

Revelation

Notes #11A

Seal #7 - Trumpet #6: Temple of God

Chapter 11:1-2a

Trumpet

#6
[Part 5]

Description

(1) Then there was given me a **measuring rod** like a staff [**42 handbreadths**]; and someone said, "Get up and measure **the temple of God** and **the altar**, and those who worship in it. (2) Leave out **the court** which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to **the nations**; and they will tread under foot the holy city for **forty-two [42] months**. (Revelation 11:1-2 NASB)

Symbology

Rod/Staff
Temple
Altar
Court/Nations
Holy City
Months
42

Meaning(s)

Reed; measurement of 42 handbreadths, or 42 prophetic months
True Church; dwelling of God in spirit; New Jerusalem
Sacrifice of Christ; worship Christ for His atonement
Nations; religions; *isms*; enemies of the cross
New Jerusalem
Nighttime; darkness
Man's opposition to God; antichrist

Period

257-1870 AD

Interpretation

Period in which nations tread under foot New Jerusalem

There are many schools of thought regarding the identity of the Temple of God. Those who interpret Revelation futuristically generally see it as a new temple yet to be built by the Jews in the present-day Jerusalem. This is based on an interpretation of Daniel's 70 weeks (Daniel 9:24-27) that sees a suspension of the 70 weeks at Calvary; the suspension occurred at 69 weeks, meaning that one week of 7 years remains. During this time, they hold that a new temple must be rebuilt so that it will be desecrated by an antichrist. However, others, including me, believe that the full 70 weeks were completed with the crucifixion of Jesus. This is a separate but important topic that must be left for another study.

What needs to be understood is that Revelation is not about the *apparent* Jew who, by the way, lies about his identity as a Jew (Revelation 2:9; 3:9), but about the Church that Christ is building (Matthew 16:18). The whole of Revelation is an unveiling of Christ and His true Church. A battle has waged over the true Church of God since Pentecost in 33 AD, and Revelation records, not only the battles, but the victories that the Church has achieved *in measure* and will ultimately achieve *in full* against all foes within and without because He is called "Faithful and True" (Revelation 19:11). Christ is the Conqueror, and Revelation is an encouragement to His conquerors that they will win, especially in martyrdom, and it is from this perspective that we must understand the meaning of the Temple of God.

Temple of God

First, to repeat, this is not about a new temple to be built in Jerusalem on the temple mount near the end of our present age.

Second, the Temple of God is called **the holy city**, and John clearly identified this city. It is called **New Jerusalem**.

Then I saw **New Jerusalem**, that **holy city**, coming down from God in heaven. It was like a bride dressed in her wedding gown and ready to meet her husband. (Revelation 21:2 CEV)

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me **the holy city, Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God, (Revelation 21:10 NASB)

And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from **the holy city**, which are written in this book. (Revelation 22:19 NASB)

Third, the Temple of God is defined by Paul as the true Church of God, both individually and corporately.

(16) Do you not know that **you are a temple of God** and that **the Spirit of God dwells in you?**
 (17) If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for **the temple of God is holy**, and **that is what you are**. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17 NASB)

(16) And what agreement does **a temple of God** have with idols? For **you are a temple of the living God**, even as God said, "I will" dwell in them and "walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Lev. 26:12; Ezek. 37:27 (17) Because of this, "**come out from among them**" "**and be separated**," says the Lord, "**and do not touch the unclean thing**," **and I will receive you**. Isa. 52:11 (18) "And I will be a Father to you, and you will be sons" and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty. 2 Sam. 7:8, 14; Isa. 43:6 (2 Corinthians 6:16-18 LITV)

(19) Consequently, then, no longer are you guests and sojourners, but are fellow-citizens of the saints and belong to God's family, (20) being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the capstone of the corner being Christ Jesus Himself, (21) in Whom the entire building, being connected together, is growing into **a holy temple in the Lord**: (22) in Whom you, also, are being built together for **God's dwelling place, in spirit**. (Ephesians 2:19-22 CV)

Fourth, the holy city, New Jerusalem is the Temple of God, which is the true Church. In other words, the temple is not a literal temple of inorganic stones arranged to make a structure; it is a spiritual temple made up of living stones with Jesus as the chief stone or cornerstone. New Jerusalem is not about a literal place, a city of bricks of gold; it is about people who are the city, a people refined by the Refiner to become pure spiritual gold (Revelation 3:18).

