Is the temple in Revelation chapter 11vv. 1-2 literal or figurative? Does a literal (or figurative) reference to the temple have implications for the dating of Revelation? A literal reference may indicate that Revelation was written before the destruction of Herod’s temple in AD 70. Does the prophecy indicate (as some Evangelical Christians believe) that a Jewish temple (not Ezekiel’s temple) will be rebuilt before the Lord returns? These are complex and interconnected themes and we need to examine the text carefully before reaching tentative conclusions.

Temple thematic is important and ubiquitous throughout the Old and New Testaments. It is a theme that has been examined in some depth by scholars. We know, for example, that Jesus likened his body to a temple and that believers constitute the building blocks of that temple. It is therefore useful at this juncture (before we examine Rev 11 vv.1-2) to summarize a theology of the temple.

The most important aspect of the temple is that it has always existed in heaven. Any terrestrial temples are merely copies (patterns if you will) of the heavenly temple. We need to clarify this as even the heavenly temple is in essence merely a metaphor as Solomon acknowledges that even the “heaven of heavens” cannot contain God. Therefore, we should not imagine the divine presence as literally seated on a throne in a heavenly temple (“holy of holies”) as the creator is greater than his creation. Temple imagery is based on cosmology, for example the seven branched menorah is derived from the cluster of seven stars know from ancient times as the “seven sisters” and when Jesus mentions that in his Father’s house are “many mansions” he is not only referencing the “priestly rooms” in Herod’s temple but also obliquely inferring the zodiac through which the planets travel.

The division into “houses” seems to have first occurred in ancient Babylon and been absorbed by the Greeks. The sky and the planets were thought of as “gods” by the ancient Babylonians and “signs and wonders” were examined for prognostication (much as astrology is nowadays) and thought to announce historical events of import (a star to announce Jesus’ birth). The Lord is effectively telling his twelve disciples that he is leaving in advance to prepare a place for them in the “heavenly temple” (with its twelve mansions) -- similarly, the priests had designated “priestly rooms” in the earthly temple.
Effectively, the “heavens” become the divine temple and the “temple furniture” is the stars, planets, constellations etc; “Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?” (Isa 66.1). However, even here we must be careful for the “heavens” are also a symbol. God cannot be contained by his own creation, even by the mysterious heavens, for everything “lives and moves and has its being in him”. Human minds need symbols and imagery -- we all live somewhere -- as humans our existence is inextricably linked with the earth. Most of us have a street and a home address, a place of residence --- God does not. He does not need a temple (even the heavens) but has chosen to build a temple out of people who are transformed into his image.

In Acts Stephen brought the devastating argument that God did not need a temple, did not want a temple and never asked for a temple. It was presumptive of David to build a temple as God only ever asked for a tabernacle. The difference between the tabernacle and the temple was that the tabernacle was temporary and moveable. It was a “tent” that had to be erected and dismantled --- the sort of home a nomad might choose (not the creator of the universe). It spoke of a transitory impermanent residence (as opposed to the permanence of a building). It directed the way in advance of the Israelites and prepared a place for the Israelites during their wanderings. Immeasurable power and glory in the form of the shekinah chose to dwell in a tent (a bit like housing a fusion reactor in a shoe box).

The Ark (not present in Herod’s temple) represented a “resurrection box” as it contained within the symbols of new life. The tabernacle itself, through its very impermanence represented the principle that God’s strength is made perfect in weakness, namely the mortality of Christ that was dismantled and then erected (resurrected) to prepare the way for the new Israel in their wanderings.
Temple imagery

A progression of temple imagery in Scripture can be represented as follows:

1. Heavenly Temple – symbology – stars, constellations, zodiac etc
2. Eden – a garden sanctuary based on the heavenly temple
3. Tabernacle – a temporary tent sanctuary based on the pattern of the heavenly temple
4. Temple - - a building based on the heavenly sanctuary
5. Jesus and his ecclesia – the true dwelling place of God

There are numerous connections between Eden and the Tabernacle. The use of certain words such as “lamps” for the luminaries and mention of seasons (i.e. feasts) anticipate the tabernacle. This is confirmed by the giving of a law (don’t eat) and the layout of Eden (as a sanctuary with cherubim and East entrance and the tree of life as the menorah). Moreover, this is clearly a priestly account with emphasis on activity that separates and divides elements in accordance with the holiness code. Furthermore, the slaughter of Abel (at the entrance to Eden) and the sending away of Cain mirrors the Day of Atonement ritual. The Bible concludes with paradise restored - a “new heavens and earth”, using imagery and metaphor that links the end in Revelation (eschaton) with the beginning (creation) in Eden. It is a picture of paradise restored – intimate communion with God.

