

## The Glory of Christ After Christmas (Revelation 11:1-2, 12:5)

On Christmas Eve I read a news article I want to read a little more from. It's about the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a WWI truce that began that night for tens of thousands of soldiers this very week in 1914, the largest informal truce in recorded history. The *New American* article last week tells more of the story

'Rifleman C. Ernest Furneaux of the British Rifle Brigade in a letter he wrote to his parents: "About five o'clock on Christmas Eve the Germans started lighting up Christmas trees in their trenches. We took no notice of them until they began to sing. Then we began to cheer them and talk to one another as we are only about 80 yards apart. So by the light of their searchlight our officers went across halfway and their officers came to meet them. They shook hands and conversed for a while. It was agreed that we should have a day off and they would fire the first shot to start again. So from five o'clock on Christmas Eve until ten o'clock this morning (December 26th) neither side has fired, only walked about. Some of the Germans came across to us and we shook hands and had some chocolate..."

Another famous incident involving a Christmas tree occurred when Alfred Kornitzke, a pastry cook from Berlin, was making marzipan balls on the German side on Christmas Eve. When shots were fired from the opposing trench, Kornitzke picked up a Christmas tree and, while still wearing his baker's hat, ran toward the enemy lines, which were manned by Algerians. When he got about half way across the no-man's land, he put the Christmas tree down and lit the candles. Kornitzke then shouted Christmas greetings. The astounded Algerians, even though they were Islamic and didn't celebrate Christmas, held their fire. Kornitzke decided after the war to become a missionary [an article quoted him 'now I know how it's done'<sup>1</sup>]

...Most frequently the soldiers met in the middle to negotiate the truce. There was usually at least one soldier who spoke the other side's language ... If there were any fallen soldiers between the lines, and that was common, the first order of business would be conducting proper burials of the dead [as it was a disgrace to any country to leave the bodies unburied]... Lance-Corporal...of the Gordon Highlanders wrote of such an experience in a letter to his father describing a Christmas Day burial service:

'Our [Christian minister] gave a short service, one of the items in which was Psalm 23. Thereafter, a German soldier, a divinity student I believe, interpreted the service to the German party. I could not understand what he was saying but it was beautiful to listen to him. The service over, we were soon fraternising with the Germans just as if they were old friends. [some even played soccer, but the letters don't agree on the true final score]

[SLIDE] It was peace in the midst of war. There were numerous photos taken. Some of the truces were extended through New Year's Day in order to have the film developed and the pictures printed. The pictures, having been taken by amateurs, are generally not perfectly in focus, but they were well enough in focus to prove the men standing in them were in the uniforms of opposing forces ... [the article said one of the truces went from Christmas all the way to Easter but] German soldier Adolf Hitler ... did not participate in the Christmas observances that [other German leaders did] ... When hearing of the truces, Hitler rejected the very idea of such truces.'<sup>2</sup>

Well, turn with me if you would to Revelation chapter 11. World War I was not the war to end all wars, as some thought it would be, but there is a final war coming, a war on the final soldiers of Christ. It seems Christ's enemies will kill His witnesses and not honor with a burial like in past wars. They'll celebrate like it's Christmas again when they think they won, but their final war on Christ will end as He ends all war, the dead in Christ rise first and meet Him in the cloud as He returns and reigns as Prince of Peace. His war will end all wars and kings and kingdoms when He's King over all the earth

Rev 11:7 says when they finish their witness *'the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them,<sup>8</sup> and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.<sup>9</sup> For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb,<sup>10</sup> and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents [it's merry anti-Christ-mas, or Christ-no-mas] because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.<sup>11</sup> But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.<sup>12</sup> Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them.<sup>13</sup> And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.<sup>14</sup> The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come.<sup>15</sup> Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."<sup>16</sup> And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God,*

<sup>17</sup> saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. <sup>18</sup> The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth."

This is the day when nations that rage will fall on their face before the wrath of God, when terrorists will be terrified at One greater than Allah, weapons of mass destruction will be destroyed, swords become garden tools because there will be no other use for them, the world will war no more, a day when those who are dead will be raised, judged, rewarded, the last day, Rev 20-22

But first Christ came at Christmas to bring the kingdom *of salvation* to the kingdom of the world. Later there will be a consummation where the world *becomes Christ's kingdom on a renewed earth* like the end of this chapter. But first in v. 8, the end of v. 8 said at His 1st coming Christ was crucified.

