

REVELATION 10 AND 11

(PART 3)

JUDGMENT AND WITNESSES

(REVELATION 11:1-3)

Introduction

God's people are now preparing to be His final witnesses (Revelation 10:8-11). There has been stunning clarity from Daniel's end-time prophecies (the open little book). They are to be a key element in that last evangelistic thrust.^{1,2} Jesus gave an amazing prophetic notice that the tarrying time was about to end (10:6 – NIV). Exciting and comforting is the message that Christ and His angels have come down to assist those saints (figurative of a special endowment of the Holy Spirit) (Revelation 10:1 – see Part 1)! The Second Coming of Christ is now close.

Another phase in end-time events moves forward with Revelation 11:1. We are clearly invited to be cognizant of the solemn times that have been entered.

This will be the second time John has been asked to “act out” a prophetic missive (as were Ezekiel and Jeremiah).

1. “Prophecy again” is symbolic of commissioning the church to finish its task (Revelation 10:11).
2. Here, he identifies (using a measuring rod) those who are to be heaven's citizens, representing God's final judicial decisions in that selection.

J. M. Court notes that the opening of Revelation 7's interlude represents the same theme as the beginning of this Revelation interlude.³ That is most interesting.

1. The sealing of the symbolic 144,000 of God's people is a byproduct of:
2. The judgment or measuring here noted – that process of choosing.

It is even more remarkable to note the identical judicial work already underway by God the Father (Revelation 4:2-3).

- This “selection process” is “acted out” by a divine command to John to “measure!”⁴
- For the church to complete its task (11:3-7), those special witnessing saints must be identified and sealed. They are then holy representatives of heaven.

¹ White, Ellen G.; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, p. 320.

² White, Ellen G.; *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 105.

³ Court, J. M.; as quoted by Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation* (Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 408.

⁴ Beale, G. K.; *The New International Greek Testament Commentary; The Book of Revelation* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1999), p. 557.

The “Anticipation Setting”⁵

John often uses a writing style called “prolepsis.” This is a literary structure that anticipates a future event by “introducing a new name or symbol, which is explained later,” but portrayed as if occurring in the present.

1. Revelation 1 – John anticipates earth’s climactic events, which thread throughout the whole book: “he is coming with clouds” (1:7; cf. verses 1 and 3). This is developed more in 6:12-17, 14:14-20, 19:11-21.
2. The divine promises of Revelation 2–3 are all brief proleptic descriptions of what is unfolded in Revelation 21–22 as everything becomes new!
3. “Babylon” is introduced in Revelation 14:8 – but not fully explained until chapters 16–18 as defiant apostate “Christians” just before the Second Coming.

The whole book is coherent, indivisible, and a progressive revelation in which all visions are connected:

- “Whenever we dissect a chapter from the total unit and try to apply it to world or church history, we are bound to misinterpret its meaning.”⁶
- “A proper exegesis honors the structural connection of all the visions and messages.

“Rev. 11 must be interpreted by its immediate context (that is from the surrounding chapters that deal with the end-time) and by its wider context in the Old Testament, before any application to history can be undertaken.

“Revelation 11 offers a preview of the last crisis of faith for the true believers on earth....

“It is evident that Rev. 11:1-13 is not an isolated prophecy about the Jewish people or about secular events in world history, but is inextricably woven into the fabric of John’s Apocalypse. It establishes a decided connection with Revelation 12–13 by introducing proleptically the prophetic time-units of ‘42 months’ and ‘1260 days’ in 11:2, 3 (see 12:6, 14; 13:5).”⁷

“And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out” (Revelation 11:1-2a).

To measure (*metreson*) means something will be evaluated against a standard. It suggests that a precise comparison is to be made.

- Some calculated decision must purposefully follow.
- Contextually, the temple and its environs are being judged by a “rule,” a “standard.”⁸
- It represents a “judicial work of God in the Last Judgment” (cf. Matthew 7:2, Mark 4:24).⁹

⁵ LaRondelle, Hans; *Writings of Revelation*, pp. 212-214.

⁶ LaRondelle, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 213-214.

⁸ Thayer Lexicón.

⁹ Deissner, Kurt; “metron” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 4:633-634 as quoted by Stefanovic, Ranko; *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, p. 335.

- The evaluation determines who should live and who should die (cf. II Samuel 8:2). “It is in this sense that the measuring process in Revelation 11 should be understood.”¹⁰

The reed John is to use is given to him by God and Christ.¹¹ Thus, it is a “divine standard!”

