

## REVELATION CHAPTER 11 (19 VERSES)

**Verse 1:** *"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.,"*

### Meaning:

**And there was given me:** After John had been revealed to the significance of the little scroll (Rev 10:9-11), God gave him a special task to perform in the spiritual realm.

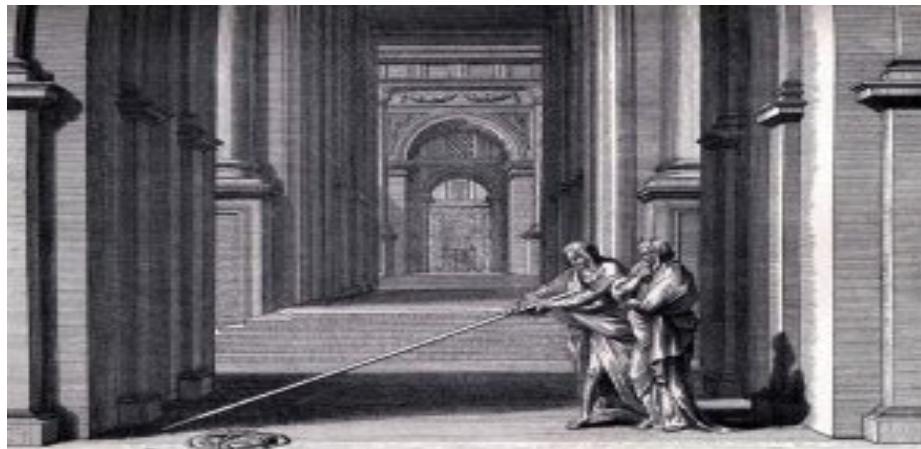
One would think of why such work was not performed by an angel rather than a mortal man (in the spirit...Rev 1:10). The fact is that, what was given to him concerned the community of God which was under the persecution of the Romans; as John was living amongst those sealed from the judgement of the wicked (Rev 7:3-4).

**A reed like unto a rod:** The reed is specifically not a rod, according to this context; simile is applied here. However, in relation to the "reed" used in this context, it might be a reference to the Hebrew *kaneh* (1 Kings 14:15; Job 40:21; Isa. 19:6), whence the Greek *kanna*, which means a "cane;" a generic name for a reed of any kind. The cane would be somehow longer than the rod to which the reed in the vision is likened.

According to the Bible, a reed was used for making measurements (Ezek 40:3-42; Zec 2:1). John was to measure the community of God, which would be a reference to the saints as the church sealed from the tribulations and the judgement of their enemies (Rev 7:3-4).

**The angel stood:** According to this context, the exact angel to help John carry out the given task is not identified.

As the 10th chapter is a transition from the sixth trumpet to the seventh trumpet, we would believe that this angel under discussion here was that same mighty angel seen (in ch 10), though the setting here is different.



### **“The angel stood, as John measures with a reed”**

Nevertheless, the angel stood with John to ensure that the task is rightly performed according to the will of God.

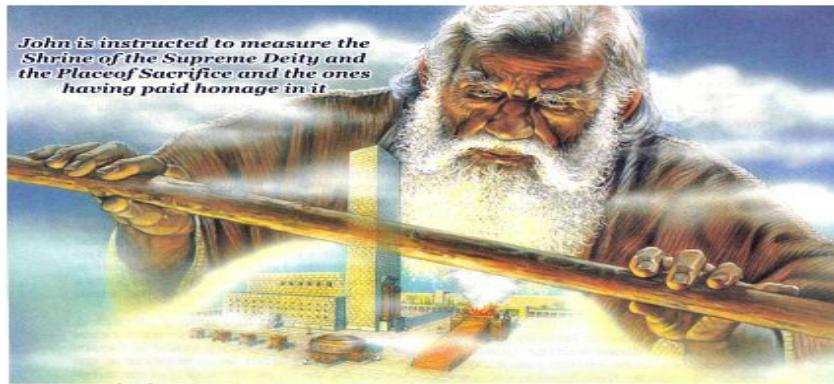
*Rise:* This command does not mean John was kneeling or sitting; we should not assume that the word "rise" meant "get up" in this context.

The meaning is that, John was to get ready to perform the measurement task; he was to measure three main things; God's temple, the altar and the saints.

*Measure the temple of God:* The word "temple" is first used of the tabernacle, which is called "the temple of the Lord" (1 Sam 1:9). In the New Testament the word is used figuratively of Christ's human body (John 2:19, 21). Believers are called "the temple of God" (1 Co 3:16-17; 6:15-20). The Church is designated "an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph 2:21). Christ calls it "my Father's house" (Jn 2:16). We read also of the heathen "temple of the great goddess Diana" (Acts 19:27)... God does not literally have a temple where He worships or hide Himself from the heavenly hosts (Rev 7:15; Rev 11:19, 14:15, 17, 15:5, 8, 16:1, 21:22).

In relation to the temple in this context, the symbolism is from the Sinai tabernacle, which is the tabernacle of the congregation; it was built with

measurements (Ex 25:9, 40, 26:30, Acts 7:44, Hb 8:5, Ex 26:13).



### **"Rise and measure the temple of God"**

In John's context, reference is to the church, as the body of Christ (Col 1:18); this symbolizes God's community. The community of God is determined by measurement, and thus identified and preserved for eternal glory.

However, with the word of God, John is to measure those of the church who have remained faithful to the Lamb. The 144,000 of Rev 7:1-4 are here referred to as the tabernacle of God. In other contexts, the church is also referred to as the temple of God (2 Co 6:16, 1 Pt 2:5). It is the temple of hearts in which God dwells (Jn 14:23; Rev 3:20).

***And (measure) the altar:*** Literally, John was not to know the length and width of the altar. The symbolism here is that, John was to know the record of those who died in the great persecution.

