



THE REVELATION OF JOHN

Bible Study 28

Text: Rev. 11:1-14

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2. What the text means.

The Two Witnesses

Greek NT

11.1 Καὶ ἐδόθη μοι κάλαμος ὅμοιος ῥάβδῳ, λέγων· ἔγειρε καὶ μέτρησον τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας ἐν αὐτῷ. 2 καὶ τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν ἔξωθεν τοῦ ναοῦ ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν καὶ μὴ αὐτὴν μετρήσῃς, ὅτι ἐδόθη τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν πατήσουσιν μῆνας τεσσαράκοντα [καὶ] δύο.

3 Καὶ δώσω τοῖς δυσιν μάρτυσίν μου καὶ προφητεύσουσιν ἡμέρας χιλίας διακοσίας ἐξήκοντα περιβεβλημένοι σάκκου. 4 οὗτοί εἰσιν αἱ δύο ἐλάϊαι καὶ αἱ δύο λυχνίαι αἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου τῆς γῆς ἐστῶτες. 5 καὶ εἴ τις αὐτοὺς θέλει ἀδικῆσαι πῦρ ἐκπορεύεται ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτῶν καὶ κατεσθίει τοὺς ἐχθροὺς αὐτῶν· καὶ εἴ τις θελήσῃ αὐτοὺς ἀδικῆσαι, οὕτως δεῖ αὐτὸν ἀποκτανθῆναι. 6 οὗτοι ἔχουσιν τὴν ἐξουσίαν κλεῖσαι τὸν οὐρανόν, ἵνα μὴ ὑετὸς βρέχῃ τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς προφητείας αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχουσιν ἐπὶ τῶν ὑδάτων στρέφειν αὐτὰ εἰς αἷμα καὶ πατάξαι τὴν γῆν ἐν πάσῃ πληγῇ ὅσακις ἐὰν θελήσωσιν.

7 Καὶ ὅταν τελέσωσιν τὴν μαρτυρίαν αὐτῶν, τὸ

Gute Nachricht Bibel

11.1 Dann erhielt ich ein Rohr, das wie ein Messstab war, und jemand sagte: »Steh auf und miss den Tempel Gottes aus und den inneren Vorhof, in dem der Altar steht. Zähle, wie viele Menschen dort beten. 2 Den äußeren Vorhof lass weg! Dort brauchst du nicht zu messen, weil er den Fremden preisgegeben wird. Zweiundvierzig Monate lang werden sie die Heilige Stadt verwüsten.

3 Ich werde meine zwei Zeugen beauftragen. Sie sollen Trauerkleidung tragen und während dieser zwölfhundertsechzig Tage prophetisch reden.« 4 Diese beiden Zeugen sind die zwei Ölbäume und die zwei Leuchter, die vor dem Herrn der Erde stehen. 5 Wenn jemand versucht, gegen sie einzuschreiten, kommt Feuer aus ihrem Mund und verbrennt ihre Feinde. Auf diese Weise werden alle getötet, die ihnen Schaden zufügen wollen. 6 Sie haben die Macht, den Himmel zu verschließen, sodass es nicht regnet, solange sie ihre prophetische Botschaft ausrichten. Sie haben auch die Macht, alle Gewässer in Blut zu verwandeln und die Erde mit allen möglichen Katastrophen zu erschüttern, sooft sie wollen.

7 Wenn sie ihre Botschaft

NRSV

11:1 Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Come and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, 2 but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample over the holy city for forty-two months.

3 And I will grant my two witnesses authority to prophesy for one thousand two hundred sixty days, wearing 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 flashes from their mouth and consumes their foes; anyone who wants to harm them must be killed in this manner. 6 They have authority to shut the sky, so that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have authority over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.

7 When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, 8

NLT

11.1 Then I was given a measuring stick, and I was told, "Go and measure the Temple of God and the altar, and count the number of worshipers. 2 But do not measure the outer courtyard, for it has been turned over to the nations. They will trample the holy city for 42 months.

3 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy during those 1,260 days." 4 These two prophets are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of all the earth. 5 If anyone tries to harm them, fire flashes from their mouths and consumes their enemies. This is how anyone who tries to harm them must die. 6 They have power to shut the sky so that no rain will fall for as long as they prophesy. And they have the power to turn the rivers and oceans into blood, and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they wish.

7 When they complete their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the bottomless pit will declare war against them, and he will

θηρίον τὸ ἀναβαῖνον ἐκ τῆς ἀβύσσου ποιήσει μετ' αὐτῶν πόλεμον καὶ νικήσει αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀποκτενεῖ αὐτούς. 8 καὶ τὸ πτώμα αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τῆς πλατείας τῆς πόλεως τῆς μεγάλης, ἣτις καλεῖται πνευματικῶς Σόδομα καὶ Αἴγυπτος, ὅπου καὶ ὁ κύριος αὐτῶν ἐσταυρώθη. 9 καὶ βλέπουσιν ἐκ τῶν λαῶν καὶ φυλῶν καὶ γλωσσῶν καὶ ἔθνῶν τὸ πτώμα αὐτῶν ἡμέρας τρεῖς καὶ ἡμισυ καὶ τὰ πτώματα αὐτῶν οὐκ ἀφίουσιν τεθῆναι εἰς μνήμα. 10 καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς χαίρουσιν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς καὶ εὐφραίνονται καὶ δῶρα πέμπουσιν ἀλλήλοις, ὅτι οὗτοι οἱ δύο προφηταὶ ἐβασάνισαν τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

11 Καὶ μετὰ τὰς τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ ἡμισυ πνεῦμα ζωῆς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσηλθεν ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔστησαν ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας αὐτῶν, καὶ φόβος μέγας ἐπέπεσεν ἐπὶ τοὺς θεωροῦντας αὐτούς. 12 καὶ ἤκουσαν φωνῆς μεγάλης ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λεγούσης αὐτοῖς· ἀνάβατε ὧδε. καὶ ἀνέβησαν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ, καὶ ἐθεώρησαν αὐτούς οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτῶν. 13 Καὶ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐγένετο σεισμὸς μέγας καὶ τὸ δέκατον τῆς πόλεως ἔπεσεν καὶ ἀπεκτάνθησαν ἐν τῷ σεισμῷ ὀνόματα ἀνθρώπων χιλιάδες ἑπτὰ καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἔμφοβοι ἐγένοντο καὶ ἔδωκαν δόξαν τῷ θεῷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.

14 Ἡ οὐαὶ ἡ δευτέρα ἀπήλθεν· ἰδοὺ ἡ οὐαὶ ἡ τρίτη ἔρχεται ταχύ.

vollständig ausgerichtet haben, wird das Tier aus dem Abgrund kommen und gegen sie kämpfen. Es wird sie besiegen und sie töten. 8 Ihre Leichen werden auf dem Platz mitten in der großen Stadt liegen, in der auch ihr Herr gekreuzigt wurde. Geistlich gesprochen heißt diese Stadt »Sodom« und »Ägypten«. 9 Menschen aus aller Welt, aus allen Völkern, Stämmen und Sprachen werden kommen und sich dreieinhalb Tage lang die beiden Toten ansehen; sie werden nicht zulassen, dass sie beerdigt werden. 10 Alle Menschen auf der Erde werden sich über den Tod dieser beiden freuen, sie werden jubeln und sich gegenseitig Geschenke schicken; denn diese Propheten waren ihnen lästig geworden.

11 Doch nach dreieinhalb Tagen kam der Lebensgeist Gottes wieder in die beiden Propheten, und sie standen auf. Alle, die das sahen, erschrecken sehr. 12 Dann hörten sie eine mächtige Stimme vom Himmel, die den beiden befahl: »Kommt herauf!« Und vor den Augen ihrer Feinde stiegen sie in einer Wolke zum Himmel hinauf. 13 In diesem Augenblick gab es ein heftiges Erdbeben. Ein Zehntel der Stadt wurde zerstört; siebentausend Menschen kamen bei dem Erdbeben ums Leben. Die Überlebenden waren zu Tode erschrocken und erwie sen Gott im Himmel Ehre.

14 Der zweite Schrecken ist damit vorüber, doch der dritte Schrecken wird bald folgen!

and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that is prophetically called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 For three and a half days members of the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb; 10 and the inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and celebrate and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to the inhabitants of the earth.

11 But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and those who saw them were terrified. 12 Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies watched them. 13 At that moment 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 has passed. The third woe is coming very soon.

conquer them and kill them. 8 And their bodies will lie in the main street of Jerusalem, the city that is figuratively called "Sodom" and "Egypt," the city where their Lord was crucified. 9 And for three and a half days, all peoples, tribes, languages, and nations will stare at their bodies. No one will be allowed to bury them. 10 All the people who belong to this world will gloat over them and give presents to each other to celebrate the death of the two prophets who had tormented them.

11 But after three and a half days, God breathed life into them, and they stood up! Terror struck all who were staring at them. 12 Then a loud voice from heaven called to the two prophets, "Come up here!" And they rose to heaven in a cloud as their enemies watched. 13 At the same time there was a terrible earthquake that destroyed a tenth of the city. Seven thousand people died in that earthquake, and everyone else was terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second terror is past, but look, the third terror is coming quickly.

INTRODUCTION

With 11:1-14, we complete the Interlude of 10:1-11:14 that stands between the sixth and seventh trumpets in this series of sevens. The general theme of the protection of God is continued which characterizes the series of three's in the 4 + 3 structure for both the seals and the trumpets. The two interludes of 7:1-17 and 10:1-11:14 also affirm this general theme. And yet each passage has its own distinct approach to this theme.

In this second interlude of 10:1-11:14, a variety of

scenes are set up in sequence to one another. The action takes place on earth and John as the narrator to us as readers is positioned on the earth after having been located in heaven in chapters four through nine. In part one contained in chapter ten, he becomes an active participant through interacting first with an angel descending to earth from heaven. But this is not a dialogue between two individuals. John first interacts with the angel who give a thunderous signal that triggers a

voice coming out of “seven thunders” who speaks out the words of the contents of the ‘little scroll’ in the hand of the angel. John is forbidden to write down any of the contents. Instead, he is commanded by a voice out of heaven to take the scroll and then eat it. Upon doing so he discovers the ‘sweet and sour’ experience that the Voice indicated would happen. At the end of this scene, John is given by the seven thunders a command to proclaim this message to all of humanity. In this context this command signifies that he is to resume the composition of his scroll that we call Revelation.

This sets the stage for John’s participation in the unfolding drama in a new way. In part one his participation began with εἶδον, *I saw*, (10:1, 5) and ἤκουσα, *I heard* (10:8). It reached a climax with him taking the scroll from the angel (ἔλαβον, 10:10) and eating it (ἔφαγον, 10:10).

Now in part two in 11:1-14, he is commanded to measure, μέτρησον, the temple in Jerusalem (vv. 1-2). Historically this would not have been possible for John to have done at the end of the first century, since the temple had been destroyed by the Romans some thirty years earlier. But this is apocalyptic visionary experience not bound by time constraints.

God also indicated to John that He was granting special authority to ‘two witnesses,’ two olive trees and two lampstands, to proclaim God’s message during the same time that pagans will trample over Jerusalem (vv. 3-6). They are immune to harm from the pagans, but at the end of this allotted time the beast from the bottomless pit will kill them. Their dead unburied bodies will be paraded on the streets of Jerusalem for a short time in victory celebration, but at the end of this short time they will come back to life to the absolute terror of the pagans.

But upon standing up in renewed life, they will be summoned to heaven by God with their enemies watching them ascent upward. That triggers a large earthquake killing 7,000 people and terrifying the rest of humanity who acknowledge the power of God at work.

The dramatically powerful symbolism of these actions vividly communicated God’s message to John and then to his readers. The Jewish Christians among them would have recognized the horrors of the Roman siege of Jerusalem in 68 to 70 AD in this scene. The testimony of the believing community in Jerusalem to Christ and God during this period would have been a small ‘two witness’ testimony to the pagans overwhelming Jerusalem. How God brought this witness back to life after the utter destruction of Jerusalem, the temple, and the surrounding region stood as a powerful affirmation of God’s overriding protection of the true people of God in the believing communities, not only in Jerusalem but all over the Roman empire. His readers in the seven

churches stood as a powerful affirmation of God’s ability to override the intended harm of evil people against God’s true people. With them standing at the time of the writing of this Revelation on the threshold of a period of very intense persecution of Christianity and some other religious groups from the eastern empire by the Roman emperor, this message was intended to brace them for the struggles that lay ahead in the near future.

What can we learn from all this? I think that is much that we can gain from this text, once it is unwrapped correctly.

1. What did the text mean to the first readers?

Before attempting to unpack the contents of the scripture text in the exegesis section below, we need to address the relevant background issues to vv. 1-14.

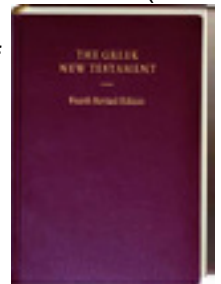
Historical Aspects:

Both groups of historical aspects need to be examined for this text. Not every aspect will be relevant to this text, but some are and thus will be examined in detail.

External History. In the eight to ten centuries of the hand-copying of this passage some variations of wording surface among the several thousand copies of this passage that are known to exist still today.

The editors of *The Greek New Testament* (UBS 4th rev ed) considered three places to be worth analysis for the purposes of Bible translation.

In verse one some words, καὶ εἰστήκει ὁ ἄγγελος, *and the angel stood*, were added in a few manuscripts after ῥάβδῳ, *staff*.¹ This was an effort to clarify who handed John the measuring rod and to define who then began speaking.² But the evidence favors the shorter, more



¹{A} ῥάβδῳ P47 κ* A 205 209 1006 1611 1841 2053 2344 Byz [P] it^{gig}.^t vg cop^{sa, bo} eth Andrew; Primasius // ῥάβδῳ καὶ εἰστήκει ὁ ἄγγελος κ² 046 1854 2329 2351 it^{ar} syr^{ph, h}, with* arm Tyconius Beatus [Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

²“The unusual construction of ἐδόθη μοι ... λέγων (was given to me ... saying) led copyists to insert the words καὶ εἰστήκει ὁ ἄγγελος (and the angel stood) in order to have a clear subject for the masculine singular participle λέγων. The Textus Receptus, in agreement with several witnesses, contains this addition. It is possible to translate the text ‘Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told’ (NRSV). But in languages that do not use the passive, it may be necessary to say ‘Then someone gave me a measuring rod like a staff, and God told me ...’” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche

difficult reading of the text, the source of the voice pointing back to God by contextual implication. In either instance the meaning of the text remains essentially the same.

In verse two, the substantival adverb τὴν ἔξωθεν, **the outside**, is preferred over the alternative reading ἔσωθεν, **inside**.³ But the overwhelming evidence favors ἔξωθεν.⁴ John was told not to bother with measuring the outer Court of the Gentiles.

In verse twelve, the tense and number of ἤκουσαν, **they heard**, is varied to ἤκουσα, **I heard**, or to ἀκούσονται, **they are indeed hearing**.⁵ The presence of αὐτοῖς, **to them**, argues strongly for the plural form of the verb.⁶ In general the evidence favors the plural form of the verb over the singular.

Of course, this apparatus concentrates only on the more significant variations. The text apparatus of *Novum Testamentum Graece* (N-A



Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 535.

³{A} ἔξωθεν P⁴⁷ A 205 209 1006 1611 1841 1854 2053 2351 Byz [P 046] it^{ar} vg syr^h cop^{sa, bo} arm eth Andrew; Tyconius Jerome Primasius Beatus // ἔσωθεν κ 2329 syr^{ph} Victorinus-Pettau

[Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

⁴“The adverb ἔξωθεν is to be preferred on both external and internal grounds: (a) it has excellent manuscript support; and (b) copyists who understood the αὐλήν to be the inner courtyard were puzzled by the expression τὴν αὐλήν τὴν ἔξωθεν, and therefore changed the adverb to ἔσωθεν (inside). The ‘court outside the temple’ refers to the court of the Gentiles and may be translated ‘the outer court of the temple’ (REB).” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 535.]

⁵{B} ἤκουσαν κ* A C P 2053 vg syr^{ph, h} // ἤκουσα P⁴⁷ κ^c 205 209 1006 1611 1841 1854 2351 Byz [046] it^{ar, g1g} syr^{hmg} arm eth^{mss} Andrew; Tyconius Beatus // ἀκούσονται 2329

[Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

⁶“Instead of ἤκουσαν, many witnesses read the first person singular ἤκουσα. The external evidence favors the plural verb. In addition, since the Seer (John) constantly uses ἤκουσα throughout the book (24 times), copyists were more likely to substitute ἤκουσα for ἤκουσαν than vice versa. Since the antecedent of the verb ἤκουσαν may not be clear, it may be better to make the subject of the verb explicit, that is, ‘Then the two prophets heard.’ (TEV and FC). It is also possible that the antecedent is the hostile bystanders. NJB follows the variant reading: ‘then I heard [ἤκουσα] a loud voice from heaven say to them.’” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 535.]

27th rev ed) includes a larger percentage of the variations found in all the existing copies of this text. In this listing some 54 places where variations of all kinds surface.⁷ The vast majority of these variations are sty-

⁷Offenbarung 11,1

* και ειστηκει ο αγγελος κ² 046. 1854. 2329. 2351 al ar syr^{ph, h**}; Tyc Bea (after ράβδω and before λέγων these words are added)

Offenbarung 11,2

* P47 (τὴν αὐλήν is omitted)

* εσωθεν κ 2329 al vgs syr^h; Vic (ἔσωθεν replaces ἔξωθεν)

* εζω P⁴⁷ M^K (ἔξωθεν after εκβαλε is replaced)

| εσω κ*

| εσωθεν P

* και P⁴⁷ κ* (και is inserted after ἐδόθη)

*1 μετρησουσιν A (πατήσουσιν is replaced)

* κ M ([καί] is omitted)

| txt A 046. 1611 pc (P^{47, 115} al: μβ')

Offenbarung 11,3

* -νους κ* A P 046. 2329 al (προφητεύσουσιν is spelled differently)

Offenbarung 11,4

* 2053txt pc (αἱ δύο ἐλαῖαι και is omitted)

* κ 1611. 2329. 2351 al lat (αἱ before ἐνώπιον is omitted)

*1 A 046. 1006. 1841 pc (τοῦ before κυρίου is omitted)

* θεου 1854. 2053^{txt}M^A vg^{mss} (κυρίου is replaced)

* εστωσαι κ² 1006. 1841. 1854. 2053 M^A (ἐστῶτες is replaced)

Offenbarung 11,5

* θελησει P⁴⁷ 1841 pc latt (θέλει is replaced)

* θελει C M; Prim (θελήση is replaced)

| θελησει P⁴⁷ 1006. 1611. 1841. 2329. 2351 al

| txt κ A pc

*1 αποκτειναι 2015 pc (ἀδικῆσαι is replaced)

* A (οὕτως is omitted)

Offenbarung 11,6

* κ M (τὴν before ἐξουσίαν is omitted)

| txt P⁴⁷ A C P 046. 1611. 1841. 2053^{txt}. 2351 pc

* βρεξη 2053. 2329 pc (βρέχη is replaced)

*1 1 al (αὐτὰ is omitted)

*2 P⁴⁷ 046 pc (ἐν is omitted)

* θελωσιν P⁴⁷ 2329 pc (θελήσωσιν is replaced)

Offenbarung 11,7

* τότε το θ. το P⁴⁷ (τὸ θηρίον τὸ is replaced)

| το θ. τότε κ*

| το θ. το τεταρτον το A

* 3 1 2 P⁴⁷ M^A (the sequence of μετ' αὐτῶν πόλεμον varies)

* M^A (και ἀποκτεινῆ αὐτοῦς is omitted)

Offenbarung 11,8

* τα πτωματα P⁴⁷ κ 1611. 1854. 2329M^A latt syr^{ph} (sa bo^{pl}) (τὸ πτῶμα is replaced)

| txt A C 1006. 1841. 2053. 2351 M^K syr^h; Tyc

* εσται κ² (it vg^{cl}) (ἔσται is inserted before ἐπι)

| εασει 2036 pc

* αταφα 2036 pc (ἄταφα is inserted after μεγάλης)

* P⁴⁷ κ¹ 1611 M^A ar* syr^h bo (και beforfe ὁ is omitted)

* ημων 1 pc (αὐτῶν is replaced)

| - P⁴⁷ κ*

Offenbarung 11,9

* τα -ματα P^{115vid} 2329 M^A latt sy sa bo^{pl} (plural spelling for τὸ πτῶμα)

* M (και before ἡμισυ is omitted)

| txt P⁴⁷ κ A C P 1006. 1841. 1854. 2351 al sy

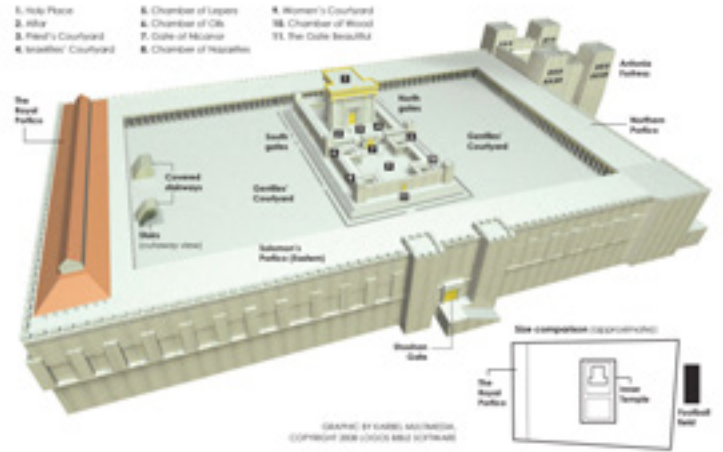
listic efforts to clarify the meaning of the text. As we noticed beginning especially in chapter ten, later copyists struggled to understand the meaning of these texts and thus freely made changes which expressed their understanding of the text in simpler and clearer terms.

