Measuring the Tribulation Temple
Revelation 11:1-2

This coming July 22 on the Jewish calendar is the 9th of Av; it is the saddest day of the year for the orthodox Jew; a day that represents great tragedy; it was on that date both the first and second temples were destroyed—Solomon’s temple by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 586 BC and Zerubbabel’s temple, also called Herod’s temple in the days of Jesus by Titus of Rome in 70 AD.

On that day of this year, thousands of Jews will gather at the Western Wall and petition God for a future temple to be built to usher in the Messiah; these orthodox Jews do not believe their Messiah can come until he has a temple to come to.

On the 9th of Av, an organization called “the Women in Green” will honor that day by walking the perimeter of the old city; this organization is so named because of the green hats they will be wearing; their march is to oppose any two state solution that would form a Palestinian state within the borders of Israel.

Actually, the 9th of Av is a day of several disasters that have befallen Israel over the centuries; according to Jewish tradition, it was the day God told the nation of Israel that they would not enter the Promised Land because of their unbelief and would be forced to wander in the wilderness for another 38 years.

It was on that date in 135 AD that the famous Bar Kokhba revolt against the Romans was squelched and the last Jewish stronghold fell to the Romans.

It was on that date in 136 AD that Emperor Hadrian established a heathen temple to Jupiter on the site of the destroyed Jewish temple.

It was on the 9th of Av that Hadrian began to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and renamed it Aelia Capitolina, meaning “the new pagan city of the Gentiles;” he
also renamed the land of Israel, Syria-Palestinia, after Israel’s most hated enemies, Syria and the Philistines.

It was on the 9th of Av, 1242, that Pope Urban II declared a Crusade against the Jews for being “Christ killers;” it was on the 9th of Av, 1492, that King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain expelled the Jews from their land.

It was the 9th of Av, 1942, that Jews of Poland in the Warsaw Ghetto were mass deported to the Treblinka extermination camp to meet their deaths.

So the 9th of Av has some bitter memories for the orthodox Jew; it is a day of fasting from food and drink; a day to avoid any bathing and washing of clothes or participating in any form of entertainment; it is a day when the Jew is to be reminded of Israel’s tragic history.

However, the orthodox Jew is committed to seeing that a third temple will one day be rebuilt on Temple Mount, where Solomon’s Temple once stood; several organizations of orthodox Jews have revealed blueprints for portions of the third temple; they have chosen its location on Temple Mount, they have a computer registry of 300,000 of the sons of Aaron who are potential future priests based on DNA testing; they have made many of the robes to be worn by this Levitical priesthood, including the garments of the high priest, as well as the precious stones for the high priest’s breastplate; they have made over sixty sacred vessels, including the Menorah made of solid gold; they have done all this according to standards set forth in Scripture; much of this can be seen by visiting the Temple Institute in Jerusalem.

As we come to our text we find ourselves in the middle of the Tribulation—three and a half years have passed and the Temple has been built; John has been asked to measure it; let’s look at our text: “Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, ‘Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months’” (Revelation 11:1-2).

As we look at these two verses in Revelation 11, let me remind you that we are in an interlude, a pause between the sixth and seventh trumpet; the seventh trumpet has yet to sound, but when it does all hell breaks loose on earth.
The Plan to Measure the Temple (11:1)

*The responsibility of John*... “Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, ‘Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there...’” (11:1).

As we come to this point in the great Tribulation the temple has already been built on Temple Mount and John is asked to measure it; the measuring rod that John uses is a reed (*calamoist*) that grew in the Jordan Valley as high as 10 to 15 feet; they are a hollow stalk, much like bamboo; they are light and easy to cut down into proper lengths and used as measuring rods like a yardstick.

What was the point of the angel asking John to measure the temple which included the holy place, the holy of holies, as well as the brazen altar where the animal sacrifices were offered and where the Jewish people gathered for worship? There are two things associated in regard to God measuring something: one is judgment and the other is ownership.

*The reason for measuring the temple*... In the OT you have instances where God wants something measured for the purpose of destruction; it’s His way of saying, “I am confining My destruction to this particular area, or this particular city” (see Lamentations 2:8); He also has things measured out that belong to Him; in Revelation 21:15 you have a careful measuring of the city of the New Jerusalem; there John writes: “And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its walls.”