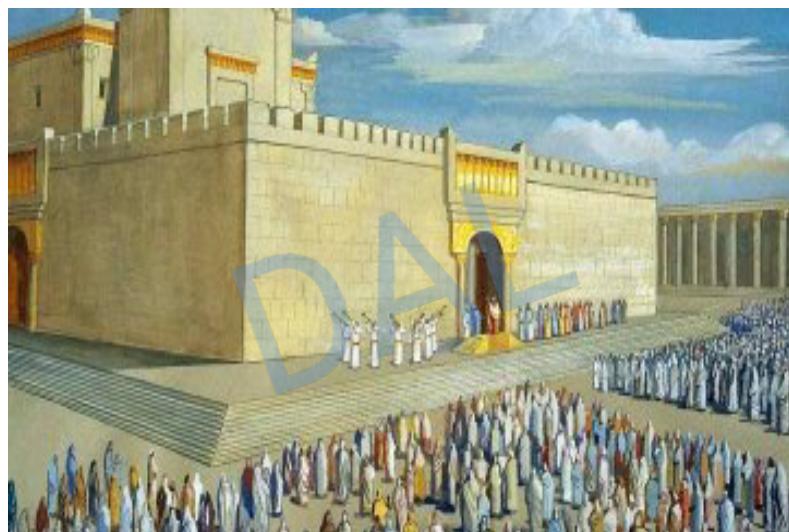


### **"The altar"**

The blood of such faithful martyrs were sacrificed on the alter; and such souls needed to be known as some are identified in the 5th seal (Rev 6:9-11).

The death of the two witnesses (Rev 11:7-10) would identify how God's people who testified concerning the gospel are slain.

***And them that worship therein:*** This is a reference to those living faithful saints who were the individual citizens sealed from being harmed in the judgement of the wicked; it is a contrast to those faithful martyrs who were to be known by John, as a measure of the altar.



### ***“The saints that worship in God's temple”***

The people of God are those who have obediently responded to the gospel. They are here measured according to their continual faithfulness to the commitment they made at the time they obeyed the gospel (Rom 6:3-6).

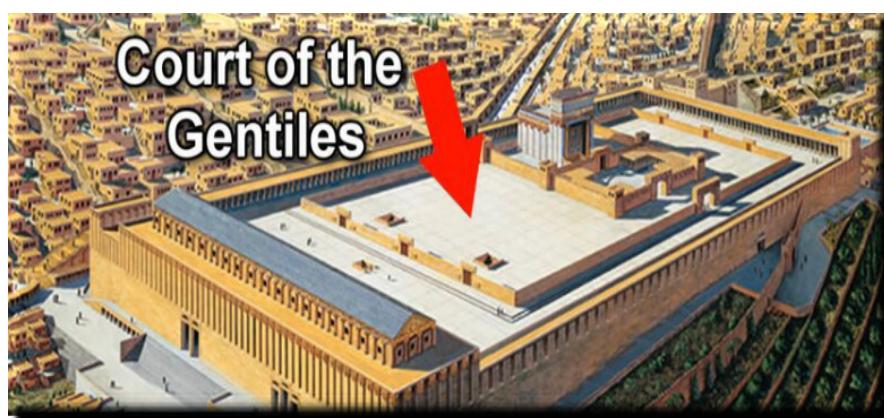
***Verse 2: “But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two, months.”***

### Meaning:

***The court which is without the temple...it is given unto the Gentiles:*** In most biblical contexts, the word "court" makes reference to the enclosure of the tabernacle (Ex 27:9-19; 40:8), of the temple (1 Kings 6:36), of a prison (Neh 3:25), of a private house (2 Sam. 17:18), and of a king's palace (2 Kings 20:4).

In this context of John's vision, the "court" as the enclosure of the temple (the church), would be a reference to how the individual members of the Lord's Church are justified before adding to those sealed (Rev 7:3-8). Thus, such place was given to the Gentiles.

"Gentile" (*eidololátris* - in Modern Greek) is any person not a Jew or a Christian; a pagan; a worshipper of false gods; a heathen. And this division is mostly caused by circumcision (Gen 17:9-14, Acts 7:8; Lev 12:3-4, Jn 7:22; Gal 5:2,6, 6:11-15, 1 Co 7:19) and the 613 laws (248 positive and 365 negative laws) given to Israel by God (Jn 1:17; Rom 2:14), based on the covenant relationships. "Gentiles" in general refers to "all nations except the Jews." *Goyim* (the Hebrew word for Gentiles, usually in plural) is equivalent to the Greek word *Hellenes* in the New Testament, which literally means "Greek" (as in Acts 16:1,3, 18:17, Rom 1:14); it generally denotes any non-Jewish nation.



**"The court...the Gentiles are not measured"**

John's reference to the "Gentiles" here would be a large group of people who were not faithful to God, and also those who were not part of the Church of Christ measured by John (vs 1).

However, the "court" and "gentiles" are in this context, making reference to uncommitted members who suffered severely for not being faithful in God when they were persecuted by the Romans; such people suffered "wrongly" (1 Pet 2:18-20, 3:14, 4:15-16).

Thus, the lukewarm and uncommitted members are left out of the measurement (Rev 3:14-15). Only those who have endured unto death are able to be measured for eternal dwelling (Rev 2:10).

***The holy city shall they tread under foot:*** "The holy city" here is the spiritual Jerusalem, the holy Zion that is subjected to the persecution of the wicked (Rev 3:12; 20:9; Gal 4:26; Heb 12:22; Rev 21:2,10; 22:19). The pronoun "they" does not make reference to the "Gentiles" (lukewarm and unfaithful members), but it is a reference to the persecutors of the Church, the Romans.

God lives in the righteous (1 Co 3:16-17, 6:15-20; Rev 21:3) and thus, whenever they are persecuted, such enemies indirectly fight against Heaven and its hosts; because the Church has been registered in Heaven (Heb 12:23).

We would therefore believe that the Romans knew they were persecuting mortal men but not God. This event in the 1st century is an encouragement to all Christians in history who suffer persecutions that, God stands for the faithful ones amongst them.

***Forty and two months:*** This is the three and a half years that is half of seven, the number of perfection. This symbolizes the time of persecution that is represented by 1,260 days (when we use 30, which is the maximum number of days in the Jewish calendar, to multiply 42), as seen in verse 3 and Rev 12:6, and the "time, times, and half a time" in Rev 12:14. This is the

same as the forty-two months in Rev 13:5 (Dn 7:25; 12:7).

Using the addition method to deduce the 1,260 from the Hebrew gematria (a system of communication through the use of numbers), we can have  $1,000 + 200 + 60$ ; the tens, hundreds and thousands in this context, are symbols of completeness or perfection.

The emphasis here is on a brief time of persecution that the saints must endure before they are delivered; such would be a complete time set by the Lord. Thus, Christianity was freed from the Romans' persecutions when Rome or Western Rome fell in A.D 476.

