

Revelation Chapter 11, Part 1 Verses 1-14

The Temple and the Two
Witnesses...

Revelation 11 Intro

- Still in the **interlude** between blowing of 6th and 7th Trumpets.
- Still experiencing the **"2nd woe."**
- Some think this is still first half of Tribulation, others think last half. **Timing is unclear.** Either way, includes a specified 3 ½ year period (may be beginning, middle, or end).
- Note, in scripture **one year is always 360 days**, not our standard 365
- John goes on an errand to the **Temple** (vision only, or actually rebuilt?)
- God makes a point through measuring Temple

Revelation 11 Intro

- This chapter has 3 scenes: The Temple on earth, the Two Witnesses, and the Temple opened in heaven (when 7th Trumpet blows)
- This lesson deals with first two only (v. 1-14)
- Focus is solidly on Israel in this chapter.
- It is helpful to have some background about the Temple before beginning. It is a lesson in God's desire for fellowship with us.

Tabernacle/Temple Background

TABERNACLE/TEMPLE HISTORY RECAP

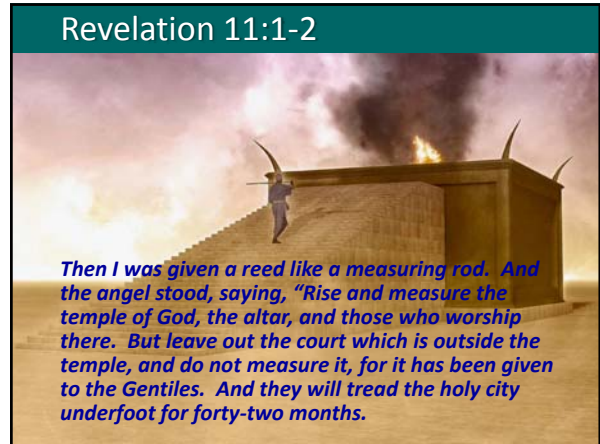
- History of tabernacle/temple is **history of God's plan of redemption**, and His ultimate plan of dwelling with the people He loves.
- Began in the garden, will end in the garden.
- Important **aid to understand God's love** for His people, and His ultimate plan to reunite us with Him.
- **Key to spiritual condition** of Hebrews/Jews, key to the **spiritual condition of believers** today. *(Referenced in Revelation 11 for this purpose.)*

Tabernacle/Temple Background

- Began in the Garden, as Adam walked and **fellowshipped with God**
- Illustrated in the wilderness in a large **tent that moved with the people**
- Given permanent home in Jerusalem (1st Temple, Solomon)
- **Destroyed by Babylon** because of disobedience 586/587 BC (Tisha b'Av, "Glory" departed prior to this)
- **Rebuilt**, but much smaller (Ezra's or Nehemiah's Temple, the 2nd Temple)
- **Enhanced by Herod** over period of 60 years

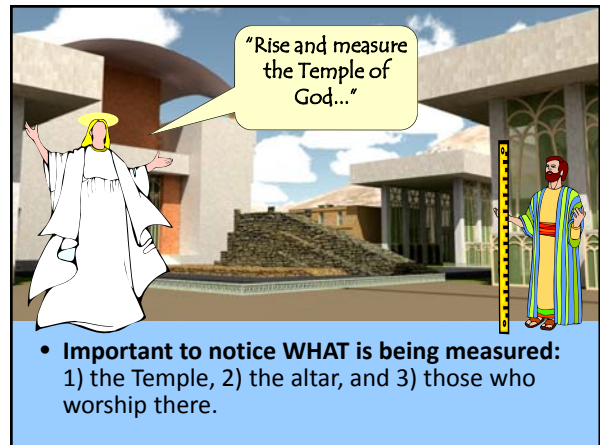
Tabernacle/Temple Background

- **Destroyed by Rome** in 70 AD (Tisha b'Av again, Jesus prophesied)
- Exists today spiritually in hearts of believers (indwelt by the Holy Spirit)
- **Possibly rebuilt for end time** prophecies to be fulfilled (3rd Temple)
- Likely newly constructed in Millennium per Ezekiel's vision (4th Temple)
- Will **end in the garden**. Not needed in eternity. God will dwell permanently with His people made holy by blood of His Son.
- Until then, **reminds us of His incredible plan and desire to fellowship** with us.