(4) To whom having drawn near, **a living Stone**, indeed having been rejected by men, but chosen by God, precious; (5) **you also as living stones are being built a spiritual house**, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (6) Because of this, it is also contained in the Scripture: "**Behold, I lay in Zion**" **an elect**, "**precious Stone**," "**a Corner-foundation**;" "and the one believing in Him shall not be ashamed, never!" Isa. 28:16 (1 Peter 2:4-6 LITV)

(9) But you are "an elect race," "a royal priesthood," "**a holy nation**," "a people for possession," so that "you may openly speak of the virtues" of the One who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; LXX-Ex. 23:22; MT-Ex. 19:5, 6 (10) you who then were "not a people, but now are the people" of God; "the one not pitied then but now pitied." Hos. 1:6, 9 2:1, 23 (1 Peter 2:9-10 LITV)

It is clear that Peter included in his epistle the ten lost tribes of Israel that had been scattered among the nations and had lost their national identity as *Israel*, the name associated with the **birthright** that was given to Joseph and his two sons. To discover their identity today one must look at the Western nations of Europe, Canada, America, Australia, South Africa, and other nations with a Christian heritage, for it is here that many of the lost tribes reside, mostly as Christians.

Fifth, New Jerusalem has no temple in it because it is the temple.

And a temple I did not perceive in it, for **the Lord God Almighty is its temple, and the Lambkin.** (Revelation 21:22 CV)

In John's writing, the word *lambkin* refers to the corporate Body of Christ. It signifies both Head and Body.

See **Appendix #3 – Lambkin.**

Sixth, this temple is heavenly in nature (2 Corinthians 5:1-2), even though it is being built on earth through bodies fashioned from the soil of the earth. These bodies have **the seed of God** residing in them (1 John 3:9), and this seed is heavenly so that, in the resurrection and transfiguration, **the one new man** (Ephesians 2:15), **the male child** (Revelation 3:27; 12:5) in **the image of the Son of God** (Romans 8:29; 1 John 3:2) will be birthed.

But you have come to **Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.** (Hebrews 12:22 NASB)

Seventh, some might counter these points with the argument that the Old and New Testaments refer in seven places (Nehemiah 11:1, 18; Isaiah 48:2; 52:1; Daniel 9:24; Matthew 4:5; 27:53) to ancient Jerusalem as a holy city. Keep in mind that this city was totally destroyed in 70 AD by the Lord's Roman army (Matthew 22:7), and Paul associated it with Hagar. Paul referred to two Jerusalems, one is earthly and to be cast out; the other is heavenly and to be embraced (Galatians 4:30).

(25) Now this **Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.** (26) But **the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.** (Galatians 4:25-26 NASB)

See **Appendix #25 – Cast Out the Slave Woman.**

Just because there is a city in the modern-day state of Israel called *Jerusalem* does not mean that it is the holy city. The fact of the matter is that it is anything but holy. It is historically a "bloody city" (Ezekiel 22:2; 24:6, 9) that is now shared by **Judaism, Islamism, and Christianity** (the *ism* of man, not the relationship with Christ); portions of which are filled with dead icons, shrines, and buildings. Besides, Jeremiah prophesied that Jerusalem will be broken, never to be repaired again (Jeremiah 19:11).

When Daniel referred to Jerusalem as the holy city, this is what it was in the sight of Judah in that day. Nehemiah referred to it as the holy city for the same reason. But take special note that Daniel used the term in conjunction with the 70 weeks that were completed with Jesus' crucifixion.

"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and **your holy city**, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. (Daniel 9:24 NASB)

Or, consider what Isaiah had to say about the holy city.

"For they call themselves after the holy city and lean on the God of Israel; the LORD of hosts is His name." (Isaiah 48:2 NASB)

In this verse, the Lord is using the term in a derogatory way. The obstinate house of Israel was laying claim that they were chosen of God because of their genealogy and, as such, Jerusalem was a holy city, but they themselves were anything but holy.

Finally, the last reference clearly refers to New Jerusalem.

Awake, awake, Clothe yourself in your strength, O Zion; clothe yourself in your beautiful garments, **O Jerusalem, the holy city; for the uncircumcised and the unclean will no longer come into you.** (Isaiah 52:1 NASB)

Isaiah was told that the Jerusalem of the New Covenant would receive a new name (Isaiah 62:2). John heard the name, and it is New Jerusalem. Compare this verse with Revelation 21:8, 27; 22:15. Also, see below: *The Court Outside*.

See **Appendix #4 – Two Jerusalems.**

The Altar

In the earthly temple, the altar was the place of sacrifice and worship. Although most translations use the phrase "**those who worship in it**" (or, something similar), it could just as easily have been translated as "**those who worship together,**" implying that there is unity in this temple.

As Paul wrote...

(11) And indeed He gave some to be apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; (12) with a view to the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, **for the building up of the body of Christ,** (13) **until we all may come to the unity of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ....** (Ephesians 4:11-13 LITV)

Those who gathered together to worship around the altar are all who believed on Jesus and His sacrifice for the sin of the world. Thus, they worshipped the One who died and rose again.

Further, the Temple of God that John saw was the Body of Christ, the full grown man in Christ that had attained to the unity of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God. In other words, this temple had attained to perfection.

However, having stated this, it is possible that the Temple of God that John saw did not contain the complete complement (number) of saints that will ultimately attain to this glory at the end of the age or in the age to come. What he saw was complete in the sense of those who had finished the race as Paul had finished and won it (2 Timothy 5:7-8). In other words, the vision of the temple was an encouragement that, at this point in the history of the Church, the Lord had already drawn a great multitude of true conquerors into His Body, and more were to come.

