

Book of Revelation
Lesson 14 - Revelation 11

1. Chapter 11
 - 1.1. The proposition developed is built around the question: What shall be the end of God's people (the church) during the time of persecution and testing?
 - 1.2. **Revelation 11:1-14** refers to God's protection of the church spiritually through bitter persecution. Come what may, God will be with them and the church will triumph (**Matthew 16:16-18**).
 - 1.3. The trials and tribulations will be severe and it will look like the church is going to be overcome, but it will not be overcome.
 - 1.4. It is intended to be a passage of comfort and assurance to Christians.
2. **Rev. 11:1 - And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and one said, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.**
 - 2.1. John is not an observer here, but rather he is given a reed, which he uses as a measuring rod. He is to measure the temple, the altar and the people who worship there. The only one who can separate a Christian from God is the Christian himself.
 - 2.1.1. The measuring reed is God's approved standard of judgment.
 - 2.1.2. Conduct a thorough self-examination on the basis of that Word (**11:1,2**)
 - 2.1.3. Preach (teach) the Word regardless of the consequences (**11:3-13**)
 - 2.1.4. What was to be measured?
 - 2.1.5. Temple, altar and them that worship
 - 2.2. "The temple of God" to be measured was the church.
 - 2.2.1. It is frequently likened to a temple (**1 Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:20-21**).
 - 2.2.2. The old temple in Jerusalem had been destroyed some 26 years earlier by the Romans.
 - 2.2.3. The temple here also refers to the inner part of the temple, the sanctuary and not all the buildings. The symbol is one thing; the meaning is another. The meaning of measuring the temple is that God names those who are his and he will protect them spiritually from all harm. This is the same basic meaning as the sealing in chapter seven. Though they may have great physical persecution, they will be protected spiritually.
3. **Rev. 11:2 - And the court which is without the temple leave without, and measure it not; for it hath been given unto the nations: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.**
 - 3.1. What was not to be measured?
 - 3.1.1. The court; why?
 - 3.1.2. The court without symbolizes the worldly or unfaithful of the church. This latter group would include those in the church who succumb to the doctrine of Balaam, Jezebel, and the Nicolaitans in courting the favor of the world. It would include those who had left their first love, those who were lukewarm and indifferent, and the apostates who had left the Lord for paganism.
 - 3.1.3. The holy city which would be trodden under foot is most certainly the church. The writer of Hebrews so styles it (Heb. 12:22-23). To tread under foot means to trample upon. This was happening to the faithful church as

John wrote. She was being assaulted and battered by the Roman system even as they had devastated Jerusalem in Palestine 26 years earlier. John selects these very words from Luke's account of Christ's prophecy of Jerusalem's fall (Luke 21:24). Literal Jerusalem was trampled for centuries, but heavenly Jerusalem would only suffer 42 months.

- 3.2. What is measured is protected by God. What is not measured is rejected by God.
- 3.3. What is the measuring rod?
 - 3.3.1. The Word of God!
- 3.4. Forty-two months is 1,260 days or 3 1/2 years (**Rev. 11:3; 12:14**). All of these have the same value. Rather than a literal prediction of calendar days, it should be seen as half of seven, the perfect number of fullness or completion.
 - 3.4.1. If the heathen could trample the church for "seven years", in the symbolism, she would have been destroyed.
 - 3.4.2. If the persecutors are only allowed to prevail "3 1/2 years" they will not succeed in their evil plan to crush out God's cause.
- 3.5. This period of time refers to the entire Christian Age, and during this age there will be short periods of severe persecution when it looks like true religion is going to be abolished with Satan winning, but he never does.
- 3.6. The church is always protected spiritually, but not physically. However, even physical persecution will not destroy the church. It will be bitter, but brief.
- 3.7. This is a comfort to people today as well as to the Christians of the first century.
4. **Rev. 11:3 - And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.**
 - 4.1. Notice first that the 1260 is the same as forty-two months of thirty days each. Therefore, this is the same period of time.
 - 4.2. Why two witnesses?
 - 4.2.1. Possibly to show that there is always someone to continue on with the work of the Lord.
 - 4.2.2. Could represent God's people from both covenants.
 - 4.3. What shall they prophesy?
 - 4.3.1. Condemnation for those who rejected Christ.
 - 4.4. They are commissioned by God!
 - 4.5. Although the church will be trampled under the foot of persecution, God will have faithful witnesses proclaiming his word throughout the ordeal.
 - 4.6. The church as a whole is doing its work of preaching the gospel to the world during these trying times.
 - 4.7. Clothed in sackcloth could mean one of two things:
 - 4.7.1. They preached a gospel of repentance. Sackcloth represented mourning and repentance in the ancient world.
 - 4.7.2. They preached in mourning and sorrow because of the fierce persecution they will encounter.
 - 4.7.3. Sackcloth represented mourning and repentance in the ancient world.
5. **Rev. 11:4 - These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth.**