Revelation 11:1-2

- **Reeds commonly used** for measurement. Measurement in scripture generally used when **something is to be built, restored, or destroyed – implies judgment, worth.**
- Scriptural measurement is about spiritual worth, not dimensions.
- Often associated with chastisement, falling short of something. Can be a precursor to judgment and/or destruction.



Revelation 11:1-2

- **Which Temple?** A vision, or one actually built and restored in Jerusalem? Many believe the Temple will be restored in Israel to fulfill this scripture (and others), prior to this time.
- 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 - *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*
- Many scriptures seem to call for literal, physical Temple in Jerusalem to be present in these times.

Revelation 11:1-2

- Restoration of Temple has **been underway for years.** Have finances, plans, temple furnishings, priest vestments, training priests....red heifer?
- Not sure **which altar is referenced**, brazen altar in the courtyard, or altar of incense inside. Word is *thusiasterion*, literally means place of sacrifice –probably references **altar of sacrifice** in the courtyard.



Revelation 11:1-2

- “Temple” = *naos*, always **inner sanctuary, Holy of Holies (the place where God met with His people (the priest as representative) [note: perfect cube, more later].** The word for entire Temple complex is *heiron*.
- For this reason, some speculate this does **not** imply an actual physical Temple, but one John sees in a vision with symbolic meaning:
 - 1) **Condition of Temple related to spiritual condition of Israel. If Temple in disrepair, hearts of the people were far from God. If Temple in good condition, people were right with God. This temple may refer to Israel’s current relationship with God.**

Revelation 11:1-2

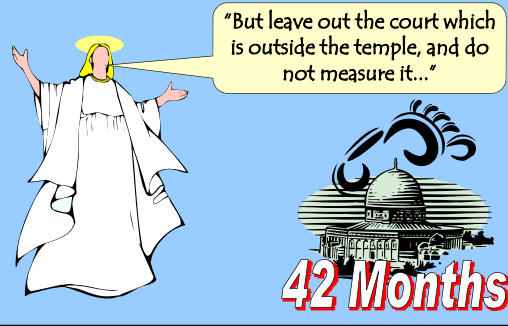
- 2) May also represent “temple of the Holy Spirit” - believers. About measuring the hearts of believers, Jew or Gentile.
 - 3) **This Temple, therefore, would not be literal, but merely a symbol of God’s presence and relationship with His people. John was to “measure” this relationship.**
- However, other things make it difficult to take passage completely symbolic/spiritual.
 - Always best to take things literally unless impossible to do that. (*often both!*)
 - Physical dimensions of “worshippers” not in question. John to measure their spiritual “worth” – **their hearts before God.**

Revelation 11:1-2

- Whether a physical Temple or not, this references spiritual condition of worshippers.
- If a literal physical Temple in Jerusalem, those worshipping there **would be Jews**, and they would *not* be worshipping the Messiah.
- Rebuilding the physical Temple is a very visual demonstration of rejection of Jesus as Messiah.
- “Measuring” these worshippers, those who have rejected Yeshua as Messiah, is then a **precursor to their judgment/discipline**. They would be found “wanting.”

Revelation 11:1-2

- **“Court which is outside the Temple”** is the court of Gentiles.