Moreover, Eden, the tabernacle and all the subsequent temples are all copies of the “heavenly sanctuary” -- “Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount” (Heb 8.5).

In Revelation we see an integration of symbology combining celestial and terrestrial temple imagery: “The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches” (Rev.1.20). The “seven stars” in heaven (the ‘seven sisters’ constellation) represent the angels of the seven churches (earthly menorah). So, the seven heavenly lights have a counterpart in the earthly seven branched light-stand. However, both the celestial and the terrestrial imagery are metaphysical –the seven stars are not actually a lamp-stand in a heavenly temple nor are the seven churches a literal menorah.
Revelation makes extensive use of Jewish temple imagery and liturgy and care must be taken to differentiate between actions located in the “heavenly temple” or on earth. The conclusion of Revelation depicts a temple built out of people. Note that is called the “tabernacle” – “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them” (Rev.21.3). It is not called the temple because “I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it” (Rev 21.22). The city itself is built on the foundation of the apostles (21.14) the tribes of Israel on the gates (21.12). “But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Heb 11.16).

The builder of this city is God himself and the temple is formed by Jesus and his saints. There is no mention of the Jews building a temple and the imagery of Ezekiel’s temple has been transformed into a metaphysical dwelling place rather than a temple drenched in the blood sacrifices of the Old Covenant. There is no longer a need for a “memorial” or “typical” sacrifice because “the name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there (Yahweh Shammah)” (Ezek.48.35). If they require a memorial, the Lord only needs to show them his wounds “and they shall mourn for him” (Zech 12.10).

The reinstitution of animal sacrifice by the Jews of the kingdom age (or before the kingdom arrives) would be an abomination to God. “He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations” (Isa.66.3). God has removed the Old Covenant permanently for we have “a better covenant with better promises….Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away” (Heb.8.6, 13). To revive the “Old” in whatever form, for whatever reason would be Anathema Maranatha.
Eden, the tabernacle and the temple portrayed a microcosm of the universe. God is effectively bringing heaven on earth as in the “New Jerusalem” which descends from heaven. There is no more separation between the holy and the profane as the whole earth is filled with His glory (His will be done on earth as in heaven). It becomes a place of perfect communion between God and man because man is transformed into his image.

Terrestrial sanctuaries represented this principle as God dwelt between the “living creatures” (cherubim) atop the “mercy seat” on a box that contained within the symbols of new life (resurrection) because God is a God of the living not of the dead. The sanctuary is a place of perfect communion between God and man and this can be none other than Christ and his saints (the new temple). All the sanctuaries speak of hope (we are not abandoned) and purpose (life has a goal) restoration (atonement for the fallen) and intimacy (Yahweh is not distant but involved with his creation) pointing to the time when He will be “all in all”.

The Temple in Revelation 11v.1-2

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two month.

During the first century king Herod had enclosed the temple perimeter with colonnades and it was referred to as the Outer Court because the “gentiles” were not permitted to enter beyond the outer perimeter. It is in this portico that commercial activity occurred (money changing and the purchasing of animals). Animals were killed in the slaughter house (Shambles) by the priests. Warning signs around the outer court stated that Gentiles who entered beyond this point incurred the death penalty. This outer forecourt or temple esplanade eventually came to be called the Gentile court.


Trampling the Temple

The first thing to note is that the Greek in Rev 11.1 employs ναός (naos) for the temple of God referring to the Holy place and particularly to the inner sanctum (Most Holy) rather than the complete temple complex. The altar is also mentioned and refers most probably the altar of burnt sacrifice (rather than the incense altar) and so the area is unquestionably the priestly court which contained both the altar and the sanctuary.

The second important factor of note is mention of the holy city in 11.2 which refers to the city of Jerusalem (on earth). This is distinguished from the “heavenly city” and the “heavenly temple” by the word heaven, as in Rev 11.19--“there was opened the temple” (the naos) “of God that is in heaven, and there was seen in His temple” (His naos) “the ark of His covenant.” The text in verse 19 clearly states that we are dealing with the heavenly temple and this is confirmed by the fact that the Ark of the Covenant was not present in Herod’s temple. Similarly, when New Jerusalem is revealed in chapter 21 it is clearly distinguished from its earthly counterpart— “I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven” (21.2). Therefore, the “holy city” in Rev 11.2 refers to the earthly city of Jerusalem and this is confirmed by Rev 11.8 where it is called the great city, “where also our Lord was crucified”.

