

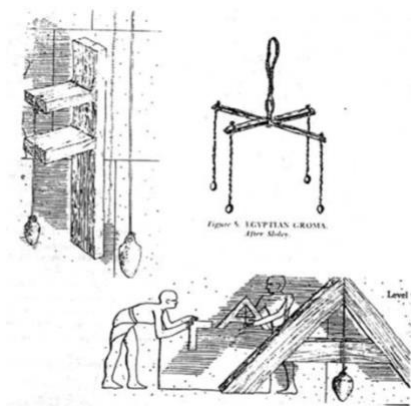


20230625 Revelation 11:1-22 – The Two Witnesses

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. ² But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given

***to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months. ³ And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."* (Revelation 11:1-3, NKJV).**

Verse 1 – The Temple Court is Surveyed



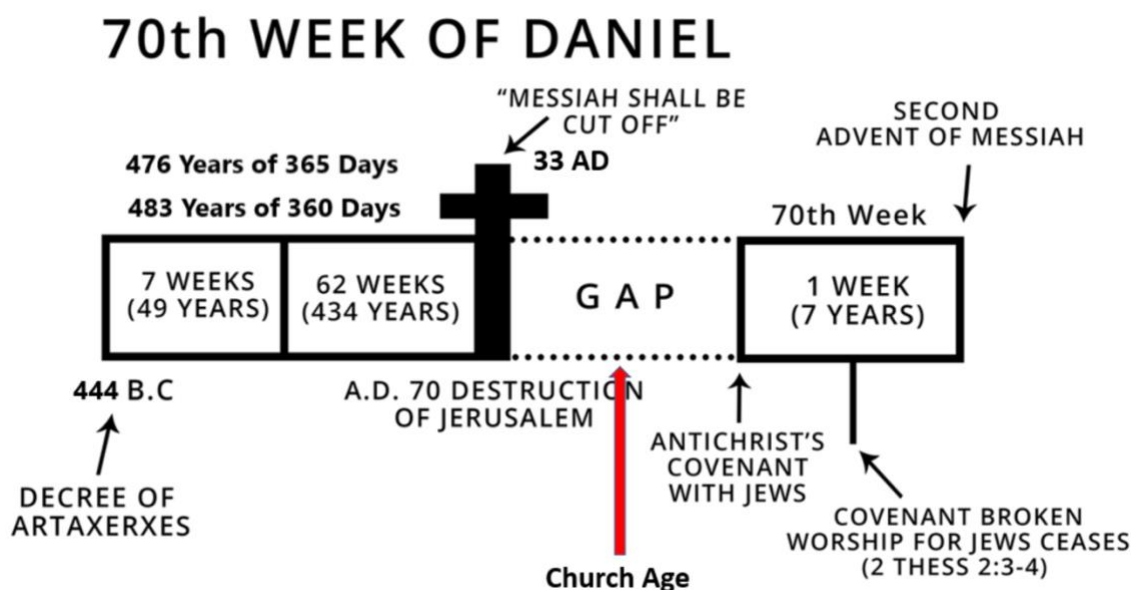
John was given some surveying tools and instructed to measure the Temple of God. He was given a reed like a measuring rod. In ancient times, a rod was six cubits long. A cubit is about 18", so a "rod" would be about nine feet long. They were cut out of cane, had markings on them, and were used like we use measuring tapes today. John was given this reed and was told by the angel to "measure the temple of God." This speaks to a rebuilt Temple. The Jews have not had a Temple for over 2,000 years, but this is further evidence that a Third

Temple will be built. That Temple will be built prior to or at the onset of the Tribulation.

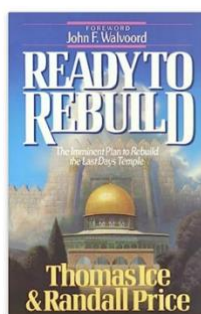
In Daniel 9:24-27, there is a prophecy saying that from the time the commandment would go forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (after the Babylonian Captivity), there would be 69 weeks (of years) which is 483 years (69X7) before the coming of the Messiah. As we've studied on prior Palm Sundays, that is exactly the amount of time that elapsed before Jesus made His way down the streets of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. In the Book of Daniel, the angel told Daniel there would be 70 weeks before the the beginning of these end-times events.

And exactly as Daniel prophesied, the Messiah was "cut off" after that 69th week. Jesus was crucified and then the "church age" began. This is referred to in scripture as "the time of the Gentiles." This is a time-gap between the 69th week and the 70th week. The

70th week is the seven years of the Tribulation. In the Olivet Discourse found in Matthew chapter 24, Jesus describes an event in which the “Abomination of Desolation” will desecrate the Temple. Jesus told His disciples, “When you see the Abomination of Desolation” flee to the hills. He was speaking of a far-off future event. That event will take place at the mid-point of the 7 year tribulation.