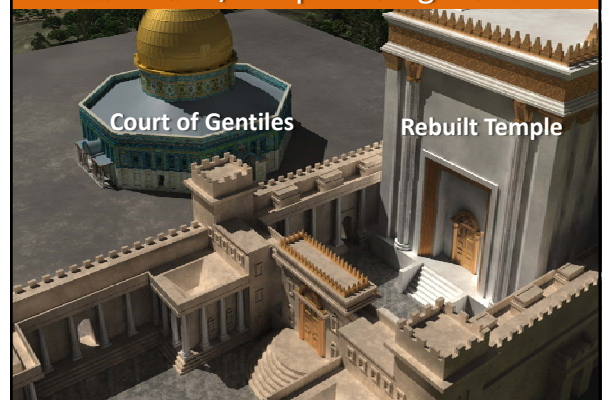


Revelation 11:1-2

- **Interesting note:** New GPS technology (and archeological finds) may reveal Dome of the Rock (and Al Aksa Mosque) do not sit on actual place where original Temple stood, but rather occupy **what would have been court of the Gentiles**.
- John told this area **“given to the Gentiles.”**
- God’s Word always very precise. Another reason to think this is literal, not allegorical only.



Tabernacle/Temple Background



Tabernacle/Temple Background



Revelation 11:1-2

- **“Given to the Gentiles”** may indicate Gentile domination during this time
- Current move to divide Jerusalem –don’t know if referenced here, or merely that Al Aksa Mosque/Dome of the Rock (*Gentile structures*) sit on God’s holy ground.
- Time span is **forty-two (42) months**, exactly 3 ½ years, half the 7-year tribulation period.
- **“Time of the Gentiles”** did not end in 1967 when Israel reclaimed Jerusalem. Continues today, will continue through tribulation.

Revelation 11:1-2

- **World’s opinion about Israel** – Jerusalem already trodden underfoot by Gentiles –will get worse. Growing anti-Semitism.
- Passage helps show strictly allegorical approach to Revelation doesn’t work. Specific time references – **not symbolic**, but literal.
- In next verse, two witnesses will **“prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days.”**
- **“Time, times and half a time”** (Dan 7:25, 12:7, Rev 12:14) = 3 ½ years = 1,260 days = **42 mos.**
- Daniel 9, “70 weeks” refers to “middle of the week” (the 70th week, or 3 ½ year mark)

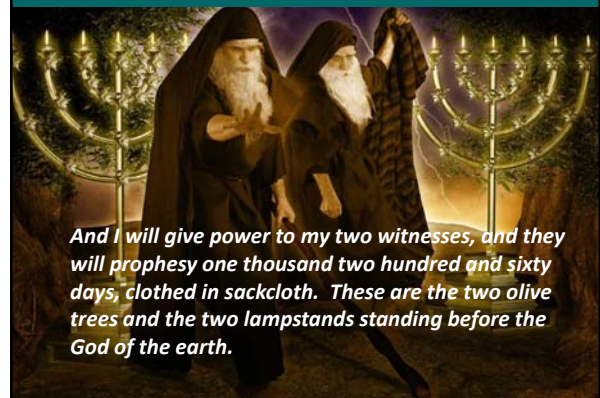
Revelation 11:1-2

- Seems God is anticipating erroneous allegorical interpretation by presenting such specific time references.
- How many ways can you say **three and one half years**??? This is a purposeful effort to make sure we understand this is a literal period of time.
- **Remember a “scriptural” year or prophetic year is 360 days.** In scripture, a month is 30 days, a year is 360 days. If people keeping track of time in this period, will count days, not months and years.

Revelation 11:1-2

- Should note that throughout scripture God provides truths to combat and deflate every worldly argument against Him and His Truth. Must look for these, know them well. **No believer should be caught off-guard by erroneous human arguments.**
- **Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.** (2 Timothy 4:2)
- **But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;** (1 Peter 3:15)

Revelation 11:3-4



Revelation 11:3-4

- God is granting power to the two witnesses. Throughout scripture (and in particular the book of Revelation), **God is firmly in control**. Nothing is outside His knowledge or will.
- Two is required number of witnesses in the Law (Deuteronomy 17:6, Matthew 18:16) to make a conviction. (*world soon convicted of sin*)
- **1,260 days...again**, how many ways can you say 3 ½ years?? (42 months X 30 days = 1,260)
- **Sackcloth** related to Hebrew custom during mourning. Familiar OT concepts in this passage.

