRUMPET JUDGMENT – vs. 13-14**

***A. As already stated, the sixth trumpet judgment ends with an earthquake in Jerusalem that levels a tenth of the city and kills 7,000 people***

***B. After this – the 2 witnesses rising from the dead and the subsequent earthquake – those that were still living “gave glory to the God of heaven.” They didn’t believe in Christ, they just recognized that there was a great power at work on earth. Remember, this was at the end of the Tribulation period and there had been much for them to take in and because of that they realized there was a God in heaven, but they would not believe by faith in Him.***

Conclusion: Much more could be said here but the main point is that God’s word, from Genesis to Revelation, is perfect, and every prophecy that has been given has been fulfilled to this point, and every prophecy that is for the future will be as well. The last half of the Tribulation period will be marked by much horror and destruction – if the rapture took place right now, will you still be here to see them fulfilled?