Like the Christmas truce 100 years ago but in a greater way 2000 years ago, Christmas is about God coming down to the trenches, to the mud and mire. The Lord of Psalm 23 came through the valley of the shadow of death so we can dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Jesus as the Good Shepherd laid down His life for His sheep, the King laid down His life for His soldiers. He came to no-man's land to make peace, not with a Christmas tree, but being crucified on a tree for His enemies. By taking the fire we deserved, He died.

If you look at Rev 12:5 it says a woman '*gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron*' - that's the Christ of Christmas. But in Revelation it's not till the 2nd coming in Rev 19:15 that He fulfills it, as He comes again, not in a manger, but in might and glory, it says He will '*strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron*' (19:15).

But He first came, not to strike down and rule nations with an iron rod, He came at Christmas to save from many nations, extending a scepter of grace. <sup>5</sup> *She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne ... He will rule with an iron rod, but this child unexpectedly first was caught up to God and to His throne.* It's kind of abrupt as it mentions His birth and then skips over His life to His resurrection and ascension where He sits at God's right hand till the day He makes His enemies a footstool under His feet, His final rule. But when John writes Rev 12, Rome is still ruling nations with an iron fist.

John and the other disciples couldn't see 2 comings, or 2-stages of Messiah's kingdom prophecies. From a distance the OT shows 2 peaks like mountains, the peak of Jesus being born (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6) and a slightly higher farther peak with the ruling reigning Messiah over a new earth with peace restored (Isaiah 65). But from a distance the Jews only saw the peaks but didn't see a valley between them, Isaiah 53. They focused on the high points they liked to focus on, and so many missed that He would be the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 before He would fulfill the end and rest of Isaiah, as the Prince of Peace ruling earth. But the end of Rev 11 assures us of His future final reign (11:15 and v. 17, it's a snapshot of the consummated kingdom in Rev 20-22)

[then Rev 12:5 is a flashback to His first coming before that rule]

100 years ago WWI started when the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary was assassinated. In Rev 12 the rightful heir to the throne of heaven came to earth born of woman to willingly be assassinated for us, to bring peace to us in salvation and put an end to war in the world as His final kingdom comes.

Mary did you know that your baby boy would one day rule the nations?

Mary did you know that your baby boy is Lord of all creation?

Did you know that your baby boy is heaven's perfect Lamb?

This sleeping child you're holding is the great I am<sup>3</sup>

Jesus is the 'great I am' from Rev 1, and 'heaven's perfect lamb' from Rev 5. He's the 'Lord of all creation' from Rev 10:6 and the One who will one day '*rule all the nations with a rod of iron*' in Rev 12:5. It's the final culmination and realization of 'joy to the world' when 'heaven and nature sing...He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love.' It's a day when earth's curse is reversed as 'no more sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground, [a day when] He comes to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found'<sup>4</sup>

Not everyone agrees on everything in Revelation, but Rev 12:5 is one where virtually everybody agrees this is talking about Christ and Christmas. Only one male child born of woman is going to rule all nations. Others might try, Rev 12-13 I think talks about imposters who try, but Jesus actually will rule. Psalm 2 is another verse most scholars agree is fulfilled in Rev 12:5, 11:18?

<sup>1</sup> *Why do the nations rage...*[that's an echo of Rev 11:18: *the nations raged*] Ps 2:5 says God '*will speak to them in his wrath and terrify them in his fury*' ...[Rev 11:18 says '*your wrath came...*' and v. 11 says nations were terrified] In the next verse in Ps 2 God the Father says: '*I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion*' [that's a parallel to Rev 11:1-2, the temple in the holy city].

