"God is not looking for brilliant men, is not depending upon eloquent men, is not shut up to the use of talented men in sending His Gospel out in the world. God is looking for broken men who has judged themselves in the light of the Cross of Christ. When He wants anything done, He takes up men who have come to the end of themselves, whose confidence is not in themselves, but in God."

H.A. Ironside

REVELATION CHAPTER ELEVEN

Handout Seventeen

Prayer Study #416

First Love Ministries, Inc. of Perry, Georgia

Revelation 11

Barclay says of this chapter: "It has been said that it is at one and the same time the most difficult and the most important chapter in Revelation. Its difficulty is obvious, and it contains problems of interpretation to which there can be no certain solution. Its importance lies in the fact that it contains a deliberate summary of the rest of the book."

The Measuring of the Temple

1 *A reed [as a measuring rod] was then given to me, [shaped] like a staff, and I was told: Rise up and measure the sanctuary of God and the altar [of incense], and [number] those who worship there.*

2 *But leave out of your measuring the court outside the sanctuary of God; omit that, for it is given over to the Gentiles (the nations), and they will trample the holy city underfoot for 42 months (three and one-half years).*

Verse 1-2 involve the measuring of the Temple. This measuring and counting is closely related to the sealing of God's people. It reminds me of Ezekiel 9:4 *...and the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it."* The purpose of this measuring and counting and marking and sealing is God's supernatural protection when the demonic terrors descend upon the world.

J. Vernon McGee says, "*And the court which is without the temple cast out and measure it not.* This excludes all that does not belong to the temple proper. The altar of burnt offering (and also the brazen laver) would be outside the temple. Since this altar is a picture of the cross of Christ, it would seem that the gospel of the cross of Christ will still be available to all mankind during the intensity of this brief crisis. It is not to be measured, and it will still be available."

In the Temple were four courts: The court of the Gentiles, the court of the Women, the court of the Israelites, and the court of the Priests, which also contained the Holy of

Holies.

Barclay says, "When he [John] speaks of the Temple, he is not thinking at all of the Temple building, which had been blasted out of existence more than twenty years before. For him, the Temple is the Christian Church, the people of God. We come across this picture repeatedly in the New Testament. The Christians are living stones, built into a spiritual house (1st Peter 2:5). The Church is founded on the apostles and the prophets; Jesus is the corner stone; the whole Church is growing into a holy temple in the Lord (Ephesians 2:20-21). '*Do you not know,' says Paul, 'that you are God's temple?' (1st Corinthians 3:16)."*

Every time there is a measuring rod in the Old and New Testaments, it indicates that God is going to deal with the nation Israel (Jeremiah 31:38-39; Zechariah 2). The reed or measuring rod or staff can be used for chastisement and judgment, as in Psalm 2:8 (*"You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.").* The rod can also be used to comfort and bring solace, as in Psalm 23:4 ("*Yea, though I walk through the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me*.").

The time period of the first two verses, most Biblical scholars believe, is a literal three- and one-half year or 1,260 days or forty-two months. The Jews considered Daniel's phrase *time, times, and half a time* (Daniel 7:25 and 12:7) to be a year, two years, and a half of a year, which adds up to 3 and 1/2 years.

The Two Witnesses

3 *And I will grant the power of prophecy to My two witnesses for 1,260 (42 months; three and one-half years), dressed in sackcloth.*
4 *These [witnesses] are the two olive trees and the two lampstands which stand before the Lord of the earth.*
5 *And if anyone attempts to injure them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their enemies; if anyone should attempt to harm them, thus he is doomed to be slain.*
6 *These [two witnesses] have power to shut up the sky, so that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying (their prediction of events relating to Christ's kingdom and its speedy triumph); and they also have power to turn the waters into blood and to smite and scourge the earth with all manner of plagues as often as they choose.*

There are many differences of opinions about the two witnesses. We simple do not know who they are, and to suggest otherwise is a slippery slope. Those who view Revelation in an historical way, believing that all the events of Revelation have already passed, suggest that they are men such as John Huss, Pope Sylvester, or Waldenson. Men who hold the futurist view, i.e. the events of Revelation, after the first few chapters, are yet to be, suggest that they are Enoch, who happened to be a Gentile and who apparently never died, and Elijah. They base the inclusion of Elijah on the Old Testament in Malachi

4:5, where it says, "*Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD."*

Some quote from the Gospel of Nicodemus, which says, *"I am Enoch who pleased God and was translated by Him. And this is Elijah, the Tishbite. We are also to live to the end of the age; but then we are about to be sent by God to resist Antichrist and be slain by him, and to rise after three days, and to be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord."* I would be very careful about basing decisions on non-canonized scripture.

J. Vernon McGee feels strongly that one of the witnesses will be Elijah because Jesus said in Matthew 17:11 that ***"Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things."*** McGee also suggests that John the Baptist will be the second witness, recalling that he was the forerunner of Christ at His first coming.

Barclay believes that these two witnesses are Elijah and Moses, noting that they both appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. He further states that these two men most characterized verse six since Elijah had the power to shut of the sky so that it did not rain, and Moses turned the water into blood and brought the plagues on Egypt.