The OT often refers to Jerusalem as the holy city (holy mountain etc), the first time the term is used is in Isa.48.2, a chapter of judgement against Israel that describes divine foreknowledge and ends with the words, “There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked”. However, the text most likely being referenced in Rev 11.2 is that of Daniel 9.26 which mentions the holy city in connection with ending iniquity: “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy”.

The prophecy in Dan 9.24-27 specifically denotes a time period that is half of “a seven” (3½ years, or 42 months cf. Dan 12.7). Moreover, the words *gentiles* and *trampled* in Rev 11.2 are intertextually linked with the Lord’s prophecy:

“And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21.24).

The Greek verbs πατέω (pateo) and καταπατέω (katapateo) to trample, crush, stamp on are frequently used in Jewish sources for the conquest of Jerusalem and profanation of the temple. The Septuagint (Greek) version of Zechariah 12.3 (LXE) has -- “I will make Jerusalem a stone trodden by all” (or a trampled stone) and particularly the intertestamental literature connected to the profanation of the sanctuary by Antiochus Eiphanes: RSV 3 Maccabees 2:18 “We have trampled down the house of the sanctuary as offensive houses are trampled down.” And in the LXE Psalms of Solomon 17:22 “Undergird him with the strength to destroy the unrighteous rulers, to cleanse Jerusalem from gentiles who trample her to destruction”.
The book of Maccabees and Revelation 11

The books of the Maccabees, although non-canonical relate the important inter-testament history of the revolt by the priestly Maccabean clan against the Seleucid Greek Empire and particularly the enforced religious changes and profanation of the Sanctuary by Antiochus. It also describes the cleansing and rededication of the temple celebrated in the Feast of Lights (Hanukkah) otherwise known as the Feast of Dedication.

Siew observes parallels between Maccabees and Revelation as follows; “The armies of nations trample upon the temple and the holy city in Rev. 11.1-2 while in I Maccabees, Antiochus Epiphanes’ armies waged war against Mount Zion and the sanctuary. In 2 Maccabees, Judas successfully defeated the Antiochus’ armies and restored the temple (2 Macc. 10.1-8). In Rev 14.1, the Lamb stands on Mount Zion and appears victorious over the nations that wage war against Jerusalem (cf. 11.1-2). Siew also notes that the word-pair. ‘temple-Mount Zion’ is used constantly in I Maccabees….. the mention of ‘Mount Zion’ together with the ‘temple’ or ‘sanctuary’ appears in I Macc. 4.36-40” and… the significance of sackcloth as a sign of mourning is also prominent in the book of I Maccabees and the Psalms of Solomon. Mattathias and his sons also were said to put on sackcloth to mourn greatly at the desolation of the Jerusalem Temple (I Macc. 2.6-8, 12–14 and I Macc.3.45-47)” 11

2 Maccabees, when exhorting the readers to celebrate Hanukkah (2:16), recounts how the ark was hidden by Jeremiah only to be revealed in an eschatological vision: “Then the Lord will disclose these things, and the glory of the Lord will be seen in the cloud, just as it appeared in the time of Moses and when Solomon prayed that the Place might be gloriously sanctified. It is also related how Solomon in his wisdom offered a sacrifice at the dedication and the completion of the temple” (2 Macc.2:8-9). Revelation 11 concludes with a vision of the ark: “Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail” (Rev 11.19)
It may seem strange that Revelation alludes to the non-canonical writings of the Maccabees but the fourth Gospel does the same when Jesus is accused of seeking equality with God (John 5.18 cf. 2 Macc 9.12)\textsuperscript{12} which is perceived as blasphemy, notably, one third of all the occurrences of blasphemy in Jewish writings are found in the book of Maccabees.

Furthermore in Acts, Stephen, like Jesus is accused of speaking “blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law. For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us” (Acts 6.13-14). The accusation of the Jews was that Jesus and his disciples, were acting like Antiochus Epiphanes (God manifest) who thought of himself as an equal of the gods and profaned Yahweh’s temple and attempted to abolish Judaism (including the rite of circumcision).\textsuperscript{13}

Rabbinical sources refer to Antiochus as *harasha* (“the wicked”). Jewish antagonism towards Antiochus draws not only on the book of Maccabees but also from the book of Daniel. Basing his account on 1 Maccabees, the first century CE Jewish historian, Josephus describing the origin of Hanukkah references the prophecy of Daniel:

> “As it happened, these things took place on the very same day on which, three years before, the divine worship had been reduced to an impure and profane form of worship; for the Temple had remained desolate for three years after being made so by Antiochus...And the desolation of the Temple came about in accordance with the prophecy of Daniel, which had been made four hundred and eight years before; for he had revealed that the Macedonians would destroy it”.\textsuperscript{14}

For Jesus and for early Jewish interpreters like Josephus the Daniel prophecy found a historical application in the time of Antiochus, but it also found a fulfilment in the destruction of the temple by the Romans and the 3½ year Jewish war, however, for political reasons Josephus was careful to disguise his critique of the Romans.\textsuperscript{15}
It is interesting then that Bauckham links the profanation of the temple under Antiochus with Revelation 11.1-2;

“This curious use of ἔκβαλε has never been explained, because its source in Daniel has not been recognised. The whole phrase is John’s translation of the last three words of Daniel 8.11: וְהֻשְלַךְ מְכֹון מִקְדָּשָׁו (literally: ‘and the place of his sanctuary was cast down/out’). John has taken the unique phrase מִקְדָּשָׁו מְכֹון, which uses the rare (ৠ), to mean the court belonging to (i.e. outside) the temple building. would mean ‘to cast down, to overthrow’ if it referred to the temple itself, but can hardly mean this if, as John supposes, it refers to the court of the temple. However, ‘to cast out’ (ἔκβαλλω) is an appropriate translation, because John assumes that the reason it has been ‘cast out’ is that the pagan nations have defiled it. They have removed the burnt offering (Daniel 8.11; 11.31; 12.11) and erected the idolatrous ‘transgression that makes desolate’ (11.31; 12.11), presumably in place of the altar of burnt-offering”.

Daniel 8:11 Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.

Aune objects that whereas Rev 11.2 employs ἔκβαλλω (ekballō) the Greek LXX of Dan 8.11 translates the Hebrew יָשַׁלךְ (šālak) with the Greek ἐρράξ. This was obviously a choice made by the Greek Septuagint translators who used a more violent and forceful word (meaning to dash or strike down) in their Daniel translation.

However, Rev 11.2 carries the sense of ex-communication (leave out or expel) and aspects of the verb ekballō are first encountered in the LXX of Gen 3.24 and 4.14 to describe Adam and Cain being driven out (expelled from) the divine presence. In Rev 12.9 the devil is “cast out” (thrown out) of heaven using the verb βάλλω (ballo), whose compound form (ekballō) was employed in Rev 11.2. The margin of Rev 11.2 implies “cast without” although most translators opt for “leave out” as John is instructed not to measure the outer court. Whatever the merit (or otherwise) of the translations we are obviously meant to see some connection with the Daniel prophecies and the profanation committed by Antiochus. But note that whereas Antiochus profaned the altar and the priestly court, in Revelation only the outer court is cast down (left out)—this indicates some sort of protection for the measured ones (more on this anon).
Furthermore, the two witnesses are depicted as “lampstands” an obvious connection with the miracle of Hanukkah (Feast of Lights or Feast of Dedication)celebrated on the twenty fifth day of the ninth month (Kislev) supposedly introduced by the Maccabees at the rededication (cleansing) of the temple.

The Maccabees introduced the feast for reasons of political expedience and based the feast on the vision of the “sons of oil” (Joshua and Zerubbabel) in Zechariah 4 and derived the date for the feast from Haggai who anticipated it in Hag.2.18-19:

“Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the LORD’S temple was laid, consider it. Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you”. It must have seemed propitious to the Maccabees to choose the 25th of Kislev as the date for rededicating the temple because Yahweh had previously told Haggai that the rebuilding under Joshua and Zerubbabel (the lampstands) would be blessed from that day onwards! A Hanukkah lampstand is a seven branched Menorah with two extra branches added - - nine candles in total - - the seven churches and the two witnesses! Moreover, Revelation 11 is interwoven with allusions to Psalm 30 which has the superscription; “A Song at the dedication of the house of David” the Psalm is read at Hanukkah:

Psalm 30  
Revelation 11

(1a) A Song at the dedication of the house  
(1b) Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there

(11b) You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness  
(3b) They will prophesyunday... clothed in sackcloth

(3a) O LORD, You brought my soul up from the grave  
(12) And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here”

(1b) And have not let my foes rejoice over me  
(10) And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them