- 5.1. "These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks." This compares them to the vision seen in **Zech. 4:2-14**. Most commentaries understand Zechariah's two witnesses to be Joshua the High Priest and Zerubbabel the governor who led the restored Hebrews in rebuilding their temple through troublous times.
- 5.1.1. John's two witnesses are like them. Zechariah's two witnesses accomplished their mission "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith Jehovah of hosts" (**Zech. 4:6**).
- 5.1.2. With God's help, John's witnesses would prevail in their ministry.
6. **Rev. 11:5-6**
- 6.1. **Rev. 11:5 - And if any man desireth to hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies; and if any man shall desire to hurt them, in this manner must he be killed.**
- 6.2. **Rev. 11: 6 - These have the power to shut the heaven, that it rain not during the days of their prophecy: and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they shall desire.**
- 6.2.1. Destruction of God's enemies
- 6.2.1.1. Recall that Elijah twice called fire down from heaven to destroy his enemies (**2 Kings 1:8-12**).
- 6.2.1.2. Moses also saw his adversaries destroyed by fire (**Num. 16:23-35**).
- 6.2.1.3. Elijah prayed for a drought to punish the wicked and it rained not for three and a half years (**1 Kings 17--18; James 5:17**).
- 6.2.1.4. Moses turned the water of Egypt to blood when Pharoah rebelled against his message (**Ex. 7:12-21**). Other plagues were sent as well.
- 6.2.1.5. This message is a searing indictment of the world and the sin in it.
- 6.2.1.5.1. In seeking to stop the church, they will be destroyed.
- 6.2.2. John's witnesses were not actually Moses and Elijah, but they were like them: bold, courageous and successful in the face of great opposition.
- 6.2.3. Men will not be able to stop the church from preaching the gospel. Men may stop one preacher or two, or even a dozen, but they will never stop the church from preaching the gospel.
- 6.2.4. The basic meaning is that just as God was with Elijah and Moses to accomplish his purpose against seemingly impossible odds, so he will be with the church as it performs its work in a hostile and wicked world.
- 6.2.5. Men will not be able to stop the church from preaching the gospel. Men may stop one preacher or two, or even a dozen, but they will never stop the church from preaching the gospel.
7. **Rev. 11:7-9**
- 7.1. **Rev. 11:7 - And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that cometh up out of the abyss shall make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them.**
- 7.2. **Rev. 11:8 - And their dead bodies [lie] in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.**
- 7.3. **Rev. 11:9 - And from among the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations do [men] look upon their dead bodies three days and a half, and suffer not their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb.**

- 7.3.1. The war
 - 7.3.1.1. Spiritual battle, not a physical one
 - 7.3.1.2. It is ongoing, not a one-time clash
 - 7.3.2. The beast
 - 7.3.2.1. This is first of 36 times in Rev.
 - 7.3.2.2. At this point, not much is known except the beast is a powerful enemy of God.
 - 7.3.3. Forces that oppose God (supporters of Satan) will always be at the ready to persecute those who are doing the Lord's will.
 - 7.3.4. There will be times when it appears that the forces of evil have won
 - 7.3.5. The great city here refers to Babylon (**Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:5, 18; 18:2, 10, 16, 18, 19, 21**). This is not so much a literal city as it is representative of the world opposing God.
 - 7.3.6. It is called Sodom, because it represents the worst in moral depravity (**Isaiah 1:9; Ezekiel 16:46, 55**).
 - 7.3.7. It is called Egypt, because it represents slavery and oppression of God's people.
 - 7.3.8. It is called the place where the Lord was crucified because it manifests the attitude, which crucified Jesus.
 - 7.3.9. "Peoples and tribes and tongues and nations..."
 - 7.3.9.1. Representative of all men everywhere who do not believe in Christ
 - 7.3.10. Satan is showing his disdain and contempt for the church and demonstrating his seeming triumph over it.
 - 7.3.11. Three and a half days indicate a brief period of time and incompleteness to Satan's supposed success. **He has no victory over a child of God.**
8. **Rev. 11:10 - And they that dwell on the earth rejoice over them, and make merry; and they shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth.**
- 8.1. The "world" will be delighted over the death and humiliation of the dead believer. Why?
 - 8.1.1. Because they "tormented" those who dwell on the earth.
 - 8.1.2. Torment was not their purpose in preaching nor was it something they did in how they preached the Word.
 - 8.1.3. It was the MESSAGE they preached that brought torment.
 - 8.2. "Them that dwell on the earth" are the idolaters and sinners who reject Christ and persecute his people (**Rev. 13:8**). They are contrasted with those who "dwell in the heavens" (**Rev. 13:6-7**) which is God's saints.
 - 8.3. This represents wicked men who are opposed to God and his church.
 - 8.4. So great is the spite and hatred of those who oppose God that they desecrate the prophets' dead bodies by refusing them burial. They rejoice and celebrate over their demise.
 - 8.4.1. The faithful witnesses for God had condemned the sinful lives and false worship of the pagan world.
 - 8.4.2. Evil rejoices even in the appearance of the defeat of truth and righteousness.