The two olive trees bring to mind the passage in Zechariah 4 where Zechariah had a vision where Joshua, a high priest, and Zerubbabel, who rebuilt the temple during the return of the Jewish exiles from Babylon, were enabled by the Holy Spirit to stand against great difficulties. According to some, perhaps the two witnesses are these two men. I find this a weak argument.

Others read this passage of Revelation as an allegory and suggest that the two witnesses are the Old and New Testament.

These are all fine Biblical scholars, but the bottom line is we really don't know who these two witnesses are. They may even be unknown to the Church or may be companies of people who walk in the anointing of Elijah and Moses.

7 *But when they have finished their testimony and their evidence is all in, the beast (monster) that comes up out of the Abyss (bottomless pit) will wage war on them and conquer them and kill them.*
8 *And their dead bodies [will lie exposed] in the open street (a public square) of the great city, which is in a spiritual sense, called [by the mystical and allegorical names of] Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.*
9 *For three and a half days men from the races and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and will not allow them to be put in a tomb.*
10 *And those who dwell on the earth will gloat and exult over them and rejoice exceedingly, taking their ease and sending presents [in congratulation] to one another, because these two prophets had been such a vexation and trouble and torment to all the dwellers on the earth.*
11 *But after three and a half days, by God's gift the breath of life again entered into them, and they rose up on their feet, and great dread and terror fell on those who*

watched them.
12 *Then [the two witnesses] heard a strong voice from heaven calling to them, Come up here! And before the very eyes of their enemies, they ascended into heaven in a cloud.*
13 *And at that [very] hour there was a tremendous earthquake and one tenth of the city was destroyed (fell); seven thousand people perished in the earthquake, and those who remained were filled with dread and terror and were awe-struck, and they glorified the God of heaven.*

The witnesses will preach until the Antichrist comes from the abyss in the form of the beast and cruelly kills them. This takes place in Jerusalem, although this passage speaks of Sodom (Isaiah 1:10) and Egypt, places where strangers where not received (Genesis 19:4-11) and where benefactors were turned into slaves. These very derogatory names speak of Jerusalem where Christ was crucified and where at the time of these events suggest that sin abounds. This same Jerusalem will hate the witnesses so much that they will refuse to bury their bodies, something that is very repugnant to Jewish belief and tradition, and they will celebrate because the two witnesses have been killed.

Things are not over, however, for the witnesses. They will be resurrected after 3 ½ days and caught up into heaven before all of Jerusalem. At the same time there will be an earthquake that will destroy 1/10 of Jerusalem and 7000 people will die.

J. Vernon McGee says that the phrase "seven thousand names of men were killed in the earthquake" is an idiom to indicate that the men who were killed were men of prominence, i.e. those who had gone along with the Antichrist.

The last of verse 13 is a message of victory. Unbelievers, seeing this sacrificial death and resurrection of the two witnesses, will be won to Christ and will glorify God!

The Third Woe

14 *The second woe (calamity) has passed now the third woe is speedily to come.*

This ends the second woe. The third woe will soon begin. Satan is cast down to the earth, and we will read of that in Chapter 12.

SEVENTH TRUMPET

15 *The seventh angel then blew [his] trumpet, and there were mighty voices in heaven, shouting, The dominion (kingdom, sovereignty, rule) of the world has now come into the possession and become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (the Messiah), and He shall reign forever and ever (for the eternities of the eternities)!*
16 *Then the twenty-four elders [of the heavenly Sanhedrin], who sit on their thrones before God, prostrated themselves before Him and worshiped,*
17 *Exclaiming, To You we give thanks, Lord God Omnipotent, [the One] Who is and [ever] was, for assuming the high sovereignty and the great power that are Yours and for*

beginning to reign.
18 *And the heathen (the nations) raged, but Your wrath (retribution, indignation) came, the time when the dead will be judged and Your servants the prophets and saints rewarded—and those who revere (fear) Your name, both low and high and small and great—and [the time] for destroying the corrupters of the earth.*
19 *Then the sanctuary of God in heaven was thrown open, and the ark of His covenant was seen standing inside in His sanctuary; and there were flashes of lightning, loud rumblings (blasts, mutterings), peals of thunder, an earthquake, and a terrific hailstorm.*

This passage is slipped in between the end of the second woe and the beginning of the third as an encouragement to believers. The Holy Spirit through John reminds us that there is victory coming, in which, the Satanic kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of the Lord and His Anointed One. In other words, the Messianic thousand-year reign will begin. At the end of the 1000-year reign, the hostile powers (verse 18) will be soundly defeated, and the final judgment will take place.

Verse 18 tells of a time when the glory of God is going to be fully shown. Previously no ordinary person could see inside the Ark of the Covenant and live. The Ark of the Covenant was a reminder of the Lord's covenant with the Jewish people. Now we are under the New Covenant, which is for all people of every nation who love and believe in Jesus. The last verse ends on an ominous note: *flashes of lightning, loud rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and a terrific hailstorm.* This indicates that there will be judgments still to come. We will see these judgments as we continue the book of Revelation.