The temple is being measured because it belongs to God; the temple is called “the temple of God;” that may seem strange for two reasons: it is the Tribulation temple and this temple was negotiated by the Antichrist in an agreement he got from the Muslim Arabs for peace in the Middle East between the Muslims who control Temple Mount in Jerusalem and the nation of Israel.

*The recording by Daniel concerning the third temple*... Daniel prophesied this over 500 years before Christ; he speaks of 70 weeks of prophecy: “Seventy weeks are determined for your people and your holy city” (Daniel 9:24); the phrase 70 weeks refers to seventy units of seven as each week represents seven years for a total of 490 years; the 490 years are divided into three sections.
The first unit of seven, or 49 years, goes from the command to rebuild the destroyed city of Jerusalem to the completion of the city; according to Nehemiah 2:1-8, that decree came from Artaxerxes Longimanus I of Persia, March 14, 445 BC; the work on the city was completed in 396 BC, exactly 49 years after the decree was issued (Daniel 9:25).

The second sixty-two units of seven, or 434 years, goes from the completion of Jerusalem to Messiah the Prince (Daniel 9:25); changing from a lunar to solar calendar and adjusting for leap years, you come to April 6, 32 AD, which is now called Palm Sunday (see Matthew 21:1-11); it is exactly 173,880 days from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem where He was proclaimed as King.

When you add together the seven weeks and sixty-two weeks you end up with sixty-nine weeks, one short of the seventieth week; there is a separation between the sixty-ninth and the seventieth week called a “parenthesis” or a “gap” (Daniel 9:25,27) and it has a three-fold purpose; Daniel reveals two of the three purposes.

1. The cutting off of Messiah, but not for Himself! (Daniel 9:26a)... Christ was crucified according to the foreknowledge of God (Acts 2:23); He died for us, and not for Himself; His death came the week of His triumphal entry but after the sixty-ninth week.

2. The conquest of Titus of Rome... “And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined” (Daniel 9:26b); it was in 70 AD when Titus of Rome attacked Jerusalem and destroyed the city and the temple.

3. The commencement of the age of grace... The gap between the 69th and 70th week represents the church age or the age of grace; it was the time when Jews and Gentiles would become one body in Christ; this was a mystery to the Jews and not forecast in Daniel’s prophecy; Paul wrote of this mystery: “... by revelation He made known to me the mystery... the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel...” (Ephesians 3:3-6).
The rise of the Antichrist... After the church age is completed, the seventieth week begins; Daniel writes: “Then he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation is determined, is poured out on the desolate” (Daniel 9:27); there comes another prince who is able to make a covenant or peace agreement between Israel and Muslim Arabs that allows the Jews to once again offer sacrifices and offerings to God; they need a temple to do that; we believe this prince is the Antichrist who is able to accomplish what no one else in history has been able to do: bring a temporary peace in the Middle East which allows the orthodox Jews to rebuild their temple so once again they can resume the sacrificial system under the Levitical law.

The seventieth week, or seven years, is the length of the Great Tribulation; it begins with the future Antichrist getting the world’s attention with this peace covenant and the building of the temple; it could take 3½ years to build it; once built, what does the Antichrist do? He brings an end to sacrifices and offerings and commits the abomination of desolation; Paul spoke of the Antichrist as “the man of sin... the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God, in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:3b-4).

Jesus warned about the “abomination of desolation” when He said: “Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains...” (Matthew 24:15-16); the “abomination of desolation” is not the destruction of the temple which took place under Titus, but the desecration of the temple when Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria in 165 BC placed a statue of Zeus Olympus in the Holy Place of the temple and offered pigs on the altar of burnt offerings as prophesied by Daniel (Daniel 11:29-31); Antiochus becomes a type of Antichrist; when the real Antichrist comes he will at the midpoint of the Tribulation commit “the abomination of desolation” by standing in the holy place of the Tribulation temple and declare himself to be God.