**Verse 3:** *"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore,, days, clothed in sackcloth."*

**Meaning:**

***I will give power unto my two witnesses:*** The "power" here is a reference to the supernatural power that protects God's people and binds believers of the gospel to God's word. God does not confirm here that the witnesses would work miracles; their power was in their mouth (vs 5), which was the prophetic messages they gave to the people on earth.



***"...my two witnesses..."***

"Two" is the symbol of unity or union, according to the Hebrew Gematria as linked with this context. The witnesses represent God's people who testify concerning the gospel (Rev 6:9-11). They give their testimony of the truth during persecution, and eventually, are overcome by their persecutors. Some students believe that the witnesses here refer to the apostles who were the special witnesses of Jesus and His resurrection (Lk 27:49; Jn 15:26-27; Acts 5:32): Some also believe that these two witnesses were manifested in the flesh to live according to what is written of them (vs 4-14), even as Moses and Elijah.

However, we should understand that, the two witnesses were not physically seen as the only Prophets or Evangelists of the gospel. But they symbolize how the faithful martyrs all worked together to testify of the truth while living on earth or in the Roman territories (Rev 12:11,17; 19:10; 20:4).

***They shall prophesy:*** This does not mean that all those witnesses in the 1st century through to the latter part of the 5th century were Prophets and Prophetesses (even as the idea of Prophetesses is condemned by Christ in Rev 2:20-24). But this would mean that "*God's people will proclaim the gospel or they would evangelize.*"

The Hebrew word used generally for a prophet of God is *nabi*, from a root meaning "to bubble forth, as from a foundation." In the time of Samuel another word, *ro'eh*, "seer," began to be used (1 Sam 9:9). Afterwards another word, *hozeh*, "seer," (2 Sam 24:11), was employed. In 1 Chronicles 29:29, all these three words are used: "Samuel the seer (*ro'eh*), Nathan the prophet (*nabi*), Gad the seer (*hozeh*)."  
The word diviner (*kosem*, in Hebrew) was only used for a false prophet (Josh 13:22). Biblically, the "seers" were the group of prophets who were only dreamers and visionists (Jer 23:25-28, 31-32). Thus, only the prophets as the "*nabi*" group, were to foretell future events; to predict. Some of the prophets in the "*ro'eh*" group like Samuel, also made declarations of events to come (Jer 11:6-23).

Some Bible students become confused of the exact work of the prophets spoken of in the New Testament; not all of them prophesied of things peculiar to the lives of the individual members of the Church.

God's people in this context were figuratively seen as prophets in the sense that, they were to preach; to instruct in religious doctrines; to interpret or explain Scripture or religious subjects; to exhort.

Therefore, the witnesses proclaimed the gospel and John who directly ate the "little scroll" (Rev 10:9-11) would predict of the future events in the lifetime of his audience, of their persecutions and the judgements of the wicked and how the faithful would be glorified.

However, at the same time God's people realize the rejection of those who are hardened. Those who are hardened rise up in persecution against the witnesses (vs 2).

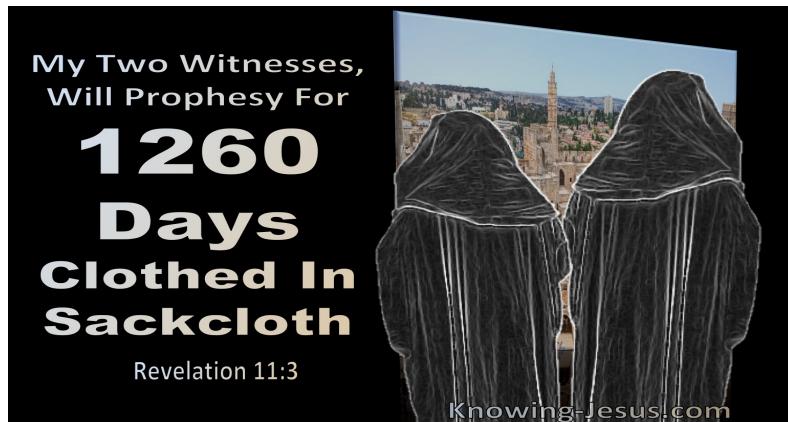
***A thousand two hundred and threescore days:*** "Score" is an archaic word for the number *twenty*, used in the way that we still use a dozen for twelve. The "threescore" here is sixty days, that is, three times twenty ( $3 \times 20 = 60$ ). Thus, the figure in this phrase is "one thousand two hundred and sixty" days (1,260 days).

This division idea of the apocalyptic numbers used in the KJV is the best for the Hebrew gematria; and such gives better interpretations to numbers in the Bible. But since some Bible students find it very difficult to cope with the expressions used by King James, they reject it.

However, 1,260 days is equivalent to the 42 months in verse 2, and the figure symbolizes completeness or perfection. The meaning is that, the community of God or God's people would testify of Christ for about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years again (as seen in the second section of John's vision, from chapter 11-22), before they would be killed by the Romans (vs 7-10).

***Clothed in sackcloth:*** "Sackcloth" is a cloth made of black goats' hair, coarse, rough, and thick, used for sacks, and also worn by mourners (Gen.

37:34; 42:25; 2 Sam. 3:31; Esther 4:1, 2; Ps. 30:11), and as a sign of repentance (Matt. 11:21). It was put upon animals by the people of Nineveh (Jonah 3:8). People who wear sackcloth are not well respected irrespective of their status and power (Mat 3:4).



**“The two witnesses...clothed in sackcloth”**

The symbol here is that God's people would be neglected and persecuted before they would be glorified in white raiment or robe (Rev 3:5, 18, 6:11, 7:9, 13).

**Verse 4: “These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.”**



**“The two olive trees and the two candlesticks”**

**Meaning:**

***These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks:*** The two concrete symbols used here mean that these two witnesses should not be literally interpreted by Bible students. These symbols in the apocalyptic literature would be a reference to the unity of all faithful members of the Church who denote the totality of God's power that binds the gospel Preachers.

Therefore, the symbol of the "two olive trees" would mean that the totality of God's revelation comes forth from the witnesses. They proclaim the sanctity, or holiness of God's people of all time.

Similarly, the "two lampstands" symbolizes the gospel Preachers. As representatives of the church, the witnesses stand as a light to all men (Zec 4:2-6; Mat 5:16; Rom 14:4).

***Standing before the God of the earth:*** The phrase "God of the earth" would find its meaning in the number *four*, which represents God's creative works associated with the earth, according to the Hebrew gematria (a system of communication through the use of numbers). Thus, 2 olive trees plus 2 lampstands equals four (i.e.  $2 + 2 = 4$ ). The meaning here is that, God exercises control on all the four corners of the world (i.e. North, South, East and West; Rev 7:1-2).

