**Lesson 19 Rev 11:1-14**

**Revelation 11:1-14 (NASB)**
1  Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it.
2  "Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.
3  "And I will grant *authority* to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."
4  These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.
5  And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way.
6  These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.
7  When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them.
8  And their dead bodies *will lie* in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.
9  Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations *will* look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb.
10  And those who dwell on the earth *will* rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.
11  But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them.
12  And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them.
13  And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.
14  The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

**G. The two witnesses (**[**11:1-14**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A1-14)**)**

While it is clear that [11:1-14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A1-14) continues the parenthetical section begun in [10:1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+10%3A1), an amazing variation of interpretations of this portion of Scripture have been offered. Alford calls this chapter "one of the most difficult in the whole Apocalypse" (*The Greek Testament*, 4:655).

The best guideline to follow in interpreting this section is to take each fact literally. In line with this principle, a literal temple will be in existence during the Great Tribulation, and the city should be considered the literal city Jerusalem in keeping with its identification in [11:8](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A8). The time periods of 42 months ([v. 2](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A2)) and three and one-half days ([vv. 9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A9), [11](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A11)) again should be considered literally. The earthquake will kill literally 7,000 individuals, and the two witnesses should be considered as two individual men.

**1. The Measuring Of The Temple (**[**11:1-2**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A1-2)**)**

[**11:1-2**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A1-2)**.** John **was given a reed,** a lightweight **rod,** to be used as a measuring instrument. John was instructed to **measure the temple** and **the altar** but not **the outer court,** meaning he was to measure the holy place and the holy of holies. While others could come into the outer court, only priests could enter into those two temple rooms. The explanation was given that this would be under the control of **the Gentiles** who would **trample on the holy city for 42 months.**

Why should John measure the temple? Measurement is usually taken of one's possessions, and the temple belonged to God. In a similar way the temple of [Ezekiel 40](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Eze+40) was measured and the New Jerusalem was measured ([Rev. 21:15-17](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+21%3A15-17)). The temple here will be constructed so that orthodox Jews can offer sacrifices according to the Mosaic Law in the period in the first half of the seven-year period known as Daniel's 70th week. At the beginning of the 42-month Great Tribulation, however, the sacrifices will stop and the temple will be desecrated and become a shrine for the world ruler of the Great Tribulation who will put an idol in it and proclaim himself to be God (cf. [Dan. 9:27](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Da+9%3A27); [12:11](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Da+12%3A11); [2 Thes. 2:4](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Th+2%3A4); [Rev. 13:14-15](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+13%3A14-15)).

John was also instructed, however, to count the worshipers who came to the temple. Here the thought seems to be that God will evaluate both the temple and those in it.

The tendency of some is to spiritualize the 42-month length of the Great Tribulation, but this should be taken as a literal period, as confirmed by the 1,260 days of [11:3](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A3) which are 42 months of 30 days each. From this it is also clear that "the times of the Gentiles" ([Luke 21:24](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lk+21%3A24)) will not end until the second coming of Christ to the earth to set up His kingdom. Though Jews may possess Jerusalem temporarily, as they have in this century, they will lose possession in the Great Tribulation.

Some believe that the 42 months refer to the first half of Daniel's 70th week ([Dan. 9:27](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Da+9%3A27)). While it is not clear, the evidence surrounding this passage in Revelation seems to refer to the final three and one-half years. This also seems to be confirmed by the fact that in the first half of the last seven years the Jews will actually possess the city of Jerusalem and worship in their temple, whereas here the context indicates that this is the period when Gentiles will tread down the Holy City, implying ill treatment of the Jews and desecration of the temple.

**2. The Ministry Of The Two Witnesses (**[**11:3-6**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A3-6)**)**

[**11:3-6**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A3-6)**.** It was revealed to John that the **two witnesses** would be empowered by God to serve as prophets for 1,260 days or 42 months. They would be **clothed in sackcloth** and would be called **two olive trees** and **two lampstands.**

Numerous and varied interpretations have been given concerning the two witnesses. Some have suggested that they are not literal individuals. However, in view of the fact that they die and are resurrected, the implication is that they are actual people.

Another problem is their identification. A common interpretation is that they are Moses and Elijah because the judgments inflicted by Moses and Elijah in the Old Testament are similar to those of these two witnesses ([11:5-6](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A5-6)). Further support is given the identification of Elijah because of the prediction ([Mal. 4:5](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mal+4%3A5)) that he will appear "before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes." Christ said this prophecy of Elijah was partially fulfilled in His lifetime ([Matt. 17:10-13](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mt+17%3A10-13); [Mark 9:11-13](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mk+9%3A11-13); cf. [Luke 1:17](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lk+1%3A17)). And both Moses and Elijah were involved in the transfiguration ([Matt. 17:3](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mt+17%3A3)), which anticipated the Second Coming. But a problem with this suggested identity is that Moses had already died once. Some have identified the two witnesses as Enoch and Elijah inasmuch as they did not die but were translated (cf. [Heb. 9:27](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Heb+9%3A27)).