The adopted reading of the text clearly has the best evidence in support and thus we can exegete it with full confidence of it being the original reading of this passage.

Internal History. Clearly in this passage, along with the preceding one, is a reference to the Jewish temple in Jerusalem known as Herod's temple. It had stood until 70 AD before being destroyed by the Romans. John is carried back some forty years or more in time in his apocalyptic vision to a period prior to its destruction. He is given instructions to 'measure'

Herod's "Second" Temple on the Temple Mount

King Herod the Great began renovations on the Second Temple approximately 20-19 BC. The entire temple expansion, including the massive Temple Mount, was not completed until approximately 42-44 AD, only to be destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.



it.⁸ From existing ancient Jewish documents and recent archaeological analysis, the outer dimensions of the were about the equivalent of 35 American football fields. The temple itself was located inside the outer court of the gentiles and was much smaller.



Measuring rod and coiled rope depicted in the Code of Hammurabi. The upper part of the stela of Hammurabi's code of laws. Public Domain.

The κάλαμος ὄμοιος ῥάβδω, [measuring rod like a staff](#), comes directly out of Ezekiel 40:1-42:20, where an angel of God takes Ezekiel in a vision from Babylon back to Jerusalem where the prophet was shone the temple of Jerusalem, and carried along with the angel while the angel measured every aspect of the temple. In the angel's hand was a **κάλαμος, τὸ μέτρον** πηχῶν ἕξ ἐν πήχει καὶ παλαιστῆς, a measuring reed (ἡτμη)

⁸“According to the Ritmeyers’s recent study of the archaeological remains, the Temple Mount retaining wall measured 1,590 feet on the west, 1,035 feet on the north, 1,536 feet on the east and 912 feet on the south; it thus approximated a rhomboid equivalent in area to thirty-five football fields.” [B. Chilton, P. W. Comfort, and M. O. Wise, “Temple, Jewish,” ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: a Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 1168.]

* αφησουσι 2053 M^K gig vg^{cl} bo (ἀφίουσιν is replaced)
 * μνημεια 1611 pc (μνημα is replaced)
 | μνημειον C pc
 | μνηματα κ^g pc
Offenbarung 11,10
 * χαρισονται 2020 latt co (χαίρουσιν is replaced)
 * ευφρανθησονται 2329M^K latt (εὐφραίνονται)
 ¹ πεμπ- κ P 2344 pc vg^{mss} (πέμψουσιν is replaced)
 | δωσουσιν M^K
 * ουτ. (-P⁴⁷) οι προφ. οι δυο (ιβ’ P^{47vid}) P⁴⁷ κ 2344 (οὔτοι οι δύο προφῆται is replaced)

Offenbarung 11,11
 * κ 1854. 2344 M^A (τὰς before τρεῖς is omitted)
 * αυτοις C P 1611. 2053 al (ἐν αυτοῖς is replaced)
 | εις αυτους P⁴⁷ κ M^K
 | txt A 1006. 1841. 1854. 2329. 2351 al; Tyc
 * επεσεν P⁴⁷ κ 1841. 2053 M^K (ἐπέπεσεν is replaced)
 * των -των C P pc (τοὺς θεωροῦντας is put in genitive case)

Offenbarung 11,12
 * -σα P⁴⁷ κ^c M ar gig sy^{hmg} co; Tyc Bea (alternative spellings for ἤκουσαν)

| ακουσονται 2329
 | txt κ* A C P 2053 pc vg sy
 * -νην -λην εκ τ. ουρ. -σαν P^{115vid} A 1611. 2053. 2329. 2351 M^K (φωνῆς μεγάλης ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λεγοῦσης is replaced)
 * A pc gig; Tyc (αὐτοῖς is omitted)
 * -βητε M (alternative spelling for ἀνάβατε)
 | txt P47.115vid κ A C P 2329. 2351 pc
 *¹ εμετρησαν P⁴⁷ (ἐθεώρησαν is replaced)

Offenbarung 11,13
 * αυτη P⁴⁷ (ἐκείνη is replaced)
 * ημερα 1854. 2329 M^K gig sy^{hmg} sa (ὥρα is replaced)
 *¹ τριτον 046 bo (δέκατον is replaced)
 *² εν φοβω κ 2351 pc lat sy^{ph.hmg} (ἔμφοβοι is replaced)

Offenbarung 11,14
 * παρηλθεν κ pc (ἀπῆλθεν is replaced)
 *¹ 6 2-5 P^{47vid} κ 2344 pc (the sequence of ἰδοὺ ἢ οὐαὶ ἢ τρίτη ἔρχεται varies)
 | 2-5 1 6 M^K

txt A C 1006. 1611. 1841. (1854). 2053. 2329. 2351 M^A
 [Eberhard Nestle et al., Universität Münster. Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27. Aufl., rev. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1993), 652–653.

וּקְנָה) some six cubits long that he used in measuring the temple.

These images from John's world, especially the Jewish part of it, stood in the background of the depiction here.

Literary Aspects:

The literary aspects play an important role here, as is always the case in interpreting ancient texts.

Genre: Rev. 11:1-14 continues the lengthy apocalyptic vision of John begun in 1:9. As part 2 of the Interlude in 10:1-11:14, John brings together three literary units that have distinctive features but whether they constitute a literary genre may be open to question.

Rev. 11:1-2 is where John is told to measure the no longer existing temple in Jerusalem. But such is no problem in an apocalyptic visionary dream. Quite clearly the background example is that of Ezekiel in chapters 40 to 42. Yet, several significant differences exist between the prophet's experience and John's. Most significant is that an angel measured the temple in Ezekiel's vision, while John is to do this measuring in his vision. Ezekiel was measuring Solomon's temple while John was measuring Herod's temple. Other distinctions of lesser significance also are present.

John now seems to be in heaven from the narrative viewpoint, although on earth in chapter ten. Perhaps this more easily enables him to go back in time to an unnamed period prior to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Some commentators fail to give full impact to the apocalyptic visionary nature of this text and come up with several really crazy proposals.⁹

⁹In Rev 11:1-2, the seer is instructed to measure the temple and the altar (i.e., the inner portion of the temple), but he is expressly told not to measure the court outside the temple, 'for the Gentiles will be permitted to keep the holy city under subjection for forty-two months.' This short text is obviously fragmentary: (1) It does not cohere well with the preceding unit of text in 10:10-11, where the last speakers (λέγουσιν, 'they say,' v 11) are not identified, and the speaker in 11:1 is identified only with the participle λέγων, 'saying,' which has no obvious antecedent. (2) 11:1-2 consists largely of a command given to the author by an unspecified person, but it is a command that the author does not fulfill; i.e., he is told to measure the temple, but there is no accompanying narrative suggesting that he actually did so. This is surprising since the reader has been led to expect that angelic or divine commands to the seer will be immediately obeyed (e.g., in 10:8 the author is told to take the little scroll from the angel, which he does in v 9; in 10:9 he is told to eat the book, which he does in v 10). (3) The location or point of view of the author is problematic. In 10:1-2, 4, 5, 8, it is presupposed that the author is on earth, while 11:1-2 suggests that he is either in the vicinity of Jerusalem (where the temple was) or in heaven if the temple he is to measure is the heavenly temple. However, there is no indication of how he has access to the temple, whether in a vision or through physical transport (or both). (4) Though Revelation was finally edited toward the end of the first century A.D., a generation after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, there is no indication in this brief pericope that the temple

But that John could be told in a vision to measure the old temple is not unusual or abnormal. Because the narrative, unlike in Ezekiel, does not record John actually measuring the temple, we have no idea what measurements John came up with. Ezekiel provides unusually precise measurements of a large number of details about Solomon's temple.

Rev. 11:3-13 has a prophetic narrative tone with highly symbolic images. The text centers around the two witnesses, who symbolize Christian witness to the world in the first century prior to 70 AD. They have a mission, vv. 3-6, are lynched to death, vv. 7-10, and their resurrection and ascension victory over their enemies in vv. 11-13. But no background model exists for this material. Bits and pieces of text and images are taken from Daniel seven and twelve, but no model for this exists in Daniel.

Rev. 11:14 functions as a transition statement, following the pattern of 8:13; 9:12; 11:14, and 12:12. In 11:14, the signal is given that the second woe has been completed and the third one will come soon.

To be sure the question of the connection of Rev. 11:1-13 to the later Jewish apocalyptic [Apocalypse of Elijah 4:7-19](#)¹⁰ does arise. The existing Coptic transla-

was actually described. The implicit point of view of the pericope is before A.D. 70." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 585-586.]

¹⁰**Apoc. Elijah 4:7-19.** 7 Then when Elijah and Enoch hear that the shameless one has revealed himself in the holy place,ⁿ they will come down and fight with him, saying,

8o Are you indeed not ashamed?^p

When you attach yourself to the saints,^q because you are always estranged.

9 You have been hostile to those who belong to heaven.

You have acted against those belonging to^r the earth.

10* You have been hostile to the thrones.^s

You have acted against the angels.^t

You are always a stranger.

11* You have fallen from heaven like the morning stars.^u

You were changed, and your tribe^v became dark for you.

12 But you are not ashamed,

when you stand firmly against God.

You are a devil.

13 The shameless one will hear and he will be angry, and he will fight with them in the market place of the great city.^w And he will spend seven days fighting with them.^x 14 * And they will spend three and one half days in the market place dead,^y while all the people see them.

15 But on the fourth day they will rise up and they will scold him saying, "O shameless one,^z O son of lawlessness.^{a2} Are you indeed not ashamed of yourself since you are leading astray the people of God for whom you did not suffer?^{b2} Do you not know that we live in the Lord?"

16 As the words were spoken, they prevailed over him, saying,^{c2} "Furthermore, we will lay down the flesh for the spirit,^{d2} and we will kill you since you are unable to speak on that day because we are always strong in the Lord.^{e2} But you are always hostile to

tion version dates in the second to third centuries AD. As a Jewish document, the original Greek version¹¹ most likely reaches back to the first Christian century in a Jewish apocalypse writing in Hebrew.¹² Probably it was composed in Egypt in Hebrew in the first century BCE.¹³

Points of commonality are charted by Aune:

“The parallels and differences are indicated in the fol-

God.”¹²

17 The shameless one will hear, and he will be angry and fight with them. 18 And the whole city will surround them. 19* On that day they will shout up to heaven as they shine¹² while all the people and all the world see them.¹²

[James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1 (New York; London: Yale University Press, 1983), 1:747–748.]

¹¹A Greek text exists in one fragmentary text and in two quotations from church fathers. These sources suggest a much earlier original document.

¹²“Though the Coptic Apocalypse of Elijah is of uncertain date (A.D. 150 to 275; see Wintermute in Charlesworth, OTP 1:729–30), in its present form, it is a Christian document that is probably a revision of an earlier Jewish composition that perhaps originated during the first century B.C. (Rosenstiehl, *L’Apocalypse d’Elie*, 75–76). It exists in Greek in one fragmentary text and two quotations (Denis, *Fragmenta*, 103–4). It is clear that Apoc. El. 4:7–19 is either dependent on Rev 11:3–13, or that both passages are dependent on an earlier source. For reasons that will be discussed below, the latter hypothesis appears the most likely (see Joachim Jeremias, TDNT 2:939–41).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 588.]

¹³ “Two works bear this name and should be distinguished as 1 Elijah and 2 Elijah. The first is extant in Coptic fragments which were edited by G. Steindorff (*Die Apokalypse des Elias* [TU 17] Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899) and translated into English by H. P. Houghton (“The Coptic Apocalypse. Part III, Akhmimice: ‘The Apocalypse of Elias,’” *Aegyptus* 39 [1959] 179–210). There are also a few minor excerpts and fragments in Greek which are reprinted by A.-M. Denis (no. 23, pp. 103f.).

“In its present form the pseudepigraphon is Christian and dates from the third century. Most scholars concur that it derives from an earlier Jewish work, and J.-M. Rosenstiehl (no. 706, pp. 9, 75f.) concludes that the Grundschrift was composed in Egypt during the first century B.C.

“The work consists of three large chapters: a parenetic section (1:1–26); an apocalyptic timetable (2:1–44); and legends about the Antichrist (3:1–99).

“The second, 2 Elijah, is extant in rabbinic Hebrew; this was edited and translated into German by M. Bittenwieser (*Die hebräische Elias-Apokalypse*. Leipzig: Pfeiffer, 1897). As far as I know an English translation has not yet been published. Scholars have generally rejected Bittenwieser’s claim that this work is as early as A.D. 260, although there are earlier Jewish traditions preserved in it.

“2 Elijah purports to be a revelation by Michael to Elijah on Mt. Carmel. Elijah receives a description of Antichrist, perceives how punishment is suffered according to the sin, and sees a revelation concerning the end.”

[“Apocalypse of Elijah,” earlychristianwritings.com]

lowing synoptic summaries:¹⁴

Rev 11:3–13

God empowers his two witnesses to prophesy for 1,260 days (three and one-half years).

The beast from the abyss will make war on them, conquer and kill them.

Their corpses will lie in the street of the great city.

After three and one-half days up they will rise up; fear will fall on those who see them.

A voice from heaven invites them to come, after which they ascend.

At that hour a great quake destroys one-tenth of the city and kills seven thousand. The rest give glory to God.¹⁵

¹⁴David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 588–589.

¹⁵“The narrative begins with the two Israelite worthies in heaven, where they had been raptured according to OT and Jewish tradition, and they only make their appearance through a descent from heaven after they learn that the eschatological adversary has revealed himself in Jerusalem, presumably in the temple. Thus this text provides an explanation for the presence of the two witnesses, which is mysteriously left unaccounted for in Rev 11:3–13. Unlike in Rev 11:3–13, they are said to address the adversary (see the Tabitha account below). The conflict between the adversary and Enoch and Elijah lasts seven days, and when they are killed, their bodies lie for three and one-half days in the marketplace. As in Rev 11:11, they are resurrected (though the mention of the fourth day seems to presuppose that they were dead for three days in an earlier version). They again denounce the adversary in a speech (as in the Tabitha account below), and this time the adversary and

Apoc. Elijah 4:7–19

Elijah and Enoch hear from heaven that the shameless one has revealed himself in the holy place and they descend.

They give a speech denouncing the shameless one.

The shameless one, angry, fights with them for seven days in the marketplace of the great city.

Killed, they lie for three and one-half days in the marketplace.

On the fourth day they rise up and again denounce the shameless one.

Again angry, the shameless one fights with them, and the whole city will surround them.

On that day they will shout up to heaven as they shine, and all the people of the world will see them.

the population of the city surround them, doubtless intending to do away with them again. They shout to heaven (unlike in Rev 11:12, where the two witnesses are addressed by a heavenly voice), implicitly for divine assistance. This assistance is apparently provided, for they take on a glorified shining appearance, and since all the people in the world can see them, they apparently ascend to heaven (cf. Rev 1:7, 'every eye will see him'). Though there is a basic similarity between these two texts, the only clear instance of the dependence of Apoc. El. 4:7–19 on Rev 11:3–13 is Apoc. El. 4:13–14 (the Shameless One fights and kills Elijah and Enoch in the marketplace of the great city, where they lie dead for three and one-half days) on Rev 11:7–9 (the beast fights and kills the two witnesses, and their corpses lie on the street of the great city for three and one-half days). It is probable, however, that this similarity is based on a later Christian revision of an earlier Jewish source.

“The relationship between the two texts is more complex, however, because of a doublet involving a woman named Tabitha in Apoc. El. 14:9–15:7, with italicized portions containing parallels to the noted texts (P. Chester Beatty 2018; tr. Pietersma, Apoc. El.):

The young woman whose name is Tabitha
will hear that the shameless one
has made his appearance in the holy places. She will
dress in her linen clothes and hurry
to Judaea and reprove him
as far as Jerusalem, and say
to him, “O you shameless one, O you lawless
one, O you enemy of all
the saints!” *Then the shameless one will become
angry with the young woman* [Rev 12:17a].

He will pursue her to the region of the setting of the sun [Rev 12:6, 13–14].

He will suck her blood in the evening
and toss her onto the temple,
and she will become salvation for the people.
At dawn she will rise up alive and
rebuke him saying, “You shameless one,
You have no power over my soul, nor over my body,
because I live in the Lord always,
and even my blood which you spilled
on the temple became salvation for the people.”

“In this text, as in the following one from Lactantius, a single messenger from God is involved rather than two. In this case it is a woman named Tabitha. While the scenario is strikingly similar to Rev 11:3–13, the differences are such that there appears to be no literary relationship between the two texts. As in Rev 11:7, there is a single enemy, who is the eschatological adversary. This adversary appears in the ‘holy places,’ i.e., ‘Jerusalem,’ and Tabitha dons a special linen garment (suggesting purity and priesthood) and meets the adversary. Unlike Rev 11:3–13, but similar to Apoc. El. 4:8–12, Tabitha reproves the adversary with a brief speech, which angers him (note the parallel to Rev 12:17). He pursues her to the east (again cf. Rev 12:6, 13–14) and kills her and (using the vampire motif) sucks her blood. That he is suddenly back in Jerusalem with her body suggests that the italicized portions in the translation above have been interpolated into an earlier text. After she has been thrown onto the temple, she will rise from the dead the next morning (an interval of one day, not three or three and one-half days) and again reprove the adversary with a brief speech to the effect that throwing her on the temple has provided salvation for the people, a motif drawn from Jewish martyrological literature. Further, nothing is said about an ascension to heaven.

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical

Although some points of similarity exist between Revelation and this text, the differences along with the time frames for both argue strongly against any kind of literary connection of the two with one another. The dependency upon the Apocalypse of Elijah (= the Coptic version of 1 Elijah) upon the OT traditions of Elijah’s ascension into heaven, 2 Kings 2:1–18, and of Enoch’s, Gen. 5:21–24, provided fertile ground for later speculation of divine communication through these two to the Hebrew people.

Another church father, Lactantius (ca. 224–320 AD), contains possibly a paraphrase of Rev. 11 but with significant differences.¹⁶ Close examination, however, suggests instead of Revelation he utilized a Persian source, the [Oracles of Hystaspes](#), for his depiction of the prophetic witness at the end to time, even though it has echoes similar to Revelation 11.¹⁷ Yet firm definitive

Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 589–590.]

¹⁶Lactantius, [Divine Institutes](#), 7.17.1–8

Now, when the end of these times is imminent, a great prophet [magnus propheta] will be sent from God to convert men to a recognition of God, and he will have the power of working miracles. Whenever men will not hear him, he will close heaven and will hold back the rains; he will change water into blood, and will torture them with thirst and hunger; and fire will proceed from his mouth and burn whoever will attempt to hurt him. By these prodigies and powers, he will convert many to the worship of God. When these works of his have been carried out, another king will rise from Syria, born of the evil spirit, the overthrower and destroyer of the human race, who will destroy the remains of that previous evil one together with itself. This one will fight against the prophet of God; he will conquer and kill him and suffer him to lie unburied. But after the third day, he will rise again and will be taken into heaven while all look on and marvel.

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 590–591.]

¹⁷“But there are, in fact, several reasons for supposing that Lactantius is dependent here on the [Oracles of Hystaspes](#) or some Jewish source and not on Rev 11:3–13, based on similarities and differences between these two texts. (1) A single prophet is found in Lactantius (who probably is dependent on an Elijah tradition); two prophets are found in Revelation. (2) The result of closing the heavens and turning the waters into blood in Lactantius is to torment people with hunger and thirst, while this effect is absent from Revelation. (3) The narrative in Revelation is consistently told with verbs in past tenses, while that in Lactantius is told using future tenses. (4) The text in Revelation contains a number of explanatory glosses (see Comment), none of which appear in the account of Lactantius. (5) The narrative in Lactantius continues on to describe events similar to those in Rev 13:1–10 (see Form/Structure/Setting under Rev 13:1–18), but with no apparent allusions to Rev 11:14–12:17. (6) The concluding earthquake that destroys one-tenth of the city, kills seven thousand people, and results in the mass conversion of survivors in Rev 11:13 is not mentioned in Lactantius, which suggests that this element has been added by John. (7) There is no mention in Lactantius of the variations on three and one-half found in Rev 11:3, 9, 11, namely 1,260 days (v 3) and three and one-half days (vv 9, 11), which also suggests that these have been added by John. (8) There is no mention in

conclusions about his sources cannot be made.¹⁸

What these texts illustrate from a literary genre perspective is the circulation of somewhat similar ideas about end time activities. These were found in Jewish, Persian, and Christian circles. How familiar John was of those traditions in place before the end of the first Christian century cannot be determined with certainty. John's initial readers were likely familiar to some extent with the Persian and Jewish traditions, which would have provided some background interpretive framework for understanding John's depiction in 11:1-13.