However, these messengers did not minister right in heaven; God's people were seen to be standing before God simply because God was living with them (Mat 18:20) throughout their ministry.

**Verse 5:** ***"And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed."***

**Meaning:**

***If any man will hurt them:*** The "hurt" here might mean "to bruise," "to

wound," "to harm," "to injure by diminution," or "to put one to death." Thus, it would be a terminology of the persecutions of the saints.

The phrase in this context would be a reference to how the two witnesses ("God's people who testify of the gospel") were persecuted in Palestine, in the Roman world, for testifying of Christ.

***Fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies:*** Literally, fire did not come out of the mouths of God's witnesses to devour those who persecuted them in the Roman territories; the apocalyptic statement given here was a terrible representation of how God's people are protected by the message (of the gospel) which they delivered.



### **“Fire coming out of the witnesses' mouth to devour their enemies”**

Figuratively, fire is a symbol of Jehovah's presence and the instrument of his power (Ex 14:19; Num 11:1, 3; Judg. 13:20; 1 Kings 18:38; 2 Kings 1:10, 12; 2:11; Isa. 6:4; Ezek 1:4; Rev 1:14). The power of God's witnesses is in their mouths; the figure here portrays the readiness of the people of God against any persecution bestowed on them.

The context of the apocalyptic literature used here would mean that, though the church can be persecuted to the point that members lose their lives, no one can fight against the truth of God's word (Mt 24:35; 1 Pt 1:25; Lk 18:6-8; Hb 4:12). Regardless of whether men accept the word of God, it remains the standard by which all men will eventually be judged (Rev 20:11-

14; Jn 12:48).

**He must in this manner be killed:** The pronoun "he" in this context would be a reference to all persecutors of the saints in history, from the apostolic period to the period of apostasy.

Literally, none of the faithful witnesses of God killed any of the persecutors, but the symbolism of the "killing" in this context would be a reference to the "pronounced judgements of God upon the wicked" by the messages delivered by the faithful witnesses. One is spiritually dead if he rejects the gospel of truth (Jer 8:9-10).

Thus, the word in the mouths of the witnesses that kills is figuratively presented as a sharp sword that devours like fire (Zech 12:6; Lk 12:49). The Hebrew writer said, *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"* (Hebrews 4:12). Simply, the sword of the Spirit is the word of God. It is written in Ephesians 6:17, *"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."* Whosoever speaks the truth given by Christ, according to His word, has a mouth made like a sharp sword, spiritually. Prophet Isaiah said, *"And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me;"* (Isaiah 49:2).

Metaphorically, the fire in the witnesses' mouths destroys falsehood, as a spiritual sword.

**Verse 6:** *"These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not,, in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."*

### Meaning:

***These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not:*** This is literally compared with the event that happened during the days of Elijah (1 Kings 17:1, Lk 4:25; 1 Kings 28:42-46; James 5:16-18).

The power to restrain rain during the days of the witnesses would be the power that would deny the enemies of God's people from divine favours (Mal 3:10). This phrase is a figure to show that, the power that is behind the witnesses originates from God.

There is no supernatural power that exists apart from the existence of God. Throughout history this power has been manifested to man (1 Kg 17:1; 18:1-45). Through the revelation of this power, God gave witness to those who were His witnesses (Mrk 16:17-20; Heb 2:3-4).

***In the days of their prophecy:*** This is an idiomatic way of stating the time when the great power of the witnesses spoken of here would be exercised. This makes reference to the lifetime of the witnesses in both the apostolic and the apostasy periods.

***(These) have power over waters to turn them to blood:*** "Water" in the apocalyptic literature used here symbolizes the "world" (Lk 5:10), which makes reference to the Roman world (Rev 17:15), the territories of Rome where the saints were living. God listened to the prayers of the saints, even the faithful martyrs (Rev 6:9-11), to control extensively the Roman world by terrifying them with the judgments (Rev 6 - 9).

Blood is the symbol of death which befell the enemies of God's people (Rev 6:12, 8:8).

***(They have power) to smite the earth with all plagues:*** The symbolism of the "earth" here is a reference to the Roman territories. God did not give power to His witnesses to personally judge Rome. But the meaning is that, God avenged the enemies in a way of answering the prayers of the saints. Thus, when the plague is witnessed, the glory is given to God Almighty

through the works of the faithful witnesses (Mat 5:14-16).

**As often as they will:** God would often be using His people to stand against all that is evil. Thus, God's witnesses are the instruments to propagate the gospel truth (2 Tim 4:2).

**Verse 7:** *"And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them."*

**Meaning:**

***When they shall have finished their testimony:*** The testimony here, is a solemn declaration or confirmation made for the purpose of establishing or proving some fact. According to the Old Testament, the altar raised by the Gadites and the Reubenites was a testimony (Josh 22:10), and the testimony was also in reference to the Scriptures, as the revelation of God's will (2 Kings 11:12, Psalm 19:7, 119:88, Isaiah 8:16,20). In this context, the "testimony" is a reference to the witness or evidence of Christ (2 Thes 1:10; 2 Co 1:12-14).

Literally, the witnesses could not "finish" ("arrive at the end of") the gospel plan of salvation for the whole world. If so, we would not have had these set times to preach the gospel (1 Co 15:1-4). The "finished" here would mean that the faithful witnesses of God made "a complete proclamation of the gospel in their lifetime," before they died by the hands of the Romans.

Contextually, it would be a time when the forces of wickedness would overcome those who preach the gospel. Christ finished His works before He died (Jn 19:30; Acts 13:29, Jn 17:4). Thus we would believe that when one dies, he finishes his works on earth, and there will be no reincarnation for the soul (Job 14:13-14, Jer 22:10, Amos 5:16; Job 7:7-10).

The word "shall" as a future tense used here does not mean that the two

witnesses are yet to be revealed. Since the martyrdom began from Stephen (Acts 7:54-60) through to the lifetime of John's audience (Rev 6:9-11, 12:11,17, 19:10, 20:4) till the fall of Rome (in A.D 476) which liberated the living saints, even to our era where some faithful witnesses are slain, the "shall" would denote the future glory of the faithful souls (Rev 19:6-10).