- Ezekiel observed a “man” appearing like brass, using a “line of flax” and a “measuring reed” – sizing the temple, God’s end-time church (Ezekiel 40:3, 5).
- Zechariah had noted in eschatologic imagery a “man with a measuring line” – sizing Jerusalem (God’s people contemporary and end-time) (Zechariah 2:1-5; cf. Malachi 3:2-3).

John is commanded to do the measuring. He becomes part of the visionary scene.

- The “temple” represents the “Christian community who worships God.”¹²
- “It is the church, the people of God.”¹³ (cf. I Corinthians 3:16-17, II Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 2:19-22).

Reflecting on this scene, expositor White notes:

“Every case is coming in review before God; He is measuring the temple and the worshipers therein.”¹⁴

“Look and see how stands your measurement of character as compared with God’s standard of righteousness, his holy law. The worshipers are to pass under the measuring line of God. Who will bear the test? Christ says, ‘I know thy works.’ Nothing is hid from him of whom John says, ‘His head and his hair were white like wool, white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire.’ How many are purifying their souls by obeying the truth? How many are now in this time wholly on the Lord’s side? How many are seeking to be a blessing to those around them?”¹⁵

“Here is the work going on, measuring the temple and its worshipers to see who will stand in the last day.”¹⁶

The word “worshipers” refers to those **actively engaged** in honoring God within the church (*naos* – G – the innermost part of the temple, the Holy and Most Holy). This suggests that these individuals claim to be God’s people).

- This is the judgment of the living! (See endtimeissues.com, Judgment of the Living – [Part I](#) and [Part II](#).)

¹⁰ Stefanovic, Ranko; *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, p. 336.

¹¹ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

¹² Boring, M. Eugene; *Interpretation – A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky), 1989, p. 143.

¹³ Mounce, Robert H.; *The Book of Revelation* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1977), p. 213.

¹⁴ White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies*, vol. 7, 219.

¹⁵ White, Ellen G.; *The Youth Instructor*, August 25, 1886.

¹⁶ White, Ellen G.; MS 4, 1888, as quoted in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 972.

- The altar is where the priest functions in that innermost area. This symbolizes the work of the leaders within the church.

Most intriguing: towards the end of the apocalyptic book John sees an angel “measuring with a golden reed” the New Jerusalem! Proleptically, perfection and holiness are portrayed. The “bride” has reached the divine standard!

- That “city” symbolizes God’s pure church that the angel said was “the bride, the Lamb’s wife!” (21:9).
- There is a moral statement made regarding that “bride:”
“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Revelation 21:27).
- In chapter 11 the “judgment,” the judicial measuring, must be viewed as a “culling out” or “separation” process.

The standard – the “golden reed” – assures and warns that nothing at variance with God’s holiness will be in His kingdom!

- Jesus and His angels came down to provide special blessings and insight to His eschatological people (10:1).
- Now – **just before** earth’s last three and a half years (vss 2-3) this judging commences.

Why is this timing so important?

- The final gospel call is to soon begin by His holy witnesses, filled with the Spirit, depicted as coming from the holy oil (via the olive trees).
- Heaven must be represented by those meeting its highest standard!

The measuring and subsequent sealing are together. Those who witness are sealed,¹⁷ represented by the first group in Revelation 7 – the 144,000.

- God is looking for – “making up” – a people who will remain loyal to Him under all circumstances.
- “Since the non-measurement of 11:2 symbolizes territory that is profane (*ekbale exothen* – “cast out”), the measuring must be a mark of God’s favor.”¹⁸
- God is choosing those with whom His presence can abide forever (cf. Ezekiel 43:1-12, 37:26-28)!

“The Qumran community also spiritualized Ezekiel’s temple. Its members declared the Jerusalem temple apostate[258] and regarded themselves as the true, spiritual temple (1QS 5.5-6; 8.4-10; 9.3-6; 11.7ff.; CD 3.19-4.6; 4QFlor 1.2-9).[259] God’s presence in the Qumran temple would insure its invincibility against the deceptive designs of Belial 94QFlor 1.7-9;[260] CD 3.19). This spiritual invincibility was seen as a fulfillment of the Ezekiel 44 temple prophecy

¹⁷ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 560.