Revelation 11:3-4

- **Sackcloth worn to express mourning, grief**. Hebrew word = *saq*, pronounced *sak*. Used first in Genesis 37, frequently throughout OT. Greek = *sakkos*. (root of our word "sack") Material coarse open weave originally used as sack for carrying things (like grain). Traditionally associated with mourning/grief because of very scratchy uncomfortable texture. Often used in very public display of grief. Grief may be over a death, or coming tragic circumstances, but also over a perceived breach of the Law.



Revelation 11:3-4

"These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth." (v.4)

obvious reference to OT **Zechariah 4**:

² And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. ³ Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left."...
¹¹ Then I answered and said to him, "What are these two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?"
¹² "...What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?"
¹³ Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord."
¹⁴ So he said, "These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth." (selected verses)

Revelation 11:3-4

- Zechariah part of "Apocalyptic Triangle" of books regarding "end times"
- Like John, Zechariah had multiple visions. This part chapter 4) **obviously correlates with the two witnesses** here in Revelation 11.
- **THE BIG QUESTION – who (or what) are the two witnesses?** (we'll get to the lampstand and the oil in a moment)
- As always, speculation and human opinion abound.



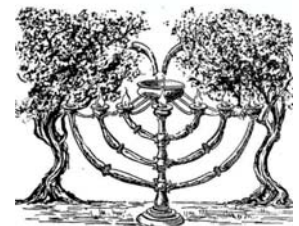
Revelation 11:3-4

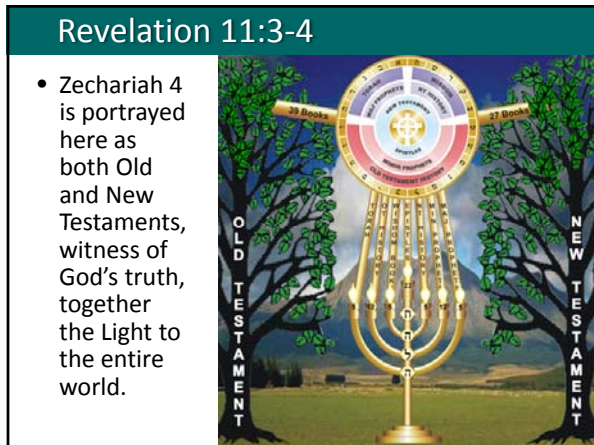
Some ideas for Zechariah passage:

- Two individuals, **Joshua (High Priest), and Zerubbabel (Governor)**, representing dual roles of Messiah (Priest + King)
- *At time Zechariah written, these individuals responsible for rebuilding the Temple.*
- Some Jews speculate two Messiahs, Messiah ben Joseph, Messiah ben David
- Some speculate not two persons, but two things, or two groups.
- Remember two is required number of witnesses for conviction

Revelation 11:3-4

- Some say the two witnesses here are the Old Testament, and the New Testament.
- Others say they are the Jews, and the Gentiles, the Jewish believers and Gentile believers.
- And, as you can imagine, there is **no lack of creative artwork** to describe this passage visually.





An interesting thought...


- If the Two Branches (Judah and Ephraim) of Ezekiel 37 are indeed the Two Witnesses of God here in Revelation 11, that **opens the door for some very thought provoking** (admittedly unconventional) potential options.
- Perhaps, as commonly thought, the Two Witnesses are **not two individuals** (more on their supposed identity later), but instead **two "branches" of the Truth, Judah and Ephraim – essentially believing Jews and believing Gentiles, the restored houses of Israel into one Israel before God.**

An interesting thought...