Literary Setting: As already alluded to, the literary context for Rev. 11:1-14 is rather easy to determine. At the first level of connection, it is closely linked to 10:1-11 as the continuation of the series of images and events in this Interlude between the sixth (9:13-21) and the seventh (11:15-19) trumpets. The transition statement in 11:14 signals that this interlude of 10:1-11:13 is a part of the sixth trumpet. It comes as that "pause" before the devastating unleashing of the seven bowls of wrath (15:1-16:21) which is triggered by the blowing of the seventh trumpet (11:15-19). The longer Interlude in chapters twelve, thirteen, and fourteen help set up the implementation of the divine wrath in the seven bowls of wrath after the blowing of the seventh trumpet.

This literary setting for the Interlude of 10:1-11:13 is somewhat parallel to the Interlude of 7:1-17 between the sixth (6:12-17) and seventh (8:1) seals in the preceding series of sevens. It continues the sense of a

Lactantius of the city or its inhabitants, though these elements are essential for Rev 11:3-13 (K. Berger, *Auferstehung*, 71). (9) The identification of the enemies of the two witnesses as two separate entities, the beast and the representatives of all nations found in Rev 11:3-13, is missing in Lactantius. (10) The preliminary successes of the witness in converting his hearers has no parallel in Rev 11:3-13. (11) Lactantius places this event "when the end of these times is imminent," while there is no explicit link with the eschaton in Rev 11:3-13."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 592-593.]

¹⁸"The determination of the source or sources used by Lactantius is problematic. It is perhaps a likely conjecture that a Christian compiler, writing in Greek and probably dependent to a certain extent on Porphyry, had placed the *Oracles of Hystaspes* together with certain *Sibylline Oracles*, the *Oracles of Clarian Apollo*, and the catalogue of Sibyls, which originated with Varro (Ogilvie, Lactantius, 54-55). It was this compilation upon which Lactantius was dependent." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 593.]

^{11.1}

And

327 was given to me a measuring rod

like a staff

saying,

"Rise up

| and

measure the temple of God

divine "pause" before the seventh seal or trumpet that opens the door for the next series of sevens. That theme of pause is more pronounced in 10:1-11:13 than in 7:1-17, but present in both interludes.

With each series of sevens the sense of impending doom grows. For John this is both literary and theological. Throughout human history God has imposed His wrath upon sinful people, both as individuals and as groups of people. Typically God begins with warnings to repent or else face consequences. And typically no repentance is manifested that necessitates the implementation of God's judgment and wrath. On occasion, especially with His chosen people Israel in the Old Testament era, the punishments would come in limited forms at the beginning. But with a stiffening resistance to repentance these judgments would intensify. Eventually as the eighth century prophets and onward were called by God to announce, the full fury of God's wrath lay ahead and would destroy the Israelite nations of both the northern and southern kingdoms separated from each other by about two centuries. The exilic and postexilic prophets such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel continued this emphasis for future days when the stubborn refusal of the covenant people to follow God's ways emerged again. The central concept of the Day of the Lord provided the reference point for all of these prophets. And will provide John a reference point later on in Revelation as it is re-interpreted to refer to the end of human history.

With the interlude of 10:1-11:13, we sense activities both by God's servants and by evil forces that are paving the way for the last final outpouring of God's wrath in temporal judgment in the seven bowls of wrath. Clearly the interlude events have an eschatological tone but to limit these events to the final days of human history is simply wrong and misleading. They cover a much, much longer period of human history and define how God deals with a sinful world since the Garden of Eden. But just as the message of the OT prophets beginning with Amos in the eighth century stresses, there is a rising crescendo of intensity of God's wrath poured out on sinful humanity. This second Interlude in 10:1-11:13 allows us to 'catch our breath' so to speak in anticipation of the full force of divine wrath yet to come.

Literary Structure: The block diagram in literal English reflects the internal arrangement of ideas in the Greek text of this text.

| and
| the altar
| and
| the ones worshipping
| in it.

11.2 | And
the outside court of the temple disregard,
| and
it do not measure
| because it was given to the gentiles
| and
| the holy city they will trample
| months
| forty
| and
| two.

11.3 | and
I will give to my two witnesses
| and
they will prophesy
days
one thousand two hundred sixty
clothed with sackcloth.

328 11.4 **These are the two olive trees**
and
the two lamp stands
which before the Lord of the earth stand.

11.5 And
if someone them wishes to harm
329 **fire comes out**
of their mouths
and
330 **it consumes their enemies;**
and
if someone them should wish to harm,
331 **thus it is necessary for them to be killed.**

332 11.6 **These have the authority**
to shut up the sky
in order that rain may not fall
during the days of their prophecy,
and
333 **authority they have**
| over the waters
to turn them
| into blood
| and
to strike the earth
with every plague
as often as they may desire.

11.7 And
whenever ends their witness
334 **the beast . . . will make . . . war**
who comes up |
out of the|bottomless pit
against them

and
335 **he will conquer them**
and
336 **he will kill them.**

11.8 And
337 **their corpses (will be)**
on the street
of the city
the great
which is called prophetically Sodom
| and
| Egypt,
where also their Lord was crucified.

11.9 And
338 **they will see . . . their corpses**
out of the peoples
| and
| tribes
| and
| tongues
| and
| nations
days three and one-half
and
339 **their corpses they do not allow to be buried**
in a tomb.

11.10 And
340 **those dwelling . . . rejoice**
upon the earth |
over them
and
341 **they celebrate**
and
342 **gifts they send to one another,**
because these two prophets had tormented those dwelling
upon the earth.

11.11 And
343 **a spirit of life . . . entered**
out of God into them,
and
344 **they stood**
upon their feet,
and
345 **great fear fell**
upon those observing them.

11.12 And
346 **they heard a loud voice**
out of heaven
saying to them,
"Come up here."

And
347 **they rose up**

into heaven
in the cloud
and
348 their enemies observed them.

11.13 And
349 there happened a great earthquake
and
350 the tenth of the city fell
and
351 there died
in the earthquake
named people seven thousand
and
352 the rest become overwhelmed with fear
and
353 they gave glory to the God
of heaven.

354 11.14 The second woe is passed;
behold
355 the third woe is coming soon.

emies. The beast will arise out of the abyss and eventually kill these two witnesses (#s 334-336). The corpses of these witnesses will be on display and provoke great celebration by people on earth (#s 337-342). But after three days they will come back to life and ascend to heaven to the amazement of all who watch (#s 343-353).

The third transitional unit contains two statements, with one referencing the completion of the second woe (354) and the second projecting the coming of the third woe (355).

Exegesis of the Text:

The above three fold division provides the most natural structuring of the exegesis of this passage. This we will follow.

A. The voice speaks to John, vv. 1-3

11.1 Καὶ ἐδόθη μοι κάλαμος ὅμοιος ῥάβδῳ, λέγων· ἔγειρε καὶ μέτρησον τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας ἐν αὐτῷ. 2 καὶ τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν ἔξωθεν τοῦ ναοῦ ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν καὶ μὴ αὐτὴν μετρήσης, ὅτι ἐδόθη τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν πατήσουσιν μῆνας τεσσαράκοντα [καὶ] δύο. 3 Καὶ δώσω τοῖς δυσὶν μάρτυσίν μου καὶ προφητεύσουσιν ἡμέρας χιλίας διακοσίας ἐξήκοντα περιβεβλημένοι σάκκους.

11.1 Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Come and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, 2 but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample over the holy city for forty-two months. 3 And I will grant my two witnesses authority to prophesy for

Analysis of Rhetorical Structure:

Clearly this longer text subdivides into three units of material. The first in statement 327b centers on the command given to John to measure the temple in Jerusalem. The second in statements 327c through 353 centers on the two witnesses authorized by God to proclaim God's message to those on the earth. The third is the transition assertion in statements 354 - 355.

In the first subunit of statement 327, this unusually long sentence for Revelation contains the instructions given to John to measure the temple, but also the promise to authorize two witnesses on the earth. All of this is contained in the very lengthy direct discourse.

In the second subunit of statements 328-353, the authorization of the two witnesses is described. They are first identified in # 328. This is followed by a warning against any who would try to harm them in #s 329 - 331. Statements 332 and 333 define the limits of their authorization to inflict harm on their en-



one thousand two hundred sixty days, wearing sack-cloth."

The narrative introductory statement, Καὶ ἐδόθη μοι κάλαμος ὅμοιος ῥάβδῳ, λέγων, sets up the lengthy instructions given to John in vv. 1b-3. The statement does not follow the usual introductory patterns and instead serves as a continuation of 10:1-11.

The passive voice ἐδόθη, was given, reflects the source of the action as coming from God. This helps explain the rather strange modal participle λέγων, saying, that is attached to the verb. Although impossible to structure this in English, in ancient Greek John felt it okay to set up a speaking assertion to the passive verb with the understanding that the source of the giving action was also the source of the speaking. Interestingly, some later copyists of this text did not understand what John was doing and inserted after ῥάβδῳ καὶ εἰστίκει ὁ ἄγγελος, and the angel stood, saying, (See above [External History](#) for details).

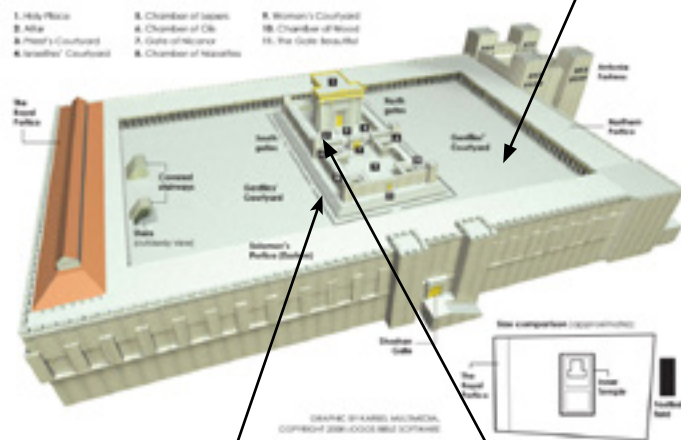
John was given a κάλαμος which was a measuring instrument something like a modern tape measure. To be sure that his readers understand what the instrument was John compares it to a ῥάβδω, rod. The image and the measuring action are drawn from Ezekiel 40:3 where a הדמנ הנקו is translated by the LXX as κάλαμος μέτρου.¹⁹

In the direct discourse several instructions are given to John by God regarding the measuring activity:

ἔγειρε
 | καὶ
 μέτρησον τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ
 | καὶ
 | τὸ θυσιαστήριον
 | καὶ
 | τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας
 | ἐν αὐτῷ.
 |
 | καὶ
 τὴν ἀύλην τὴν ἔξωθεν τοῦ ναοῦ ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν
 | καὶ
 μὴ αὐτὴν μετρήσης,
 ὅτι ἐδόθη τοῖς ἔθνεσιν,
 καὶ
 τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν πατήσουσιν
 /-----|
 μῆνας
 τεσσαράκοντα
 [καὶ]
 δύο.

Herod's "Second" Temple on the Temple Mount

King Herod the Great began renovations on the Second Temple approximately 20-19 BC. The entire temple expansion, including the massive Temple Mount, was not completed until approximately 62-61 AD, only to be destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.



John is told four things to do or not to do. He is told to rise up and measure the temple of God, ἔγειρε καὶ μέτρησον τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ. John evidently is still 'on earth' in continuation of the narrative perspective in 10:8-11. After just having been told he must proclaim God's message (10:11), now he is instructed to measure the temple. But he is also to measure the altar (τὸ θυσιαστήριον) and then the people worshipping in the temple (τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας ἐν αὐτῷ). This is unlike what Ezekiel experienced in his vision. In the second pair of instructions John is told in more detail to not

¹⁹This also compares to Zechariah 2:1-13 where in a vision the prophet sees a young man planning to measure Jerusalem.

measure the outer Court of the Gentiles which was not a part of the temple proper. A twofold reason is given for this: ὅτι (1) ἐδόθη τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καὶ (2) τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν πατήσουσιν μῆνας τεσσαράκοντα [καὶ] δύο, because it has been given over to the gentiles and the holy city will be trampled upon 42 months.

The temple etc. described here is Herod's temple in Jerusalem that existed until the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.²⁰ Although Solomon's temple included the Court of Gentiles, it hardly compared to the one in Herod's temple.²¹ The specific altar referenced

20 "The phrase τὸ ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, 'temple of God,' is used elsewhere in Revelation only in 11:19, where it is qualified with the phrase ὁ ἐν τῇ οὐρανῇ, 'which is in heaven,' to distinguish it from the earthly temple of God in Jerusalem referred to here. The term ναός has a number of meanings but is frequently used of the temple building itself, including the holy place or sanctuary and the holy of holies. The temple described here is certainly the earthly temple in Jerusalem, for the distinction between the temple proper (ναός) and the forecourt holds for both the temple of Solomon and the Herodian temple, though the real or imagined architecture is somewhat more complex. In addition to the holy of holies and the holy place, the temple of Solomon had two courts: the inner court surrounded by a wall (1 Kgs 6:36; 7:12) and the outer court, which surrounded the royal palace and the temple precincts (1 Kgs 7:9, 12); see TDOT 5:135. The temple described in Ezek 40-42, modeled after the temple of Solomon, also had two courts, an oblong inner court (Ezek 40:23) and a square outer court (Ezek 40:17-20). The Herodian temple, described both in Josephus and in m. Middot, consisted of four courts (following TDOT 5:137). The inner court of priests was separated from the court of Israelites by a barrier one cubit high. The court of Israelites was adjacent to the court of women. This whole inner precinct (the holy of holies, the holy place, and the three courts) was enclosed by a high wall with gates. The very large court of Gentiles, essentially a huge marketplace, lay without. The term τὸ ἱερόν tended to be used of the entire temple complex, including the three areas into which the inner court of Herod's temple was divided, the court of priests, the court of Israelites and the court of women (m. Kelim 1:8; m. Mid. 2:5; Jos. J. W. 5.198-99; Ag. Ap. 2.103-4; see Schürer, History 2:296-99); these three areas together with the temple itself constituted the ἱερόν. The ναός, with the temple and its three courts, was separated from the outer court (called החצר החיצונה *hehāšēr hahīšōnā*; LXX ἡ αὐλή ἡ ἔξωτέρα), or ὁ πρῶτος περίβολος, 'first court' (Ant. 15.417), by a low stone barrier that enclosed an area known as the rampart (היל *hēl*) and upon which were posted warnings that Gentiles were forbidden to pass through on pain of death (Ant. 15.410-17; J. W. 5.193-94; 6.124-26; Philo Leg. 212; m. Mid. 2:3; see Eph 2:14; for a plan of the Herodian temple, see Finegan, Archaeology, 117). One of these inscriptions has survived complete, along with fragments of two others (CIJ 2:1400; OGIS, 598; see Schürer, History 2:285-86 n. 57); the complete transcription reads (Finegan, Archaeology, 119-20):

"No foreigner is to enter within the balustrade and enclosure around the temple area. Whoever is caught will have himself to blame for his death which will follow."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 605-606.]

²¹"The outer court, which could be included in the designation τὸ ἱερόν (Mark 11:15-16; Matt 21:12; Luke 19:45, 47; John 10:23; Page 13

here is either the incense altar or the altar of burnt offerings.²² The exclusion of the Court of the Gentiles is mandated by God in speaking to John. The terminolo-

see Jos. J. W. 2.400) and was later called the court of the Gentiles, was bounded by covered porticoes, open toward the inside but closed toward the outside, along the perimeter of the temple mount (the portico on the east side was called Solomon's portico; see John 10:23). The entire *temenos* (sacred precincts) measured approximately 1,455 feet along the western wall (fully excavated by 1992), 1,035 feet along the northern wall, 1,536 feet along the eastern wall, and 912 feet along the southern wall (Ant. 15.396). The Royal Stoa, a triple portico, was located along the southern wall of the temple mount (Ant. 15.411–416; J. W. 5.190–9). This outer forecourt or temple *esplanade* eventually came to be called the court of the Gentiles and was used for commercial activities (Mark 11:15–17; Matt 21:12–13; Luke 19:45–46). The Temple Scroll (11QTemple) describes the second courtyard as a square area 480 cubits long on each side and off-limits for women (11QTemple 38–39), while the third courtyard is described as a square area 1,600 cubits long on each side (11QTemple 40).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 606.]

²²“Here the term τὸ θυσιαστήριον, which normally means ‘altar,’ can refer either to the altar of incense (8:3[2x], 5; 9:13) or to the altar of burnt offerings (6:9; 14:18; 16:7; see Comment on 6:9), though the presence of the definite article suggests that here it refers to the altar of burnt offering (Swete, 132; Zahn, 424; Beckwith, 590; Loisy, 205; Allo, 129; TDNT 4:887–88). A number of interpreters insist that the altar of incense is referred to here (Bauckham, “Conversion,” 269; Giesen [1997] 242), though the fact that both the holy of holies and the holy place (where the altar of incense is located) constitute the ναὸς of the temple precinct makes the reference to measuring τὸ θυσιαστήριον redundant if the altar of incense is meant. The altar of incense was located in the holy place, separated by the *pārōket* or curtain from the most holy place, both rooms together constituting the ναὸς or temple. In the Herodian temple, the altar of burnt offerings was located in the court of the priests, separated from the court of Israelites and the court of women, though the sacrificial ritual could be observed from both courts. A more substantial barrier separated the fourth court, the court of Gentiles, from the other three courts. τὸ θυσιαστήριον here appears to refer to the room in which the altar was situated, i.e., the ‘altar room,’ ‘holy place,’ or (as translated here) ‘altar area.’ This meaning is required by the context, i.e., καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας ἐν αὐτῷ, ‘and those who worship in it,’ unless ἐν can be construed to mean ‘near, in the vicinity of’ (BAGD, 258; I.1.c). In Paral. Jer. 2:10; 9:7, the context requires that the phrase ἐν τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ mean ‘in the sanctuary’ or ‘in the altar area’ (the latter is the translation in R. A. Kraft and A. E. Purinton, *Paraleipomena Jeremioi* [Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1972] 15, 45). The same meaning is required in Apoc. Ezra 6:14, “And the prophet said, ‘My feet walked in the sanctuary [ἐν τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ].’” A parallel usage occurs in Ignatius Eph. 5:2–3 (see Trall. 7:2), ἐὰν μὴ τις ἦ ἐντὸς τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου, ‘unless a person be within the sanctuary’ (Bauer-Paulsen, Ignatius, 32, suggest this meaning also for θυσιαστήριον in Rev 11:1 and 14:18). Schoedel (Ignatius, 55) understands θυσιαστήριον in Ignatius Eph. 5:2–3 to simply mean ‘altar,’ used in a figurative sense. In both Ignatius Eph. 5:2–3 and Trall. 7:2, the θυσιαστήριον is a metaphor for the Christian community in subordination to the bishop (Wehr, Unsterblichkeit, 69–70).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 606–607.]

gy used here is rather common and easy to identify.²³

The twofold reason for excluding the measuring of the Court of the Gentiles alludes to the pagans having overrun it and polluted it. The combining of the aorist passive ἐδόθη and the future active πατήσουσιν carries the idea of the gentiles having been given permission to trample over this outer court.²⁴ A very close paral-

²³“The phrase ἐκβαλε ἔξωθεν, literally ‘cast it outside,’ translated literally in the Vulgate as *eice foras*, is problematic if taken literally (Feuillet, NTS 4 [1957–58] 186, however, exaggerates the problem); instead it must be figuratively understood to mean ‘exclude’ rather than ‘cast out,’ for here ἐκβαλε = μὴ μετρήσης. Feuillet is correct, however, in suggesting that the phrase ἐκβάλλειν ἔξω is normally applied to people who are expelled or excluded (Luke 4:29; Acts 7:58; John 9:34–35 12:31), which coheres with a metaphorical interpretation of this passage construed as referring to excluded people. Luke 13:28, part of the conclusion of the parable of the narrow door, is particularly appropriate, for it refers to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and the unfaithful cast out (ἐκβαλλομένους ἔξω; Feuillet, NTS 4 [1957–58] 186–87). Bauckham, convinced that vv 1–2 are dependent on John’s reading of Dan 8:11–14, has argued that the problematic phrase καὶ τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν ἔξωθεν τοῦ ναοῦ ἐκβαλε ἔξωθεν is John’s translation of the last three words of Dan 8:11, וְהוּשַׁל מְכוֹן מִקְדָּשׁוֹ, ‘and the place of his sanctuary was cast down’ (“Conversion,” 269–70). Since וְהוּשַׁל would mean ‘cast down, overthrow’ if used of the temple itself, John understands the phrase to refer to the court of the temple. From this perspective, argues Bauckham, ἐκβάλλειν is an appropriate translation, for John assumes that the court of the temple has been “cast out” because the Gentiles have defiled it. In Bauckham’s favor, it may be said that the phrase וְהוּשַׁל מְכוֹן מִקְדָּשׁוֹ, in Dan 8:11 cannot refer to the destruction of the temple, which was not torn down by Antiochus Ephiphanes; rather the phrase probably refers to the desecration of the altar of burnt sacrifices (Collins, Comm. Daniel, 334). Both the LXX and Theod translate וְהוּשַׁל with ἐρημοῦν, ‘to make desolate, lay waste,’ indicating that they fully understood the context. On the other hand, his explanation has weaknesses. First, the Hebrew verb וְהוּשַׁל is never used in the OT in the sense that Bauckham argues; the passages to which he refers all use other Hebrew words. Second, ἐκβαλε, ‘exclude,’ is a second-person singular aorist imperative, describing an action that the heavenly voice commands John to take.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 607.]