Therefore, if the "finishing of the testimony" was a reference to the apostles, then it was a time when they had completed their ministry. The truth would continue, but they would be martyred for the truth. If reference here was to the church, then the proclamation of the gospel would continue until the time God says that all things concerning the eternal plan of the gospel dispensation have been completed.

***The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit:*** Most at times, **deep** is used to denote the **bottomless pit** as used in this context (Rev 9:1-2, 11:7); and "deep pit" is mostly used to describe sheol (Ez 31:15, Ez 32:21). **Sheol** simply refers to the place of torments (Job 24:19). This means that the angel (messenger) was given the power to open the sheol or place of torments, also known as the **abyss** (Rev 9:11). Demons are chained in the bottomless pit (Jd 6, 2 Pt 2:4) and the sinners' souls are also kept in this part of the hadean world (Lk 16:23), and Satan also lives there (Rev 9:11; Lk 8:30-31).

When the word "beast" is used in contradistinction to man (Ps. 36:6), it denotes a brute creature generally; it figuratively refers to wicked men (2 Pet 2:12). The "Beast" here would be a reference to Satan (Rev 11:9, 20:2) who was behind the wickedness of Rome. He was a Cherub (Ez 28:14-16), and some Bible students call him Lucifer; "Brilliant star," a title given to the king of Babylon to denote his glory. The meaning is that, Satan would rise against the gospel preachers and persecute them and also put some to death.

***Shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them:*** Satan himself was not physically manifested to make war against the

saints; he was behind the wickedness of Rome.

The figure here shows that the beast originated out of that which is evil (from the abyss). Herein is the government persecution of the Roman Empire that is launched against the work of the apostles and church in order to terminate the proclamation of the gospel (Rev 13:1-18).



**“The beast (dragon) from the abyss made war with the saints”**

God was not powerless to also fight against the wickedness of Rome, but the symbolism here would mean how God permits the wicked to put His people into tribulations (Job 1:6-12, 2:1-7). Thus, those who endured forever beheld the glory (Rev 2:10; 1 Co 10:12-13, James 1:12).

**Verse 8: “And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.”**

**Meaning:**

***Their dead bodies shall lie in the street:*** The bodies of the faithful ones which deserved to be buried in tombs or graves were left in the Roman territories. We would believe that such bodies were not buried because their families (if there were some members still living) could not also bury them as a result of the severe persecutions. Some Bible students also

assume that since the Romans disregarded the gospel Preachers, their bodies were denied to be buried.



### **"The dead bodies of the two witnesses"**

However, the event here symbolizes how the bodies of the dead saints were not valued by the Romans just because they spoke of a God far different from their paganism (vs 10).

*Of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified:* Phrases like this expressed in the book of Revelation create awareness to John's audience that all these events narrated here should be addressed figuratively.

If the phrase "where also our Lord was crucified" is taken literally, then certainly Jerusalem is the city to which reference is made (Ps 48:2; Mat 5:35). If it is understood figuratively, then it could refer to Rome, which launched her attack on the Church (Rev 14:8, 16:19, 17:4, 18, 18:2, 10-19).

The figure of "Sodom and Egypt" used here are some references made from the Old Testament. "Sodom" symbolizes the city of wickedness that was destroyed because of her wicked inhabitants (Gen 19:4-11, 24-25, Deut 32:32; Isa. 1:9-10; 3:9; Jer 23:14; Ez 16:46,49): "Egypt" also symbolizes the tyranny against all that God is because Egypt was the place of great idolatry and the nation that held captive the people of God (Ezek 23:3-27).

However, the context would mean that John might be referring to the world of wickedness that is the global scene for the crucifixion of Jesus and the persecution of His body.

**Verse 9:** *"And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves."*

**Meaning:**

*They of the people...kindreds...tongues...nations:* This would be a reference to the Roman Empire, even those in Asia Minor; the faithful in the seven Churches were not part of them. These groups of people under discussion here would be the same people to whom John ministered (Rev 10:11).

The four(4) groups spoken of here would be the totality of the Roman world (or territories). Thus, we would believe that the gospel was preached all over the "Roman world" (Rom 10:18) but they hardened their hearts (Rev 9:20-21; Rom 3:3-4).

*Shall see their dead bodies:* The symbol here explains to John's audience that the witnesses were mortal men amongst them, but should not be considered to be special people or celestial beings commissioned from Heaven (Rev 11:3).

Though the people did not bury the witnesses' bodies, in all tangible and comprehensive reasons, God would be the One behind the scene.



**"The bodies of the two witnesses seen by all inhabitants of Rome"**

The bodies of the witnesses are not allowed to be buried in order that intense scorn be manifested against them and the message they preached.

**Three days and a half:** This "3½ idea" is compared with the 42 months or the 1,260 days (vs 3; Rev 12:14; Rev 13:5, Dan 7:25, 12:7). The 3½ is half of seven (or  $7 \div 2$ ).

Scientifically, decomposition begins several minutes after death, with a process called autolysis, or self-digestion: 24-72 hours after death - the internal organs decompose. 3-5 days after death - the body starts to bloat and blood-containing foam leaks from the mouth and nose. 8-10 days after death - the body turns from green to red as the blood decomposes and the organs in the abdomen accumulate gas. Several weeks after death - nails and teeth fall out. 1 month after death - the body starts to liquify. Thus, if the context is taken literally, the bodies of the witnesses experienced "bloat decay;" 3 - 4 days (Jn 11:39). But the event here is figurative.

According to the Hebrew gematria, the 3 & 7 are complete or perfect numbers. Thus the "3 and half days" would be a complete set time when the bodies of the all the faithful witnesses in Asia Minor were disrespected by the public.

***Shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves:*** Those who have been convicted of their wicked ways by the proclamation of the truth here demonstrate the intensity of their hate toward those who are messengers of truth.

**Verse 10:** *"And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth."*

**Meaning:**

***They that dwell upon the earth:*** The specific people under discussion here

would be a reference to the wicked of the great city or Rome.

But since the vision of the two witnesses is compared with the tribulations of the gospel Preachers, its contextual meaning also extends to our time. Thus we would believe that, John seems to go beyond the picture of either Jerusalem or Rome. It is the nature of the unregenerate world to launch persecution against the proclaimers of that which convicts the hearts of the wicked (1 Kg 18:17; Jn 17:14; Acts 2:37; 24:24-25).

***Shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another:*** What is depicted here is *not* a figure of love or benevolence; it is a picture of evil deeds.