- This makes them **groups of people**, rather than just two individual persons.
- Considering remaining text in Revelation, this would mean whole groups would be **spared initially from death at the hands of the antichrist**, but then killed later, eventually to rise together 3½ days later!
- It also means these groups would be empowered to do remarkable things in their witnessing ministry, similar to what Moses and Elijah did (more on this in a moment).
- Hmmm....interesting, **but also speculation!**

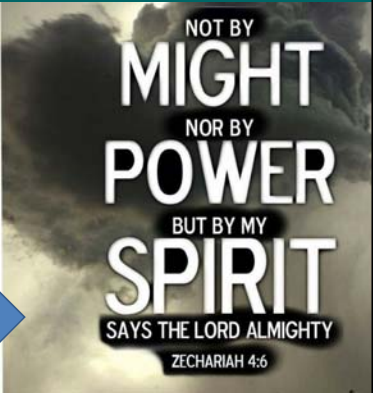
Revelation 11:3-4

- Whether individual persons, or whole groups, **olive oil** seen in Zechariah 4 consistently considered reference to Holy Spirit.
- Oil in scripture is a well-known allusion to the **power of the Holy Spirit**.
- The Holy Spirit *enables* human believers, always. None of God's work is done without the Holy Spirit.



Revelation 11:3-4

- Ultimately, in Zechariah, it is not so much the identity of the two witnesses that matters, as much as **the "bottom line" message itself:**



Revelation 11:3-4

Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord REJOICES to see the work begin...
Zechariah 4:10

- MESSAGE: the Temple (2nd Temple, Ezra) would be rebuilt by Spirit of God, **not by might or power of man**. This is true no matter what topic, building the Temple, or completion of God's ultimate plan.
- Also true God loves to see the beginning of work for Him. HE will complete it!

Revelation 11:3-4

- Since the Zechariah 4 passage is obviously tied to this one in Revelation 11, **debate continues** regarding identity of these witnesses (in both passages).
- In both passages, nothing happens by man's power or authority, but only by God's Spirit. **Critical lesson for all believers**, and a critical lesson for navigating through Revelation.
- In the Revelation passage, we are given "**clues**" used to speculate about these identities.
- *Will look at next several verses before speculating....*

Revelation 11:5

And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.



Prophecy 1,260 Days

Revelation 11:5


- Seems like we have some **human flame throwers** here!
- Throughout scripture fire symbol for judgment. Earth will be consumed by fire, **destroyed so it can be re-created in perfection**.
- Those who want to harm these witnesses will die by fire. Whether literal or spiritual (*or both*) difficult to discern. Seems unlikely, but nothing out of range of speculation regarding how God will fulfill this (*ultimate destination of unbelievers is Lake of Fire*).

Revelation 11:5

- Recall prophet **Elijah** able to bring fire from heaven by power of God's Spirit (1 Kings 18:38) *[keep Elijah in mind for a moment!]*
- The **False Prophet** apparently also has this ability (Revelation 13:13) so it may not be so far-fetched.




Revelation 11:6



These 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 11:6

- Now we have a few **more interesting powers** for these witnesses. They will serve as clues for their "identity speculation."
- Witnesses able to **"shut heaven,"** stop rainfall, adding to horrid environment already experienced through earlier trumpet judgments. 
- Who was able to do this in scripture? **ELIJAH.** *(Actually, through God's power, not his own ability. Remember bottom line message of Zechariah 4: "Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD!")*

Revelation 11:6

- Don't know if this **strictly on Israel**, or entire world.
- Witnesses seem to be in Israel, specifically Jerusalem (see verse 8). Although if groups, not just individuals, **could be everywhere.**
- If world-wide, will be world-wide food shortages, famines, disease, etc. Many will die as a result, and **all will want to rid world** of these witnesses. *(For their message, and for the result of their powers.)*
- Passage seems to indicate **NO RAIN** for entire time of their days of prophesying (3½ years)

Revelation 11:6

- Witnesses also have **power to turn water into blood.** Should immediately bring someone to mind!
- MOSES** able to do this *(again, through God's power)* Plagues of Egypt.
- So, **"clues"** we are given:
 - Two, seem to be human, but with supernatural powers
 - Able to kill their enemies, those who would harm them
 - Can "shut the heavens" (no rain)
 - Can turn water into blood

Revelation 11:6

- Back to their identities:** It is obvious that Elijah and Moses come to mind immediately.
- Also, these two appeared with Yeshua at His "transfiguration" - *Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.* (Matthew 17:1-3)
- For these reasons, most commentators lean toward speculating identities of two witnesses as **Elijah and Moses.**

Revelation 11:6

- **However**, there is a little verse in Hebrews that complicates this: ***And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment...*** (Hebrews 9:27).
- **Elijah did not die.** He was taken to heaven in a whirlwind. But **Moses did die** (Deuteronomy 34:5). Moses cannot die a second time, which is what happens to the two witnesses. This would seem to remove Moses from speculation, but many still believe he is one of the witnesses. God's word cannot lie, but He can override His own Word if He chooses.