²⁴“The relationship between the ὅτι, ‘for,’ clause and the καί, ‘and,’ clause that immediately follows is problematic. One solution is to regard ἐδόθη, ‘will be permitted,’ as a passive of divine activity and the καί clause as equivalent to an indirect object, i.e., as an alternate way of expressing the idea ‘because God allowed the Gentiles to conquer the holy city.’ A second (and preferred) solution is to regard καί + future indicative as a coordinate clause, which forms the subject of the verb ἐδόθη (i.e., as equivalent to the simple infinitive [e.g., T. Iss. 5:8, τῷ Γὰδ ἐδόθη ἀπολέσαι, ‘to destroy was permitted to Gad’], or a ὅτι, ‘that,’ or ἵνα, ‘that,’ clause [Rev 9:5, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἵνα μὴ ἀποκτείνωσιν αὐτούς, ‘not to kill them was permitted to them’]), i.e., literally, ‘to conquer the holy city was permitted to the Gentiles’ (Beckwith, 599, gives this as a possibility; Bousset [1906] 317). The construction in v 3 is similar, though not identical: δώσω τοῖς ὄσιν μάρτυσίν μου καὶ

lel to this concept is Luke 21:24.²⁵ Both Rev. 11:2 and Luke 21:24 are allusions to Zech. 12:3.²⁶ The enemies of God's people will viciously oppose the proclaiming of God's message.²⁷ Yet their time of polluting the outer court is limited to 42 months.²⁸ Although clearly John

προφητεύουσιν, 'I will permit my two witnesses to prophesy.' A third solution is to regard the logical subject of ἐδόθη as ἡ αὐλή, 'the temple court' (Charles, 1:278), i.e., 'because the outer court has been given over to the Gentiles, and they will trample the holy city ...' [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 607–608.]

²⁵**Luke 21:24c.** καὶ Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἔσται πατουμένη ὑπὸ ἐθνῶν, ἄχρι οὗ πληρωθῶσιν καιροὶ ἐθνῶν. and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

²⁶**Zech. 12:3** (LXX). καὶ ἔσται ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ θήσομαι τὴν Ἱερουσαλὴμ λίθον καταπατούμενον πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν· πᾶς ὁ καταπατῶν αὐτὴν ἐμπαίξων ἐμπαίζεται, καὶ ἐπισυναχθήσονται ἐπ' αὐτὴν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῆς γῆς.†

On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it shall grievously hurt themselves. And all the nations of the earth shall come together against it.

²⁷“A close parallel is found in Luke 21:24, καὶ Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἔσται πατουμένη ὑπὸ ἐθνῶν, ἄχρι οὗ πληρωθῶσιν καιροὶ ἐθνῶν, 'and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled' (see Vos, *Synoptic Traditions*, 120–25). Both v 2 and Luke 21:24 are allusions to LXX Zech 12:3, 'And it will come to pass on that day I will make Jerusalem a stone trampled by all the Gentiles [καταπατούμενον πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν].' Since *ἕβεν μα'āmāsā*, 'a stone of burden,' i.e., 'a heavy stone,' in Zech 12:3 is incorrectly translated by καταπατεῖσθαι in the LXX phrase λίθον καταπατούμενον, 'a trampled stone,' the author appears to be dependent on the LXX rather than the MT. Cf. Pss. Sol. 8:12, 'They walked on the place of sacrifice [Syriac 'temple'] of the Lord [ἐπατοῦσαν τὸ θυσιαστήριον κυρίου].' The Greek verbs πατεῖν and καταπατεῖν are frequently used in Jewish sources for the conquest of Jerusalem and the profanation of the temple (Isa 63:18; Dan 8:13; Pss. Sol. 2:2, 19; 8:12; 17:22; 1 Macc 3:45, 51; 4:60; 3 Macc 2:18 [here trampling means destruction]; 2 Apoc. Bar. 67:2; Jos. J. W. 4.171, 261; see TDNT 5:940–45). The same motif occurs in 4QpNah 3–4, 1:3–4 (tr. Horgan, *Pesharim*, 163), '[but God did not give Jerusalem] into the power of the kings of Greece from Antiochus until the rise of the Kittim; but afterwards [the city] will be trampled [and will be given into the hand of the rulers of the Kittim]' (see the commentary on these lines in Horgan, *Pesharim*, 173–74). Barn. 16:5 claims that 'it was made manifest that the city and the temple and the people of Israel were to be delivered up' (freely citing sections of 1 Enoch 89:56–58).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 608.]

²⁸“The period of forty-two months (also mentioned in Rev 13:5, where it is the period during which the beast exercises authority; see Comment there) is a symbolic apocalyptic number for a divinely restricted period of time (often a limited period of eschatological tribulation), ultimately derived from Dan 7:25; 12:7. Forty-two months is equivalent to three and one-half years, a period of time that the author expresses differently elsewhere as 1,260 days (11:3; 12:6) and as 'a time, times, and half a time' (12:14). He uses the number three and one-half for the number of days between the death and the ascension of the two witnesses (11:9, 11). Therefore, while John uses three different time designations to express three and one-half years, the reference to 'a time, times, and half a time' in 12:14 makes it clear that he is alluding to Daniel (7:25;

is working off prophetic numbers,²⁹ it is interesting that the Roman siege of Jerusalem lasted approximately 42 months in 66 - 70 AD before they took the city and destroyed it and the temple.³⁰

The image of 'measuring' surfaces numerous times in the Bible as a metaphor for either destruction

12:7). In Dan 7:25, both the LXX and Theodotion read ἕως καιροῦ καὶ καιρῶν καὶ ἕως ἡμίσεος καιροῦ, 'for a time and times and a half time,' while LXX Dan 12:7 (εἰς καιρὸν καὶ καιροῦς καὶ ἡμισυ καιροῦ, 'for a time and times and a half time') differs somewhat from Theod Dan 12:7 (εἰς καιρὸν καιρῶν καὶ ἡμισυ καιροῦ, 'for a time of times and a half time'). It is often claimed that the Aramaic phrase *ἕבן ופלג ודני עב-דע .ad .iddān wē.iddānīn ūplag .iddān* in Dan 7:25 is a cryptic way of saying three and one-half years (BDB, 1105), just as the equivalent Hebrew phrase *למועד מועד ודני עב-דע .ad .iddān wē.iddānīn ūplag .iddān* in Dan 12:7 is said to mean 'for a set time, times, and a half = 3 1/2 appointed times = half the prophetic week of years' (BDB, 417). However, *ἕבן .iddān*, 'period,' is not just a substitute for *שנה šānā*, 'year'; rather it envisages a long period (a period, two periods, four periods = seven periods, i.e., eternity), which is suddenly and unexpectedly cut in half (a period, two periods, one-half period); see Goldingay, *Daniel*, 181. According to Justin, Jewish biblical interpreters speculated that the term καιρός *מֵעַד מֵעַד .mo.ēd* in Dan 12:7 meant one hundred years (Dial. 32.3). It is likely that the phrase 'a time, times, and half a time' is purposefully vague, for it is both specific and indeterminate at the same time (Stahl, "Zeit," 480–93). The real issue, of course, is what the phrase might have meant to the author of Revelation. The Aramaic phrase *עבני ושבע ודני wēšib.ā .iddānīn* is literally translated ἐπτὰ καιροί, 'seven periods,' in Theod Dan 4:32 (MT 4:22), while LXX Dan 4:32 (followed by Ant. 10.216) has ἔτη ἐπτά, 'seven years.' In a first-century A.D. composition, the Vitae Prophetarum, the author claims that ὁ Δανιὴλ τὰ ἐπτὰ ἔτη ἃ εἶπεν ἐπτά καιροῦς ἐποίησε γενέσθαι ἐπτὰ μῆνας, 'Daniel made the seven years (which he called seven periods) become seven months.' There is then ample evidence to suggest that the strange formula in Dan 7:25; 12:7 was understood to mean three and one-half years in early Judaism. The number 'three and one-half days' (an allusion to three and one-half years) is used in Rev 11:9, 11 as the period between the death and the resurrection of the two witnesses. In the present context it is relevant that almost exactly three and one-half years elapsed between the beginning of the first Jewish revolt (fall of A.D. 66) and the siege of Jerusalem (Wellhausen, *Skizzen*, 222; Schwier, *Tempel*, 172). Gunkel disputed the view that three and one-half (as half of seven) was an unlucky number (Schöpfung und Chaos, 266–68), and Kittel ("Rundezahlen," 31–47) cited a number of rabbinic passages in which three and one-half is not an apocalyptic symbol but simply a "round" number for an extended period of time (e.g., Lev. Rab. 19; y. Šabb. 7.2; b. Sanh. 97b). It is in this context that the three and one-half years of famine during the time of Elijah (mentioned only in Luke 4:25 and Jas 5:17) should be interpreted.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 609–610.]

²⁹Note that among the prophets 42 months equals three and one-half years, as well as 1,260 days. Additionally, these numbers symbolically signal a long period of time, which has been cut in half.

³⁰Also of interest is the 42 month famine of Elijah mentioned in Luke 4:25 and James 5:17, but called three and one-half years.

or preservation of what is measured.³¹ Contextually the

³¹“Measuring” can be a metaphor for destruction (2 Sam 8:2a; 2 Kgs 21:13; Amos 7:7–9; Isa 34:11; Lam 2:8) as well as for preservation (2 Sam 8:2b; Ezek 40:1–6; 42:20; Zech 2:5), though the latter is obviously intended here. The theme of divine protection calls to mind Rev 7:3–8, where the 144,000 are sealed for their protection (9:4), as well as the flight of the woman to a place of safety in the wilderness in Rev 12:6, 14. The view that protection in Revelation means not security against physical suffering and death but rather support in and through suffering and death and protection from spiritual danger (Caird, 132; Mounce, 219; Sweet, 182; Harrington, 119) seems to me to subvert the meaning of the text. Further, the two witnesses in vv 3–13 experience just such divine protection from physical harm until their testimony is complete, i.e., when the period of 1,260 days is over (vv 3, 7). The measuring of the eschatological temple in Ezek 40–42 is a device for providing a detailed description of the future temple. Measuring is the common theme that links these prophetic and apocalyptic texts, and measuring can be a means of indicating the essential structure of a thing, which in this case involves the holiness of that which is measured (L. L. Thompson, *Revelation*, 88–89), or it can indicate the preservation or destruction of that which is measured (Isa 34:11; 2 Kgs 21:13; Amos 7:7–9). In Ezek 40:3, a man (probably an angel) uses the measuring rod (as in Rev 20:15), and it is also a man, but again presumably an angel, who does the measuring in the Qumran fragments of an apocalypse on the heavenly Jerusalem (see for a brief discussion of the various groups of fragments making up this work). This “Description of the New Jerusalem” text is dependent to some extent on Ezekiel for the general structure of the town, though Ezekiel has a square city of modest dimensions, while the ‘New Jerusalem’ texts envisage the city as an enormous rectangle (García Martínez, *Qumran*, 186). In Zech 2:1–2 it is a man (probably an angel) who is on his way to measure Jerusalem. Measurements of the Jerusalem temple are also found in 11QTemple 3–48 and in m. Middot. Here in Rev 11:1–2 it is John who is commanded to do the measuring. In a very difficult passage in 1 Enoch 61:1–5, angels are given long cords either for measuring the righteous themselves for their preservation or for measuring the future heritage of the righteous on analogy to the tribal land allotments (Josh 13–19) and to reveal the secrets of the depths of the earth. The present imperative ἔγρε, ‘come!’ ‘get up!’ is formulaic when followed by a second verb in the imperative and functions as a call to action to a person without assuming that he or she is actually sitting or lying down (Matt 9:5; Mark 2:9, 11; 3:3; 10:49; Luke 5:23–24; 6:8; John 5:8; Eph 5:14). Grammatically, John is told to measure three things, the temple, the holy place, and those who worship near it (ἐν αὐτῷ), i.e., near the temple or near the altar or holy place. Measuring worshipers is often thought to make little sense and therefore suggests symbolic interpretation (Feuillet, *NTS* 4 [1957–58] 185; W. J. Harrington, *Apocalypse*, 151). However, since the verb μετρεῖν can mean ‘count’ as well as ‘measure,’ this is not really problematic. This could be an example of zeugma, in which one verb is used with two objects but suits only one (BDF §479). The context suggests that this task of measuring connotes preservation since what John is expressly told not to measure is the outer court, which will be given over to the nations (v 2). This digression (between the sixth and seventh trumpets) with its emphasis on preservation thus corresponds to the digression following the opening of the sixth seal in which the sealing of the 144,000 in 7:1–17 symbolizes their preservation. In other Jewish apocalyptic scenarios, there is no mention of the protection of the Jerusalem

preservation idea is intended here, and this pericope continues the theme of God’s protecting His people on earth living through the outpouring of divine judgments. It first appeared in 7:3–8 with the protecting of the 144,000³² and will continue to be repeated in 12:6, 14 in the flight of the woman to a place of safety in the wilderness. Consistently God’s protection does not mean immunity from suffering in these difficult times. Rather, it means that God stands with His people in such times to sustain them and guide them through difficult times. This is clearly the theme of the two witnesses here in chapter eleven.

What is not mentioned in the narrative is whether or not John carried out this assignment to measure. The text somewhat assumes that he did, but it is not clear on this point. This leaves open several interpretive issues that have been debated vigorously.³³ Yet John could

temple from conquest by the nations.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 604–605.]

³²“Thus the measuring comes to be practically synonymous with the sealing in 7:4 sqq. A related meaning is attached to measuring like 1 Enoch 61:1–5.” [R.H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St John*, vol. 1, *International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1920), 275.]

³³A. The Symbolic Act of Measuring the Temple (Rev 11:1–2)

1. The Main Issues. There are several clusters of interpretive problems presented by vv 1–2: (a) Is Rev 11:1–2 based on an earlier prophetic oracle formulated before the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, perhaps by Zealots, or was the brief narrative of the symbolic measuring of the temple formulated by the author decades after the temple had been destroyed? (b) Is the temple referred to in vv 1–2 the physical temple in Jerusalem, or is it the heavenly temple? (c) How should the apparently symbolic references to the “temple,” “altar,” “worshipers,” “outer court,” and “holy city” be interpreted? The following discussion will attempt to show the range of possible answers to each of these problems.

2. The Origin of Rev 11:1–2. Rev 11:1–2 rests somewhat uneasily in its present context. It is tenuously linked with the immediately preceding unit of text in 10:8–11 (the commission to prophesy), in that it is a symbolic prophetic action enacting both salvation and judgment and can therefore be considered the first step in carrying out the prophetic commission of 10:11. It is more clearly linked to the text unit that follows in 11:3–13 (the story of the two witnesses) by the temporal reference to forty-two months specified for the subjugation of the outer court and the holy city to the Gentiles (v 2), which is equivalent to the 1,260 days of the ministry of the two witnesses (v 3), and by the reference to “the holy city” in v 2, which is matched by the reference to “the great city” in v 8 (both presumably referring to Jerusalem). Further, 10:8–11 is linked to 11:3–13 by the occurrence of the verb προφητεύειν, “prophesy,” in 10:11 and 11:3 (and the noun προφήτης, “prophet,” in 11:10).

There are a series of difficulties within 11:1–2 as well: (a) The abrupt introduction of the passage (the subject of the participle λέγων, “saying,” is unspecified; the usual visionary formulas such as “I saw” or “I heard” are absent). (b) The command to the

visionary to measure the temple is never actually carried out. (c) Nothing is said about when or how the visionary could have access to the temple to carry out the task of measuring. (d) The Jerusalem temple is mentioned only here in Revelation and otherwise is apparently of little or no concern to the author. (e) Although the temple had been destroyed in A.D. 70, decades before the final composition of Revelation, nothing is said about that destruction, except that the outer court and the city will be overrun by the Gentiles. (f) The promise that the sanctuary of the temple complex will not be profaned by the Gentiles contradicts the expectation in Daniel, which predicts that the entire (second) temple will be desecrated but not destroyed (Dan 8:11–14; 9:26–27 [see Collins, Daniel, 357]), reflecting the conquest of Jerusalem and the temple mount by Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 B.C., and the expectation that the temple will be completely destroyed, found in the eschatological discourse of Jesus (Mark 13:2 = Matt 24:2 = Luke 21:6) and alluded to in other sayings of Jesus (Mark 14:58 = Matt 26:61; Mark 15:29 = Matt 27:40; Acts 6:14; cf. John 2:19).

These are some of the factors that motivated Wellhausen to propose that 11:1–2 was a fragment of a Zealot prophecy from the weeks before the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, expressing the belief that the Romans would take the city and the temple court but would be unable to penetrate the inner parts of the temple, which were held by the Zealots themselves (Wellhausen, *Skizzen* 6:221–23; *id.*, *Analyse*, 15). This proposal has been accepted by many other scholars, including Bousset (1906) 324–30; J. Weiss, *Offenbarung*, 128–29 (who dates this prophecy to the few months between May and August A.D. 70); Beckwith, 586–87; Charles, 1:270–74; Behm, 58; Kraft, 152–54; Lohse, 64; Beasley-Murray, 176–77; Hengel, *Zealots*, 243; Müller, 206–7; Boring, 143. Toward the end of the war, the Zealots retreated into the sanctuary itself, the holy place and the holy of holies, as a place of last resort (Jos. J. W. 6.122 [tr. LCL]):

Into those hallowed and inviolable precincts they rushed in arms, their hands yet hot with the blood of their countrymen; and to such lengths of crime did they proceed, that the indignation which the Jews might naturally have displayed had the Romans inflicted such wanton outrages upon them, was now manifested by the Romans against the Jews, for profaning their own sacred places.

Wellhausen's proposal is based in part on Josephus's attestation to intense prophetic activity during the last weeks and months of the war (J. W. 6.285–87; tr. LCL):

They owed their destruction to a false prophet, who had on that day proclaimed to the people in the city that God commanded them to go up to the temple court [τὸ ἱερόν], to receive there the tokens of their deliverance. Numerous prophets, indeed, were at this period suborned by the tyrants to delude the people, by bidding them await help from God, in order that desertions might be checked and that those who were above fear and precaution might be encouraged by hope.

As a result of this prophecy and perhaps others like it, some six thousand Jews waited in the inner courts of the temple in expectation of divine intervention, but all were killed by the Romans or died in the fire (Jos. J. W. 6.283–84). Caird (131) dismisses Wellhausen's proposal cavalierly as "improbable, useless, and absurd," while Flusser ("Hystaspes," 13–14) disputes the idea that such a written prophecy might have survived the destruction of the temple and argues that even had it done so, it would quickly have been proven wrong by the fate of the temple. Others have similarly argued that a Zealot oracle that had been proven wrong would hardly have been accepted by Christians (Roloff [ET] 129; Giesen

[1997] 240). Against this argument, it must be noted that oracles are rarely, if ever, "proven wrong" and are always capable of manipulation and reinterpretation, so that this objection has no great weight. Flusser rather suggests that 11:1–2 reflects a widespread apocalyptic conviction from the second temple period of the essential inviolability of Jerusalem and the temple (Zech 12:2–6; 1 Enoch 56:5–8; Sib. Or. 5.101–10; Jos. J. W. 6.98). Dio Cassius, for example, reports the existence of a Jewish rumor that Jerusalem was impregnable (65.5.4; cf. Jos. J. W. 5.458–59). This view is also maintained by Feuillet (NTS 4 [1957–58] 188), who suggests that an echo of this view is found in 2 Apoc. Bar. 6:3–9, where, just before the destruction of Jerusalem, an angel descended to the holy of holies and removed the veil, the holy ephod, the mercy seat, the two tables, the priestly vestments, the altar of incense, the forty-eight precious stones worn by the priests, and all the holy vessels, which were then buried in a secret place in the earth until the eschaton (cf. 2 Apoc. Bar. 80:2–3; Paral. Jer. 3:10–11, 18–19; other apocalyptic traditions recognize that the temple furniture and vessels were destroyed or carried off as booty: Apoc. Abr. 27; 4 Ezra 10:21–23). For the Jews, the temple was both the center and the stronghold against the siege of Titus (Hengel, *Zealots*, 221–24; cf. Dio Cassius 65.6.1–3). However, it is only the inviolability of the temple (*ναός*), altar, and those who worship there that is preserved according to Rev 11:1–2, for the outer court and the holy city are destined to be controlled by the nations for a restricted period of time (n.b. that the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple is not even suggested).

Lohmeyer (88–89) proposed that rather than regard vv 1–2 as a Zealot oracle from before A.D. 70, the reader should understand it as an early Christian oracle in which the "temple" and "those that worship in it" represent Christians and the act of measuring is equivalent to the sealing of 7:3–8. Similarly, vv 1–2, according to Roloff ([ET] 129), are based on an early Christian prophetic saying interpreting the events of A.D. 70 from a Christian perspective.

3. Earthly or Heavenly Temple? Another problem is whether the temple referred to in 11:1–2 is the literal temple in Jerusalem (presumably reflecting a period before A.D. 70), or whether the text was formulated with the transcendent, heavenly temple in view. If the author incorporated a prophetic oracle that originated before A.D. 70, as many interpreters propose, into his composition more than two decades after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70, he must have understood it symbolically.