So John has been asked to measure the temple of God, a temple that will be built because a charismatic figure, who will later be identified as the Antichrist, negotiated a peace agreement in the Middle East which enabled the orthodox Jews to build their third temple.
The Purpose of the Temple

*The renewal of the sacrificial system...* As soon as this covenant is agreed upon to build the temple it won’t be long before the Jews are offering sacrifices on the brazen altar; the altar will be first to be built; when the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity to rebuild the temple under the leadership of Zerubbabel, they first built the altar and began offering sacrifices to the Lord long before the temple was completed (Ezra 3:1-7); God wanted their worship and under the old law that was the primary way the Hebrews worshipped.

*The reason for renewing the sacrificial system...* Very early in the Tribulation the Jews are going to go back to sacrificing animals at the brazen altar; God is preparing them to look once again for the Messiah to come; most Jews today are secular, and orthodox Judaism is small in number; most Jews are only into tradition and have forgotten the significance of the sacrificial system; however, when it is all reinstated they will all participate because of their love for tradition; in doing so, they will come face to face with their sin; those sins need sacrifice; however, those sacrifices which they will offer on that altar will not take away sin or transform their lives.

*The receiving of the gospel by the Jews...* Paul said, “All Israel will be saved” (Romans 11:26); could the worship at the brazen altar be the beginning of a process that will save the Jews? This will also be a time when the gospel is preached to all peoples by the 144,000 Jews from the twelve tribes of Israel; could their message begin to resonate in the mind of the Jew and cause repentance? We will soon meet the two witnesses who preach the gospel throughout the first half of the Tribulation; will their message suddenly bring conviction? Could it be, as work starts on rebuilding the temple, that this too will motivate the Jew back to God as well as having some interest in their Messiah?

While this is the Tribulation temple, it is called “the temple of God;” as the Jews begin to move back to God, the Antichrist takes control; once that temple is finished in the middle of the Tribulation, he seizes control of it and proclaims himself to be god (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4); this becomes the “abomination of desolation” of which Jesus warned; He told the Jews when you see this, head for the hills; mass annihilation of the Jews is about to begin for you; either worship the Antichrist or die.

It is at this point where the Antichrist takes total control of the world; not only does he control the temple of God, but he becomes a one-world dictator; with the
help of the false prophet he establishes a one-world government and a one-world religion; he will claim, “I am God and there is no other. Worship me and live! Deny me and die!”

So John is told to measure the temple that it may be set apart for divine purposes; namely to be a means of bringing the Jew back to God and ultimately to their Messiah, Jesus Christ.

The Prohibiting of Measuring the Outer Court (11:2a)

*The removal of the outer court...* “But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles...” (11:2a).

Outside the temple was an outer court called the court of the Gentiles; that was as close as any Gentile could get to the temple; there was an inner court which was as close as the ordinary Jew could get to the temple; the brazen altar was in that court; only the priest from the tribe of Levi was permitted into the holy place and only the high priest into the holy of holies.

John could measure as far out as the inner court of the temple with its brazen altar and where the Jews would gather for worship; he was to leave out the court of the Gentiles.

There are two thoughts here: beyond the court of the Gentiles would be the Dome of the Rock, the second holiest shrine of Islam; could it be that when the Antichrist negotiated this peace agreement permitting the Jews to rebuild the temple on Temple Mount that it would be near and behind the Dome of the Rock? That would seem to make sense as I cannot see the Muslims allowing this sacred shrine of theirs to be torn down or moved; it would seem to be part of the agreement that the Dome of the Rock remain.

I realize that orthodox Jews at the Temple Institute don’t want to believe that; they will tell you that God will cause an earthquake that will destroy that Muslim shrine; be that as it may, John is told not to measure the outer court for it has been given to the Gentiles; remember that Muslim Arabs are Gentiles and they have control of that land on Temple Mount.

There is another possibility as to why John was told not to measure the outer court of the Gentiles: God never made a covenant with the Gentiles to save them
as He did with the Jews; He said through Paul, “all Israel will be saved;” He never said “all Gentiles will be saved;” God has a special heart for the Jews; He has allowed many Gentile nations to perish—especially those who were enemies of Israel—but God has said Israel will never perish; the prophet Amos wrote what God said about Israel: “I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land that I have given them,’ says the LORD your God” (Amos 9:15).