Revelation 11:6

- Others speculate **Elijah** and **Enoch**, the only two we know of who **did not die**.
- These two were “snatched away” – in other words, they were “**raptured!**”
- Others consider entirely different identities, like **Zerubbabel** and **Joshua** from the book of Zechariah, or even others, including **John the Baptist, or other wild guesses**.
- And others consider the two witnesses not to be individuals, but **groups of individuals**, or even something entirely **spiritual**. (*Difficult to justify this, since passage is so detail specific!*)

Revelation 11:6

- **Bottom line** of this debate regarding identities: It simply does not matter at this point who they are. What they do, what they say, and what happens to them is what matters (*just like in the book of Zechariah*)
- **We know what they will do:** they will witness and prophesy, boldly proclaiming the truth of God to those who are lost. They are given divine powers and protection for 3 ½ years, during which time there will be no rain, and they may bring plagues on the earth or turn water into blood whenever they choose. **No wonder the world wants them gone!**

COMMENTARY: There is a great deal of difference of opinion as to the identity of the two witnesses. They are introduced to us without any suggestion as to who they are. ...If the identity of these two was essential for the understanding of this book, I think there would have been some indication given about their persons. It is always in these areas that the sensational preachers concentrate. They can tell you what the seven thunders said (John was told not to write it down, and he didn't), and they can tell you the names of these two witnesses. Those who have espoused the historical view of Revelation have named such men as John Huss, Pope Sylvester, Waldenson, and the two Testaments. You can see that you could come up with almost anything from that viewpoint. Men who hold the futurist view—which is the view I hold—are not in complete agreement as to who they are. Seiss and Govett say that they are Enoch and Elijah. ...Dean Alford, Walter Scott, and Donald Grey Barnhouse state that they are Moses and Elijah. William Newell does a very smart thing—he does not even attempt to identify them. There is also the possibility that they are two unknown witnesses—that is, they have had no previous existence, and they have not yet appeared on the scene. (*McGee*)

Revelation 11:7

When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.



Revelation 11:7

- **NOTE!!** Nothing will happen to witnesses until FINISHED with God-ordained service.
- **Good reminder!** *They are immortal until their work for God is finished. SO ARE WE!*
- Who is the “**beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit?**” Chapter 13 references beast from sea, and beast from land. ID as antichrist, False Prophet. Are either beast from abyss?
- Don't know. Some see Satan (*dragon*), others a “demon beast” in Antiochus Epiphanes (*type for AC*), will later inhabit final world ruler.
- **And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.** (Rev 9:11)

Revelation 11:8

And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.



Revelation 11:8

- Jewish law requires bodies buried within 24 hours.
- Jews generally don't embalm, so critical to get bodies buried quickly, especially in hot climates like Israel.
- Not allowing bodies of witnesses to be buried is a huge **sign of disrespect**.
- John goes to great lengths to make sure we know what city this is. Defined as "spiritually" called **Sodom** and **Egypt**. Both judged as evil in scripture.
- Sodom known for horrible immorality, sexual perversion. Egypt known as worldly, pagan, opposition to God. These two cities represent world without God.

Revelation 11:8

- The final identifier is the "**city where our Lord was crucified.**" There can be no question about this. It is Jerusalem. John makes sure we know where this city is.
- May indicate that the two witnesses are confined to Jerusalem only.
- John's association of "Sodom" and "Egypt" defines its spiritual condition, while Jerusalem references its physical location. At this time, Jerusalem will not be acting much like a "holy city." *Even today it is a wicked city, like every other city on the planet.*
- Some speculate death of witnesses signifies **end of preaching the Word of God** in the world.