***“They rejoiced...made merry...sents gifts to one another”***

The wicked would not only jubilate over the death of the faithful witnesses, they are here contextually continuing their wicked and abominable acts.

***Because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth:***  
None of the faithful witnesses literally tormented the inhabitants of Rome; but the gospel truth did.

Truth torments the wicked of the world, and thus, the wicked rejoice over the destruction of those who proclaim it.

**Verse 11:** *“And after three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon*

*them which saw them."*

**Meaning:**

*After three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them:*

This would mean that "the Spirit of life from God acted on the bodies of the faithful witnesses after a complete set time."

Figuratively, the word "life" symbolizes "spiritual life or salvation" (Jn 3:16, 17-18, 36); "eternal life" (Matt. 19:16, 17; Jn 3:15); of God the Father and Son as the absolute source and cause of all life (John 1:4; 5:26, 39; 11:25; 12:50).

Contextually, this event does not prove the belief of re-incarnation (Ps 89:48, Job 7:1-10, 14:14); what happens here is a symbol of the future resurrection and glory of the saints (Rev 7:14-17; 1 Thes 4:13-18), and the stability of the truth that is terminated (Amos 5:10; Gal 4:16).

*They stood upon their feet:* Literally, none of the souls re-incarnated in the martyrdom. Though the life given here denotes the future resurrection (1 Co 15:50-58), the phrase is strictly in relation with the truth which was not totally condemned by the enemies of God's people.

The truth proclaimed by the martyred was resurrected after a brief silence in order to go forth again to the hearts of willing audiences. A resurgence of the preaching of the gospel once again spread rapidly as in the early days of the establishment of the church.

*Great fear fell upon them which saw them:* Men were amazed at the resilience of the message of the gospel and the tenacity of those who obeyed God rather than man (Ez 37:5-14).



**“The wicked saw them and were terrified”**

Witnessing the power of the gospel truth, is a great terror in the hearts of the wicked.

**Verse 12:** *“And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.”*

**Meaning:**

***They heard a great voice from heaven:*** This would be the voice of God. The Lord Almighty is figured here to be the cause of all good things that happen in the lives of His people (James 1:17-18).

This voice is however, a symbol of a specific event in the second coming of Christ; Christ will descend with a shout (1 Thes 4:16), and His voice shall resurrect the dead (Jn 5:28-29).

***Come up hither:*** Literally, the "here/hither" would be a reference to the dwelling place of God (Eccl 52), which is "The heaven of heavens," or "the third heaven" (Deut. 10:14; 1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 115:16; 148:4; 2 Co 12:2).

God would not literally resurrect the faithful souls to be with Him directly while the world has not come to end; this was never recorded in the lifetime of John's audience. All souls are kept in the hadean world (Lk 16:22-23), till the final judgement of the world; and those in Paradise are in the presence

of the Lord (2 Co 5:8; Phil 1:23).

The meaning here is that, there will be a final time when the righteous will be called to dwell in the new heavens and earth (2 Pet 3:1-14). This will be the time of the final coming of Jesus (1 Th 4:12-17).

***They ascended up to heaven in a cloud:*** Since the symbol of the "resurrection of the witnesses" explains two main things to John's audience (that is, the final resurrection of all people in the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the truth in Christ), the second Christian generations as well as all Christians in history, are encouraged through these events.

John included in this context the encouragement of the persecuted saints by reminding them of their eventual call to heavenly dwelling. However, if one dies from persecution, he will immediately be at home with the Lord, in Paradise. He will be called home to rest in the presence of the Lord (Rev 2:10; Phil 1:23).



**“They ascended up on high; Christ received them into Heaven”**

It is also an encouragement given to those who are persecuted because of the gospel truth (Gal 4:16) in our present times. God in this context protects the truth from being harmed, proving to the world that all things come from above (Jn 3:27).

**Their enemies beheld them:** When one is glorified, the enemies behold him. The inability of the enemies to hunt down the faithful, because of God's mighty hand, will make them amazed.

**Verse 13:** *"And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven."*

**Meaning:**

**The same hour was there a great earthquake:** Earthquake is a shaking, trembling or concussion of the earth (Mat 27:54, Acts 16:26). Earthquake is used figuratively as a token of the presence of the Lord (Judges 5:4, 2 Sam 22:8; Psalm 77:28, 97:4, 104:32). God has shown here His presence for the resurrection of the truth and the future assurance of the celestial bodies (1 Co 15:40,50-52).

The phrase, "The same hour" would mean "During the time of the resurrection;" God shook Rome and terrified her to death. The figure of the Earthquake here shows that the kingdom of Rome which persecuted the saints is fragile, and shakes in the presence of the unshakable God.

**The tenth part of the city fell:** The "tenth part" is seen as the "one-tenth" or "ten percent" (10%) of Rome. The symbol here is a reference to the "tithe" (the translation of the Hebrew word *Maser* and the Greek word *Decate*) of the Sinai law that was contributed to God by the people (Lev 27:32).

Bible students should understand that, God in this context was not literally ordaining or restoring the Sinai law of the tithes (out of the 613 laws). If so, then the reference was to all the four(4) main types of tithes; Self tithe (yearly)...(Dt 14:22-26); Tithes to the Levites (after every three years)...(Dt 14:27, Dt 12:12,19, Nm 18:21-24, Josh 13:14,33, Nm 35:1-8); Tithes to foreigners, orphans, and widows (after every three years)...(Dt 14:28-29);

and Tithes from the Levites to God Almighty (Nm 18:25-32). In all these, we should understand that all the laws of the tithes are done away (Heb 7:11-16; Col 2:14; Gal 3:10-11).

However, God only used the "one-tenth" idea (as His share) in this context to express His sovereignty over everything, including the kingdom of Rome. The meaning here is that, a portion of the great city is taken in order to be dedicated to God.

Though the city of Rome finally fell in the latter part of the 5th century, it fell slowly and gradually, as God subsequently took His share from their lives till the wall and about 90% of the people fell in A.D 476.

***In the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand:*** God did not literally take what He dedicated to Himself to heaven as His tithes, but those people in the city were destroyed by men. God's presence was with His people, but the destruction of the wicked occurred through the invasions of Rome. In this sense, the fragile stability of the Roman kingdom was shaken by God in order to bring it down.

During the reign of the gospel truth in the hearts of God's faithful witnesses in Rome, a complete amount (of the enemies) that is symbolic of the determined judgment of God, was condemned.