Of course, God loves the Gentile and will save all who will come to Him; Peter learned this when he went to the home of a Gentile named Cornelius to share the gospel; he had to confess “that God shows no partiality” (Acts 10:34).

So when Paul writes that “all Israel will be saved” what does he mean? There are those who believe that all Jews will be saved based on God’s covenant with Israel; the Jew does not need to come to Christ to be saved; Christ only came to save the Gentile; this theology is called “Dual Covenant Theology;” that is, God has one covenant to save the Jew and another to save the Gentile.

We do not accept that teaching, nor do we believe that every Jew who has ever lived will be saved; the prophet Ezekiel speaks of a future time that God will restore Israel when the Lord returns to the earth; He will gather all Israel in “the wilderness of the peoples;” there He will plead His case with them face to face; He will purge the rebels from among the Israelites and they shall not enter the land of Israel (Ezekiel 20:33-38); after God removes the godless from the nation He will establish a new covenant with regenerate Israel (see Jeremiah 31:33-34); it will be a remnant of Jews that will be saved.

How, then, can Paul use the word “all” in saying, “all Israel will be saved?” Not all Jews are true Jews; remember what the risen Lord said to the Jews whom He identified as belonging to “the synagogue of Satan”? “They say they are Jews but are not, but lie” (Revelation 3:9); a true Jew in God’s eyes is not just one racially who comes from the seed of Abraham and is physically circumcised; he must have a circumcised heart (Romans 2:28-28; 9:6-8); he must have a heart that bleeds for God; a heart that will come to recognize Jesus as his Messiah; that is true Israel and thus “all Israel will be saved.”

John is told to measure the temple, the brazen altar, but not the court which is outside the temple, for it has been given to the Gentiles; that is, it does not belong to God; neither does the Dome of the Rock belong to God, nor has God
ever made a separate redemptive covenant with the Gentiles as He has with the Jew.

The Plundering of Jerusalem (11:2b)

The treading on Jerusalem... “And they will tread the holy city under foot for forty-two months” (11:2b); who is the “they” but Gentiles; the Lord does not want the court which is outside the temple measured—a court which belongs to the Gentiles—because it will be the Gentiles who will wage war on the city of Jerusalem.

The time of the treading... “...for forty-two months;” the war will begin in the middle of the Tribulation right after the Antichrist has stood in the holy place of the temple and declared himself as god; it will last the entire reign of the Antichrist, which will be three and one half years.

During the first half of the Tribulation, Jews from all over the world will be coming to Jerusalem because of the temple; they want to reconstitute their ancient religion; they are back in their land offering their sacrifices to God while the temple is in construction; then, once the temple is built, and the Antichrist takes control and proclaims himself as god, all mayhem breaks out; Jesus said, “When you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, then let those in Judea flee to the mountains....” (Matthew 24:15); where are they to flee? The one country in the Middle East not controlled by the Antichrist is Jordan; as Daniel wrote those who have escaped from the hand of the Antichrist are Edom, Moab and Ammon (Daniel 11:41); that would be the territories occupied by modern-day Jordan; the Jews will have to quickly travel there and hide out; it is their only means of survival; when we get to chapter 12 we read of how Israel, depicted as a woman, will have wings of an eagle that will fly her into the wilderness to her special place of security; there she will be nourished by God for the remainder of the Tribulation.

The measuring of the Tribulation temple by John is God’s promise that though devastating times are coming, God has a future for Israel; He is going to establish the sacrificial system at His temple as a way of reintroducing Himself to His chosen people; then when the city of Jerusalem is attacked, He is going to protect a remnant of Jews in the land of Jordan and miraculously nourish them for the last three and one half years of the Tribulation; our God is a faithful God; He made a covenant with Israel and He will not violate that covenant; He cannot go back on His word! As Paul wrote: “If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for
He cannot deny himself” (2 Timothy 2:13); no matter what the Antichrist does, no matter what Satan does, God will purge out the rebels from Israel and redeem His nation as well as an innumerable number of Gentiles before Jesus returns! Amen!