¹⁸ Thomas, Robert L.; *Revelation 8–22 – An Exegetical Commentary* (Moody Press, Chicago), 1995, p. 80.

(cf. CD 3.19 – 4.5: 4QFlor 1.15-17). Metaphors of measurement are even used to express the inviolable security of this temple (cf. ‘cord of righteousness’ and ‘plumbline of truth’ in 1QH 11.26; cf. 11.19-27).[261] (Measuring assures a holy group – a remnant – will be identified.)

“As with the two witnesses [symbolic of that group] in Rev. 11:3-7, so at Qumran, worship in the spiritual temple consisted not of literal offerings, but of proclaiming God’s word and obedience out of a sincere heart (1QS 9.3-5; 4AFlor 1.6).”

[258] See references in J. M. Ford, *Revelation*, 174-75.

[259] So Gartner, *Temple and Community*, 16-44, and McKelvey. *New Temple*, 45-53.

[260] Dupont-Sommer. *Qumran*, 312, regards 4QFlor as emphasizing assurance against persecution.

[261] Cf. McKelvey, *New Temple*, 52.”¹⁹

“But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not” (vs 2a)

John was instructed to measure three things – all related to God’s people and their worship experience. To indelibly show that these were set apart from all other people – a negative is given.

- Measure – temple, altar and worshipers
- Don’t measure – outer Gentile court

The verb to “leave out” or “do not measure it” is *ekbale*. It is emphatic and depicts an act of rejection (cf. Luke 4:29, 13:28, 20:15; John 6:37, 9:34-35; Acts 7:58).²⁰

- This reveals God’s distinction between those who are His – and
- Those rejecting His grace – “the Gentiles”

The wall or barrier that divided these areas in Herod’s Temple had inscriptions threatening death to any Gentile who would pass beyond.²¹

- Thus – the measuring/judging relates to those who claim to be Christ’s.
- They have the possibility of eternal life.

“In the typical service only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the Day of Atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period. ‘Judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel?’ 1 Peter 4:17.”²²

- As noted previously, this judicial work identifies those who will be “sealed” – eternally made secure.
- The Gentile world, by this time, is standing distinct.

¹⁹ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 563.

²⁰ Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

²¹ Josephos, Bell. 5.5.23.

²² White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, p. 480.

- Their names must have been taken out of the Lamb's book of life. This is a distinct rejected group. Their judicial review occurs during the millennial period of Revelation 20.

"If any of these depart from Him, and by stubborn persistence in sin become finally hardened against the influences of His Holy Spirit, their names will in the judgment be blotted from the book of life, and they themselves will be devoted to destruction.... 'Whosoever hath sinned against Me,' He said, 'him will I blot out of My book.'"²³

- Those Gentiles cannot pass over that court barrier to become part of the "temple people" (cf. Ephesians 2:11-18).
- An in-depth study of the seven-sealed book of destiny (Revelation 4 – 6, 8:1) shows that even before the appointed time begins, God has decided who He will reject!

Those in the inner court/temple can, however, pass to the outer court. When that is completed, the "times of the Gentiles" will be fulfilled! (Luke 2:24)!

- Gentiles or "nations" represent those hostile to God and His people (Revelation 11:18).²⁴
- They do not belong to the community of God.
- They will be found outside the New Jerusalem (21:27).
- *"For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie"* (Revelation 22:15).

In comparison is the group who will become eternally clothed in the righteousness of Christ!

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.' By this we see the importance of having our names written in the book of life. All whose names are registered there will be delivered from Satan's power, and Christ will command that their filthy garments be removed, and that they be clothed with his righteousness. 'And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.'"²⁵

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" (Revelation 3:5).

"and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months" (Revelation 11:2b)

The Holy City, noted initially in 3:12 and then in 21:2 and 10, represents a future heavenly city that even Abraham looked forward to (Hebrews 11:10).

- Yet, it is used as a deeply spiritual symbol.

²³ White, Ellen G.; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 326-327.

²⁴ Stefanovic, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

²⁵ White, Ellen G.; *Historical Sketches of Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 156.

- It is a metaphor for God's true people, which are called the Lamb's wife – His bride (Revelation 21:9) – those who are His chosen community.

Since the Holy City is here being “trampled” or persecuted (noted shortly), the identity of the heavenly Jerusalem must be spiritualized:

- It is the people of the outer court that are persecuting God's people.
- This parallels the hatred of the “little horn” stomping on the “stars” and “host of heaven,” representing God's people and leaders (Daniel 8:10).
- Luke 21:24 also alludes to God's people (Jerusalem) being trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until their time of probation is up.