Then in Ps 2 the Father says '*You are My Son,*' then He promises to His Son the King '*I will give You The nations for Your inheritance ... You shall break them with a rod of iron*' (v. 6-9 NKJV, that's what Rev 12:5 is talking about) If that's the background to Rev 11-12, what's the application? Psalm 2 then says to all: <sup>11</sup> *Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.* <sup>12</sup> *Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you be destroyed in the way, for His wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him.* (NIV)

That's the biblical application of the kingdom consummation in Revelation. It's a sweet and awful day coming, so we should serve the Lord with fear. Ps 100 says '*serve the Lord with gladness,*' Ps 2:11 says '*rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry...*' In other words, honor Christ, give homage to Christ, give affection to Christ, show your love to Christ, and take refuge in Christ by trusting in Him alone to keep you from His wrath soon to come  
[repent, turn from your sin to Christ as your Lord and your love]

That's the big picture biblically of Rev 11-12 and a key OT background. We could see other parallels in Rev 12 with Matthew's Christmas story, in Satan through Herod trying to kill the male child who was born to be King. But in our remaining time today I wanted to give you that setting of Christ's glory as we look at just the first part of chapter 11. You may have questions about the kingdom coming and how it all fits chronologically, or how the rapture and resurrection of the 2 witnesses fits in your timeline, or who those 2 guys are, or what the beast is, or how this fits with the book of Daniel or books in *The Left Behind* series. For today I want to leave behind those things, and I want look at how Christ is glorified after Christmas and how that may tie in with the first part of Rev 11 just v. 1-2. Some questions may be clearer later in the book, others less clear till they happen, today I hope His glory is clear

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

Now this is one of those passages that's not as clear, at least to us, and so we need to understand the context within the book and compare it to other more clear passages in other books of the Bible. It's clear in Ezekiel 40 measuring rods were like yardsticks to measure things (OT also mentions a measuring line). The phrase '*holy city*' is clear<sup>5</sup> all throughout Scripture as a name for Jerusalem. The verb '*trample*' is clear in its other uses for treading on grapes in a winepress (Rev 14:20, 19:15), stomping on a snake/scorpion (Lk 10:19)

Only other use of Grk verb: Lk 21:24 when Jesus said the temple would be destroyed *'and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles...'* It's a negative connotation and the temple clearly was destroyed in 70 AD just as Jesus promised it would. That's a clear cross-reference. What's not clear is what *'temple'* John saw here. It's clear from Rev 1 John was on the island of Patmos, he's not in Jerusalem, and there hasn't been a temple standing in Jerusalem for probably 25 years at the time John wrote this. So what is v. 1?

### **#1 option: A future non-Christian Jewish temple**

One futurist view is Judaism will rebuild a temple on the temple mount. It's most common among dispensational writers but some historic premillennial writers in the early church and a few modern Reformed pastors like James Boice<sup>6</sup> believed a temple may be rebuilt and sacrifices revived by Jews who don't believe Jesus is Messiah and a once-for-all sacrifice. Now the Jewish Christian church in Israel isn't trying to go back to OT temple worship but some Jews who reject the NT want to, maybe they will, this view suggests. Some say a temple must be in place for the first 42 months of Daniel's '70th week,' as Christian Jews/church are gone, etc. But this view has difficulties

- a big one is the Muslim dome of the rock; they don't want Jews near!
- there's uproar over Jews building houses on their own land, much less a temple on Islam's holy site! It's hard to see how that could be possible
- for Christ-rejecting Judaism, does the title in v. 1 *'temple of God'* fit?
- we need to be careful not to limit God to man's interpretations/ideas so until the Muslim Dome is gone and Jews have building permits the watching world can relax, Christ's coming is still months or years off?

Rev 1 makes clear Christ could come soon, imminently. Men can be wrong on other things like theories on the rapture or red heifers or rebuilt temples, but the Bible is clear on what we need to get right: readiness for His return. Some get all worked up on whether there will or won't be a future temple. I don't think we should be dogmatic on or dividing over things like that, we can leave it to God. But I'm not sure there has to be one to fulfill Rev 11:1?

### **2<sup>nd</sup> option: A present heavenly temple**

Look at v. 19 in this context: *Then God's temple in heaven was opened ...* Arguably a stronger case in context can be made for God's temple in v. 1 being the same as v. 19 *'God's temple in heaven...'* If we let John interpret his words later in the chapter, it's clear the temple is in heaven. And if you turn back to chapter 3, Christ already taught John about the temple of God. In Rev 3:11 Christ says He's coming soon and speaks of crowns (rewards).