(a) Most interpreters understand the primary reference in vv 1–2 to be to the literal temple in Jerusalem (Zahn, 421–22; Allo, 129; Lohmeyer, 87; Lohse, 64; Giesen [1997] 241). Some interpreters base this view on the proposal made by J. Wellhausen that a Jewish oracle, probably of Zealot origin, concerning the inviolability of the temple despite the capture of the city was made and circulated during the brief period A.D. 67–70 (Wellhausen, *Analyse*, 15; Bousset [1906] 324–30; Beckwith, 586–87; Charles, 1:270–73). Of course, those who think that the Revelation of John was written before A.D. 70 can simply regard 11:1–2 as a prophecy by the author that was not fulfilled. Arguments supporting the interpretation of the temple and the altar and those who worship there as references to the historical temple in Jerusalem are the following: (i) The notion that the heavenly worshipers of God need protection seems unnecessary. (ii) According to 10:1, the seer is on earth when he witnesses the descent of the mighty angel. There is nothing to suggest that the seer's position on the earth has changed when he is commanded to measure the temple of God in 11:1. (iii) The symbolic interpretation of vv 1–2, advocated by many inter-

preters who regard the primary reference to be the temple in Jerusalem (Roloff [ET] 128–29; Beasley-Murray, 176–77; Mounce, 219–20), makes it unnecessary to suppose that a heavenly temple is in view. (iv) The local references in vv 1–2 (as well as in vv 7–9) suggest that the author is using a source that originated at least with Palestinian Christianity, perhaps interpreting the traumatic events of A.D. 70 (Roloff [ET] 129). (v) The temple in vv 1–2 cannot be the heavenly temple because part of the precinct cannot be measured since it will be taken over by the Gentiles for forty-two months (Kraft, 152). (vi) The temple at Jerusalem is never used elsewhere in early Christian literature to symbolize Christians or the Church.

(b) Recognizing the difficulties in interpreting vv 1–2 as a reference to the temple in Jerusalem that was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70, a number of scholars have argued that the heavenly temple is in view (Feuillet, NTS 4 [1957–58] 183–200). Recently Giblin (112; id., NTS 30 [1984] 438–40) has argued that it is only in the heavenly sphere where the temple, the altar (i.e., “altar” in Revelation is never connected with animal sacrifice), and those who worship there (the heavenly court) are protected from any assault; the excluded forecourt represents the profaned earth, the “forecourt” of heaven. The following are the arguments for a spiritual or allegorical understanding of the temple and altar: (i) The model for Rev 11:1–2 is Ezek 40:1–42:20, where Ezekiel is transported to a “high mountain” in the land of Israel where he watched a man carefully measure a visionary temple that would eventually be rebuilt but that was not yet actually in existence. (ii) If Revelation was written after A.D. 70, as most scholars agree, the temple would no longer have been in existence. (iii) The notion of a heavenly temple, based on the model of the tabernacle revealed to Moses (Exod 25:9, 40; 26:30; 1 Chr 28:11–19), was widespread during the late second temple period; the inviolability of the eschatological temple that God will build, identified as the community, is emphasized in 4QFlor 1:2–6 (Bachmann, NTS 40 [1994] 476–77). (iv) Rev 11:1–2 distinguishes the temple and altar from the outer court in a way analogous to the cosmic significance of the holy of holies, like heaven, accessible only to God, and the holy place, like the earth and the sea, accessible to mortals (Ant. 3.123, 181). (v) The phrase οἱ προσκυνῶντες, “those who worship,” is formed from a verb used characteristically of the heavenly worship of God (e.g., Rev 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 14:7; 19:14) or of the antithetical worship on earth of the dragon and the beast. (vi) In Revelation, heavenly realities are normally designated by the terms ναός, “temple” (3:12; 7:15; 11:19; 14:15, 17; 15:5, 6, 8; 16:1, 17), and θυσιαστήριον, “altar” (6:9; 8:3[2x], 5; 9:13; 14:18; 16:7). The specific phrase ὁ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, “the temple of God,” is used elsewhere in Revelation only in 11:19, where it is explicitly the heavenly temple.

4. Symbolic Significance of Rev 11:1–2. (a) The symbolic interpretation of vv 1–2 most widely held among modern interpreters is that the temple of God is not a literal building but, together with the altar and the worshipers, represents the Christian community who worship God, while the court outside the temple and the holy city refer to the outer life of the Church, the vulnerability of the people of God to suffering and death (Behm, 58; Allo, 130; Lohse, 64; Sweet, 182; Mounce, 220; Beagley, Apocalypse, 61; Boring, 143; Bauckham, “Conversion,” 272; id., Theology, 127). This interpretation is based in part on the frequent use of the temple as a symbol for the Church in early Christian literature (1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:19–22; 1 Pet 2:5; Ign. Eph. 9:1; 15:3 [here the individual Christian is a temple of God]; Magn. 7:2;

Barn. 4:11; 6:15; 16:10; cf. Ign. Phld. 7:2 and 2 Clem. 9:3, where Christians are urged to keep their flesh as the temple of God). A corollary of this view frequently expressed by those who hold it is that the protection symbolized by measuring does not mean security against physical suffering and death; rather it assures support in and through suffering and death and protection from spiritual danger (Loisy, 205; Caird, 132; Mounce, 219; Sweet, 182; Harrington, 119; Boring, 143–44).

(b) A second symbolic interpretation is that the protective measuring of the temple, altar, and worshipers symbolizes the preservation of Christians, the true worshipers of God, while the conquest of the outer court and the holy city represents the rejection and punishment of unbelieving Judaism (Swete, 132–33; Feuillet, NTS 4 [1957–58] 187–88; McNicol, ResQ 22 [1979] 193–202; Beagley, Apocalypse, 62–63; close to the view of Andreas of Caesarea, who thought that the temple represented Christians who offered true sacrifice to God while the outer court represented the unbelieving synagogue of Gentiles and Jews [Comm. in Apoc. ad 11:2–3; J. Schmid, Studien 1/1:111–12]). Early Jewish sources understand the destruction of the temple as the punishment of Judaism for disobedience (Apoc. Abr. 27.5–7; 2 Apoc. Bar. 1:3–4; Paral. Jer. 1:8; 4:7–8; Sib. Or. 3.273–79; T. Levi 10:3; T. Judah 23:1–3).

(c) A third view is that the temple, altar, and worshipers refer to the Jewish remnant, while the outer court and the holy refer to Israel, which will be given up to the Gentiles for the punishment of the sins of the Jews (Beckwith, 588–90; M. Rissi, Future, 16, 64–65; id., “Das Judenproblem im Lichte der Johannesapokalypse,” TZ 13 [1957] 241–59).

(d) Finally, a fourth view is that the temple, altar, and worshipers refer to that which was fundamental and essential in Judaism while the outer court and the holy city refer to all that was external and expendable in Judaism (Eichhorn 2:51–53; Stuart, 2:214).

5. Conclusion. The many problems inherent in 11:1–2 suggest that the passage was based on a source consisting of a prophetic oracle predicting the inviolability of the sanctuary within the temple precincts in Jerusalem. In its present literary setting, however, it is clear that this originally Jewish oracle has been reinterpreted and must now be understood symbolically. However, the history of the symbolic or allegorical interpretation of this passage (reviewed above under 4), has shown little restraint, and I find such an interpretation to be generally unsatisfactory. It should first be emphasized that the deep theological structure of 11:1–2, in its present context, centers on the salvation and protection that lie at the center (the temple of God), while danger and destruction lie at the periphery (the outer court and the holy city). The worshipers, however, find salvation and protection in the temple and the altar area only insofar as they have been measured and so divinely protected by God. The author therefore regards the temple as a locus of salvation, much as the wilderness functions as a locus of salvation in Rev 12:6, 14, where the woman hides from the dragon at a place prepared by God in the wilderness. Here the wilderness, normally a place of danger and chaos, is transformed into a place of refuge and salvation. The Zealots, it will be remembered, regarded the wilderness and the temple, by turns, as places of refuge and salvation (Hengel, Zealots, 249–55). Second, while the temple and the altar area generally represent the place of salvation, those who worship there represent the remnant of God’s people who will physically survive the tribulation and the eschatological war as well as the divine plagues sent to punish the wickedness of human-

easily have traveled via his apocalyptic vision to a time prior to the destruction of the Jerusalem temple with the task of measuring it for protection against the pollution of the gentiles. Of course, the Romans did destroy both the city and the entire temple complex in early 70 AD. So the image here cannot be attached too closely with the Jerusalem temple. That he is not described as doing this suggests that it was probably done but doing the measuring is not the point. The symbolism of God laying His protecting hand around the temple proper reflects the same promise made to protect the 144,000 in chapter seven with the divinely placed seal on their foreheads. That protection by God of His own is then illustrated in the symbolic actions of the two witnesses in the subsequent text.

B. The two witnesses, vv. 4-13

4 οὗτοι εἰσιν αἱ δύο ἐλαῖαι καὶ αἱ δύο λυχνίαὶ αἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου τῆς γῆς ἐστῶτες. 5 καὶ εἴ τις αὐτοὺς θέλει ἀδικῆσαι πῦρ ἐκπορεύεται ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτῶν καὶ κατεσθίει τοὺς ἐχθροὺς αὐτῶν· καὶ εἴ τις θελήσῃ αὐτοὺς ἀδικῆσαι, οὕτως δεῖ αὐτὸν ἀποκτανθῆναι. 6 οὗτοι ἔχουσιν τὴν ἐξουσίαν κλεῖσαι τὸν οὐρανόν, ἵνα μὴ ὑετὸς βρέχῃ τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς προφητείας αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχουσιν ἐπὶ τῶν ὑδάτων στρέφειν αὐτὰ εἰς αἷμα καὶ πατάξαι τὴν γῆν ἐν πάσῃ πληγῇ ὅσακις ἐὰν θελήσωσιν.

7 Καὶ ὅταν τελέσωσιν τὴν μαρτυρίαν αὐτῶν, τὸ θηρίον τὸ ἀναβαῖνον ἐκ τῆς ἀβύσσου ποιήσει μετ' αὐτῶν πόλεμον καὶ νικήσει αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀποκτενεῖ αὐτούς. 8 καὶ τὸ πτώμα αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τῆς πλατείας τῆς πόλεως τῆς μεγάλης, ἣτις καλεῖται πνευματικῶς Σόδομα καὶ Αἴγυπτος, ὅπου καὶ ὁ κύριος αὐτῶν ἐσταυρώθη. 9 καὶ βλέπουσιν ἐκ τῶν λαῶν καὶ φυλῶν καὶ γλωσσῶν καὶ ἐθνῶν τὸ πτώμα αὐτῶν ἡμέρας τρεῖς καὶ ἥμισυ καὶ τὰ πτώματα αὐτῶν οὐκ ἀφίουσιν τεθῆναι εἰς μνήμα. 10 καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς χαίρουσιν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς καὶ εὐφραίνονται καὶ δῶρα πέμπουσιν ἀλλήλοις, ὅτι οὗτοι οἱ δύο προφηταὶ ἐβασάνισαν τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

kind. The divine protection that God provides for his people is not just spiritual (the view of most interpreters); it is also physical, for it entails the survival of God's chosen people at the end of days. The over-allegorization of the passage has essentially removed the clear apocalyptic orientation that the passage exhibits. How, one asks, can the temple, the altar, and the worshipers all stand for the people of God? What does divine protection symbolized by measuring and counting mean when that protection has nothing to do with the safety and security of the people of God? Thus the worshipers in the temple of God, in my view, are analogous to the 144,000 whom God has sealed (7:3-8; see Form/Structure/Setting on Rev 7:1-17), for they too are divinely protected against the divine punitive plagues as well as the murderous intent of the enemies of God.

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 593-598.]

11 Καὶ μετὰ τὰς τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ ἥμισυ πνεῦμα ζωῆς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσηλθεν ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔστησαν ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας αὐτῶν, καὶ φόβος μέγας ἐπέπεσεν ἐπὶ τοὺς θεωροῦντας αὐτούς. 12 καὶ ἤκουσαν φωνῆς μεγάλης ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λεγούσης αὐτοῖς· ἀνάβατε ὧδε. καὶ ἀνέβησαν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ, καὶ ἐθεώρησαν αὐτοὺς οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτῶν. 13 Καὶ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐγένετο σεισμός μέγας καὶ τὸ δέκατον τῆς πόλεως ἔπεσεν καὶ ἀπεκτάνθησαν ἐν τῷ σεισμῷ ὀνόματα ἀνθρώπων χιλιάδες ἑπτὰ καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἔμφοβοι ἐγένοντο καὶ ἔδωκαν δόξαν τῷ θεῷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.

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 pours from their mouth and consumes their foes; anyone who wants to harm them must be killed in this manner. 6 They have authority to shut the sky, so that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have authority over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.

7 When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, 8 and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that is prophetically called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 For three and a half days members of the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb; 10 and the inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and celebrate and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to the inhabitants of the earth.

11 But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and those who saw them were terrified. 12 Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies watched them. 13 At that moment 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.

In the narrative about the two witnesses three sections emerge focusing on 1) the 42 months of activity by them; 2) the successful war against them by the beast that leads to their execution; and 3) their coming back to life and ascension into heaven.

Who are these two witnesses? Several descriptive aspects are provided beginning with the promise of them in the final segment of the discourse instructions to John.³⁴

³⁴“The abrupt way in which this text unit begins (i.e., without
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This part surfaces in verse three: Καὶ δώσω τοῖς δυσὶν μάρτυσὶν μου καὶ προφητεύσουσιν ἡμέρας χιλίας διακοσίας ἐξήκοντα περιβεβλημένοι σάκκου. And I will grant my two witnesses authority to prophesy for one thousand two hundred sixty days, wearing sackcloth. God promises to authorize two witnesses to spread His message during the 42 months that the gentiles are ‘trampling on’ the outer court of the temple (v. 2).³⁵ The essence of their authorization is stated simply as δώσω τοῖς δυσὶν μάρτυσὶν μου καὶ προφητεύσουσιν, I will give to two my witnesses and they will prophesy.³⁶ In

any of the typical introductory devices favored by the author) is an argument against considering 11:3–13 as a major text unit following 10:1–11:2 (F. Hahn, “Aufbau,” 145) or 10:8–11:2 (Kraft, 150–52). The verb δώσω, “I will give,” and the possessive pronoun μου, “my,” suggest that the speaker in 11:1b–3 is God or Christ (Haugg, Zeugen, 16); this suggests the fragmentary character of 11:1–2 since it is likely that the unidentified speaker is an angel who gives the author a measuring stick and orders him to measure parts of the temple. The speech probably continues only through v 3. This is the only feature that betrays the identity of the speaker since the rest of Rev 11 (beginning with v 4) is narrated in the third person.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 610.]

³⁵“The length of the ministry of the two witnesses is fixed at 1,260 days, another way of calculating the 42-month period mentioned in v 2 as the length of time that the nations will trample over the holy city (see Comment on 11:2). The 42 months of 11:2 and the 1,260 days of 11:3 constitute one of the few formal links between 11:1–2 and 11:3–13. This symbolic period of 3 1/2 years suggests that the period during which the nations will control Jerusalem is precisely the period when the two witnesses will exercise their ministry and provides the reason that he has linked vv 1–2 (originally an independent tradition) to vv 3–13 (another independent tradition). The end of that period, described in vv 7–13, involves the murder, resurrection, and ascension of the two witnesses as well as the earthquake that destroys a tenth part of the city and the conversion of the survivors.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 610–611.]

³⁶“The construction καὶ δώσω ... καὶ προφητεύσουσιν is Hebraic. וְתָתַן ... וְיָנִיחַ = ‘I will commission (or give permission to) my two witnesses to prophesy.’ Some scholars think that it occurs also in 11:2, ἐδόθη ... καὶ πατήσουσιν: but this seems wrong, for we should then require δοθήσεται ... καὶ πατήσουσιν. Besides ἐδόθη is used in a literal sense in 11:2, whereas δώσω in 11:3 is used in an idiomatic sense. Hence this is the only instance of this idiom in the Apocalypse which uses three different constructions of διδόναι in this sense. 1. διδόναι, c. inf. = ‘to permit’: cf. 2:7, 3:21 (ὁ νικῶν δώσω αὐτῷ καθίσει), 6:4, 7:2, 13:7, 15, 16:8. This is the normal construction in this sense in our book. It is noteworthy that in 13:15 we find this idiomatic sense and the literal close together, ἐδόθη αὐτῷ δοῦναι. This idiom is Hebraic: cf. Esth. 9:13, וְיָנִיחַ ... וְתָתַן. It is found once in John 5:26. 2. διδόναι, c. ἵνα and subjunctive: cf. 9:5, 19:8. 3. ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία ποιῆσαι, 13:5. This is found twice in John 1:12, 5:27. It is also a well-known Hebrew idiom, i.e. לְתַתֵּן לְהַרְשִׁית. The speaker is either God or Christ.” [R.H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St John*, vol. 1, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1920), 280.]

the background apocalyptic tradition the two witnesses are typically identified as Elijah and Enoch, because both ‘ascended to heaven’ without dying. But verse eight rules this out in Revelation; the city where they are crucified is called Sodom and Egypt but is where ὁ κύριος αὐτῶν, their Lord, was crucified, thus Jerusalem. These are Christian witnesses rather than OT prophets witnessing for God.

Could they be Moses and Elijah? C.H. Charles thinks so.³⁷ But Aune and others take a different slant

³⁷“The origin and identification of the two Witnesses are problems of great difficulty. Here the apocalyptic tradition does not give us the help we should expect; for the apparent meaning of 11:5–6 and apocalyptic tradition are here at variance. 1. The latter, which Bousset holds is really the older, identifies the two Witnesses with Enoch and Elijah. The oldest Christian attestation of this view belongs to the 2nd cent. A.D. Cf. Tert. De Anima, 50, “Translatum est Henoch et Elias, nec mors eorum reperta est, dilata scilicet. Ceterum morituri reservantur ut Antichristum sanguine suo exstinguant.” Ps. Johannine Apoc. 8; Ps. Cyprian, De Montibus Sina et Sion, 5, and other authorities, for which see Bousset, The Antichrist Legend, xiv. To these we may add the remarkable fact that in 1 Enoch 90:31, if the text is correct, it is said that Enoch and Elijah would return before the judgment.

“2. The text of 11:5–6 apparently identifies the two Witnesses with Moses and Elijah. The Witnesses are empowered to turn the water into blood and to smite the earth with every plague, 11:6. These words point to the first Egyptian plague, Ex. 7:14 sqq., and the rest that were inflicted by Moses on the Egyptians. But the rest of the text points just as clearly to Elijah. For the Witnesses have power to consume with fire (cf. 2 Kings 1:10 sqq.; Sir. 48:3), and to close the heaven so that there should be no rain upon the earth, 1 Kings 17:1 sqq.; Sir. 48:1–3; Luke 4:25; Jas. 5:17. We are here undoubtedly reminded of Elijah. Moreover, their assumption into heaven is in harmony with 2 Kings 2:11 and the tradition in regard to Moses embodied in the Assumption of Moses. In the next place their return before the end of the world was expected amongst the Christians and the return of Elijah among the Jews. The belief in the return of Moses would naturally arise from Deut. 18:18, cf. John 6:14, 7:40, and in that of Elijah from Mal. 4:5: cf. Sir. 48:10; Mark 9:11; Matt. 11:14; Eduj. viii. 7: see Jew. Encyc. v. 126. Possibly both expectations may be combined in John 1:21. Again the account of the Transfiguration (Mark 9:1 sqq. and parallels), in which Moses and Elias appear with Christ, taken with the preceding evidence, may also point to the existence of an expectation of their return. And a reference to this expectation is actually found in Debar. R. x. 1, where, according to Jochanan ben Zakkai (1st cent. A.D.), God said to Moses, “If I send the prophet Elijah, ye must both come together”; see Volz, 193.

“The duty assigned to Moses and Elijah here is to spread repentance. This idea is found in Pirke El. xliiii., xlvii., in regard to Elijah, though generally in Judaism his duties are differently described. It is remarkable that in later Judaism it is said in regard to Elijah that his Messianic activity would begin three days before the coming of the Messiah (Elijahu Rabba, 25 sqq.). The number three here is significant in regard to our text.

“We may, therefore, conclude with some confidence that the author of the Jewish fragment, 11:3–13, meant Moses and Elijah by the two Witnesses.1

“But, though Moses and Elijah were designed by the phrase

with their assertion that these two symbolic witnesses affirm a Christian proclamation of the Gospel.³⁸

Their dress in sackcloth is rather typically Jewish for prophets in mourning of anticipated calamity from coming judgments.³⁹ As a symbolic call to repentance

‘the two witnesses’ in the original document, there is much doubt as to the denotation of this phrase in its present context. Many allegorical interpretations have been given of it, but not one of them is satisfactory when taken in connection with the work of the witness in 11:5–6. Apparently, therefore, we are to conclude that the phrase retains its original significance, as we shall see more clearly presently. In any case the question is of very small moment; for throughout the rest of the Apocalypse our Seer’s thoughts and visions are concerned with Rome and not with Jerusalem, as they are in this fragmentary section, 11:1–13. For the moment the steady progressive current of our author’s thought has been checked, and he has here turned aside into a backwater, but with 11:14 we return again into the main current.”

[R.H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St John*, vol. 1, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1920), 281–282.]

