

## **Revelation 11 (NASB)**

Most Bible scholars believe that the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Revelation is the most difficult chapter of any book in the Bible to understand.

### **The Two Witnesses**

*11:1 Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it.*

The measuring of the temple shows God knows every inch of it. Nothing is hidden from Him. This is probably the third and final Temple in Jerusalem that we are talking about. Daniel 12:11 says "From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days." Matthew 24:15 and 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 also refer to the third Temple.

*11:2 Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.*

The phrase "don't measure the outer court" is significant because the outer court is where those who do not belong to God are. Three and a half years is equal to 42 months and 1260 days. We are talking about the second 3 ½ years of Tribulation.

*11:3 And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. 6 These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.*

The two witnesses will witness for 3 ½ years. We are not sure if this is the same 3 1/2 years as verse 2. (See Revelation 11:10 and Revelation 16:10-11.) The two witnesses get their power from God because they belong to God. The exact identity of the two witnesses is not known. Matthew 17:3 says they are Moses and Elijah. 2 Kings 2:11, Genesis 5:23 and Hebrews 11:5 name Elijah and Enoch. Zechariah 4:11-14 says Joshua and Zerubbabel. Based on Hebrews 9:27, the most likely pair are Enoch and Elijah but we still don't know. Hebrews 9:27 says "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment." Elijah called down fire on them and the fire came out of their mouths. 2 Kings 1:12 says "Elijah replied to them, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty." Then the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty." The phrase "shut up heaven" means no rain. According to James 5:17-18, Elijah shut up the heavens for 3 1/2 years. All of the nouns used to describe these two witnesses are masculine and show that they are males.

*11:7 When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. 10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.*

Their testimony lasted until they finish their testimony. 3 1/2 years is not the answer in these verses. The beast / Satan kills them. This is the first of 38 references to the beast in the book of Revelation. The word witnesses is actually 'martyria' and it means martyr. You are not done on Earth until the moment God is done with you is an important concept that verse 7 reveals. Being a witness is something we are but giving testimony is something we do. Half of the Bible scholars believe "the great city" is Jerusalem and the remaining scholars believe that it is Rome. When the two witnesses are finally killed, the people are happy, there is a celebration. They celebrate because the witnesses have told them the truth and they didn't want to hear it.

*11:11 But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them. 12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them. 13 And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

*14 The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly.*

They leave them lying in the street for 3 ½ days. This is significant because it was an insult to them to not be buried on the same day they died based on Jewish culture. God turns Satan's mockery into absolute fear, God brings them back to their feet. The celebration comes to an abrupt end because of great fear. Everyone hears God "call them back to heaven." Their enemies see them ascend into heaven. Next there is an earthquake. It is not known whether people repent and turn to God after this happened.

### ***The Seventh Trumpet—Christ's Reign Foreseen***

*11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever." 16 And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying,*

*"We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. 18 And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth."*

*19 And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.*

The seventh trumpet sounds after the two witnesses are taken to Heaven. Jesus does not return to set up His millennial reign yet. Satan still rules on Earth. The phrase "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ" means it is a done deal. It is going to happen, you can count on it. The 24 elders worship God again. They are giving thanks while Satan still rules on Earth because they know what is going to happen. The people are angry because they don't want God to be king. Luke 19:14 says that "But his citizens hated him and sent [a] delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.'" The first thing John sees when the temple is opened is the Ark of the Covenant. The chapter ends with flashes of lightning, peals of thunder and an earthquake and hailstorm.