(12b) O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever  
(17) We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty
The measuring and trampling are synchronous events as indicated by multiple allusions to Psalm 79:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psalm 79</th>
<th>Revelation 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The heathen (Gentiles) are come into thine inheritance... they have defiled</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The dead bodies of thy servants</td>
<td>8,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The flesh of thy saints... the beasts of the earth</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. None to bury them</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision...</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How long, Lord?</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen</td>
<td>18 (&amp; 16:1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Let the sighing of thy prisoners come before thee</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Render sevenfold... into their bosom</td>
<td>(the 7 vials of ch. 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. We will give thee thanks for ever</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measuring the worshipers (Rev 11.1b)

“Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein”

No distinction seems to be made between measuring the temple, the altar or the worshippers, moreover, the worshippers are situated “in” (therein) the altar. The NIB reads as follows; “Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshippers there”. This translation understands the word measure (which can sometimes mean count) as a zeugma (one verb that is used with two objects that suits only one) but this is a contrived reading as John is given a measuring rod….so he is measuring not counting.

The NKJ produces a sensible translation: “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”. J.A.T. Robinson makes an insightful comment when he says;

“The symbols of the measuring line and plummet are not just the symbols for the persecution of a faithful remnant, but also of judgement and destruction. But the background here is clearly Ezek.40-45, where the point of the action laid upon the prophet is purification – to teach my people to distinguish the sacred from the profane’ (44.23): ‘so tell the Israelites, man, about this temple, its appearance and its proportions, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities’, iniquities which include, above all, the failure to remove the corpses of their kings (43.7-10). But the testimony of the two witnesses of Revelation ends in failure: their corpses are left unburied in the streets; and it is only by God’s resurrection of them to heaven that their enemies are scared into homage (11.7-10)”.

19
Both Ezekiel and John are instructed to eat the prophetic scroll (Ezek. 3.1/Rev 10.9) and prophesy over… peoples (ASV Rev 10.11) // bones (ASV Ezek. 37.4). However, although John is instructed to measure the actual task is performed symbolically by the preaching of the witnesses (fire proceedeth out of their mouth, Rev 11.5//I will make my words in thy mouth fire, Jer. 5.14).

Critical scholars suspect that the trampling by the nations in Rev. 11:1-2 and the witnessing in Rev. 11:3-14 are derived from different sources and therefore regard the two episodes as unrelated. However, Antoninus Siew notes that John employs a paratactic construction that results in a parallelism between vv.2 and 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse 2</th>
<th>Verse 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong> – Given (ἐδόθη) the outer court</td>
<td><strong>A’</strong> – I will give (δώσω)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong> – To the nations (τοῖς ἔθνεσιν)</td>
<td><strong>B’</strong> To my two witness (τοῖς δύσιν μάρτυσίν μου)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong> – They will trample the holy city (τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν πατήσουσιν)</td>
<td><strong>C’</strong> – They will prophesy [to and in Jerusalem] (προφητεύσουσιν)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong> – 42 months</td>
<td><strong>D’</strong> – 1,260 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structurally, this parallelism in the form of ABCD A’B’C’D’ is impressive. The analysis that Siew proposes supports our exegesis – namely, that the witnessing and measuring are simultaneous events that occur during gentile occupation of the land.
Implications of Rev 11.1-2 for the dating of Revelation

The destruction of the temple in AD 70 was a cataclysmic event for Judaism and vindicated early Christians. Many commentators have remarked upon the silence in the N.T. and the absence of any description of the destruction of the temple as a past event. Surely this is a glaring omission?

When the Babylonians attacked Jerusalem it was accurately recorded by the prophets because the destruction vindicated divine judgement and emphasised the veracity of the prophecies. Yet none of the apostles write about the fall of Jerusalem as a past event. In Rev 11.1-2 the temple is depicted as still standing, awaiting God’s judgements – this cannot be doubted as there is a direct link with the words of Jesus in Luke 21.24. Therefore, at the time of writing, the destruction of the temple was still unfulfilled prophecy.

The only way of circumventing this conundrum is either to understand the “temple” in Rev.1-2 as figurative, or, (as many scholars) to insist that these sections are Jewish fragments written prior to the destruction of the temple that were later editorially incorporated. So, earlier Jewish fragments were employed in this (and other sections) in the predominately Christian Revelation (sic).