9. **Rev. 11:11-12**

9.1. **Rev. 11:11 - And after the three days and a half the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them that beheld them.**

9.1.1. The church goes through persecution and tribulation and it looks as if it is defeated and Satan wins, but then the church is revived and comes out stronger than ever.

9.1.2. Regardless of how many Christians may suffer persecution, Christ's church will survive and God will always be the victor!

9.2. **Rev. 11:12 - And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they went up into heaven in the cloud; and their enemies beheld them.**

9.2.1. The meaning is that when the church was revived after it seemed it was dead, even the enemies of the church recognized that it is the work of God.

10. **Rev. 11:13 - And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell; and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand persons: and the rest were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.**

10.1. In view of the events that happened, the people of the city recognized God's hand in all of this and gave him the glory. There is no indication that they repented and obeyed the gospel, but rather that they glorified God out of fear.

11. **Rev. 11:14-19**

11.1. **Rev. 11:14 - The second Woe is past: behold, the third Woe cometh quickly.**

11.1.1. Six trumpets have sounded and two woes described; the third and last woe, which is the seventh trumpet, is ready to sound. The last message may be summed up this way. The church will suffer as it preaches the gospel of God, but it will succeed in preaching the gospel even though it is opposed. God's word is truth. The gates of Hades will not prevail against the church, but at times it will look as if it will be destroyed, but as it is revived it will be more effective than before. This cycle happened in the first century. It continues to happen. We can be assured that the will God will be accomplished and those who are faithful to him will be vindicated.

11.2. **Rev. 11:15 - And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, The kingdom of the world is become [the kingdom] of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever.**

11.2.1. They voices are part of the heavenly host. They are talking about the complete defeat of Satan and the victory of Christ.

11.2.1.1. There are two ways to view these and probably it should be viewed both ways. First, the seventh trumpet ended the Christian Age. Christ has come. The judgment has occurred. They recount this in their song of praise.

11.2.1.2. Second, it is an introduction to the battle, which is described in the rest of the book, but the outcome is certain though the battle is bitter. Christ and his church will be victorious.

- 11.2.1.3. It should be noted here that the kingdom is pictured forever, with God and Christ reigning. It should be remembered that the kingdom will be delivered up to the Father at the Second Coming of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:24). The Bible teaches the kingdom will continue after Jesus comes, but not on the earth, and not for a thousand years. It will continue forever in heaven.
- 11.2.1.4. The Lord is triumphant and the Lord's people will rejoice in His victory. He shall reign forever and ever.
- 11.2.1.5. Notice with what suddenness, quickness and precision the Lord's return will result in his victory!
- 11.2.1.5.1. **Mark 13:31-32 - Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.**
- 11.2.1.5.2. **2 Peter 3:10-11 - But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in [all] holy living and godliness**
- 11.2.1.5.3. **1 Thes. 4:13-18 - But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.**
- 11.3. **Rev. 11:16 - And the four and twenty elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces and worshipped God,**
- 11.3.1. After the announcement of victory, there is an acclamation of praise.
- 11.3.1.1. The 24 elders show up again
- 11.3.1.1.1. In chap 4 they praised God as Creator
- 11.3.1.1.2. In chap 5 they worshipped Him as Redeemer
- 11.3.1.1.3. Here they proclaim Him Conqueror and King (v. 17,18)
- 11.3.1.1.4. They fall upon their faces and worship God.

- 11.4. **Rev. 11:17 - saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast; because thou hast taken thy great power, and didst reign.**
- 11.4.1. They worship God ascribing to him as the Almighty Lord God who was and is. He has taken great power and does reign. This indicates he has defeated all the enemies and his reign will be uninterrupted.
- 11.5. **Rev. 11:18 - And the nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and [the time] to give their reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth.**
- 11.5.1. The Greek word “kairos” indicates that it is the right time for judgment to occur.
- 11.5.2. The righteous are referred to here by three names. They are called: the prophets, saints and them that fear thy name both great and small.
- 11.5.2.1. Prophets refers to inspired preachers.
- 11.5.2.2. Saints refers to all Christians, including the prophets. Them that fear thy name might further describe the saints.
- 11.5.2.3. Small and great refers to men from all classes of life.
- 11.5.2.3.1. All of God’s people will join in the eternal reward known as Heaven!
- 11.5.2.4. God repaid the wicked with punishment that fitted the crime. He destroyed those that destroyed the earth. This refers to eternal punishment. He gave the reward to the righteous and punishment to the wicked, a basic teaching of the Bible.
- 11.5.2.4.1. God’s judgment is not settling of the score, but a day when He recognizes and rewards His own.
- 11.6. **Rev. 11:19 - And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.**
- 11.6.1. The Ark of the Covenant in the Old Testament signified the presence of God among his people. This means that God will keep his covenant with his people. He will look after them, never forsake them, give them the strength to endure faithfully to the end, and save them eternally.
- 11.6.2. The lightning, voices, thunders, earthquake and great hail indicate he will keep his covenant with the wicked by punishing them eternally.
- 11.6.3. This section of Revelation is closed. We are now ready to enter the next section.