**Rev 3:12** *The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar **in the temple of my God**. Never shall he go out of it ...* [now does that mean if we overcome, God will make us a literal physical pillar in a literal physical temple? Is this promise that we'll be turned into a pillar like Lot's wife and forever standing in a rebuilt Jewish temple in earthly Jerusalem? No, if you read the rest of the verse Jesus is talking about the new Jerusalem and God's heavenly city]

That's the first time Revelation speaks of the temple of God, the next time is in chapter 7 if you want to turn there. Rev 7:9 describes a saved multitude. **7:15** *Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night **in his temple*** [what temple is that? v. 16 says this is when worshippers aren't hungry or thirsty anymore, there's no more sun, and v. 17 says there will be springs of living water and God will wipe every tear from our eyes. That's how heaven is described at the end of Revelation, this *temple of God* is heaven. The end of v. 15 says it's the very presence of God on His throne. The earthly tabernacle/temple was modeled after God's heavenly sanctuary]

The next time a heavenly being mentions '*the temple of God*' is in Rev 11:1, so it would make sense that John would think they're talking about the same temple they've been talking about every other time the word temple is used in the book, God's temple in heaven. Makes sense, a question in the context of Rev 11:2 is if it's only about saints in glory, not about people on earth? 11:2: *do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for 42 months ...* That sounds like what's happening earth, not just up in heaven, it sounds like not just the saved in a temple, it's also the unsaved trampling its courts.

[sounds like a division of worshippers in v. 1 and the world in v. 2]

**Option #3 (I lean more to): a past image of present and future realities**

If you disagree with me, we don't need to wrestle afterwards, but I wrestled with this text and am open to the idea this is an image of *the temple of God* in the past, when faithful Israelite worship took place at the temple before it was destroyed, and it may picture true worship till the future return of Jesus. Rev 11 isn't a real-time video, it's a vision about reality from another time. Everyone agrees the start of Rev 12 flashes back to NT times, the birth/life of Jesus, and it seems to me the start of Rev 11 may be another flash back? The image in Rev 11:1 may be a literal earthly temple, but not necessarily a future temple, maybe like Rev 12 John sees a past scene that makes a point? The point of the past temple and present trampling of what's holy could be that the present and future true worship of God will never be stomped out. It pictures Jerusalem in Jesus' day but has application for churches in our day.

### **1st application: God wants our true worship like true Israel in the past**

God marks out those who worship Him in v. 1, and I think one way to apply v. 2 is He makes a distinction between true and false religion; some worship but only on the outside. If we turn to Lk 1 we see some God marks out. You may wonder what all this has to do with the glory of Christ after Christmas. The NT temple has a lot more to do with the rest of the Christmas story than you may realize. Lk 1:5 mentions Zechariah and Elizabeth as faithful Jews, true worshippers in the temple. Lk 1:6: *And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.*

[they were ‘true Israelites’ like John 1:47, Rom 9:5]

Many priests and leaders of Israel in the temple were corrupt in that day but Zechariah as high priest that year entered the temple in true worship in v. 9, and in v. 10 a godly remnant of other faithful Jews prayed outside. In v. 11 at the altar an angel appears and speaks, same scene and same words as Rev 11:1, where it mentions the temple, altar and worshippers, and those on the outside. Earlier in Revelation *the altar* is where souls cry out to God and it’s where God hears the prayers of His saints from earth (8:3, 6:9-11), not on a literal structure but a symbol from John’s upbringing, a past image of literal present suffering in the church (the sacrifice of the martyrs and their prayer) and future, continuing when John wrote Revelation after the temple is gone. Rev 11:1 mentions altar and true worshippers; think of those like Zechariah.

[Grk *naos* (11:1) only priests entered but 1:5, 5:10 says we’re all priests]

The last line of the Christmas hymn Angels from the Realms of Glory says:

Saints before the altar bending, Watching long in hope and fear,  
Suddenly the Lord, descending, In His temple shall appear, Come and worship...<sup>7</sup>

Look at Lk 2:27. After Jesus is born, after the shepherds leave, the very next part of the story is about Christ’s glory after Christmas. Mary and Joseph, as faithful worshippers see another true Israelite, Simeon, in the temple of God <sup>27</sup> *And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law,* <sup>28</sup> *he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,* <sup>29</sup> *“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;* <sup>30</sup> *for my eyes have seen your salvation* <sup>31</sup> *that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,* <sup>32</sup> *a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”* [that’s what I mean by Christ’s glory after Christmas, and in v. 37 another true Israelite, Anna faithfully worshipping in the temple as a widow for decades, she meets Jesus in the temple then tells other faithful] <sup>38</sup> *And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.*



The lyrics we've sung recently like 'Prepare Him Room' and 'O Come, O Come Emmanuel' and 'O Come All Ye Faithful' all are applications of this. It seems to me the temple is a central part of Christ's glory after Christmas, and Luke 1-2 highlights in it images of faithful Israelites and true worship.