The Court Outside

The court outside is not to be visualized as a literal court but a place where nations reside that are not within the holy city or, we should say, do not comprise the holy city. Later in his vision, John heard of those who will be outside the holy city, never to be allowed to enter it while in a state of unbelief and unrighteousness.

But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Revelation 21:27 ESV)

But **as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.**" (Revelation 21:8 ESV)

But **outside are the dogs and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and everyone loving a lie, and making it.** (Revelation 22:15 LITV)

Surely, these are in the outer court of the world, but John was told the outer court was for the nations. From this, we can ascertain that the nations included all that stood against or were not standing with the true Church and their Christ.

(1) Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing? (2) The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, (3) "Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!" (Psalm 2:1-3 NASB)

This would include all false religions, even ones with the name of Christ attached to them, such as Roman Catholicism, an institutional, visible, and apparent church that places a pope (vicar) in the place of Christ on earth and worships Mary as an intermediary between them and her Son. But let us not forget all the *isms* of man, including Islamism. As a reminder, up to this point in history, we have been presented with the period from the fall of pagan Rome to the protest of the Reformation, and in between we have seen the rise of papism and Islamism.

See **Appendix #12 – Isms.**

During this time, the true Church that Christ is building had endured persecution, suffering, and martyrdom at the hand of the **Judaists**, the **Romanists**, and the **Islamists**. Looking at this as past history, all of these were in the outer court. Another way of stating this is that those who disregarded the blood of Christ, consequently, trampling under foot the Son of God, were not allowed to enter the holy city, spiritually speaking. They were considered enemies of the cross. This still applies in our day as well.

(28) Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. (29) How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? (Hebrews 10:28-29 NASB)

(18) For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, (19) whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. (Philippians 3:18-19 NASB)

One might argue that the Romanists do not trample under foot the Son of God. If not, then how do they explain **transubstantiation** that crucifies Christ over and over again? Or, if not, how do they explain their many **traditions** that override and contradict the Word of God, such as the way to salvation is through the church? Jesus made it very clear as He chastised the Jews that their traditions invalidated the word.

(5) But you say, Whoever says to the father or the mother, a gift, whatever you would gain from me; (6) and in no way he honors his father or his mother. And you annulled the command of God on account of your tradition. (7) Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you, saying: (8) "This people draws near to Me with their mouth, and with their lips honor Me; but

their heart holds far off from Me. (9) **But in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.**" Isa. 29:13 (Matthew 15:5-9 LITV)

This was a major problem in the days of the Reformation that has continued to our day, not only in Romanism, but in many quarters of Christianity (Denominationalism; Christian Zionism) and Judaism, which is a religion full of the tradition of men, as it continues to reject Christ.

Measuring Rod, a Reed

John recorded that he was given a **measuring rod like a staff [reed]**. The staff was actually a reed, which is a biblical unit of measure that was equal to 42 handbreadths. Ezekiel's temple serves as the standard by which John's temple of God is measured.

And behold, there was a wall on the outside of the temple all around, and in the man's hand was a **measuring rod [reed] of six cubits**, each of which was a **cubit and a handbreadth**. (Ezekiel 40:5 NASB)

As a side note, Ezekiel's temple has never been built, and it does not match the dimensions of New Jerusalem. Some have pointed out that because of the unusual dimensions of Ezekiel's temple it should not to be taken literally, but rather, figuratively and spiritually as a type of New Jerusalem.

At any rate, a cubit consisted of 6 handbreadths; however, according to Ezekiel, the cubit is made up of a cubit (6 handbreadths) plus a handbreadth, which totals 42 handbreadths. The number **42** itself is significant, for it signifies "**man's opposition to God**" or "**antichrist**."

Thus, the temple was measured based on the number 42. But take note that John made no mention of actual measurements of the temple; these are given later when he saw New Jerusalem come down out of heaven. Further, he did not count the number of people that made up the holy city. The number 42 only appears in reference to the number of months that the temple was trampled under foot.

It is apparent that in ordering John to measure the temple with a reed of 42 handbreadths, he was actually being given the period of time that the holy city would be trampled under foot by the nations. The crux of the matter is that he was given the angelic measurement of a reed that not only was 42 handbreadths but also 42 months. "**And they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two [42] months.**"

The reason the period is measured in months rather than days is because months are measured by the moon, which signifies a lesser light, even darkness. Thus, the trampling under foot of the holy city signifies a dark period for the true Church as the nations try to snuff out her light. The good news is that the two witnesses testify that the testimony of Jesus and the Word of God is not snuffed out. Instead, they are a light that shines in the darkness for 1,260 prophetic days.

Based on a 30-day lunar or prophetic month, 42 months corresponds to 1,260 days, which is the length of time the two witnesses are called upon to prophesy. Since it appears that these periods of time either run concurrently or narrowly overlap each other, they are taken up together under separate study notes in light of the day-year prophetic principle.