Revelation 11 and the Temple Restored

March 23, 2020 Pastor Emeritus Joe Fuiten recorded in Ethel

Today is March 25, the anniversary of the Annunciation where the angel appeared to Mary to announce that she would be with child. Luke 1:30-33 “*But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. 31 You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.*" What Gabriel promised is coming about in our day here in the end times.

 In this chapter, the end of this present world as we have known it and the arrival of the world as God intended it is coming into view. Also in full view are some of the compromises that led up to the end.

*“I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshipers there. 2 But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles.[[1]](#footnote-1) They will trample on the holy city for 42 months.”*

 First, John is instructed to take a measure of the temple particularly the holy altar and those who worship God. Assess the holy because there is also an unholy. There is a group that tramples on the holy city. A clear contrast is drawn between what is holy and what is unholy yet those both exist within the sacred platform.

 What is pictured or suggested here is the tendency toward religious compromise in the last days.

 I want to describe the physical location and then draw the conclusions from it. Temple Mount is today one of the most famous places on earth dominated by a golden domed Moslem shrine called the Dome of the Rock. The picture shows the Moslem shrine in the foreground with the gray domes of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the background. (3 pix, first labeled with Holy Sepulcher)

 Before the Temple was destroyed, as this picture shows, the Temple stood in the center with the outer Court of the Gentiles surrounding it. The idea of separating Jews from Gentiles, Believers from Pagans, Holy from Unholy, is what is behind these opening verses. The whole temple and grounds should be sacred but compromises exist so it becomes divided.

It could not refer to anything of the physical Temple itself because by the time John wrote Revelation that Temple had been destroyed completely some twenty years earlier. The actual Temple was a burned pile of rubble. No Temple has ever existed again on that property from that day until now. It seems to be an end-times prophecy with both physical and spiritual implications.

Let’s think first about the physical implications. For it to come about, a Temple must be built because none now exists. But there is a big, golden-domed problem standing in the way. If a physical temple is coming, how will it come about? (pix of golden dome again)

I suspect the anti-Christ will be a religious negotiator. He will negotiate a deal between the Jews and Muslims to allow a temple to be built alongside the Dome of the Rock, possibly on the same site as the original temple. If that happens, what John envisioned would be true. The Jews would have the Temple and the Gentiles would have the Dome of the Rock. (pix of dome and temple side by side)

Presently Temple Mount has two main buildings, El Aksa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock with quite a bit of open courtyard space around the Dome. If a third building, the Temple or Tabernacle, were to be added how might that come about? Let me show you how a possible scenario. For this scenario I am relying heavily upon the research and theories of Asher S. Kaufman who claimed the Dome of the Spirit and the Tablets marks the spot where the Art of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place once stood.[[2]](#footnote-2)

I have the Dome of the Rock labeled “B” in the picture. The “Dome of the Spirit and Tablets” is labeled “A.” (pix)

There are a couple of key pieces of evidence to show this to be a possible explanation. The Temple and Eastern Gate were in a line. In the next picture, the red arrow marks the location of the Dome of the Spirit and the Tablets in relation to the Eastern gate. That is significant because the ancient records say you could look through the eastern gate directly into the Temple gates. In other words the Temple and the Eastern Gate were lined up. (show sketch of layout of temple mount followed by my pix in vest)

The second piece of evidence is the flat rock which forms the floor of the Dome of the Spirit and the Tablets. (4 pix) This is the only part of temple mount not covered with dirt or with flagstones. It is an unhewn flat piece of stone. Since David bought the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite as the place for his tabernacle, and threshing floors would presumably be flat for easy extraction of the wheat or barley, this would be the one place that meets that description.

So if this site is the location of the first Temple, then the Dome of the Rock is in what would have been the Court of the Gentiles. It can be allowed to be in the Court of the Gentiles while the newly constructed or restored tabernacle[[3]](#footnote-3) would be in the location of the original.

This allocation of space between competing claims has a precedent at the Cave of Machphelah or the Cave of the Patriarchs located in Hebron. There both a mosque and a synagogue exist in the same ancient building over that cave where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their wives (except Rachel) are all buried. (3 pix)

For our purposes here in Revelation 11 we can see how this description can take place in the very places we have seen with our own eyes.

Beyond the physical aspects there is also the spiritual. The holy space will be invaded by religious people who have compromised. They will trample the holy place for years.

**Notice however, that God also has a witness. In fact, he has two witnesses.** *3 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. 5 If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. 6 These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want*.

They will speak what is true and be hated for it. They will witness for Jesus and Jesus will empower them so they are not destroyed. We recognize this today where Christian are threatened on their job because of their witness. In Revelation 11 God defends his two witnesses with great power. This is power against power. Jesus takes on the false religions head on.

However, in time the two witnesses are killed and the world gloats over the sight of their dead bodies. For three and a half days their dead bodies are denied normal human dignities as they lie exposed before the world while the world celebrates. Finally, they are resurrected and ascend into heaven.

The end is virtually at hand which you see reflected in the subsequent verses. *14 The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon. 15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever." 16 And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying: "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. 18 The nations were angry; and your wrath has come.*

With the seventh trumpet, the scene changes from the earth and back to heaven. Verse 15 is really a decisive and summary verse of all that has been happening. The worldly kingdom has been superseded. It has become the Lord’s kingdom. His kingdom will never end. A new era is beginning. The change is announced in heaven by loud voices.

 God has had the power all along but now he uses that power. His eternal nature is described as a prelude to the exercise of his formerly dormant power. He has begun to reign. The anger of the nations is nothing. God’s wrath more than matches it.

 The time of judgment has arrived. These are the righteous dead who are judged here. *The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great-- and for destroying those who destroy the earth." 19 Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm*.

 The temple is opened and the judgment of both the righteous and unrighteous begins. The ark of his covenant is the heavenly prototype from which the earthly one is copied. It is also the throne of God. Thus we know that God himself is rewarding and punishing.

 When it says that the unrighteous are destroyed it is not a statement of loss of eternal being but rather a description of their status. They are ruined, decayed, destroyed.

1. GREEK: *ethnos*. A race, i.e. a tribe; specially, a foreign (non-Jewish) one (usually by implication, pagan): (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance.) This is the same word used in Matt 28:19-20 “Therefore go and make disciples of all *nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Where the Ancient Temple of Jerusalem Stood. Extant ‘foundation stone’ for the Ark of the Covenant is identified.” Biblical Archaeology Review, 9:02, Mar/Apr 1983. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 2 Macabees 2:4-10 describes Jeremiah placing the Tabernacle pieces in a cave on Nebo for later use at the time God would choose. In that climate, the items could remain in pristine condition at this very moment awaiting the use God will make of them at this time. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)