This all represents the “true community of faith undergoing persecution.”²⁶ This is the tribulation of the end time.

- “Revelation 11:18 speaks of the angry nations [the Gentiles] that ‘destroy the earth.’”²⁷
- The details of this persecuting power are discussed further in Revelation 13:1-10.
- *“On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves”* (Zechariah 12:3 – NIV). A promise of God's final church is seen as a pure woman (Revelation 12:1), untouched by anything earthly.

“John could well be seeing this as a further indication of the contents of the ‘little scroll’ of 10:5-10.”²⁸ – where persecution is described. This is exactly what was uncovered from Daniel in our study of Revelation 10!

- “Isolating the Apocalypse from the book of Daniel is like cutting off the root (Daniel) from its fruit (Revelation). Daniel alone pins down each apocalyptic symbol to concrete events of history. Consequently, to ignore the chronological pattern of Daniel's prophecy in the interpretation of the Apocalypse can be considered a fundamental mistake.
- “Daniel portrays how the temple of God and its true worshipers will be trampled underfoot, not by the Roman Empire but *by a rebellious and idolatrous worship* that causes desolation (see Dan. 7:21, 25; 8:11-13, NKJV, NASB; 11:31-35; 12:11).”²⁹

A Special Time Period is Introduced in This Verse!

“and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months” (Revelation 11:2b)

Elements of time have been noted in several places up to this point – e.g.:

- “shortly come to pass” (1:1)
- “time is at hand” (1:3)

²⁶ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 569.

²⁷ Stefanovic, *op. cit.*, p. 342.

²⁸ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 413.

²⁹ LaRondelle, *op. cit.*, pp. 220, 221.

- “ten days” (2:10)
- “I come quickly” (3:11)
- “half an hour” (8:1)
- “five months” (9:5, 10)
- “time no longer [delayed]” (10:6)

Many of these are associated eschatological “clocks” or statements of “urgency.” Our contextual focus is “*time no longer [delayed]*” (10:6). (The word “delayed” is implied.) A clock of 42 month that has been on hold is about to begin:

1. Within the setting of Christ’s “coming” with His angels to prepare and strengthen His people (Revelation 10:1).
2. Jesus has an open (unsealed portion) of the book of Daniel – a small book. It is filled with timing prophecies (10:2).
3. Then Jesus gives another prophecy with that book in one hand and raising the other to heaven swearing (taking a divine oath!) that time would soon no longer be delayed (10:6).
4. What time within Daniel’s prophecies?
5. There are three specific timing prophecies in Daniel 12 that had been sealed. Which one parallels this?
 - Clearly the “appointed time” (Daniel 8:19, 11:35; cf. Daniel 12:7)
 - “time times and half” – the word used is “*moed*” – a special set-aside time (Daniel 12:7)
 - It is in a Day of Atonement setting – thus, it is annual, with a total of three and a half years.

“Forty-two months” is later used as the period that the demonic antichrist beast has power.

- “*And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue **forty and two months**. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations*” (Revelation 13:5-7).
- The “beast” followers are the “outer court Gentiles” from “all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” (13:7), explained as those who “dwell upon the earth” and who worship the beast (13:8).

This time period (42 months) is one of the three ways a three-and-a-half-year expression is made. The other two are 1260 days (Revelation 11:3 and 12:6) and time, times and half a time (Revelation 12:14).³⁰

An allusion comes from the tribulation and judgment of Israel through a drought in Elijah’s day of three and a half years (I Kings 17:1, 18:1; cf. Luke 4:25, James 5:17). It also parallels the terminal three and a half years of Daniel 9’s 490-year probationary period.

³⁰ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 414.

Intriguing is the insight that it is a period between the “abomination that causes desolation” and the “eschaton.”³¹

- This 42 months is a limited time that God permits the antichrist to operate.
- It is a time of persecution for God’s people.
- God strictly controls this period.
- “*And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened*” (Matthew 24:22).

The 42 months are also a time of protection for His church (Revelation 12:6, 14). Though individuals may even face martyrdom, they will be sealed and spiritually protected. The church will triumph.

“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth” (Revelation 11:3).

