

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

DECODING THE DETAILS

REVELATION 11

WHY DO WE NEED TO STUDY THIS CHAPTER?

- ▶ Far from being incidental, irrelevant, or simply strange, this chapter is essential to understanding God's purposes. Our first reason for studying Revelation is to understand the future of humanity in relation to the plans of God (1.1-2); He doesn't want us to be ignorant about all that is going to happen. He has promised blessing for those who "hear and take to heart what is written in it" (1.3). This chapter introduces specific times and reveals the convergence of numerous prophecies given over hundreds of years.

THE BACKGROUND TO CHAPTER 11

I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, “Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, with its worshipers. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months.”

- ▶ When we come to chapter 11, the seals, which correspond to Matthew 24, have been broken, giving a preview of the judgments to come. Six trumpets have sounded, unleashing six specific judgments on “all who live on the earth” John is now given a measuring rod and told to measure the temple of God— something that we know doesn’t exist today!

DECODING THE TIMELINE

“They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.”

- ▶ One of the features of Revelation 11 is the reference to specific time periods: 42 months and 1260 days. Over the next several chapters, we will see these repeated in connection with different events, as well as another time designation: “time, times, and half a time” (12.14). Human history will culminate on the pre-determined “Day of the Lord” and Scripture is specific about preceding events.

TIME, TIMES, AND HALF A TIME

He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time.

DANIEL 7.25

- ▶ The book of Revelation has more references to the Old Testament than any other NT book. Much of the OT is the “fore-telling” of the future. It deals in particular with the Jewish people, the unique relationship they share with Him, and His plans and purposes concerning them. Therefore, understanding OT prophecies, especially those in Daniel, is key to understanding Revelation.

You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone He wishes. (DANIEL 4.25)

- ▶ A "time" is understood as a year. This passage is translated as seven years in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament), completed in 2 B.C.
- ▶ Thus, "time" equals one year, "times" equals two years, and "half a time" (or "the dividing of time" KJV) equals six months; "time, times, and half a time" equals 3.5 years or 42 months or 1260 days.

“WEEKS” AND “SEVENS”

He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.

DANIEL 9.27

- ▶ When we come to Revelation 11, there is a convergence of prophecies including one in which Jesus referenced Daniel 9.27:

“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand . . .” (MATTHEW 24.15)

“Seventy ‘sevens’¹ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place.” (DANIEL 9.24) ¹ “weeks” KJV

- ▶ When Daniel was praying, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah about the return of the exiles to Jerusalem, the angel Gabriel appeared to him with insight into God’s prophetic timeline: 70 years of captivity followed by seven “sevens” and “sixty-two “sevens”. A seven (or a week), is seven years (cf. Genesis 29.27-28). From the decree to rebuild the temple until the death of the Anointed One will $7 + 62$ weeks, or 490 years. That leaves one “seven” remaining.

THE FINAL SEVEN

He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

2 THESSALONIANS 2.4

- ▶ It is the testimony of Daniel, Jesus, the Apostle Paul that one known variously as the antichrist, “the beast that comes up from the Abyss” and the man of lawlessness, will emerge in international politics. He will be arrogant and blasphemous— the incarnation of godlessness – and the whole world will be charmed by him. This is the final week of Daniel’s vision, the seven years of tribulation.

- ▶ He will make a covenant with the Jewish people but 42 months into it, he will break that covenant and violate their place of worship.

He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him. (DANIEL 9.27)

- ▶ During 42 months of his leadership (Revelation 13.5), the two witnesses will also be present. God is endeavoring to return His chosen people, the Jews, back to Himself. The Apostle Paul wrote:

I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way all Israel will be saved. (ROMANS 11.25-26)

► In chapter 10, the Apostle John saw the mighty angel straddling land and ocean, holding the small book, and making legal claim to the earth. Now the apostle hears that same voice saying, “I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days”—after which the seventh angel sounds his trumpet and elders proclaim:

“We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,

the One who is and who was,

because you have taken your great power

and have begun to reign.

The nations were angry, and your wrath has come.

The time has come for judging the dead . . .

and for destroying those who destroy the earth. (11.17-18)

WHAT DO WE NEED TO REMEMBER?

We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

2 PETER 1.19

- ▶ The apostle was instructed to measure a temple that, as of now, does not exist! But just as Daniel's other prophecies have been fulfilled, this one will be also. When these events in Revelation take place, the era of grace will be over and God's specified timeline will be rolling toward the end. Are you paying attention?