Revelation 11:9-10

Then 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. And 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 11:9-10

- Reference to "**peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations**" means EVERYONE on the planet.
- People *everywhere* will **SEE bodies**. How? Not possible 50 yrs ago. Satellite television, instant news channels, 24-hr cable news coverage. Could not be fulfilled any other time in history, until now. Entire world can see same image at same time.
- Not allowing burial of bodies, leaving to rot in streets, testimony to man's completely evil state.
- COMMENTATOR: "*Now comes the real revelation of the heart of man: glee – horrid, insane, inhuman, hellish, ghoulis glee!*" (Newell)
- "**Those who dwell on the earth**" – 2X here = lost

Revelation 11:9-10

- **Only mention in NT of any kind of celebration** or sending gifts to "one another." Witnesses kept the lost ("*inhabitants of the earth*") from enjoying their sins.
- At their death, lost world celebrates, think they have gotten rid of "party poopers," don't have to fear them any longer.
- Historically, possible to silence messengers of God's Word. **NOT possible to silence God's Word!**
- Very interesting **OT passage may predict** this event. When first written, prophetic of destruction of Jerusalem and slaughter by Nebuchadnezzar. May have double fulfillment... (*common in prophecy*)

Psalm 79:1-3 – Double Fulfillment?

*O God, the nations have come into Your inheritance;
Your holy temple they have defiled;
They have laid Jerusalem in heaps.
The dead bodies of Your servants
They have given as food for the birds of the heavens,
The flesh of Your saints to the beasts of the earth.
Their blood they have shed like water all around Jerusalem,
And there was no one to bury them.*

Revelation 11:11

Breath of Life



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.

Revelation 11:11

- Two witnesses are **resurrected**, restored to life. No question they were dead.
- Technology can certify death. Ancient days, some question. Jews believed someone could “come back” if not “dead” more than 3 days. If 4 days passed, deterioration set in. **Why Jesus waited until Lazarus in the tomb for 4 days!** No question he (Lazarus) was dead.
- The statement that “**great fear fell on those who saw them**” is no doubt a huge understatement. This event seen globally, cannot be denied.
- The world-wide **celebration is over**.

Revelation 11:12

“Come up here!”



And 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.

Revelation 11:12

- Notice what witnesses hear: “**come up here!**” Exactly what John hears at beginning of ch 4. Witnesses “raptured,” “caught up” from earth.
- *If Elijah and Enoch, their second such trip!*
- **Not just disappearance**. God enables people to **physically see this**, watch it happen real time. Cannot be denied. Whole world will see.
- Some speculate if two witnesses are groups instead of individuals, entire passage here is actually about believers and their “**catching away**” at the **MID POINT** of Tribulation. *Timing of rapture debated hotly. Interesting thought.*

Revelation 11:12



In 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. The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

2nd Woe: PAST
3rd Woe: Coming Quickly!

Revelation 11:13-14

- Seems to be a literal, real earthquake
- Perhaps limited to **city of Jerusalem**, since specific details given, that one tenth of city fell, and 7,000 killed there.
- **One of earth's largest earthquake fault line** runs just east of Jerusalem, down into Jordan, called the "Great Rift" valley. Very seismically active area. Coincidence? *We know better than that!*
- Everyone not killed is terrified, and **"give glory to God of heaven."** This doesn't mean they were saved. May be momentary (temporary) reaction.

Revelation 11:13-14

- Could also signal **Israel's moment of national salvation** (Zechariah 13)
- **"God of heaven"** distinguishes Yahweh from pagan gods. He is the One True God.
- The **"second woe" is now, finally, past** – *this was long and terrible!* Lasted from herd of demonic horsemen through this earthquake, which ends the 6th trumpet judgment. Phew!
- **Third woe is coming soon**, which will usher in the last set of judgments, the Bowl Judgments, or Bowl Plagues.
- No wonder the angel said **"woe, woe, woe...."**