During that long gap of time between the ascension of Jesus and the Tribulation, God has opened salvation to the Gentiles. The “time of the Gentiles” will come to an end, as seen in Daniel chapter 9, when he talks about the “prince of the people that is to come.” This is the Anti-Christ who will come and break his covenant with Israel. He will proclaim that he is God and will demand to be worshipped.



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Israel. Scripture tells us that **a wall will be built around it “separating the holy from the ‘common’ or profane” (Ezekiel 42:20).** This might be a wall built between the Dome of the Rock and the rebuilt Jewish Temple. When Sandy and I went to Israel for the first time around 1998, we became aware that many scholars believe the original Temple was in another position on the Temple Mount. It was several hundred feet north of the

Dome of the Rock. Hence, it would be possible to rebuild the Temple in that place, AND keep the Dome of the Rock where it is.



Many scholars believe that the original position of the Holy of Holies is where a small cupola sits today. It is called the "dome of the spirits" (dome of the tablets). It is directly in line with the Eastern Gate. Hence, the Eastern gate would have lined up directly with the door to the Temple which would line up with where this cupola sits.

This location would leave no room for the "outer court" which was the court of the Gentiles. They couldn't go beyond that. The dome of the Rock would be in what would have been the outer court. In verse 2 the angel says, "Leave it out." The wall was to separate the holy from the profane. It appears that John is giving a clue as to where the Temple could be rebuilt and is describing its nearness to the "profane." He adds that the Gentiles will tread the city for 42 months, being exactly 3 ½ years.



In verse 3 John says that two witnesses will be raised up and will prophesy for 1,260 days (3 ½ years as based on the Jewish counting of months as 30-day time periods). These two witnesses will prophesy in sackcloth during that time. We're talking about the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation. These are the two olive trees and the two candle sticks. Olive trees produce

the oil that symbolizes the Holy Spirit. These two witnesses will be filled with the Holy Spirit and will shine worldwide as lamps of truth.

So, who are the witnesses? We don't know for sure. In Malachi, before the 400 years of silence, the Lord said, "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the Day of the Lord....." There was a promise that Elijah would return before the great day of the Lord. The Jews have waited for Elijah to return for over two thousand years. When Jews observe Passover, they keep a place set at the table for Elijah in case this is the year that he will appear, preparing the way for the Messiah. I am pretty certain that Elijah will be one of the witnesses. Remember when John the Baptist came, the angel told Zacharias that he would go in the spirit of the Prophet Elijah. When John the Baptist was asked who he was, they asked if he was Elijah, etc. He said he was preparing for the coming of the Messiah.

⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. 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. 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 11:4-6, NKJV).

These two witnesses filled with the Holy Spirit will have supernatural powers. When anyone might approach them to kill them, fire will come out of their mouths and consume their enemies. There is all sort of conjecture over who the other witness might be. Some think it might be John the Baptist himself - who was a personage much like Elijah. Others believe it could be Enoch because he did not die. Jude quotes from the prophecy of Enoch concerning the Lord's coming. Like Elijah, he didn't die a natural death. Others have thought that it might be Moses because he appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. So, he could be another possibility. I sort of feel like it is going to be Moses. When Jesus was asked by the lawyer which was the greatest commandment, he quoted the Torah passage with a mandate to love God with all our hearts, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. He said that on these hang ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS. When we think of the Law, we think of Moses as the lawgiver. When we think of the prophets, we think of Elijah as the super prophet. These two would be the coming of the Law and the Prophets.

Others believe that it could be Zechariah, and others believe it could be John the beloved himself because in the last verse of Chapter 10, Jesus says that "You will prophesy again. The bottom line is that we do not know.

Their Ministry

We're told that the two witnesses sort of untouchable. I think of them sort of like Jedi Knights with supernatural ways about them. We think of Elijah calling down fire to consume the enemies of God during his battle with the Prophets of Baal. When I was a little boy, my mother would read me stories of things that Elijah did, and in my mind he was sort of like a super-hero. Later in life, I've wondered if some of what she told me were just stories that she had made up. There is a story in which Elijah recovers an axe head that was floating on the river. ⁴ So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. ⁵ But as one was cutting down a tree, the iron ax head fell into the water; and he cried out and said, "Alas, master! For it was borrowed." ⁶ So the man of God said, "Where did it fall?" And he showed him the place. So he cut off a stick, and threw it in there; and he made the iron float. ⁷ Therefore he said, "Pick it up for yourself." So he reached out his hand and took it." (2 Kings 6:4-7, NKJV). My mother wove many tales around that one short mentioned in the Bible so I suppose I want Elijah to be one of the two witnesses and I think that he will be.

