

**MEASURING THE NEW COVENANT**

**TEMPLE OF GOD**

**THE BODY OF CHRIST IN THE LAST DAYS**

In Revelation 11, John is given a measuring staff and instructed to measure the temple, the altar, and those who worship there.

Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it." Revelation 11:1

A couple of things about this passage are worth noting. The first is that if you continue reading, John never reports back any measurements that would typically be associated with measuring a physical structure. The reason for that is related to the second thing worth noting, which is that he is instructed to measure people. Is God interested in how tall people are or is the instruction to measure the temple, the altar, and the worshipers speaking of something other than a physical structure?

### **The New Covenant Temple**

Jesus' time of ministry focused largely on teaching new covenant truth. He taught about being born again, and that food does not defile a person. He taught that murder and adultery begin in the heart with hatred and lust. He revealed spiritual truth to people who tended to view things naturally so it's not surprising when they misunderstood this reference:

Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body. John 2:19-21

At the center of the new covenant teaching is the Holy Spirit who indwells those who believe in Jesus. Since the temple of God is considered to be His dwelling place, new covenant believers are also seen as the temple of God by virtue of having the Holy Spirit living within.

Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 1 Corinthians 3:16

The new covenant temple is made up of believers individually and corporately as the body of Christ. This is clearly demonstrated in the teachings of Jesus and restated by the apostle Paul.

### **Measuring the Temple**

Many people believe that there will be a physical temple rebuilt in Jerusalem before Jesus returns, and that very well may be the case. However, the instructions in Revelation 11:1 state that the *worshipers* are to be measured which is something

that only makes sense in a new covenant context where believers are considered to be the temple of God. Essentially, John is instructed to measure the spiritual condition of the body of Christ down to the individual member.

After John is instructed to measure the temple, we have the account of the two witnesses. Unless the measuring of the new covenant temple takes place during the ministry of the two witnesses, the whole part about measuring the temple is ignored which would essentially make it meaningless.

The 1260 days of the ministry of the two witnesses coincides with the man of sin's 42-month war against the saints. This is the time when worshiping the image and receiving his mark becomes mandatory under the penalty of death. It is the time when God calls on the faithful to persevere.

If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints. Revelation 13:10

And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. Revelation 14:11-12

The man of sin will perform supernatural signs and wonders that will amaze the people of the world. He will use his command of the supernatural as validation for his claim of being God and will call on the world to worship him as such. He instructs those whom he has deceived to build an image. The image is a code of conduct that the deceived collaborate on. This code of conduct worships the man of sin as God and everyone must comply with its provisions under the penalty of death. He uses his mark, which is required in order to buy or sell anything, to hasten compliance with the terms of the image. Those who refuse his mark and the image are to be killed.

The mark and the image are used to begin the measuring of the body of Christ, which is the temple of God. They measure the altar, where sacrifices are made, and those who worship there. They will reveal who is willing to sacrifice all they have in this world in order to keep the commandments of God and persevere in the faith. The mark of the beast will be used to expedite this decision-making process since no one will be able to buy or sell anything unless they have his mark. It will compel people to decide sooner rather than later.

After enough time has lapsed and the mark and the image have accomplished the initial measuring of the temple, the sixth seal is opened. The sixth seal is a harbinger of the coming judgment and wrath of God that takes place when the seventh seal is opened. The seventh seal contains the seven plagues which are

God's judgment against those who worship the man of sin through his mark and the image. The two witnesses are the ones that are seen as bringing the plagues.

The plagues of the seventh seal will measure the hearts of the deceived. Their purpose is to convict those who worship the man of sin by showing them that they made an error in judgment and that they should repent of their idolatry. The first four plagues affect the natural realm and serve to demonstrate to the world that the man of sin is not the God of creation because he is impotent to do anything about them.

There's a common misunderstanding about the mark which is that those who are deceived into receiving it and worshiping the image have sealed their fate by doing so. Suffice it to say that worshiping the man of sin is idolatry and will be forgiven if repented of. Revelation 14:9-12 describes the fate of those who ***persist*** in worshiping the man of sin, those who ***refuse to repent*** of their idolatry.

The end of the sixth plague is when the two witnesses are killed. Their death brings an end to the 42-month war against the saints and completes the measuring of the hearts of the deceived. All that is left after the death of the two witnesses is for the armies to gather at Armageddon which is followed by the return of Jesus at the seventh trumpet.

In summary, the first part of the 1260-day (42 month) ministry of the two witnesses is when the faithfulness and perseverance of the body of Christ, the temple, is measured by the mark and the image. This is followed by the plague judgments that will affect those who chose to worship the man of sin. The plagues will convict people of their idolatry and measure the hearts of the deceived who, for whatever reason, chose to save their lives by receiving his mark and worshiping the image. Those who repent of their idolatry will be forgiven. After everyone has chosen whether they are going to repent or harden their heart, Jesus returns to destroy the wicked.

Of the 1260 days of measuring, it's not clearly stated as to how many days are taken by the mark and the image and how many days are taken by the plagues. We only know that the two measurings are separated by the harbinger of the sixth seal. We may have a clue, however, in the book of Daniel.

Daniel 8 talks about the temple and the altar where the daily sacrifices are made as it pertains to the time of the end. It's a widely interpreted passage but I think it gives us a clue as to how long each of the two "measurings" lasts. Some people see Daniel 8 as referring to a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem which may be true. We'll just have to wait and see. A lot of prophecy can be viewed from a spiritual perspective as well as a natural perspective and since Daniel 8 pertains to the time of the end, referencing the new covenant temple of God is certainly feasible. What follows is based on a spiritual understanding of the following passage:

Out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land. It grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down. It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the **regular sacrifice** from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the **regular sacrifice**; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper. Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, "How long will **the vision about the regular sacrifice** apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?" He said to me, "For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored." Daniel 8:9-14

The small horn refers to the Satan-possessed man of sin who declares himself to be equal with God. He removes the regular sacrifice from God and throws down His sanctuary through the mark and the image. When the mark and the image become mandatory, those who do not worship the man of sin will be put to death.

It is on account of the idolatry of the mark and the image that the regular worship of God is redirected to the man of sin. The signs and wonders that he performs will deceive some believers into thinking that he actually is God and cause them to fall into idolatry by receiving his mark and worshiping the image. It will then take 1150 days for the holy place, the body of Christ, to be properly restored through the conviction and repentance brought about by the plagues.

The above passage focuses on the **regular sacrifice** which is why I interpret the 2300 evenings and mornings as 1150 days. The regular sacrifice was to occur once in the evening and once in the morning so 2300 sacrifices would take 1150 days. If 2300 days is what was meant, it could have easily been stated that way but it's not. It's stated as 2300 evenings mornings which is more likely a reference to daily sacrifices since that is the focus of the passage.

If the measuring of the temple lasts for the 1260 days of the two witnesses and 1150 of those days are for restoring the deceived believers back to the faith, that leaves 110 days for the initial measuring that's accomplished by the mark and the image.

The days of measuring will reveal who has acted on the teachings of Jesus and who has ignored them. They will serve the purpose of bringing the body of Christ to full maturity, to the unity of the faith. People will demonstrate through their actions who it is that they serve so that when Jesus returns, everyone's allegiance will already have been declared through the decisions that they have made.