³⁸“Since parallel texts regularly name Enoch and Elijah as the two eschatological prophets who will return at the end of the age, it can perhaps be assumed that the author has omitted their names intentionally, possibly because he regarded them as Christian prophets whose ministry takes place after that of Jesus, who is designated as ‘their Lord’ in v 8, in view of the widely held view that John the Baptist was the eschatological Elijah (Mark 1:2; 9:11–13 = Matt 17:10–13; Matt 11:14; Luke 1:17; Justin Dial. 49.3, 5), though the author of the Fourth Gospel rejects that identification (John 1:19–28). Furthermore (see below), the author modifies the expectation of Enoch and Elijah redivivi to Moses and Elijah redivivi. The term ‘witness’ in this context has the connotation ‘prophet’ since the phrase οἱ δύο μάρτυρες, ‘my two witnesses,’ in v 3 is exactly parallel to οἱ δύο προφῆται, ‘the two prophets,’ in v 10 (note that the verb προφητεύειν, ‘prophesy,’ and the noun προφητεία, ‘prophecy,’ are used of their ministry in vv 3, 6 and that μαρτυρία, ‘testimony,’ in v 7 is parallel to προφητεία in v 6). It seems probable that the source reworked by our author read προφῆται uniformly, a term that he supplemented with μάρτυρες, a critical term within the theology of the book as a whole. The tradition of the violent death of the prophets provides the conceptual background to 11:3–13 (2 Chr 24:19; 36:15–16; Neh 9:26; Matt 5:11–12 = Luke 6:22–23; Matt 23:34–36 = Luke 11:49–51; Matt 23:37–39 = Luke 13:34–35; Acts 7:52; 1 Thess 2:15; Barn. 5:11; Vit. Proph. 1.1; 2.1; 3.2; 6.1; 7.1; 21.3; Aune, *Prophecy*, 157–59; Urbach, *Sages*, 558–63). This motif occurs in succinct form in Jub. 1:12 (Charlesworth, *OTP* 2:53), ‘And I shall send to them witnesses so that I might witness to them, but they will not hear. And they will even kill the witnesses.’ [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 610.]

³⁹ “Sackcloth (a dark-colored fabric made of goat hair or camel hair originally used for making grain sacks) was worn for several reasons: (1) as a sign of individual mourning or national distress (Gen 37:34; 2 Sam 3:31; Lam 2:10; Esth 4:1; Ps 30:11 [MT 30:12]; Isa 15:3; 22:12; Joel 1:13; Amos 8:10; Barn. 7:12; Ant. 7.40; 10.11; 19.349; Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri*, no. 31, line 19 [= Porten-Yardeni, *Textbook* 1:74–75]), (2) as an indication of submission when supplicating people or offering prayers to God (1 Kgs 20:31–32; Jer 4:8; 6:26; Dan 9:3; Ant. 7.154; 12.300; 20.123;

their dress is the single clue as to the content of the message they were to proclaim. It is not specified anywhere in the text directly.

Verse four throws more light on the question of identification, although at first it seems to be confusion rather than light: οὔτοί εἰσιν αἱ δύο ἐλαῖαι καὶ αἱ δύο λυχνῖαι αἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου τῆς γῆς ἐστῶτες, *These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. What? Are these two witnesses not humans? John says that they are two olive trees and two temple lampstands, that is, menorahs. The introductory statement οὔτοί εἰσιν... matches 7:14, οὔτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἐρχόμενοι ἐκ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς μεγάλης, these are the ones coming out of great affliction.... Note that the two witnesses are at the same time two olive trees and two menorahs. Evidently the reference to the two olive trees reaches back to Zech. 4:3.*⁴⁰ Although

J. W. 2.236–37; Barn. 7:5), (3) as a penitential practice (1 Kgs 22:27–29; 2 Kgs 19:1–2; 1 Chr 21:16; Neh 9:1; Ps 35:13; Jonah 3:5–8; Matt 11:21 = Luke 10:13; Ant. 8.362; Plutarch *De superst.* 168D), and (4) as the garb appropriate for prophets, who could dress in clothes appropriate for mourning in anticipation of the calamity of coming judgment. When made of goat hair, it could be extremely dark or even black in color (Isa 50:3; Rev 6:12; 1 Clem. 8:3).

“Occasionally, prophets are depicted wearing sackcloth or something similar, probably to exemplify the need for repentance and humility before God (Isa 20:2 [here the term translated ‘sackcloth’ may refer to the basic male undergarment]; Zech 13:4; Asc. Isa. 2:10; Mark 1:6; the sheepskins and goatskins of Heb 11:37, which are natural, have nothing to do with sackcloth, which is manufactured), though it was by no means the typical uniform of prophets (as claimed by K. Berger, *Auferstehung*, 28, and Hengel, *Leader*, 36 n. 71); see the careful discussions in Guelich, *Mark 1:1–8:26*, 20–21, and Tilly, *Johannes*, 167–75. In fact, the garments of the two witnesses provide the only clue to the nature of their message, for nothing whatever is said about the content of their prophetic testimony. Though it is often claimed that their message was a call to repentance (Bauckham, “Conversion,” 278), the text is strangely silent on that point (Satake, *Gemeindeordnung*, 120–21; Müller, 209). Satake has argued that the two witnesses are concerned not with securing the repentance of the world but rather with acting as God’s agents in judging the world; killing and tormenting the opposition are not normal tactics of evangelists (*Gemeindeordnung*, 119–33). Despite the generally negative role of the two witnesses, however, it must be borne in mind that most of the inhabitants of the city were converted following the resurrection and ascension of the witnesses (v 13), though this too may belong to the revision of a traditional source. The focus, therefore, is not on the character or the content of their message but rather on the fact that, whatever it is, it will surely be rejected as they themselves will be.”

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 611–612.]

⁴⁰**Zech 4:1–7** (LXX). 4.1 Καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν ὁ ἄγγελος ὁ λαλῶν ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ ἐξήγειρέν με ὄν τρόπον ὅταν ἐξεγερθῆ ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ὕπνου αὐτοῦ ὃ 2 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς με Τί σὺ βλέπεις; καὶ εἶπα Ἐώρακα καὶ ἰδοὺ λυχνία χρυσοῦ ὅλη, καὶ τὸ λαμπαδεῖον ἐπάνω αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ λύχνοι ἐπάνω αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἐπαρυστρίδες τοῖς λύχνοις τοῖς

no language of comparison is used here, it seems likely that the image of two olive trees by menorahs represents the anointing of these two witnesses for their task of prophesying.⁴¹ The other reference to αἱ δύο λυχνίαί αἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου τῆς γῆς ἐστῶτες, **the two menorahs which stand before the Lord of the earth**, also alludes to the menorah, λυχνία, mentioned in Zech. 4:2-3, 11. Interestingly in the Jewish temple tradition only a single menorah is described as being in the tabernacle. But multiple menorahs evidently were used in Solomon's temple.⁴² In the subsequent interpretive

ἐπάνω αὐτῆς· † 3 καὶ δύο ἐλαῖαι ἐπάνω αὐτῆς, μία ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ λαμπαδείου καὶ μία ἐξ εὐωνόμων· † 4 καὶ ἐπηρώτησα καὶ εἶπον πρὸς τὸν ἄγγελον τὸν λαλοῦντα ἐν ἐμοὶ λέγων Τί ἐστὶν ταῦτα, κύριε; † 5 καὶ ἀπεκρίθη ὁ ἄγγελος ὁ λαλῶν ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς με Οὐ γινώσκεις τί ἐστὶν ταῦτα; καὶ εἶπα Οὐχί, κύριε· † 6 καὶ ἀπεκρίθη καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς με λέγων Οὗτος ὁ λόγος κυρίου πρὸς Ζοροβαβὲλ λέγων Οὐκ ἐν δυνάμει μεγάλῃ οὐδὲ ἐν ἰσχύϊ, ἀλλ' ἦ ἐν πνεύματί μου, λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ· † 7 τίς εἶ σύ, τὸ ὄρος τὸ μέγα, πρὸ προσώπου Ζοροβαβὲλ τοῦ κατορθῶσαι; καὶ ἐξοίσω τὸν λίθον τῆς κληρονομίας ἰσότητά χάριτος χάριτα αὐτῆς· †

4.1 The angel who talked with me came again, and wakened me, as one is wakened from sleep. 2 He said to me, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it; there are seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it. 3 **And by it there are two olive trees, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.**" 4 I said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?" 5 Then the angel who talked with me answered me, "Do you not know what these are?" I said, "No, my lord." 6 He said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts. 7 What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain; and he shall bring out the top stone amid shouts of 'Grace, grace to it!'"

⁴¹"It is striking that the two witnesses are both the two olive trees and the two menorahs. In the phrase αἱ δύο ἐλαῖαι, 'the two olive trees,' the noun is articular because it is an allusion to the well-known olive trees in Zech 4:3, yet the author probably understands this metaphor more comprehensively, i.e., as a reference to the anointing and, therefore, the official commissioning of these prophets (Kraft, 157). In .Abot R. Nat. 34 (Goldin, Fathers, 137–38), the two anointed ones who stand before the Lord of the whole earth (Zech 4:14) are interpreted as Aaron and the Messiah." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 612.]

⁴²"The mention of two menorahs, however, when only one is found in Zech 4, may indicate the presence of an exegetical tradition upon which John is dependent. Though biblical tradition mentions but a single menorah in the wilderness tabernacle, and ten are mentioned in connection with the temple of Solomon (see Comment on 1:13), ancient representations of the menorah often show two menorahs flanking the Torah shrine (Yarden, Tree of Light, plates 93–95, 101, 109–10, 114, 119, 130, 193–94, 206). In the mosaic floor of the Beth Alpha synagogue, a depiction of the Torah shrine shows a *pārōket*, 'curtain,' flanked by two seven-branched menorahs, each surrounded by the sacrificial symbols of the shofar and the incense shovel (Gutmann, Jewish Sanctuary, plate XLVIII; see the nine-branched menorah flanked by an incense shovel and shofar [ram's horn] carved in relief on an arch stone from Yahudiyye,

tradition of the Zechariah 4:1-14 text, the olive trees came to represent Zerubbabel, a claimant to the Davidic throne, and Joshua, the high priest on whom the prophet Zechariah and others based their hopes for the restoration of Judah.⁴³ This evolves over time into

in BAR 14 [1988] 62). Two menorahs flank the ark in four drawings from Beth She>arim, in mosaics from Hammath Tiberias, Na>aran, Beth She<an, and Susiya (Hachlili, Jewish Art, 247–48, plates 101–5), and on the <Assalieh lintel (Hachlili, Jewish Art, plate 29a). It should be borne in mind that the term λύχνος, 'light,' is also used as a metaphor for witness. Just as the two witnesses are λυχνίαί, 'lights,' so John the Baptist is also spoken of figuratively as ὁ λύχνος ὁ καιόμενος καὶ φαίνων, 'the light which burns and shines' (John 5:35). Similarly, 2 Pet 1:19 compares the prophetic message of the OT to a lamp (λύχνος) shining in a dark place." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 612.]

⁴³"The passage begins with an allusion to the two olive trees and the two (instead of seven) lamps or menorahs of Zech 4:1–14. In Zechariah the olive trees represent Zerubbabel, the claimant to the Davidic throne, and Joshua, the high priest, on whom the prophet Zechariah and others based their hopes for the restoration of Judah. This passage (together with the messianic prophecy of Balaam in Num 24:17 concerning the coming of the 'star' [= priest] and 'scepter' [= king]), with its emphasis on the importance of both the royal and priestly offices, became influential in circles of Jewish eschatological expectation that emphasized the coming of two messiahs, a royal Messiah of David and a priestly Messiah of Aaron. The description of the two witnesses also owes features to biblical and traditional conceptions of Enoch, Elijah, and Moses. These were all taken up alive into heaven according to Jewish tradition, as are the two witnesses in v 12. The two witnesses have the power to perform punitive miracles; they can destroy with fire those who attempt to harm them (like Elijah; see 2 Kgs 1:9–16), cause drought (also like Elijah; 1 Kgs 17:1), and smite the earth with plagues (like Moses; see Exod 7–10). Strangely, the content of their message is not mentioned, though it may be presumed that they demand repentance of the nations (though initially in vain). They are often interpreted as Elijah and Moses (who were expected to return in the last days, though not minister in tandem) or Enoch and Elijah (many other suggestions are detailed in Form/Structure/Content, III. Central Interpretive Issues). Since the people of God are both kings and priests (1:6; 5:10), it is likely that the two witnesses represent the Christian Church in its prophetic witness. Since the witnesses are identical in every respect, the fact that there are two of them is based on the notion of the reliability of two witnesses (Num 35:30; Deut 19:15; John 8:13–18). When the brief period of their immunity is over, they will be killed by the beast from the bottomless pit (v 7; presumably identical with the beast of Rev 13 and 17), who is introduced here very briefly for the first time in Revelation but plays no further role in this narrative unit. The equation of the eschatological adversary in Jerusalem with the chaos monster is a redactional addition by John. The scene of their prophetic activity and the place where their unburied bodies lie is in 'the street of the great city' (my emphasis). If the city is Jerusalem (where, according to v 8, their Lord was crucified), which is denounced under the names of 'Sodom' and 'Egypt,' then the street in view could be Tyropoeon Valley Street (see Comment on 11:8). Yet the city also represents the world that has rejected the gospel and slain its prophetic messengers. In early Judaism there was a widespread view that suffering and martyrdom in Jerusalem were

messianic expectation that the Messiah will be a royal king from the descendencia of David and a faithful high priest of Aaron presiding over the renewed temple in Jerusalem. These symbols of commissioning of the two witnesses affirm the parameters of their mission of prophesying, a messianic centered message calling the nations to repentance in commitment to Christ.

Verses five and six assert the power of these two witnesses. First in terms of protecting themselves against attempted harm from enemies: *καὶ εἴ τις αὐτοῦς θέλει ἀδικῆσαι πῦρ ἐκπορεύεται ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτῶν καὶ κατεσθίει τοὺς ἐχθροὺς αὐτῶν· καὶ εἴ τις θελήσῃ αὐτοὺς ἀδικῆσαι, οὕτως δεῖ αὐτὸν ἀποκτανθῆναι, And if anyone wants to harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes; anyone who wants to harm them must be killed in this manner.* This power of punitive miracles follows the example of Elijah described in passages such as 2 Kings 1:9-16.⁴⁴ Verse six then defines a

the all but inevitable experience of the true prophet (Luke 13:33); thus the fate of the two witnesses replicates the fate of Jesus and many earlier prophetic messengers. The fact that the two witnesses lie dead on the streets of the great city for three and one-half days is intended to remind the audience of the period between the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus. The summons of the dead witnesses to heaven by an unidentified heavenly voice both replicates John's revelatory experience in 4:1 and is reminiscent of the ascension motif in 2 Kgs 2:11-12 (Elijah) and Luke 24 and Acts 1 (Jesus). The ascension of the two witnesses on a cloud before onlookers represents a miraculous divine rescue. The destruction of a tenth of the city and death of seven thousand inhabitants by a great earthquake result in the survivors giving glory to the God of heaven, language that suggests their conversion." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 631-632.]

⁴⁴2 Kings 1:9-16 (LXX). 9 καὶ ἀπέστειλεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡγούμενον πενηκόνταρχον καὶ τοὺς πενήκοντα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀνέβη καὶ ἦλθεν πρὸς αὐτόν, καὶ ἰδοὺ Ἡλιου ἐκάθητο ἐπὶ τῆς κορυφῆς τοῦ ὄρους. καὶ ἐλάλησεν ὁ πενηκόνταρχος πρὸς αὐτόν καὶ εἶπεν Ἄνθρωπε τοῦ θεοῦ, ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐκάλεσέν σε, κατάβηθι.† 10 καὶ ἀπεκρίθη Ἡλιου καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς τὸν πενηκόνταρχον Καὶ εἰ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγώ, καταβήσεται πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ καταφάγεται σε καὶ τοὺς πενήκοντά σου· καὶ κατέβη πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ κατέφαγεν αὐτόν καὶ τοὺς πενήκοντα αὐτοῦ.†

11 καὶ προσέθετο ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ ἀπέστειλεν πρὸς αὐτόν ἄλλον πενηκόνταρχον καὶ τοὺς πενήκοντα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀνέβη καὶ ἐλάλησεν ὁ πενηκόνταρχος πρὸς αὐτόν καὶ εἶπεν Ἄνθρωπε τοῦ θεοῦ, τάδε λέγει ὁ βασιλεὺς Ταχέως κατάβηθι.† 12 καὶ ἀπεκρίθη Ἡλιου καὶ ἐλάλησεν πρὸς αὐτόν καὶ εἶπεν Εἰ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγώ εἰμι, καταβήσεται πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ καταφάγεται σε καὶ τοὺς πενήκοντά σου· καὶ κατέβη πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ κατέφαγεν αὐτόν καὶ τοὺς πενήκοντα αὐτοῦ.†

13 καὶ προσέθετο ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐτι ἀποστείλαι ἡγούμενον πενηκόνταρχον τρίτον καὶ τοὺς πενήκοντα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἦλθεν πρὸς αὐτόν ὁ πενηκόνταρχος ὁ τρίτος καὶ ἔκαμψεν ἐπὶ τὰ γόνατα αὐτοῦ κατέναντι Ἡλιου καὶ ἐδεήθη αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐλάλησεν πρὸς αὐτόν καὶ εἶπεν Ἄνθρωπε τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐντιμωθήτω δὴ ἡ ψυχὴ μου καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ τῶν δούλων σου τούτων τῶν πενήκοντα ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς σου·† 14 ἰδοὺ κατέβη πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ κατέφαγεν τοὺς δύο πενηκόνταρχους τοὺς πρώτους καὶ τοὺς πενήκοντα αὐτῶν, καὶ

variety of powers over the natural world: οὗτοι ἔχουσιν τὴν ἐξουσίαν κλεῖσαι τὸν οὐρανόν, ἵνα μὴ ὑετὸς βρέχῃ τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς προφητείας αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχουσιν ἐπὶ τῶν ὑδάτων στρέφειν αὐτὰ εἰς αἷμα καὶ πατάξει τὴν γῆν ἐν πάσῃ πληγῇ ὅσάκις ἐὰν θελήσωσιν. They have authority to shut the sky, so that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have authority over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.

The power to prevent rain from falling for specified periods (v. 6a) also echoes the power of Elijah as in 1 Kings 17:1.⁴⁵ And the power to turn water into blood and to inflict plagues echoes the power of Moses in the Exodus (see Exod. 7:14-11:10). This last statement reflects the language of 1 Sam. 4:8 where the Philistines express fear of the Israelite ark of the covenant in its power to afflict the Egyptians with every kind of plague.

These two witnesses possess then equal authority and power to that of these two OT figures whom God

νῦν ἐντιμωθήτω δὴ ἡ ψυχὴ τῶν δούλων σου ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς σου.† 15 καὶ ἐλάλησεν ἄγγελος κυρίου πρὸς Ἡλιου καὶ εἶπεν Κατάβηθι μετ' αὐτοῦ, μὴ φοβηθῆς ἀπὸ προσώπου αὐτῶν· καὶ ἀνέστη Ἡλιου καὶ κατέβη μετ' αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα.† 16 καὶ ἐλάλησεν πρὸς αὐτόν καὶ εἶπεν Ἡλιου Τάδε λέγει κύριος Τί ὅτι ἀπέστειλας ἀγγέλους ζητῆσαι ἐν τῇ Βααλ μιῶν θεῶν Ακκαρων; οὐχ οὕτως· ἡ κλίνη, ἐφ' ἧς ἀνέβης ἐκεῖ, οὐ καταβήσῃ ἀπ' αὐτῆς, ὅτι θανάτῳ ἀποθανῆ.†

9 Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty men. He went up to Elijah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, "O man of God, the king says, 'Come down.'" 10 But Elijah answered the captain of fifty, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty." Then fire came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

11 Again the king sent to him another captain of fifty with his fifty. He went up and said to him, "O man of God, this is the king's order: Come down quickly!" 12 But Elijah answered them, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty." Then the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

13 Again the king sent the captain of a third fifty with his fifty. So the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and entreated him, "O man of God, please let my life, and the life of these fifty servants of yours, be precious in your sight. 14 Look, fire came down from heaven and consumed the two former captains of fifty men with their fifties; but now let my life be precious in your sight." 15 Then the angel of the Lord said to Elijah, "Go down with him; do not be afraid of him." So he set out and went down with him to the king, 16 and said to him, "Thus says the Lord: Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, — is it because there is no God in Israel to inquire of his word? — therefore you shall not leave the bed to which you have gone, but you shall surely die."

⁴⁵17.1 Kings 17:1 (LXX). 1 Καὶ εἶπεν Ἡλιου ὁ προφήτης ὁ Θεοβίτης ἐκ Θεσβῶν τῆς Γαλααδ πρὸς Αχασαβ Ζῆ κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ, ὃ παρέστην ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, εἰ ἔσται τὰ ἐτη ταῦτα δρόσος καὶ ὑετὸς ὅτι εἰ μὴ διὰ στόματος λόγου μου.†

17.1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbea in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."

used to both get His message out and to protect themselves against intended harm. They are not Elijah and Moses come back to life. Instead, they are Christian witnesses to the Messiah who was Jesus Christ.