Power to Shut up the Heavens

They also will have the power to shut up the rain. Elijah did the same thing. Moses had power over the waters to change them to blood. That is one of the plagues of Egypt. They will have other powers like Moses to bring plagues upon the land.

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. 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. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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 11:7-10, NKJV).

The prophecy tells us that after these prophets are done with their ministry, Satan will come up out of the abyss and he will overcome them and kill them. Before their ministry was completed, they were untouchable, but after they "finish their testimony," God will take them..

Then they'll lay there in the street in Jerusalem (Sodom and Egypt). Jerusalem is referred to either directly or indirectly as either Sodom or Egypt in the following scriptures: Deuteronomy 29:23; Isaiah 1:9-10; 3:8-9; Jeremiah 23:14; Ezekiel 16:1-2, 44-58; Amos

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4:11; Lamentations 4:6. Everyone on the earth will see their dead bodies for 3 ½ days. We can go online right now and watch a live Webcam coming out of the streets of Jerusalem. You can go there this moment and see what is going on at the Western Wall. This was impossible

until the current internet age. This shows us how things that before were inexplicable have now become reality. <https://www.geocam.ru/en/online/western-wall/>

Jewish custom requires burial the same day of death, but the bodies of these two witnesses will be left out on the streets. All the world will rejoice in the fact that these witnesses are dead. They stopped the rain. They brought plagues. Everyone is going to be so relieved that they are finally dead. The passage says that their deaths will be celebrated by people sending gifts to one another because they'll be so happy.

BUT... verses 11-14 explain something further.

The Witnesses Resurrected

¹¹ 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. ¹² 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. ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly. (Revelation 11:11-14, NKJV).



At this point, they'll suddenly just stand up as God breathes life back into them. This will cause a huge fear to come over all of the peoples of the earth as they watch on. And then, while everyone is watching, they will be taken up into heaven. Can you imagine such a thing happening? How could anyone not believe there is a God in heaven after seeing

this thing come to pass? Just after they've been taken up, an earthquake will hit Jerusalem and will destroy 1/10th of the city. Seven thousand people will die from the earthquake. The survivors will understand that these are supernatural events and they'll credit God with what has happened. Then the angel says, the second woe is past. The third woe is now coming" (this is the end of the sixth trumpet).

Some confuse this next trumpet with the trumpet of God found in 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4, but this is not the rapture. This trumpet is signaling the second coming of Jesus.

Seventh Trumpet: The Kingdom Proclaimed (This is the third "woe" to the inhabitants of the earth who have rebelled.)

¹⁵ Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Revelation 11:15, NKJV).

These are the lyrics that the choir sings in Handel's Messiah. This is the promise of the coming of Christ. All of the kingdoms of the earth will melt into the Kingdom of our God. And He shall reign forever and ever. Praise God! What a day that will be.

¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying:

***"We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty,
The One who is and who was and who is to come,***

Because You have taken Your great power and reigned.

***¹⁸ The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come,
And the time of the dead, that they should be judged,
And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints,
And those who fear Your name, small and great,
And should destroy those who destroy the earth.” (Revelation 11:16-18, NKJV).***

The twenty-four elders fell on their faces proclaiming that the great redemption of the earth has finally come to pass. This is the time when the prophets and the saints will be rewarded, and the “nations” will be subjected to the wrath of God.

The Son of Man Will Judge the Nations

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the ¹⁴holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. ³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: (Matthew 25:31-34, NKJV).

All of us have the possibility of one of two destinies. We are either going to have an eternal life in the presence of the Lord, or we will suffer eternal separation from Him.

¹⁹ Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail. (Revelation 11:19, NKJV).

John looked into heaven and saw the Temple of God and the Ark of the Covenant. This isn't the Ark that Moses made and put in the tabernacle (that was the ark that was made after the pattern of the one in heaven). Some believe the ark Moses made is hidden in Israel, and others say it is in Ethiopia (put there by Jeremiah before Nebuchadnezzar came back to destroy the Temple). The true Ark of the Covenant is in heaven and John saw it. John looked out and saw lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

We'll start with chapter 12 next week, and will examine things that will take place in the last half of what we call the Great Tribulation.

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by
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