When using the multiplication method to deduce the 7,000 according to the Hebrew gematria, we can have  $7 \times 1,000$  or  $70 \times 100$  or  $700 \times 10$ ; all these numbers show completeness or perfection. Thus the "seven thousand" was not emphasizing on an actual number of people who died; but a figure that indicates the complete sovereignty that led to the death of many citizens of Rome through the invaders.

***The remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven:*** The persecutors now recognize the presence of the God of those whom they persecuted (vs 7-10). Their glory to the Most High God was not their gratitude; because none of the remnants repented of their sins (Rev 9:20-

21).

In reference to the emotions of the wicked during the final judgement of the world, they will shake for recognizing the work of God; but that will be too late for them.

**Verse 14:** *"The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly."*

**Meaning:**

***The second woe is past:*** Contextually, we know of the second woe (Rev 9:12) to be the vision of the sixth trumpet (Rev 9:13-21). However, John then makes a declaration that, the second woe does not end in Rev 9:21, but rather in Rev 11:13.

Thus we would believe that, the 10th chapter as the interlude between the 6th and 7th trumpets, and the chapter 11:1-13 as the analysis made on the Sealed (Rev 7:3-8) or the Church and the witnesses, all fall under the 6th trumpet vision. Meaning that, what was recorded (in Rev 10:1 - 11:1-12) explained what exactly happened after the sixth trumpet when the seventh trumpet was not opened.

***The third woe cometh quickly:*** The "quickly" here does not mean that the proceeding visions were all unveiled on a single day, week, month or year. Since the book was written probably between A.D 65 & 96, we would believe that the visions were not chronologically given, but this "woe" would not tarry.

In the third woe, there is an indication that there were no terrifying signs of the judgements of the enemies (vs 15-19), but was a symbol that brings to a conclusion the redemptive work of God, amongst humanity.

However, the message delivered through the seventh trumpet vision propagates through chapters 12, 13 and 14, till the visions of the seven bowls (Rev 15 - 16).

Thus, God now reveals to John of the manifestation of Christ in his first coming, His mission on Earth, His persecution and ascension (ch 12). This vision was to comfort all those persecuted that their Savior or Redeemer was also persecuted (1 Pet 2:21-25), but was finally lifted up above all things (Acts 1:9; Eph 4:7-8).

**Verse 15:** *“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.,”*

### **Meaning:**

***The seventh angel sounded:*** After the vision of the life of the Church (vs 1-14), God proceeded to unveil new things to John, through the 7th trumpet. This trumpet concludes God's redemptive work amongst humanity.



### **“The signs of the last (7th) trumpet vision”**

The wise God (Isa. 55:8-9) who apocalyptically used numbers to explain and summarize events to John, uses the number 7 pertaining to the 7th angel and the 7th trumpet to show the completion or the perfection of His

redemption on Earth.

***There were great voices in heaven:*** When reading this conclusion section of all the seven trumpets visions (Rev 8:6), Bible students should understand that though the 11th chapter is not the last part or chapter of this book, it is a summary to the events that will take place in the future when Christ comes again to judge all humanity, the living and the dead (Mat 25:31-46).

Thus, the "great voices" would be those redeemed into eternity; those who shall behold heaven (Rev 7:13-17). Thus, they in this context of John's vision, make a proclamation with such loud voices.

We would also believe that, some parts of or the seven spirits (Rev 1:4) as the heavenly hosts also jubilated over the Kingdom reign of the Godhead. Thus, such spirits will be the 24 Elders (Rev 4:10, 5:8), the Cherubims (Gn 3:24, Ez 10:1), the Seraphims (Isa. 6:1-6), the 4 Beasts (Rev 4:6-9, Ez 1:4-14...these are spirits but not in reference to the beast in Rev 13), the Wheels (Ez 1:15-21, 10:2), the Angels (Ps 104:4) and Ministers (Hb 1:7).

However, each of the redeemed and some hosts in heaven give glory to the Most High God.

***The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord:*** The reference of the "kingdoms" here is not to only the four earthly kingdoms; the Babylonian kingdom, the Medo-Persian kingdom, the Greece/Greek kingdom, and the Roman kingdom. But it would be to all earthly kingdoms. The meaning is that, it is God who gives power to all earthly kingdoms to rule over humanity (Rom 13:1-5). So in all, we have three separate kingdoms; the kingdom of light/kingdom of heaven or God (Mat 3:2, 4:17, 13:41), the kingdom of darkness or Satan (Col 1:13; Luke 11:18), and the kingdom of men or the world (John 18:36). Since Satan and some mortal men still reign, God's power is not fully exercised in His kingdom, until He brings everything to His feet (1 Co 15:24-26).

Thus, in this context, the proclamation of the heavenly hosts after God's final judgement is that the present kingdom reign of the Son has been exalted over all the kingdoms of this world (Dan 7:13-14; Eph 1:20-22; Phil 2:8-11).

**(Our Lord), and of his Christ:** During the time when Satan and all the wicked are condemned (Mat 25:41,46), the Godhead (Col 2:8-10) as God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit will then begin to exercise full control of His people in heaven.

**He shall reign forever and ever:** We must keep in mind that Jesus is presently reigning over all things (Rev 12:10; Mat 16:18-19; 1 Pet 3:22). He will reign over all things until the end of time when He will relinquish His kingship to the eternal reign of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (1 Co 15:24-28). The pronoun "He" does not make reference to only God the Son, but to the total Godhead (Mat 28:19; Col 2:8-10).

**Verse 16:** *"And the four and twenty,, elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshiped God,"*

### **Meaning:**

[For more information on the twenty-four elders and their meaning, refer to Rev 4:4, BOOK OF REVELATION ~ PART 1, pp. 72 - 76]

***Fell upon their faces, and worshiped God:*** The Modern Greek refers to worship as *latreía* which means "the feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for a deity." Worship is a daily reverential and obedient submission of one's heart and life to God in response to a personal recognition of the awesomeness of God.

The worship of the twenty-four elders portrayed here would not just be a figure that was to communicate the particular event that occurred in John's vision.



### **"The 24 Elders fell upon their faces and worshipped God"**

It is thus a symbol of how the redeemed saints and all the heavenly hosts shall be giving their reverences to God, daily (Rev 4:8-11).