The second subunit of vv. 7-10 presents the gruesome death of these two witnesses. Evil people on earth cannot harm them during the 42 months of their work. But supernatural evil in the form of the beast from the abyss possess such power to kill them and does so at the end of their work on earth. The people of the earth then rejoice over the death of the two witnesses and refuse to allow them to be properly buried.

Who is this τὸ θηρίον?⁴⁶ This figure has not yet

⁴⁶“The figure of the beast is introduced here unexpectedly and for the first time in Revelation. Surprisingly, he plays no further role in this pericope. The definite article with θηρίον indicates that it (or he) is familiar to the readers even though it is introduced here for the first time (K. Berger, *Auferstehung*, 23). Though one might assume that this beast is identical with the one from the sea (13:1–10), θηρίον is anarthrous in 13:1, suggesting that John assumes that it is unknown to his readers. Since a beast is also described in 17:8 in a similarly phrased statement as originating from the abyss (καὶ μέλλει ἀναβαίνειν ἐκ τῆς ἀβύσσου, ‘he will ascend from the abyss’), it might be assumed that the beast in Rev 17 is identified by the author with the one mentioned in 11:7; 13:1–10. Yet the fact that θηρίον, ‘beast,’ in 17:3 is anarthrous suggests that a different beast is being referred to by the author (or he has inconsistently edited a source). This actor, however, is introduced a bit too abruptly; the motivation for his actions is not evident, so the phrase ‘the beast who ascends from the abyss’ (perhaps an allusion to the four beasts in Dan 7:3, who ἀνέβαινον ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης, ‘ascend from the sea’) is very probably a later redactional addition designed to tie Rev 11:3–13 more closely to Rev 13 and 17 (Kraft, 157–58), and the abyss from which he ascends is intended to be identical with the sea from which the beast emerges in 13:1 (on the abyss in Revelation, see Comment on 9:1b). The adjectival phrase τὸ ἀναβαῖνον ἐκ τῆς ἀβύσσου, ‘who ascended from the abyss,’ functions as a description of the origin of the beast and does not suggest that the beast ascended during the ministry of the two witnesses to oppose them. The author frequently uses descriptive participial phrases to identify various characters (12:9, 17; 17:1; 18:9, 15; 19:20; 21:9, 15). His war against the two witnesses is narrated not as an event that has already occurred but rather as a prophecy of that which will occur in the future, as the three future indicatives ποιήσει μετ’ αὐτῶν πόλεμον, ‘he will make war against them,’ νικήσει αὐτούς, ‘he will conquer them,’ and ἀποκτενεῖ αὐτούς, ‘he will kill them,’ indicate. There is a close parallel in 13:7, where it is said of the beast from the sea that ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ νικῆσαι αὐτούς, ‘he was permitted to wage war with the saints and conquer them.’ The beast is probably modeled after the fourth beast in Dan 7:21, ‘who made war with the saints and prevailed over them.’ The fourth beast of Daniel was believed by some early Christian writers to be Rome (Hippolytus de Ant. 25.1–3; 28.1), and for Victorinus, the beast from the abyss is the Romans (Comm. in Apoc. 11.4). Though only the two witnesses are attacked by the beast, the phrase ποιήσει μετ’ αὐτῶν πόλεμον, ‘he will wage war on them,’ is language that is hardly appropriate for attacking and killing just two individuals. Normally this kind of language in Revelation is used of war waged against the righteous by Satan or one of his representatives (see Rev 12:17; 13:7 [the beast makes war on the righteous as the agent of the dragon]; T. Job

appeared in Revelation but from chapter eleven on will show up quite often as the symbol of rebellion against God and opposition to the people of God. The beast is not equal to Satan who is the dragon in Revelation, but rather functions as an agent of Satan (cf. 12:17; 13:7). Very likely the beast here is modeled after the fourth beast of Dan. 7:21.⁴⁷ Interestingly several church fathers interpreted the fourth beast of Daniel as representing the Roman empire. This provided an interpretive backdrop for understanding the beast in Revelation. Rev. 13:7 provides a close parallel to 11:7 where a detailed description of him is provided in vv. 1-6. His πόλεμον, war, against the witnesses is successful and he kills them. John provides not detail about how this happened -- something typical to descriptions of war in Revelation.⁴⁸

4.4; 18.5; 27.2). The Christian life is described with martial imagery in Eph 6:10–17 and Ignatius Trall. 4:2. Satanic opposition as warfare is not found as frequently in early Jewish or early Christian sources as one might expect.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 616–617.]

⁴⁷**Dan. 7:19-22** (LXX). 19 τότε ἤθελον ἐξακριβασθαι περὶ τοῦ θηρίου τοῦ τετάρτου τοῦ διαφθείροντος πάντα καὶ ὑπερφόβου, καὶ ἰδοὺ οἱ ὀδόντες αὐτοῦ σιδηροὶ καὶ οἱ ὄνυχες αὐτοῦ χαλκοὶ κατεσθίοντες πάντας κυκλόθεν καὶ καταπατοῦντες τοῖς ποσὶ,† 20 καὶ περὶ τῶν δέκα κεράτων αὐτοῦ τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς καὶ τοῦ ἐνός τοῦ ἄλλου τοῦ προσφυέντος, καὶ ἐξέπεσαν δι’ αὐτοῦ τρία, καὶ τὸ κέραν ἐκεῖνο εἶχεν ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ στόμα λαλοῦν μεγάλα, καὶ ἡ πρόσωπις αὐτοῦ ὑπέφερε τὰ ἄλλα.† 21 καὶ κατενόουν τὸ κέραν ἐκεῖνο πόλεμον συνιστάμενον πρὸς τοὺς ἁγίους καὶ τροπούμενον αὐτούς† 22 ἕως τοῦ ἔλθειν τὸν παλαιὸν ἡμερῶν, καὶ τὴν κρίσιν ἔδωκε τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῦ ὑψίστου, καὶ ὁ καιρὸς ἐδόθη καὶ τὸ βασίλειον κατέσχον οἱ ἅγιοι.†

19 Then I desired to know the truth concerning the fourth beast, which was different from all the rest, exceedingly terrifying, with its teeth of iron and claws of bronze, and which devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped what was left with its feet; 20 and concerning the ten horns that were on its head, and concerning the other horn, which came up and to make room for which three of them fell out — the horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke arrogantly, and that seemed greater than the others. 21 As I looked, this horn made war with the holy ones and was prevailing over them, 22 until the Ancient One came; then judgment was given for the holy ones of the Most High, and the time arrived when the holy ones gained possession of the kingdom.

⁴⁸“The narrative is extremely abbreviated and enigmatical (as are all the battle descriptions in Revelation; cf. 12:7–8; 17:14; 19:19–20; 20:9). Nothing is specifically said about how these two witnesses were killed, though stoning was a frequent fate of prophets in Jewish and early Christian tradition (Deut 13:10; 2 Chr 24:21; Heb 11:37; Matt 21:35; 23:37; Luke 13:34; Acts 7:58–60; Paral. Jer. 9:21; Vit. Proph. 2.1). According to Augustine, Elijah and Enoch will be killed together at the end of the world by the Antichrist (Ep. 193.3, 5; De gen ad litt. 9.5), an old tradition also reflected in Acts Pil. 25, undoubtedly influenced by Rev 11 (tr. Hennecke-Schneemelcher, NTA 1:525):

I am Enoch, who pleased God and was removed here by him. And this is Elijah the Tishbite. We shall live until the end of the world. But then we shall be sent by God to withstand Antichrist and to be

The corpses (τὸ πῶμα αὐτῶν) of the two witnesses is left to rot on the streets of Jerusalem (v. 8). The identity of the city, though couched in indirect language, is clear. The descriptive terms for the city link Jerusalem with evil and rebellion against God: τῆς μεγάλης, ἣτις καλεῖται πνευματικῶς⁴⁹ Σόδομα καὶ Αἴγυπτος, ὅπου καὶ ὁ κύριος αὐτῶν ἐσταυρώθη, the large one, which is called prophetically Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. Although down through the centuries a few have identified this city with Rome, these indicators are rather clearly identifying Jerusalem as where the corpses of the two witnesses are left to rot ἐπὶ τῆς πλατείας, upon the street. The use of the definite article τῆς seems to point to a known street in Jerusalem, perhaps the pre-70 street in Jerusalem known as the Tyropoeon Valley Street.⁵⁰

killed by him. And after three days we shall rise again and be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord.

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 617.]

⁴⁹“The term πνευματικῶς here means not simply ‘allegorically’ or ‘metaphorically’ but ‘prophetically’ (Schweizer, TDNT 6:449), for it refers to the charismatic exegesis of the OT under the guidance of the Spirit of God (Aune, “Charismatic Exegesis,” 126–50). In Isa 1:9–10, the prophet denounced Jerusalem as ‘Sodom’ (see Jer 23:14; Ezek 16:46, 49; Asc. Isa. 3:10; cf. Fekkes, Isaiah, 176).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 620.]

⁵⁰“The bodies of the two witnesses lie unburied on the street, perhaps a deliberate literary contrast to Jesus’ burial, which occurred soon after his death (Mark 15:42–47; Matt 27:57–61; Luke 23:50–56; John 19:38–42). According to John 19:31–37, Pilate was particularly anxious to have the bodies of those executed buried before the Sabbath began (cf. Jos. J. W. 4.317).

“That ἡ πλατεῖα is articular probably means that it refers to a well-known street or square in either pre-A.D.-70 Jerusalem or in Rome (a reference to Rome in the source may have been redacted to refer to Jerusalem; see Comments on vv 8b and 8c; the chief public square at Rome was the Forum Romanum), though an original reference to Jerusalem appears most likely. If so, this is one of several indications that the author was of Palestinian origin. Jewish apocalyptic certainly regarded Palestine generally and Jerusalem in particular as the focus of God’s eschatological program. One evident problem, if the author wrote ca. A.D. 90, is that Jerusalem had been destroyed in A.D. 70 (though portions of Revelation were almost certainly composed before A.D. 70). Very little is known about the streets of Jerusalem during the period before Hadrian’s reconstruction (see Wilkinson, Jerusalem, 54–65; a map of the gridded street layout of Jerusalem as completed by Herod the Great is found on p. 62; a more detailed discussion with street maps is found in Wilkinson, Levant 7 [1975] 118–36). Although portions of a significant ancient street have been excavated in Jerusalem, it dates from the Roman resettlement of Jerusalem, renamed Aelia Capitolina, during the principate of Hadrian (see Avigad, Discovering Jerusalem, 213–29; H. Geva, NEAEHL 2:762). This street is called the *cardo maximus*, which was the general designation for the major north-south axis of a typical Roman city. This main artery of Roman-Byzantine Jerusalem was twenty-two meters or seventy-two feet wide, four times the width of other streets, and so

With these rotting bodies laying on the street where all can see them, John says (v. 9) groups of people from all over see them (βλέπουσιν) and refuse to allow the corpses to be buried (τὰ πῶματα αὐτῶν οὐκ ἀφίουσιν τεθῆναι εἰς μνήμα). The language here

could certainly be described as ἡ πλατεῖα (Broshi, IEJ 24 [1977] 232–35). The *cardo maximus* of Jerusalem, now called Khan ez Zeit Street, is depicted in the Madaba mosaic map of Jerusalem from the Byzantine period, ca. A.D. 600 (Avigad, Discovering Jerusalem, 211–12; Finegan, Archaeology, 169–70; Wilkinson, Levant 7 [1975] 118–23; M. Avi-Yonah, “Jerusalem,” NEAEHL 2:775–76). However, the late date of this construction reveals little about the street system of Jerusalem in the Herodian period. The only large streets or plazas found in pre-A.D.-70 Jerusalem excavated thus far are the following: (1) The main north-south street, ten meters wide, dubbed “Tyropoeon Valley Street,” ran along the western side of the temple mount and under the pier of “Robinson’s Arch” and served as the central market of Jerusalem during the Herodian period (Mazar, “Temple Mount,” 25–26; Ben-Dov, Temple, 113–15 [photographs]; H. Geva, “Jerusalem,” NEAEHL 2:741 [photographs]). According to Ben-Dov, it was “the most impressive commercial center in Jerusalem” (Temple, 114). The Roman-Byzantine Secondary (Eastern) *Cardo*, in its northern section, follows the earlier Tyropoeon Valley Street (H. Geva, “Jerusalem,” NEAEHL 2:763–64; M. Avi-Yonah, “Jerusalem,” NEAEHL 2:779). (2) Intersecting this street is “Hulda Gates Street,” a narrow east-west street (6.4 meters wide and ca. 280 meters long), which ran along the southern wall of the temple mount in front of the Hulda Gates (Mazar, “Temple Mount,” 26–27; Ben-Dov, Temple, 108; H. Geva, “Jerusalem,” NEAEHL 2:742). (3) South of the monumental stairs leading up to the narrow street that ran past the “Double Gate” in the southern wall of the temple mount the remains of a plaza have been found (Mazar, “Temple Mount,” 27–30). (4) In the middle of the Upper City in the Jewish Quarter, fifty meters of a paved east-west street of the late Herodian period have been excavated, which at one point measured thirteen meters in width (Avigad, IEJ 22 [1972] 198–99; id., Discovering Jerusalem, 88, 94; Ben-Dov, Temple, 115). This street, called “Upper Market,” ἡ ἄνω ἀγορά (Jos. J. W. 2.305, 315, 339; 5.137), branched off from Tyropoeon Valley Street and ran to the Upper City to the residential and commercial areas. (5) In addition, Wilkinson proposes two major street grids, one oriented around the temple enclosure and the other oriented around Herod’s palace (completed 23 B.C.), with a major street, which he calls “Temple Street,” proceeding west from the temple mount and connecting the two building complexes (Wilkinson, Jerusalem, 62; id., Levant 7 [1975] figs. 6–8). According to Wilkinson (Levant 7 [1975] 126), “Temple Street was probably never straight, even though it was the most impressive in the whole city of Herod the Great [emphasis added].” Prof. L. Levine, however, informs me that Wilkinson’s “Temple Street” has no basis in archeological evidence. At this point, then, it appears that Tyropoeon Valley Street is the best candidate for ἡ πλατεῖα at the present stage of our knowledge of the archeology of pre-A.D.-70 Jerusalem. Even though the tradition of the ministry of the two witnesses is located in pre-A.D.-70 Jerusalem, however, this does not contradict the fact that the author has transformed the historical Jerusalem into a symbol of an unbelieving world (Considine, CBQ 8 [1946] 388), which violently rejected the divine messengers sent to proclaim the word of God to it.”

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 617–619.]

appears to have been influenced by [Psalm 79:1-3](#) where the razing of Jerusalem is described in terms of dead bodies lying everywhere and no one to bury them. To not bury a dead body quickly was considered the ultimate of outrage against the individual and an action of intentional desecration of the individual.

The extent of desecration and outrage of evil people over the death of the two witnesses is further described in verse ten: καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς χαίρουσιν ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς καὶ εὐφραίνονται καὶ δῶρα πέμπουσιν ἀλλήλοις, ὅτι οὗτοι οἱ δύο προφῆται ἐβασάνισαν τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, and the inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and celebrate and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to the inhabitants of the earth. The bothersome message of the two witnesses had ἐβασάνισαν, tormented, the people of the earth. Consequently jubilant celebrations took place over their deaths. Some comment on ‘gift exchange’ needs to be made due to its different pattern from modern western culture.⁵¹ The patterns varied widely and gifts were sometimes nothing more than food. Always with a gift of some value the expectation was to receive a similar gift back in return. The pattern described here is of high level celebration and is further emphasized in the use of the uncommon verb εὐφραίνονται denoting intense celebration.

⁵¹“The two motifs of joy and gift exchange are closely connected. In the Greco-Roman world the exchange of gifts was an expression of mutual obligation and occupied an important role in both public and private life (Iliad 6.119–236). Gifts were exchanged on the occasion of religious festivals, such as the Saturnalia (Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 101; Scullard, *Festivals*, 207; H. S. Versnel, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion* [Leiden: Brill, 1992] 2:148; see Herodian 1.16.2; Macrobius Saturnalia 1.7.18ff.). In ancient Israel, as in ancient Greece, the presentation of gifts was connected with birth (Matt 2:11), betrothal (Odyssey 15.16–18), and marriage (Odyssey 20.341–44), and on various occasions gifts were presented by parents to children (Matt 7:11 = Luke 11:13), i.e., all occasions associated with joy and rejoicing. Gift giving on most of these occasions, however, did not actually involve gift exchange (the Saturnalia and the New Year festival of Kalends are exceptions; see M. Meslin, *La fête des kalendes de janvier dans l’empire romain* [Brussels: Latomus, 1970] 39). Some of the traditions associated with the Saturnalia, including gift exchange, may have been adopted by the Christian celebration of the nativity of Christ on December 25 (first celebrated on that date in A.D. 336), just following the festival of Saturnalia, which was celebrated for seven days, December 17–23 (Scullard, *Festivals*, 205–7). The Jewish festival of Purim was a time of joy and gladness and also an occasion when people gave “gifts of food to one another and presents to the poor” (Esth 9:22, NRSV), indicating that this Jewish festival truly involved gift exchange. The word ‘gift,’ however, requires some definition, for in the ancient world no one ever gave something of value without expecting recompense (Finley, *World*, 64–66; Hands, *Charities*, 26–48).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 623.]

The third subunit of vv. 11-13 underscore the short lived celebration of the evil people over the killing of the two witnesses.

Just 3 1/2 days after their execution these two individuals come back to life: Καὶ μετὰ τὰς τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ ἥμισυ πνεῦμα ζωῆς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσῆλθεν ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔστησαν ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας αὐτῶν, *But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet.* The Greek phrase πνεῦμα ζωῆς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ expresses something in Greek that is almost impossible to capture in English. The word πνεῦμα means both Spirit and spirit, and also breath. Here combined with πνεῦμα ζωῆς the sense is ‘breath of life’ and plays off Ezekiel 37:10.⁵²

The ἔστησαν ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας αὐτῶν, *they stood on their own feet*, highlights the reality of coming back to life and is common in such narratives throughout the Bible. The reference to 3 1/2 days is repeated from ἡμέρας τρεῖς καὶ ἥμισυ in v. 9.⁵³ God breathes new life into these corpses, just as He did with Jesus in the tomb.⁵⁴ The visible picture of a resurrection experience

⁵²**Ezek. 37:10** (LXX) καὶ ἐπροφήτευσεν καθότι ἐνετείλατό μοι· καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς αὐτοὺς τὸ πνεῦμα, καὶ ἔζησαν καὶ ἔστησαν ἐπὶ τῶν ποδῶν αὐτῶν, συναγωγή πολλὴ σφόδρα.

I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

⁵³“The phrase ‘after three and one-half days’ is repeated from v 9a. Since the resurrection of the two witnesses occurs in three and one-half days, it is reminiscent of the three days associated with the resurrection of Jesus. This tradition takes two forms: (1) Jesus rose ‘on the third day’ (Matt 16:21 = Luke 9:22; Matt 17:23; Matt 20:19 = Luke 18:34; Luke 24:7, 21, 46; Acts 10:43; 1 Cor 15:4), and (2) Jesus rose ‘after three days’ (Matt 27:60; Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34). The attempt to equate ‘after three days’ with the ‘three and one-half days’ of Rev 11:11 is problematic, for the 3 1/2 days is an analogous, though much shorter, period of time than the 42 months of v 2 and the 1,260 days of v 3 (both variations of 3 1/2 years) as periods of oppression (v 2) and witness (v 3).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 624.]

⁵⁴“The phrase ‘breath of life’ occurs several times in Genesis (Gen 1:30; 2:7; 6:17; 7:15, 22; cf. Job 32:8; 33:4; 4 Ezra 3:5). God breathed the breath of life into the first human being. Lactantius Div. Inst. 7.17.3 says (tr. McDonald, Lactantius, 518), ‘But after the third day, he will rise again and will be taken into heaven while all look on and marvel.’ In Paral. Jer. 9:7–14, after praying near the altar of the temple, Jeremiah collapses as though dead. When the sorrowing people are about to bury him, a voice says, ‘Do not bury one who still lives, because his soul will again return to his body.’ After three days of waiting, Jeremiah revives and praises and glorifies God. In T. Abr. [Rec. A] 18:11, Abraham prays and ‘God sent a spirit of life [ἀπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς πνεῦμα ζωῆς]’ into the dead servants of Abraham, and they were made alive again. The notion that the soul of a deceased person lingered around the corpse for three days was widespread in the ancient Near East (Plutarch De num. vind. 22; K. Berger, *Auferstehung*, 370–71).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 624.]

is conveyed here, but the technical language of ‘resurrection’ is not used, evidently because this terminology is reserved for Jesus and for believers at the very end of time with the return of Christ.

The reaction of the evil people is predictable: *καὶ φόβος μέγας ἐπέπεσεν ἐπὶ τοὺς θεωροῦντας αὐτοὺς, and great fear fell upon those observing them.*⁵⁵ Realization of having made a terrible mistake regarding these two witnesses sank in full force.

