

**A Journey Into the Heavens**  
**The Temple, the Two Witnesses, and the Seventh Trumpet**  
**February 17, 2016**

Thus far we have studied through the sixth trumpet, which is the second of the three woes in Revelation 8:13. The first woe transpired at the sounding of trumpet five, as the fallen star (the enemy) was given the key to the bottomless pit.

At the sounding of the sixth trumpet (9:14), four angels were loosed who through the army of 200 Million were given the power to kill one-third of the worlds population. Coupled with the one-fourth killed at the opening of the fourth seal (6:7-8), at least one-half of the worlds population has now been killed.

Chapter ten is a parenthetical chapter describing the angel and the bittersweet book that contained the rest of the message that John was to deliver (10:11). Chapter 11 continues this parenthetical section and is one of the most difficult chapters to interpret.

**I. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Temple (11:1-2)**

In this chapter John is no longer just a witness to the happenings; he is instructed to... measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein (vs.1). Some have tried to spiritualize verses 1-2, but this creates serious problems. For example, if this temple refers to the church, how can John measure an invisible body of people? Also, who are the worshippers, and what does the altar represent?

It seems obvious a literal approach is intended here. As mentioned in chapter seven, God is not finished with the Jews. The events described in this chapter make the location of events unmistakable - the temple in Jerusalem.

Therefore, the Jewish temple must have been rebuilt, and biblically speaking, there is only one place in all the world where it can be rebuilt according to II Chronicles 3:1-2.

Why is it necessary the temple in Jerusalem be rebuilt to fulfill prophecy concerning the return of Christ? (Turn to II Thessalonians 2:1-4)

It is clear in the New Testament that during the Great Tribulation there will be a literal Jewish temple in Jerusalem. For it to be rebuilt in its original place, the Dome of the Rock, which now stands there, would have to be destroyed, and this would bring the wrath of 400 Million Muslims upon the Nation of Israel.

Today, the old city of Jerusalem is entirely in the hands of the Israelis, and they will never give it up, but the temple area where the Dome of the Rock stands is still in the Muslim hands. How then could they ever rebuild the Jewish temple in its original place? No one knows, but before 1948 neither did anyone dream the Jews would again be a nation and have Jerusalem as their capital.

John's measurement of the temple seems to be a symbolic action for claiming or staking out a possession. This corresponds well with Zechariah 2:1-13.

The outer court was not to be measured, so John only measured the holy place and the holy of holies. The explanation is given that this would be under the control of...the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months (11:2).

It appears at the beginning of this 42-month, or 3 1/2 years period, the sacrifices will stop, and the temple will be desecrated by the world ruler putting an idol there and setting himself up as a god to be worshipped.

The reference to the Gentiles treading upon the city of Jerusalem seems to imply not only the desecration of the temple but also the severe persecution of the Jews. This will be discussed further in Revelation 13.

## II. The \_\_\_\_\_ Witnesses (11:3-14)

In 11:3, John says two witnesses would serve as God's prophets for 1260 days, or 3 1/2 years. The identity of these two prophets is not disclosed in this passage. Some think they are Elijah and Moses, but we really do not know. The witnesses will be able to perform miracles, such as destroying with fire anyone who would harm them (11:5).

Like Elijah in the Old Testament, they can shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, and like Moses, they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. (11:6)

In verse seven we are introduced to the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit and kills the two witnesses. However, this will happen only after they have finished their testimony (11:7). Like the murder of Christ, their deaths will not be a tragic accident; they will have finished their ministry. This is the first mention of the beast that kills them, but he is mentioned more than 30 times in the remainder of the book. This killing is apparently his first act, and it will win him world wide support.

After they are murdered their bodies are put on display for all to see for 3 1/2 days, and the world rejoiced at this display. After their bodies had been on display for 3 1/2 days for all the world to see, the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them (11:11).

As the two witnesses are resurrected, a voice from heaven calls them up, Come up hither, and they ascended up to heaven in a cloud in full view of their enemies (11:12).

Immediately after the resurrection and ascension of the two witnesses, another great event occurs - an earthquake in which the tenth part of the city fell, and ... were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were frightened, and gave glory to the God of Heaven (11:13).

The identity of the remnant is unclear, but it could be some may be converted because of these events, and others simply recognize God's power but do not turn to Him in repentance. Whatever the case, this ends the interlude and the sixth trumpet, which is the second woe.

### **III. The \_\_\_\_\_ Trumpet (11:15-19)**

At the sounding of the seventh trumpet comes the announcement, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever (11:15). Other events must transpire before this fact is realized, but the victory has already been won!

In 11:16 the 24 elders which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God. They praised Him for His great power, for judging the wicked, and for giving rewards to His servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Him (11:17-18).

This chapter began with the measuring of the temple on earth, but in verse 19 the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament...

The fact that there is a throne room of God in Heaven, which was the pattern for the tabernacle and the temple in the Old Testament, has already been discussed. The focus in this verse, however, is not the temple itself but the ark of his testament.

The ark of the covenant was the only piece of furniture in the holy of holies. The Shekinah cloud of glory, which was the visible sign of God's presence rested upon the mercy seat that covered the ark. Communion with God was dependent upon the bloodstained mercy seat. Inside the Ark of the covenant were the tables of the law which signified God's righteousness; Aaron's rod that budded which symbolized the power of God to resurrect life; and the golden pot of manna which showed God's essence.

According to II Chronicles 5:10, by the time of Solomon's temple the ark only contained the tablets of the law. It is presumed the ark was destroyed when Nebuchadnezzar burned the temple in 586 B.C.

And, it is also assumed there was no ark in the second temple, since there is no mention of it when Cyrus was commissioned the rebuilding of the temple and sent back all its vessels in Ezra 1:1-11.

Though the earthly temple will be desecrated by the beast, its counterpart in heaven is displayed in Revelation 11:19 to reflect God's power, holiness, and majesty.

Also the opening of heaven to show the ark of the covenant to the Christians on earth, who are probably primarily Jews at the time, assures them of God's love and presence during this time of severe trials and persecutions by the beast.

In 11:19, much like the scenes in Revelation 4:5 & 8:5, John sees and hears lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail. Apparently, this refers to the happenings on earth. Just as there is thundering and lightening before a storm hits, these are warnings of the storm of judgement about to fall on the earth.

It is so sad that when crisis or catastrophe strikes, people (even Christians) turn to God for help, but after the circumstances have passed, they go back to the same way of life as before. This happens because their turning to God was inspired by fear or desperation, rather than repentance or a love for God. We need to be totally dependent and sold out for Christ on a daily basis!