The way this verse abruptly begins, “and I will give,” suggests that the speaker is God or Christ, who began speaking in verse 1, “saying ‘Rise, and measure.’”³²

There is a paired message:

- “I will give power”
- “They shall prophesy”
- God gives power – man responds by using that power.

This now reveals that the “community of faith” that was **chosen** shares in the recommissioning of John in 10:11³³ to “prophesy again.”

A message is given John to understand – the little book

↓
He eats it – imbibes its content

↓
Based on that message, he is to “prophesy”

These two witnesses, it must be concluded, are using the same information now to be given to the world!

This means that the gospel for the last days will be “built on that little scroll.”³⁴

They are “prophetic witnesses” for the “time of the end.” The Old Testament had prophecies that the eschatological community of God’s people would receive the Spirit’s gift of prophecy (Joel 2:28-32).³⁵

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Aune, David E.; *52B World Biblical Commentary; Revelation 6–16* (World Books; Publisher, Dallas, Texas), 1997, p. 610.

³³ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 572.

³⁴ Osborn, *op. cit.*, p. 420.

³⁵ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 574.

Note the contrast in the two uses of “give” in 11:2-3: The church is “given” to the Gentiles (wicked world) to be “trampled” or persecuted and “God gives” to the witnessing church authority to emerge victorious in its prophetic work, though suffering.³⁶

The words “they will prophesy” (*propheteusousin*) “of necessity includes the foretelling of the future.” (cf. 10:11, I Peter 1:10, Jude 14).³⁷ Contextually, the details of what occurs within that three and a half years is based upon the unsealed portion of Daniel. They will have entered that time.

The Two Witnesses

The word “and” connects verses 2 and 3. The period of 1260 days the witnesses “prophesy” is the same time the Gentiles persecute the church (see discussion of 42 months in the previous verse).

- 1260 days is the same period that the woman (church) flees to the wilderness from Satan’s wrath (Revelation 12:6).
- Thus, the imagery of the two witnesses and the woman are interchangeable.³⁸

The apocalypse began with a vision of Christ ministering among the seven lampstands, representing churches. He told John that their designation could be removed if they were unrepentant (Revelation 2:5).

- Here in Revelation 11 we note in the next verse that there are only two lampstands left.
- Five have fallen (cf. Revelation 1).
- The only two who had no divine judicial complaint were Smyrna and Philadelphia.

There are many views of these two witnesses:

1. Contextually, they are the two remaining churches.
2. Expositor White notes that they are the Old and New Testaments.³⁹
3. Many identify them as the spirit and mission of Moses and Elijah, replicated here for the whole church.⁴⁰

Why “two witnesses?”

- In the Old Testament law, two witnesses were required to create a just defense (Numbers 35:30; Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15).⁴¹
- Together (and they function as one) they form a valid legal witness to the little open book.

³⁶ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

³⁷ Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

³⁸ LaRondelle, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

³⁹ White, Ellen G.; *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 188.

⁴⁰ Brighton, Louis A; *Revelation, Concordance Commentary* (Concordance Publishing House, St. Louis), 1999, p. 294.

⁴¹ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 575.

- Stunning – the time periods of that book (Daniel 12) were given by Christ in a divine oath (Daniel 12:7) when two witnesses were present (Daniel 12:5)! They are linked together.⁴²

Sackcloth

The witnesses are “clothed” in “sackcloth.”

- This symbolizes mourning (cf. Ezra 9:3-4).
- Why are they sad? Is it from the bitterness following eating the unsealed portion of Daniel?

The judicial setting of the two witnesses, the judgment scene noted in 11:1, and with this imagery coming at the time of their witnessing or “prophesying again” reveal their sighing and crying over the sins of the world (Ezekiel 9:4)⁴³ (cf. II Kings 1:8, Mark 1:6, Joel 1:8, Amos 8:10).

- Interestingly, when the Ninevites and their king repented from Jonah’s warning –
- They all put on sackcloth to indicate their repentance and pledge to give up their evil ways (cf. Isaiah 3:24, 22:12; Jeremiah 4:8, 6:26).⁴⁴

Thus, sackcloth (cf. Jeremiah 4:8, Matthew 11:21):

- For the prophet, preacher, evangelist represents sadness over the sins of the people – “the garb of mourning.”⁴⁵
- For the people, it represents repentance and promise to give up sin – “the garb of penitence.”⁴⁶

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⁴² Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 420.

⁴³ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 576.

⁴⁴ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 420.

⁴⁵ Mounce, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*