[you can go back to Rev 11 but I wanted you to see some past images of it]

## **2<sup>nd</sup> application: God wants us to worship Christ with His church**

John, who wrote Revelation, began His gospel of John not with a baby, but with the beginning, with Jesus who was with God and was God and Jn 1:14 says He '*became flesh and dwelt among us* [literally 'tabernacled among us' like the Jewish tabernacle/temple, He became it] *and we beheld His glory...*' A past OT image of this was David in the psalms '*One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple...I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing...praises*'<sup>8</sup>

God wants us to want to worship the Lord. The church is where we offer up sacrifices of joy and sing praises today. It's the house of the Lord today that we should long to dwell in not just 1.5 hours one morning a week but in the evening when we can worship, all our days and life. The gathered church is where we inquire and are inspired as we behold the King's beauty and glory

I love Thy Kingdom, Lord, [we sing in] the house of Thine abode,  
The Church our blest Redeemer saved, with His own precious blood.

I love Thy Church, O God! Her walls before Thee stand,  
Dear as the apple of Thine eye, And graven on Thy hand.<sup>9</sup>

Do you love and long for God's church? If not ask Him to help you in 2015. And focus on Christ in worship, not your preferences, styles, sounds, sights. In OT times you had to go the tabernacle or later travel far to the Jerusalem temple to worship where God's glory and presence dwelt in visible form. In NT times, though, Jn 1:14 says that presence came in the flesh, a tabernacle among us, a temple among us wherever His body was. We see His glory not in a Shekinah cloud over a most holy place or a structure on a temple mount anymore, we behold His glory in Christ, one greater than Solomon's temple

[we have that privilege every Lord's day, every worship service]

The first thing John's gospel highlights in Jerusalem is Jesus clearing out the corrupted temple worship, saying '*Destroy this temple, and in 3 days I will raise it up*'...*But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered...*(Jn 2:19)

That's John writing as a disciple who remembered that Jesus *did* promise a rebuilt temple, in fact Matthew quotes it as *temple of God* just like Rev 11:1

But it's not a building, it's His body. Not necessarily the dome on the rock's location, Jesus said of those who believe in Him like Peter, '*on this rock I will build my church*' (Mt 16:18). In the writings of the apostles, the church is the body of Christ, the church is His temple for true worship now. The NT temple was destroyed but Christ rebuilt another one, the body of Christ.

2 chapters after Jesus called Himself the temple John writes of a Samaritan who asked Jesus about the temple and true worship and Jesus said '*the hour is coming, and is now here, when...true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth...*' (Jn 4:23). With the first coming of Jesus, true worship that in the past was in a place, is now in a person. Jesus is the true temple of God, and His body, His church is what He promised to build. Eph 2 says the church is God's house and is built as '*a holy temple in the Lord*' (v. 19, 21). Even the Corinthian church is a *temple of God* (2 Cor 6:16, 1 Cor 3:16-17). At least 9 of 10x *temple of God* is used in NT letters it's clearly the church, so as John hears *temple of God* in Rev 11:1 he doesn't forget the NT letters.

J. Vernon McGee wrote on Rev 11:1 '*temple of God* places us back on Old Testament ground, for there is no temple given to the church. The church *is* a temple of the Holy Spirit today; that is, believers (not a building) are the temple...this altar was a picture of the cross of Christ, it would seem that the implication is that the gospel of the cross of Christ will still be available to all mankind during the intensity of this brief [final] crisis. It is not to be measured, and it will still be available...Gentile...dominion is limited'<sup>10</sup>

[you can read similar views in Geneva Bible of 1500s, early church, etc.]<sup>11</sup>

**Last application: Worship God if He's marked you out in His mercy**

When Rev 11:1 mentions a measuring line, John might think of 2 Sam 8:2 where a measuring line marks out who lives or dies. In Micah 2:5, God's people aren't protected because God says you '*have no one stretching a measuring line...in the assembly of the LORD.*' The closest cross-reference is Zechariah talking about Israel's return from exile to rebuild the OT temple:

