

# Temple & Witnesses

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November 19, 2023

## Chapter 10 Review:

- The mission: Feed on the gospel and Word. Digest it. Let it transform you.

And endure in proclaiming it to all nations.

- The encouragement: Christ still rules over the earth though it often seem like the forces of evil do.

The Church's true identity (1-2)

The Church's witness (3-6)

The Church's terrible lot (7-10)

The Church's triumph (11-14)

The Church's true identity is the temple, the dwelling place of God (vs. 1-2)

Somewhere or someone being marked out for judgment.

OR,

Somewhere or someone being marked out for protection and preservation.

Measuring = God's protection and preservation (See also Ezekiel 4-48, Zechariah 1-2)

Big picture meaning of the measuring rod and temple of God =

God's presence protects his people spiritually through suffering (G.K. Beale)

- The measuring = God will safeguard His church forever

- Temple & Holy City & People = God's people, ie the true church who truly worship God (altar) (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:15-16; 1 Pet 2:4-8; Rev. 3:12)

The Church's true identity is the temple and dwelling place of God

The unmeasured outer court = the false church that is not eternally secure

Holy city trampled for 42 months =

The church on earth persecuted and suffering for a time

42 months, or 1260 days or 3.5 years =

Figurative for the church age since the resurrection of Jesus (12:1-6)

The Church's true identity is the temple and dwelling place of God protected and preserved eternally by God though she suffer on this earth!

Revelation 11:3-6

Two witnesses, two olive trees, and two lampstands = The church's witness

- Two witnesses and their signs Like Moses & Elijah

Like 70 sent out in twos

Like OT two to establish a charge

- Two olive trees Zerubbabel & Joshua the High Priest (Zech 4)
- Two lampstands Like Smyrna and Philadelphia (See also Zechariah)
- Fire from mouth Like Jeremiah (Jeremiah 5:14)

The witness of church is authoritative, serious, and powerful.

Revelation 11:7-10

The Church's terrible lot (7-10)

- Persecution, suffering, death
- Sodom and Egypt = Cities of man opposed to Christ

Revelation 11:11-14

The Church's triumph (11-14)

- The suffering of the church seems long but is short.
- The celebration of the wicked even shorter.
- The victory of the church is eternal.

Applications:

1. Nominal Christians be warned.
2. Christ followers: Remember that you are sealed eternally.
3. Take hold of the courage the Spirit provides to be His witnesses on this earth.
4. Don't miss how Christ modeled the church's call in His own life.

**What is this Temple referenced in Revelation 11? Three major views:**

**1. Futurist view - a literal Jewish temple rebuilt in the future on Mount Zion.**

The futurist view argues for a literal Jewish temple rebuilt on Mount Zion in a future and literal physical nation. This view comes from dispensational theology and many hold to it because of the influence of the Scofield study Bible. This view would look at what happened in 1948 with a Jewish State being reinstated and the capture of Jerusalem in 1967 and what is happening today in Israel as possible advancements and signs towards an eventual Jewish temple being rebuilt in the end times on Mount Zion (which is currently hosting two Muslim Mosques).

Now, there are several fundamental problems with the dispensational view. The main one is the view that God has two distinct plans for the church and for physical Israel as if they are two distinct peoples. That

is contrary to much of what the NT teaches. Likewise, when Jesus foretold the destruction of the Temple, he never mentioned a rebuild. Jesus Christ is the reality of the Temple. He is "God with us." He ended sacrifices with His sacrifice for sins. There is no longer any valid purpose for the Temple. This view would be a return to the shadows of the OT. Those OT pointers are no longer necessary because Christ, the reality to whom they pointed has come. Jesus said in John 4:23, that true worship would not be any longer confined to a particular place, but would be in Spirit and in truth. John also has to measure the worshipers in this temple as well, an unusual request if he is seeing a physical structure.

## **2. Preterists view John as speaking about the Herodian temple that Jesus prophesied would be destroyed and was destroyed in 70 AD.**

The main problem here has to do with the controversy over when Revelation was written. I think a case is well made in mid-to-late 60s writing, but many others believe it was written in the 90s. There is also criticism about the inconsistency of interpretation. Why is this a literal interpretation instead of symbolic?

## **3. The Symbolic view does not take the word temple as literal but as symbolic for all the church.**

I lean towards the symbolic when I seek to let Scripture interpret the Scripture. The word "temple" frequently appears in the New Testament, and in the book of Revelation itself, as a metaphor for God's people. One example is 1 Cor. 3:9, 16-17 which refers to the church in Corinth as "God's field, building, and temple." Here is an important Greek lesson. As Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, the 'you' in the Greek is plural. We need the southern translation here that would say, "y'all" are God's building and temple. While 1 Cor 6:18 is singular usage referring to individual believers, 1 Cor 3 and other texts refer to the church as a whole. Either a particular church like Corinth or the entire church like in Ephesians 2:19-22 which says, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him, you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit." 1 Peter

2:5 also speaks of the church in this way.

These texts refer to the entire “universal” true church as the holy temple. Outside of Revelation in the NT, the term temple of God is used ten times. Nine of the ten have spiritual meaning not physical. Matthew 26 refers to the physical temple but in the context of a transition to the spiritual temple. 14 or 15 usages in Revelation are also spiritual. The one exception is 21:22, where John when seeing the new heavens and the new earth wrote:

“And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.”

The focus is on the whole covenant community forming a spiritual temple in which God’s presence dwells.

The NT Scriptures refer to the physical temple as a shadow. To go back to some form of physical temple is to go backward in redemptive history. The temple described in Revelation 11:1-2 symbolically depicts the people of God. The temple and altar display God’s presence. The temple in Revelation symbolizes the church, which is the unique dwelling of God on earth.