While there is room for considerable discussion of these various views, the fact is that the passage does not identify the two witnesses, and they probably do not have historic identification.

The description of the two witnesses as olive trees and lampstands has an Old Testament background ([Zech. 4:2-14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Zec+4%3A2-14)). The two witnesses in this passage were Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor. Their connection to the lampstands was that they were empowered by the Holy Spirit, symbolized by the olive oil. In a similar way the two witnesses of [Revelation 11](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11) will be empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Like prophets of old the two witnesses will be able to do supernatural miracles, and fire will destroy those who will try to harm them ([Rev. 11:5](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A5)). Like Elijah they will have power to stop rain, and will have power like Moses to turn water into blood and to bring on plagues ([v. 6](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A6)). In the midst of the unbelief, apostasy, and satanic power of the Great Tribulation these two witnesses will be a threat to the entire wicked world for a literal period of 1,260 days.

**3. The Death Of The Two Witnesses (**[**11:7-10**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A7-10)**)**

[**11:7-10**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A7-10)**.** With the ministry of the two witnesses ended, God permitted **the beast that comes up from the Abyss** (cf. [9:1-2](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+9%3A1-2), [11](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+9%3A11); [17:8](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+17%3A8); [20:1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+20%3A1), [3](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+20%3A3)) to overcome them. The beast, that is, the Antichrist, is mentioned nine other times in Revelation ([13:1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+13%3A1); [14:9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+14%3A9), [11](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+14%3A11); [15:2](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+15%3A2); [16:2](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+16%3A2); [17:3](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+17%3A3), [13](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+17%3A13); [19:20](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+19%3A20); [20:10](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+20%3A10)). After the witnesses were killed, their bodies were left unburied in Jerusalem, **figuratively called Sodom and Egypt,** because of the people's apostasy and rejection of God.

**For three and one-half days** the whole world gloated over their dead **bodies.** This implies some worldwide display, now made possible by television. Their deaths were considered a great victory for the world ruler and Satan, and were celebrated by people **sending each other gifts.**


##### 4. The Resurrection Of The Two Witnesses ([11:11-12](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A11-12))

[**11:11-12**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A11-12)**.** After three and one-half days in the street, however, suddenly the two witnesses were resurrected and **stood on their feet.** They responded to the invitation, **Come up here,** and **went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on** with great fear.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

**Open it**

1. What determines how you interpret a hard-to-understand Bible passage?
 **Context, who is the verse talking to, what did the original writer say and mean**

2. Why do you think so many people are gleeful to learn of the moral failures of prominent Christians?
 **Some have a bad attitude of I am better than everyone else. I am not gleeful, but sorry they have given Christians a bad reputation**

**Explore it**

3. What was John given? ([11:1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A1))
 **A measuring rod like a staff**

4. What was John told to do with the object he had been given? ([11:1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A1))
 **Measure the temple, the altar and those who worship in it**

5. What important "end times" individuals are mentioned in this passage and what will be their mission? ([11:3-6](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A3-6))
 **The two witnesses and to prophesy for 1260 days**

6. What special protection will be given the ones called the "two olive trees and the two lampstands"? ([11:4-5](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A4-5))
 **to have fire flow out of their mouths to devour their enemy’s**

7. What will happen to the two witnesses when they have finished their God-ordained ministry? ([11:7](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A7))
 **The beast comes out of the abyss will make war and overcome then and kill them**

8. In John’s vision, what happened three and half days after the two witnesses were killed by the beast? ([11:11-12](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A11-12))
 **They shall be brought back to life by the breath of God**

9. What catastrophic events will follow the two witnesses? ([11:13](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Rev+11%3A13))
 **A great earthquake and 1/10 of the city falls and 7000 people die**

**Get it**

10. What do the events in this passage tell us about the world?
 **How bad we have become here on earth**

11. What encouragement for Christians today does the story of the two witnesses offer?
 **God will protect us**

12. How do you think you might react if you saw two men dead for three and half days come back to life?
 **Fear and awe**

**Apply it**

13. What can you do to show your support this week for ministers, evangelists, and Christian leaders?
 **Pray for them, see how you can support them**

14. How can you be a witness this week to those who don’t know Christ?
 **Share the gospel with someone you know**

**Revelation 10:1 (NASB)**
1  I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire;

**Revelation 11:8 (NASB)**
8  And their dead bodies *will lie* in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.

**Revelation 11:2 (NASB)**
2  "Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.

**Revelation 11:9 (NASB)**
9  Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations *will* look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb.