The next sequence of events for the two witnesses after coming back to life was the heavenly voice (v. 12): *καὶ ἤκουσαν φωνῆς μεγάλης ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λεγούσης αὐτοῖς· ἀνάβατε ὧδε. καὶ ἀνέβησαν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ, καὶ ἔθεώρησαν αὐτοὺς οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτῶν, Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here!” And they went up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies watched them.* The heavenly voice here alluded back to 10:4 which plays off 4:1 with a command to “Come up here.” This image of deity speaking from heaven in a loud voice was relatively common in John’s world.⁵⁶ The ascension of these two witnesses, modeled after Jesus’ ascension (cf. Acts 1:9), is done with their enemies watching them ascend.⁵⁷ The unusual

⁵⁵“The phrase ‘great fear fell on them’ is a Semitic expression for a collective response of awe, either because the Israelites or Jews seem invincible (Exod 15:16; Deut 11:25; Esth 8:17; 9:2; 1 Macc 3:25; 7:18; 2 Macc 12:22) or as a reaction to a display of supernatural power (2 Macc 3:24; Luke 1:12, 65; Acts 5:5; 19:17). The verb θεωροῦν occurs just twice in Revelation (11:11, 12), while βλέπειν occurs nineteen times (in contrast, θεωροῦν is a favorite term in the Fourth Gospel, where it is used twenty-four times)” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 624.]

⁵⁶“For the motif of the unidentified voice in Revelation, see Comment on 10:4. Here the voice simply commands the two witnesses to ‘Come up here!’ a phrase identical with that found in 4:1. Voices from heaven occasionally provide strength and encouragement for martyrs (Mart. Pol. 9.1). Witnesses to the apotheosis of Apollonius of Tyana reportedly heard a chorus singing within the closed temple from which he disappeared: ‘Hasten from earth, hasten to heaven, hasten,’ i.e., ‘Go upwards from earth’ (Philostratus Vita Apoll. 8.30).” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 624–625.]

⁵⁷“This event is presented as a miraculous divine rescue, a view underlined by the fact that the enemies of the two witnesses observe their ascension. There are some Jewish and Christian martyr legends in which it is reported that martyrs ascend to heaven after their deaths, where they stand before God, though in every text with the exception of one (T. Job 39.12–13; 40.3), it appears to be a matter of the ascension of the souls of the martyrs (Dan 12:2–3; 4 Macc 17:5; Jos. J. W. 2.153–55; Mart. Justin [Rec. A and B] 5; Acts Scill. 15 [Hodie martyr in caelis sumus]; Mart. Perpetua 11.7–8; Mart. Fruct. 5; 7.2; see Kellermann, *Auferstanden in den Himmel* [who, however, does not refer to Rev 11]). In some passages the resurrection of the martyr is in view, but with no reference to an ascent to heaven (2 Macc 7:9, 11, 14, 23, 29; Jub. 23:30; see Hengel, *Zealots*, 269–70). Other texts mention the immortality that awaits

the martyrs but similarly do not mention heaven (Jos. J. W. 1.650; 7.344–60; Ag. Ap. 2.218–19; 4 Macc 7:19; 9:8; 16:25).

“Clouds are used as transport in a number of ways in Israelite and early Jewish tradition (see Sabourin, BTB 4 [1974] 290–311; Lohfink, *Himmelfahrt*, 187–93; Luzarraga, *Nube*, 220–25; Vermes, *Jesus*, 186–88: “Excursus I: the cloud, a means of heavenly transport”): (1) as a means of transport for Yahweh (Deut 33:26; Ps 68:34; see Houtman, *Himmel*, 324–26), (2) as a means of transport from earth to heaven (Acts 1:9; 1 Thess 4:17; Rev 11:12; 2 Kgs 2:11; 1 Enoch 14:8; 39:3; 52:1; 70:2; 2 Enoch 3:1; T. Abr. [Rec. A] 10:1; [Rec. B] 8:3; 10:2; Ant. 4.326 [a cloud descended on Moses, and he disappeared in a ravine]; b. Yoma 4a [“Moses ascended in the cloud”]; Pesiq. Rab. Kah. 20.4 (96b), “the cloud covered Moses and carried him up” [A. Jellinek, *Bet Ha-Midrash* 1:59]), (3) as a means of transport from one area of heaven to another (Pss 68:4; 104:3; Isa 19:1; Dan 7:13; T. Abr. [Rec. B] 12:1, 9; 4 Ezra 13:3), (4) as a means of transport from heaven to earth, often associated in early Christian sources with the coming of the Son of man (Rev 1:7; 10:1; Mark 13:26 = Matt 24:30 = Luke 21:27; Mark 14:62 = Matt 26:64; Barn. 16:8; T. Abr. [Rec. A] 9:8; 15:2), (5) as a mode of enthronement (Rev 14:14–16; Sir 24:4; Mek. de-Rabbi Ishmael, Shirata 6 [Lauterbach, 2:46], “Nebuchadnezzar said: ‘I will make me a little cloud and will dwell in it’”), and (6) as a symbol associated with theophanies or angelophanies (Rev 10:1; Exod 14:24; 16:10; 24:16; Lev 16:2; Num 12:5; Deut 1:33; Lam 3:44; 2 Macc 2:8; Mark 9:7 = Matt 17:5 = Luke 9:34–35).

“The ascension of the two witnesses narrated in vv 11–12 is essentially a rapture story, as distinguished from stories of the heavenly journey of the soul; that is, the two witnesses are physically taken up alive into heaven as the final conclusion of their earthly lives (Zwiep, *Ascension*, 22, 36 n. 1). K. Berger has pointed out that Luke 24 exhibits the threefold pattern of resurrection, manifestation, and ascent to heaven, a pattern also found in Rev 11:3–13, Gos. Pet. 10, and Barn. 15:9 (Auferstehung, 170–74, 471–75). This pattern is found in its most succinct form in Barn. 15:9, ‘Therefore we celebrate joyfully the eighth day on which Jesus rose from the dead, and after being manifested, ascended into the heavens.’ A central motif that this verse shares with Acts 1:9 is the cloud as a vehicle for carrying those ascending into heaven. Nevertheless, this rapture story is different from other early Jewish rapture stories involving Enoch, Elijah, Moses, Ezra (4 Ezra 14:7–9, 50), Baruch (2 Apoc. Bar. 76:1–5), and Phinehas (Bib. Ant. 48:1–2), for all these figures were taken up alive into heaven to await the eschaton, at which time they would return (Mal 3:23–24; Acts 1:11; 3:21; 4 Ezra 14:9; 2 Apoc. Bar. 76:2; Bib. Ant. 48:2; see Zwiep, *Ascension*, 76–79). The appearance of the two witnesses, on the other hand, is an eschatological event that presumes the return of Moses and Elijah. Their physical assumption into heaven apparently represents a second rapture, which is accomplished for their protection, not for their preservation until the eschaton.

“The theme of the apparently permanent (as opposed to the temporary) translation or transport of the righteous to heaven is somewhat problematic since in biblical tradition heaven is not normally considered the abode of the righteous, whether living or dead. Traditions of the translations of Enoch (Gen 5:22, 24; Sir 44:16; Ant. 1.85; 1 Enoch 39:3; Heb 11:5; 1 Clem. 9:3; Ps.-Titus Epistle [Hennecke-Schmeemelcher, NTA 2:153]) and Elijah (2 Kgs 2:1–12; Mal 4:5), however, are obvious precedents. These and other texts that mention the ascension of Moses, Ezra, Baruch, Phinehas, and others (Zwiep, *Ascension*, 36–79) suggest that heaven could be considered the abode of certain righteous individuals

aspect is that these two witnesses ascend into heaven body and soul in tact. One can assume that their being brought back to life was something of a resurrection experience comparable to that of Jesus, but the text does not specifically indicate this. But, of course, this is apocalyptic visionary experience, not regular life experience like that of Jesus.

Just as these two witnesses are ascending on the cloud back into heaven, a great earthquake takes place in Jerusalem (v. 13): *Καὶ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐγένετο σεισμός μέγας, and in this very hour there occurred a great earthquake.* This is comparable to the earthquake that accompanied Jesus' death in Mt. 27:51.⁵⁸ Typically (Apoc. Paul 20, 51; Asc. Isa. 9:7–9), just as only exceptional Greek heroes were rewarded with life on the Islands of the Blessed. On this theme see T. Job 39.12 (Charlesworth, OTP 1:859), 'For you will not find my children, since they were taken up [ἀνελήφθησαν] into heaven by the Creator their King.' The text seems to imply that Job's children, killed when their house collapsed, were taken up into heaven body and soul (see the extended discussion by Spittler in Charlesworth, OTP 1:859 n. e). A different form of assumption with an obvious body-soul dichotomy is found in T. Abr. (Rec. B1; F. Schmidt, 62) 7:16–17, 'and he [Abraham] will be taken up [ἀναλαμβάνεται] into the heavens, but his body remains on the earth.' A similar text is found in the Testament of Abraham (Rec. B2; F. Schmidt, 89): 'You shall be taken up [ἀναλαμβάνεσαι] to the heavens but your body will remain on earth.' In Asc. Isa. 9:9, Isaiah reportedly saw the righteous in the seventh heaven 'stripped of the garment of the flesh' (tr. Hennecke- Schneemelcher, NTA 2:657). Part of Munck's argument that Peter and Paul are the two witnesses in Rev 11:3–13 is the tradition that they were taken into heaven after their deaths (Petrus und Paulus, 72ff.). He uses this argument apparently unaware that this is a widespread martyrological motif. Peter's 'ascension' is described in 1 Clem. 5:4, οὕτω μαρτυρήσας ἐπορεύθη εἰς τὸν ὀφειλόμενον τόπον τῆς δόξης, 'after thus bearing witness, he [Peter] went to the well-deserved place of glory.' Similarly, 1 Clem. 5:7 says of Paul καὶ εἰς τὸν ἅγιον τόπον ἀνελήμφθη, 'he was also taken up to the holy place.' Similarly, in Mart. Paul 4 (Lipsius-Bonnet, AAA 1:114, line 15 through 1:115, line 1), Paul says in his swan song that "I am going to the Lord" (perhaps based on Phil 1:23). Acts Thom. 169–70 (Lipsius-Bonnet, AAA 2/2:286, lines 10–11) reports that when the grave of the apostle Thomas was opened by a person seeking a relic, his body was not there (on the motif of disappearance = heavenly ascent, see Comment on v 12c)."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 625–626.]

⁵⁸"In view of the analogy of the death and resurrection of the two witnesses with that of Jesus, the earthquake mentioned in Matt 27:51 accompanying the death of Jesus is a relevant parallel. In Revelation, earthquakes (along with other seismic and atmospheric phenomena) usually have a theophanic function (6:12; 8:5; 11:19), but here and in 16:18 they are instruments of divine punishment. According to PGM IV.679–84, a group of seven gods sends thunder, lightning, and earthquakes to punish the impious. In legendary narratives, the ascension of heroes is often accompanied by atmospheric and seismic phenomena; in the case of Romulus there was an eclipse, thunder, lightning, and rain (Dionysius Hal. Ant. Rom. 2.56.2; Plutarch Rom. 27.6; Ovid Metam. 14.816–17; Dio 1.5.12). These phenomena are not punitive; rather they function primar-

earthquakes in the Bible signal a divine action that is being validated. But here the earthquake becomes a divine punishment on these who celebrated the killing of the two witnesses. One tenth (τὸ δέκατον τῆς πόλεως) of the population of Jerusalem were killed by the earthquake, which numbered 7,000 people (χιλιάδες ἑπτὰ).⁵⁹ This would imply a population of around 70,000 inhabitants at this point in time. This is a reasonable number in light of the ancient estimations of the fluctuating population in the first century AD.

The subsequent reaction by the survivors is depicted as καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἔμφοβοι ἐγένοντο καὶ ἔδωκαν δόξαν τῷ θεῷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. The unanswerable question here is was this real or fake? Probably the latter, although opinion on it is divided among the commentators.⁶⁰ In the terror of the moment these survivors

ily as signs that an extraordinary event is taking place." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 627.]

⁵⁹"One topos found in ancient battle accounts is the enumeration of the slain in thousands (1 Sam 18:7; 21:11; 29:5; Scrip. Hist. Aug., Div. Aurelianus 6.5; 7.2). The figure 7,000 is used in 1 Kgs 19:18 for a remnant of 7,000 Israelites who have not worshiped Baal (in Rom 11:7–8, Paul uses the term οἱ λοιποί, 'remnant,' for just these 7,000 Israelites). The biblical conception of 'remnant' frequently refers to that portion of the community that escaped (or will escape) death or exile (Jer 24:8; Ezra 9:13–15; Isa 10:20–22; 11:11–16; 17:5–8; 28:5; 37:31–32; Amos 7:1–6; CD 1:4–5; 1QH 6:8; Rom 9:24–29; 11:5). Since one-tenth of the city is said to be destroyed in this earthquake, the figure of 7,000 may represent a tenth part of a total population of 70,000. Josephus (Ag. Ap. 1.197), on the authority of Hecataeus, claims that there were 120,000 inhabitants of Jerusalem, a figure that many have thought too high for the early first century A.D., though Chaplin estimated a population of ca. 250,000. The population of Jerusalem before A.D. 66 has been estimated at something between 55,000 and 95,000 (Joachim Jeremias, Jerusalem, 83 n. 24), perhaps something more than 70,000 (Hengel, Zealots, 67 n. 38). Broshi (RB 82 [1975] 5–14; id., BAR 4 [1978] 10–15) suggests that (with a population density of 160 to 200 persons per acre) as many as 40,000 people occupied the 230 acres of Jerusalem during Herod's reign, while just before the destruction of the second temple in A.D. 70, it doubled in size with a population of ca. 80,000 occupying about 450 acres. Another argument for identifying 'the great city' of v 8 with Jerusalem and not Rome is the great disparity in population; the population of Rome during the mid-first century A.D. was ca. 500,000 (Allo, 155)." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 628.]

⁶⁰"This is a typical conclusion to a miracle story (K. Berger, Auferstehung, 24; cf. Theissen, Miracle, 69–72), consisting of two stock reactions, 'fear and amazement' (fear: Matt 17:6; 27:54; Mark 4:41; Luke 2:9; 7:16; 8:35; amazement: Matt 8:27; Mark 1:27; 5:42; 6:51; Luke 4:36). The phrase 'they glorified God' at the conclusion of a miracle is an 'acclamation' and is frequently found in Luke-Acts (Luke 8:47; 9:43; 13:13, 17; 18:43; 23:47; Acts 3:9). Sometimes, as here, both kinds of reactions are combined (Mark 2:12; 16:8). The phrase διδόναι δόξαν τῷ θεῷ, 'to give glory to God,' is an idiom with several meanings: (1) it can mean 'to tell

acknowledged that God had indeed done these miracles. Reading a ‘conversion’ into this is not justified, in spite of Aune’s arguments.

After all of these details we still are perplexed by the identity of the two witnesses. The profiles developed here present them in the molds of Elijah and Moses but without asserting that these two OT characters have returned back to earth for another assignment. Instead, their experiences in their earthly life seem to provide a model for these two witnesses. Their witness, which is prophesying here in chapter eleven, is distinctly Christian and focused on the twin traditions of a royal and a priestly Messiah fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The likelihood is that these symbolize the Christian witness of believers on earth, especially during the final days leading up to the full outpouring of God’s wrath at the very end. God grants certain protections to His people but this doesn’t make them immune from eventual martyrdom as the two images of the 144,000 on earth and the host in heaven in chapter seven assert. He blesses their witness with His supernatural presence but this doesn’t guarantee acceptance by evil people caught up in the pleasures of this world. Most likely then they are τῶν ἁγίων, *the saints*, of 13:7 against whom the beast made war while they were on the earth and slaughtered most all of these. But God’s protecting arm was around them and brought them into heaven as martyrs.

C. The second and third woes, v. 14

14 Ἡ οὐαὶ ἡ δευτέρα ἀπῆλθεν· ἰδοὺ ἡ οὐαὶ ἡ

the truth’ (John 9:24; Louw-Nida, § 33.468), (2) it can mean ‘give praise and honor to God’ (this is a Lukan formula: Luke 8:47; 17:18; Acts 3:9; 4:21; 11:18; 12:23; 13:48; 21:20), and (3) it can be verbal indication of conversion, which is probably the meaning here (Trites, *Witness*, 169–70; Sweet, 106–9; Bauckham, “Conversion,” 278; disputed by Giesen [1997] 259). This is somewhat surprising, however, since it is the only instance in Revelation of people turning to the true God as a result of a punitive miracle. Yet there is strong evidence that διδόναι δόξαν τῷ θεῷ is an idiom for conversion (Haas, “Testament of Job,” 141). In Rev 16:9, people blasphemed the name of God, and ‘they did not repent so as to give glory to him,’ suggesting that had they repented they would have given glory to God. In the angelic proclamation of the ‘eternal gospel’ in 14:6–7, people are exhorted to ‘fear God and give him glory,’ i.e., become converted. Here in 11:13, giving glory to God is clearly the consequence of repentance, i.e., conversion (Loisy, 216). The ‘conversion’ of Nebuchadnezzar is described in LXX Dan 4:34, using the phrase δὸς δόξαν τῷ ὑψίστῳ, ‘give glory to the Most High.’ Similarly, the phrase διδόναι δόξαν τῷ θεῷ, ‘to give glory to God,’ occurs in other contexts in which it clearly indicates that conversion has taken place (1 Esdr 9:8; Acts 13:48; Hermas Sim. 6.3.6; 8.6.3). The phrase διδόναι δόξαν τῷ θεῷ is also used of Christians as a sign of their adherence to God (Mart. Justin 6.1; Mart. Agape 7.2). The conversion of the remnant of Judaism is predicted by Paul in Rom 11:25–26.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 628–629.]

τρίτη ἔρχεται ταχύ.

14 The second woe has passed. The third woe is coming very soon.

This concluding verse brings the Interlude of 10:1–11:13 to a close and paves the way for the next series of events. The twofold declaration makes this clear. This continues a pattern of editorial insertion by John in order to help the reader understand the progression of his narrative.⁶¹ This pattern began in 8:13 with the angel’s crying of “Woe, Woe, Woe” between the fourth and fifth trumpets. Then in 9:12 the first woe is specifically identified with the blowing of the fifth trumpet. Now in 11:14 John asserts that the blowing of the sixth trumpet along with the Interlude completes the second woe.

He then asserts that the third woe is to come shortly, although he never specifically identifies it as he did the first two. This third woe seems to be closely identified with the blowing of the seventh trumpet. It may be linked to the mention of an οὐαὶ in 12:12. But this cannot be clearly identified as the third woe. More likely it is to be understood in the seven bowls of wrath in 15:1–16:21 as comprising collectively a woe from God.

2. What does the text mean to us today?

Wow! What does all this have to do with us today? The easiest opinion is to project it all to some future series of events at the end of human history that has little or no connection to us in the twenty-first century. But this is being dishonest with a text that sought to be relevant to Christians living at the very end of the first Christian century. And when they read its contents, they were convinced it was relevant to them. And so did successive generations of believers for many, many centuries afterward.

John makes use of contemporary imagery and terminology to the readers in his day as a part of the effort to speak to needs in the seven churches of Asia. As

⁶¹“Of the pattern of ‘three woes’ announced by the eagle in 8:13, and anticipated by the reader, only two woes are explicitly mentioned as having occurred (9:12; 11:14). The statements here and in 9:12 are the author’s editorial comments, which he does not present as transmitted to him by a heavenly revealer; rather he simply inserts them into what he considers the appropriate juncture in his narrative. This in turn suggests that the statement of the eagle in 8:13 was inserted by the author at an advanced stage of composition. This sentence would appear more appropriate if it were placed after 9:21, and it is also difficult to reconcile with the result of the sounding of the seventh trumpet in 11:15–18, which can hardly be described as a “woe.” Its displacement results from the insertion of 10:1–11:13 between the sixth and seventh trumpets (similar to the author’s insertion of 7:1–17 between the sixth and seventh seals) and the author’s attempt to pick of the threads of that narrative in 11:15–18.” [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 630.]

we have plowed through this maize of terms and imagery, hopefully you have sensed some powerful spiritual principles at work that have vital relevance to believers of every generation.

First one thing, the theme of God's protecting hand upon His people on earth is affirmed here again with graphically powerful images. The measuring of the temple for divine protection speaks volumes to us today. The granting of authorization to proclaim the message of Christ to a pagan, hostile world challenges us mightily. Believers carrying out such a commission walk in the shadows of Elijah and Moses whom God empowered to get His message across. How God cares for His servants as they complete this mission is marvelously wonder.

We must not ever confuse the nature of God's protecting hand upon us in His service. We are not immune from suffering and trials. The hostility of a pagan world that we seek to win over to Christ can on occasion turn vicious and harmful. Yet in the power of the Gospel God gives us ways of overcoming this anger and hostility.

Ultimately when martyrdom becomes our lot in life, we must remember that it takes supernatural evil from the abyss to kill us off. People of their own accord cannot do this to us. The beast of the abyss working in behalf of Satan captures such evil people and uses them to achieve their goals of opposing God and His people.

But their initial victory, though celebrated among evil men, is but short lived. God Himself gives us the summons, "ἀνάβατε ὧδε, [Come up here!](#)" No power of evil men nor of evil beasts out of Hell itself can override that summons! We are heaven bound and no one can stop us.

As faithful witnesses even in martyrdom our approach to a death that guarantees resurrection offers a powerful testimony to pagan people that God indeed is alive and working in the lives of His people. It may or may not turn them to repentance, but at minimal it leaves them with the haunting sense of God at work in our lives as His servants.

We do indeed have a lot to learn from Revelation 11:1-14!