**Verse 17:** *"Saying, We give thee thanks,, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned."*

#### **Meaning:**

***We give thee thanks,, O Lord God Almighty:*** The thanksgiving here would not just be a reason for God's sovereignty, but would also be of the salvation of the saints who suffered from the persecution launched on them by the kingdom of darkness, through the wicked on earth. This event covers that of all the faithful in history.

The saints are now reigning with Christ because they have committed themselves to His lordship (Lk 22:29-30; Rm 5:17).

***Which art, and wast, and art to come:*** This shows the manifestation of God Almighty in the three divisions of time: past, present, and future. The God to whom the Holiness is attributed, is that same God who worked in the Old Covenant (Heb 1:1), and is still working in this New Covenant (Heb 1:2; Jer 31:31-34, Heb 8:7-13, 7:22), and the same God who shall come to judge the living and the dead (2 Co 5:10; Rev 22:12).

**Because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned:** The people of God or hosts of heaven are here jubilating over the victory of God, for bringing to a close both the earthly kingdoms and the kingdom of darkness, which launched their attacks against the saints. This declares the total sovereignty of the Almighty God over all things.

**Verse 18:** *"And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth."*

### **Meaning:**

***The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come:*** God's "wrath" is His holy and just indignation against sin, the wicked (Rom 1:18-19). The "vehement exasperation" of the wicked against the justice of God in judgements, even in the final judgement of the whole world, does not and will not affect the reactions of God.

The Romans who persecuted the saints, but never repented of their sins (Rev 9:20-21) will not feel happy for such disappointments from their gods they served in the pantheon or paganism. This same incidence implies to how all the wicked of this shall be brought to God's judgement on the final day, of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Co 5:10; Jn 5:29).

***The time of the dead (is come), that they should be judged:*** This statement would be a reference to the "time of the resurrection of the dead" (Jn 5:28-29) on the final day of judgement of the whole world. During the resurrection of the dead on "the end of time," the dead in Christ shall resurrect first (1 Thes 4:16), the souls of the saints in Paradise shall be brought with Christ (1 Thes 3:13, 4:14). And those in Hades, even in the

place of Torments shall also resurrect (Rev 20:13).

The "end of time" is an "appointed day" (Acts 17:31), "the last day" (Jn 12:48), "a day of fiery indignation" (Hb 10:27), "a day of destruction" (2 Thes 1:7-9, 2 Pt 3:7), and shall be at "an unknown time" (Mrk 13:32; 2 Pet 3:10).

Hence, the "time of the dead" is a reference to the future resurrection of all the dead, where Christ will bring them into judgement (Mat 25:31-46).

***That thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets ... the saints ... them that fear thy name, small and great:*** "The prophets" here symbolizes the messengers of God as the witnesses of the Gospel (Rev 11:3). We should understand that all the faithful shall be glorified or rewarded "in heaven" (1 Co 9:25; Phil 3:14-16; 2 Tim 4:7-8), as the wicked shall be punished (Heb 10:29-31), but the gospel preachers shall uniquely be pronounced before God the Father and all the host in heaven (Mat 10:32-33; Lk 9:26).

***Shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth:*** This makes reference to the wicked men of Rome who terminated and persecuted the Church in Asia Minor. The reward of the faithful saints in Asia Minor would lead to the destruction of the Roman kingdom that launched her attack on the inhabitants of the Earth.

In this sense, Rome defiled the Earth with her paganism and wickedness. And out of these, she fell in 476 CE. In the like manner will all the wicked of this world be destroyed (Mat 35:41,46).

**Verse 19:** ***"And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."***

**Meaning:**

***The temple of God was opened in heaven:*** The word "temple" is first used

of the tabernacle, which is called "the temple of the Lord" (1 Sam 1:9). In the New Testament the word is used figuratively of Christ's human body (John 2:19, 21). Believers are called "the temple of God" (1 Co 3:16-17; 6:15-20). The Church is designated "an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph 2:21). Christ calls it "my Father's house" (Jn 2:16). We read also of the heathen "temple of the great goddess Diana" (Acts 19:27). But what we should understand here is that, God does not literally have a temple where He worships or hide Himself from the other heavenly hosts (Rev 7:15; Rev 14:15, 17, 15:5, 8, 16:1).

In this context, the "temple" would symbolize "God's presence." The presence of God is manifested through the opening of the sanctuary (Rev 21:22). This section of John's vision would motivate God's people that His presence would continue to be with them at all time, even to the end of this world, in judgement.

*There was seen in his temple the ark of his testament:* The word "testament" (Heb 9:15-17) is also referred to as "covenant" (Jer 33:20, 34:18-19; Jer 31:31-33) or "agreement" (2 Co 6:16). The term "covenant" (*diatheke* in Greek) refers to an alliance or standing contract between two parties.

According to the Old Testament, the "ark of testament" or the "testament ark" in this context, is also a reference to the "covenant ark" or "covenant box" (Exo 37:1-9). The box or ark kept three main things (Heb 9:2-4); the gold jar with the manna in it (Exo 16:33-36), Aaron's stick that had sprouted leaves (Num 17:8-11), and the two tablets with the commandments written on them (Exo 25:16, 21-22, Deut 10:2, 4-5).



### **"The covenant ark/box seen in the temple of God"**

What we should understand here is that, God is not by this mean instituting all the covenant relationships He has had with the Israelites, in Christianity. The fact is that, the Original Covenant Box which was deleted from the minds the Israelites (Jer 3:16) is here shown to all people on the day of judgement of the whole (Roman) world; though it is not the exact box or ark which Israel used. What was once concealed in the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle in the Old Testament, is now revealed to all.

When Christ died, the veil to all the things in the tabernacle was "cut" (Mat 27:51) which symbolizes the end of a testament, which was the Mosaical dispensation and all the 613 laws (Col 2:14). Thus, the symbolism of the opening of the temple to show up the covenant box would mean that, once God judges the whole world, He brings to a close all dispensations of time.

***There were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail:*** All these apocalyptic symbols declare the presence of God in the judgement. [vs 13 treats similar symbols]

*Revelation chapter 11 – work initiated by DAL – written by the Teacher of the Apocalyptic Literature*

**ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:**

DAL

**REVELATION CHAPTER 12 (17 VERSES)**

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

**LESSON PREPARED BY: NYARKO SETH (TEACHER OF THE APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE)**

**CONTACT: 0249289180 / 0504156724 ; CHURCH OF CHRIST GHANA, E/R - AKIM NYANKOMASE & AKIM ACHIASE - L.A.B BRANCH**