**Revelation 11:11 (NASB)**
11  But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them.

**Revelation 21:15 (NASB)**
15  The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall.

**Revelation 21:16 (NASB)**
16  The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal.

**Revelation 21:17 (NASB)**
17  And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, *according to* human measurements, which are *also* angelic *measurements.*

**Daniel 9:27 (NASB)**
27  "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

**Daniel 12:11 (NASB)**
11  "From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, *there will be* 1,290 days.

**2 Thessalonians 2:4 (NASB)**
4  who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

**Revelation 13:14 (NASB)**
14  And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who \*had the wound of the sword and has come to life.

**Revelation 13:15 (NASB)**
15  And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

**Revelation 11:3 (NASB)**
3  "And I will grant *authority* to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

**Luke 21:24 (NASB)**
24  and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

**Daniel 9:27 (NASB)**
27  "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

**Revelation 11:5 (NASB)**
5  And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way.

**Revelation 11:6 (NASB)**
6  These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

**Malachi 4:5 (NASB)**
5  "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD.

**Matthew 17:10 (NASB)**
10  And His disciples asked Him, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

**Matthew 17:11 (NASB)**
11  And He answered and said, "Elijah is coming and will restore all things;

**Matthew 17:12 (NASB)**
12  but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands."

**Matthew 17:13 (NASB)**
13  Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.

**Mark 9:11 (NASB)**
11  They asked Him, saying, "*Why is it* that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

**Mark 9:12 (NASB)**
12  And He said to them, "Elijah does first come and restore all things. And *yet* how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt?

**Mark 9:13 (NASB)**
13  "But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him."

**Luke 1:17 (NASB)**
17  "It is he who will go *as a forerunner* before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

**Matthew 17:3 (NASB)**
3  And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

**Hebrews 9:27 (NASB)**
27  And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment,

**Zechariah 4:2 (NASB)**
2  He said to me, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold with its bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps on it with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it;

**Zechariah 4:3 (NASB)**
3  also two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left side."

**Zechariah 4:4 (NASB)**
4  Then I said to the angel who was speaking with me saying, "What are these, my lord?"

**Zechariah 4:5 (NASB)**
5  So the angel who was speaking with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord."

**Zechariah 4:6 (NASB)**
6  Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts.

**Zechariah 4:7 (NASB)**
7  'What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel *you will become* a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"'"

**Zechariah 4:8 (NASB)**
8  Also the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

**Zechariah 4:9 (NASB)**
9  "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will finish *it.* Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you.

**Zechariah 4:10 (NASB)**
10  "For who has despised the day of small things? But these seven will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel—*these are* the eyes of the LORD which range to and fro throughout the earth."

**Zechariah 4:11 (NASB)**
11  Then I said to him, "What are these two olive trees on the right of the lampstand and on its left?"

**Zechariah 4:12 (NASB)**
12  And I answered the second time and said to him, "What are the two olive branches which are beside the two golden pipes, which empty the golden *oil* from themselves?"

**Zechariah 4:13 (NASB)**
13  So he answered me, saying, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord."

**Zechariah 4:14 (NASB)**
14  Then he said, "These are the two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth."

**Revelation 11:5 (NASB)**
5  And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way.

**Revelation 11:6 (NASB)**
6  These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

**Revelation 9:1 (NASB)**
1  Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him.

**Revelation 9:2 (NASB)**
2  He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.

**Revelation 9:11 (NASB)**
11  They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.

**Revelation 17:8 (NASB)**
8  "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.

**Revelation 20:1 (NASB)**
1  Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.

**Revelation 20:3 (NASB)**
3  and he threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

**Revelation 13:1 (NASB)**
1  And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns *were* ten diadems, and on his heads *were* blasphemous names.

**Revelation 14:9 (NASB)**
9  Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand,

**Revelation 14:11 (NASB)**
11  "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

**Revelation 15:2 (NASB)**
2  And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God.

**Revelation 16:2 (NASB)**
2  So the first *angel* went and poured out his bowl on the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.

**Revelation 17:3 (NASB)**
3  And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.

**Revelation 17:13 (NASB)**
13  "These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.

**Revelation 19:20 (NASB)**
20  And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.

**Revelation 20:10 (NASB)**
10  And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.