

I. Review of the Context of Revelation 10–11

- A. Revelation chapter 10 and most of chapter 11 is an angelic explanation (parenthetical section) that follows after the crisis described in Revelation 9. Remember in these sections the chronological storyline is paused. The pause button is released in 11:15... “then the seventh angel sounded (trumpet)...”
- B. In Revelation 9, the demons of the 6th Trumpet have killed 1/3 of the earth, leaving many in deception and confusion. Many do not believe it is the judgment of God on something they are doing wrong. They possibly attribute the calamity they’re experiencing to the two witnesses.
- C. John is left breathless at the refusal to repent as he sees the trumpet judgments unfold (chapter 9). Then a “mighty angel” descends from heaven to give further insight.
- D. God assures His people that He will release prophetic direction and great power to help them endure. In Revelation 10, God promises to release prophetic understanding that will help people avoid deception and overcome confusion.
- E. In Revelation 11, the two witnesses will preach with great power and release God’s judgments against the Antichrist for 3½ years.
- F. There will be a great outpouring of the Spirit (Joel 2:28–32; Acts 2:17–21; Ephesians 4:11–13; Revelation 11:10, 18; 16:6; 18:20, 24). All believers will receive prophetic dreams and visions.

II. The Temple and the Trampling of Jerusalem

Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, “Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. ²But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles (nations). And they will tread (trample) the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.” Revelation 11:1–2

- A. The paradox in the temple that is referred to during this timeframe is that it is God’s temple, yet the Antichrist will use it and it’s said to give “given” to the Gentiles or the nations.
He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call God and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God. 2 Thessalonians 2:4
- B. John was told to measure the temple, altar, and its worshipers. To measure something means to evaluate it carefully and to discern its quality and purpose.
- C. Amos saw a plumb line in God’s hand indicating that He “measured” Israel’s obedience.
The LORD said, “Amos, what do you see?” I said, “A plumb line.” Then the Lord said: “Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of My people Israel...” Amos 7:8
- D. To be trampled under foot is symbolic of being conquered and crushed to the ground. Grapes were trampled under foot (Judges 9:27; Isaiah 16:10; 63:2).

- E. Jesus prophesied that Jerusalem would be surrounded and trampled by Gentile armies. This was partially fulfilled in AD 70, yet will be completely fulfilled in the end times.

“When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. ²¹Then let those in Judea flee to the mountains... ²⁴They will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles.” Luke 21:20–21, 24

“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation’...¹⁶then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains...²¹For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.” Matthew 24:15–16, 21

- F. The trampling of Jerusalem includes its siege and capture by the armies of the Antichrist.
I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken...half of the city shall go into captivity... Zechariah 14:2

“...when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem...³all nations of the earth are gathered against it.” Zechariah 12:2–3

- G. 42 months: This is the same 3½ year time frame as 1,260 days (11:3; 12:6), times, time, and half a time (12:14), and 42 months (13:5). There are eight scriptures and four phrases that describe the final 3½ years before Jesus returns—1260 days (11:3; 12:6); 42 months (11:2; 13:5); time, times and half a time (12:14; Daniel 7:25; 12:7) and the middle of the week (Daniel 9:27). Different terminology is used so that the meaning is clear.

III. The Two Witnesses

I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days...⁵And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies... ⁶These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire. Revelation 11:3, 5–6

- A. The two witnesses are powerful prophets/apostles who will release God’s judgments on the Antichrist in a way that will be similar to what Moses did on Pharaoh’s empire. The trumpet judgments are similar to the signs they operate in.
- B. God will raise them up specifically as the two “anointed ones” of Zechariah 4:1–14 whose “anointing oil” fills the lampstands in the midst of the Lord (the Church – Revelation 1:20).
- C. Old Testament law demands that a minimum of two witnesses be required for just judgment (Numbers 35:40).

D. Their supernatural power and preservation alludes to the efforts of the king of Israel to capture and then kill Elijah in 2 Kings 1.

“What sort of man was he?” the king demanded. “What did he look like?”⁸They replied, “He was a hairy man, and he wore a leather belt around his waist.” “Elijah from Tishbe!” the king exclaimed.⁹Then he sent an army captain with fifty soldiers to arrest him. They found him sitting on top of a hill. The captain said to him, “Man of God, the king has commanded you to come down with us.”¹⁰But Elijah replied to the captain, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and destroy you and your fifty men!” Then fire fell from heaven and killed them all.¹¹So the king sent another captain with fifty men. The captain said to him, “Man of God, the king demands that you come down at once.”¹²Elijah replied, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and destroy you and your fifty men!” And again the fire of God fell from heaven and killed them all. 2 Kings 1:7–12

E. Their ministry will enrage the Antichrist, who will give himself to a concerted effort to kill them.

When they finish their testimony, the beast [Antichrist]...will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.⁸And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city [Jerusalem] which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.⁹Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves.¹⁰And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. Revelation 11:7–10

F. They think their victory over the two prophets is final, but it is not. They think the ministry of the two prophets was negative, but it was fulfilling the will of God. The nations of the earth are completely deceived about this. Through them God was actually pleading with them to repent.

G. To signify their internal condition, the nations rejoice at their seeming victory over God and His messengers, they turn the event into an international holiday resembling Christmas. It is a time of good cheer as all around the earth can witness the success of the Antichrist to prevail over their seeming tormenters and foes.

H. It is during this time that the mocking of the Antichrist regarding the martyrs of Jesus will be at its height (Revelation 13:6) as all will recognize the next great event that seals his legitimacy and identity in their minds. I believe that the earth will be celebrating the man and his “accomplishment” as much as they are celebrating the death of their two tormentors.

And he (antichrist) spoke terrible words of blasphemy against God, slandering His name and His dwelling—that is, those who dwell in heaven.⁷And the beast was allowed to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And he was given authority to rule over every tribe and people and language and nation. Revelation 13:6–7

I. But.....the story isn’t over!

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

J. Observation: Revelation 11 is filled with detailed descriptions. It’s one argument to not dismiss the book as simply poetic language.