*1:16 thus says the LORD I have returned to Jerusalem with mercy; my house shall be built in it, declares the LORD of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem.*' It's a promise of protection for true Israel in Zechariah 1, then the next chapter is when Jerusalem is measured by the measuring line and God warns the nations who plunder or trample faithful Israel, that He will protect them as the apple of His eye from His holy place. So measuring or marking in Rev 11:1 before the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet may be parallel to the marking out of those measured at 144,000 before the 7<sup>th</sup> seal, Rev 7-8

Similar context of marking with a seal and true worship in a temple (7:15). Hamilton writes whether or you not the Rev 11 ‘temple that gets measured ...is a literal building in Jerusalem, we can agree...being measured signifies God’s protection [and] that the main point is God will protect his people.’<sup>12</sup>

Rev 11:1 isn’t only measuring a temple, it’s also measuring an *altar*. In Rev 6, John saw an altar that pictured the persecuted church and martyrs, and he heard there is a full number of them to be complete before the end. That’s a clue that the measuring in Rev 11:1 may have to do with the full measure of suffering and martyrdom from John’s day to the last day, that it has a limit.

I think a true worship idea is clear as the end of 11:1 measures *worshippers*. It’s not a mere building, it’s believers. NIV ‘*count the worshippers there,*’ and it’s in contrast with the heathen in v. 2 who are trampling *the holy city*. The only other time John uses the phrase *the holy city* is in chapter 21 where an angel *measures by a rod* like Rev 11:1 (only other use in NT). But there, the future Jerusalem is said to have no temple in the sense of a building like in the Old Covenant, it says in Rev 21:22 Jesus is the temple of the holy city to come. It associates *the holy city* with Christ’s bride, the church (v. 9-10). Heb 12:22-23: ‘*you have come to the city of the living God...the church...*’ The world tramples the church, but she’ll be glorious and victorious, Rev 21

The *Application Commentary* says: ‘The most likely symbolic interpretation of the act of measuring here is a promise of preservation as in the measuring of Jerusalem (Ps. 48:12-13...) or the temple ... trampling of the outer courts probably signifies the suffering of God’s people (maybe Jewish, maybe Christian) in this age, however the measuring is deferred until 21:16. Those who serve God may be a minority, often a persecuted minority, but the future is ultimately ours. God often works through what is small, broken, and despised in this age, but he will ultimately vindicate his remnant.’<sup>13</sup>

The measuring of 42 months and the men who witness for the gospel we’ll look at next time, but I’ll give Peter the last word, application for the church ‘*you ... are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices ... a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you ... Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy ... Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God...*’ (1 Pet 2:5-12)

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.thenewamerican.com/culture/history/item/4654-the-christmas-truce-of-1914>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.thenewamerican.com/culture/history/item/19665-the-christmas-truces-of-1914-peace-in-the-midst-of-war>

<sup>3</sup> Mark Lowry, "Mary, Did You Know?"

<sup>4</sup> Isaac Watts, "Joy to the World" (from Psalm 98).

<sup>5</sup> Other uses of "holy city" are Neh 11:1, 18, Isa 48:2, 52:1, Dan 9:24, Matt 4:5, 27:53, Rev 21:2, 10, 22:19 [the latter referring to Jerusalem in its renewed final form].

<sup>6</sup> Hippolytus (born AD 170) wrote: 'the Antichrist ... shall build the city of Jerusalem, and restore the sanctuary. He shall cut off the two witnesses and ... as it is said [and he quotes Rev 11]' and 'Christ displayed His flesh like a temple, and raised it up on the third day; and he too will raise up again the temple of stone in Jerusalem...For through the Scriptures we are instructed in two advents of the Christ and Saviour,' *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5, p. 184, 287. See also James M. Boice, *The Last and Future World*, 1974, p. ??,

<sup>7</sup> James Montgomery, "Angels from the Realms of Glory."

<sup>8</sup> Ps 27:4, 6 KJV.

<sup>9</sup> Timothy Dwight, "I Love Thy Kingdom."

<sup>10</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, p. 979.

<sup>11</sup> Quote Geneva Bible and Victorinus here

<sup>12</sup> James Hamilton, *Revelation*, p. 236.

<sup>13</sup> Craig Keener, *NIV Application Commentary*, p. 289, 299-300.