However, such a “cut and paste” approach to composition belies the textual integrity of the book. Anthony Siew noted that Rev 11.1 to 14.5 is a literary unit in the form of a chiasm delineated by an inclusio. It commences with the measuring of a temple (worshipers) in Rev 11.1 and is bracketed by the revelation of a symbolic temple (saints) on Mt Zion in Rev 14.5.
Challenging the unity and composition history of the Apocalypse neglects to explain the complex spiral chiastic structure, which makes editorial insertions of earlier “Jewish fragments” unlikely if not impossible. Torrey’s assessment is as follows:

“There are indeed very obvious reasons why the Apocalypse should now seem to call for drastic alteration, for it cannot be made to fit the present scheme of New Testament dogma. If the Church in its beginnings was mainly Gentile and opposed to Judaism, this Book of Revelation can be hardly understood. It is very plainly a mixture of Jewish and Christian elements, and the hope of effecting a separation between the two naturally suggests itself. It is, however, a perfectly futile dream, as the many attempts have abundantly shown. Every chapter in the book is both Jewish and Christian, and only by very arbitrary proceedings can signs of literary composition be formed. The trouble is not with the book, but with the prevailing theory of Christian origins”.

Torrey’s judgement is that “the book is a unity, in no sense composite. Detailed proof, quite unanswerable, will be found in H. B. Swete’s Apocalypse of St. John (1906)”. Torrey finds himself in agreement with Stuart, Terry, Charles and Robinson in believing that Rev.11.1-2 shows that Herod’s temple was still standing when Revelation was written.
There are many other indicators in the Apocalypse (and the New Testament epistles) that Revelation was written before AD 70 and this has obvious implications for how it is interpreted. Although the temple in Rev.11.1-2 is Herod’s temple (not the temple in heaven), certain elements are obviously symbolic, namely, the measured worshipers. It is the testimony of the witnesses that measures the worshipers and this occurs during the gentile trampling. It implies that although they will be spiritually preserved they may not be spared martyrdom and suffering.

The conclusion is inescapable that the two witnesses are testifying to the Jewish nation before the fall of the temple. The apostle Paul alludes to Revelation chapters 10 and 11 when he asks - “Hath God cast away his people?” (Rom 11.1), Paul continues by employing the example of the 7,000 faithful in the time of Elijah (Rom 11.2-4), recognizing the Elijah reference in Rev 11.6 (power to shut heaven) and contrasting the remnant in Romans with the 7,000 slain in Rev 11.13. Moreover, Paul admonishes, “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (Rom 11.25). The apostle understands the mystery of Rev 10.7 as gentile inclusion. John is informed that when the seventh trumpet begins to sound “the mystery of God should be finished”. The apostles’ remarks in Romans 11.15 {“For if the casting away of them [Israel] be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?”} read as a paraphrase of Revelation 11 - - “…is given unto the Gentiles (Rev 11.2)…and the time of the dead, that they should be judged” (Rev 11.18).

The apostle Paul had access to the apocalypse before the fall of Jerusalem and this helps explain why the early church expected an imminent advent. From a first century perspective the warning in Revelation and the looming Jewish war and fall of Jerusalem heralded the seventh trumpet and the fulfilment of Daniel’s prophecy. When Paul wrote Romans 11 he had Revelation 11 at his elbow. He expected Israel to be cast off but it is doubtful that he expected the times of the Gentiles to last so long.
How does this influence our interpretation of the Apocalypse?

A simplistic (preterist) approach results in understanding the Apocalypse as completely realized in the past. This is obviously wrong as the kingdom has not visibly arrived and it does no justice to the three-pronged question posed to Jesus in Matthew 24:3; “Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?”

Determining which apocalyptic passages are past and which are still future is the most difficult conundrum facing the interpreter and this is because some sections refer simultaneously to the past and the future. This is because past and future archetypes merge into a supra-historical pattern that transcends time and space to form the day of the Lord.

The past acts as a viewing prism through which interrelated patterns and allusions of past and future, old and new testaments are seen, thus producing a timeless message that had a past fulfilment and still awaits a final consummation. This is achieved by utilizing imagery, symbol and metaphor from the Old Testament which is employed in the woof and weave of the Apocalypse. We are being instructed to recognize patterns.

Instead we condition ourselves to read repeating patterns, overlapping patterns and spiral chiasms, in a consecutive, diachronic, linear fashion rather than synchronously or laterally. Revelation is deliberately flexible. It could have all been realized in the first century but was not because the nation became intransigent and the early church was becoming corrupted by the influence of Judaists. The only solution was to sweep the entire Jewish system away and instigate the “times of the gentiles”.

Rebuilding the temple

Many evangelical interpreters believe that the Jews will rebuild a temple next to the Dome of the Rock before the Lord returns. It is a fact that fundamentalist religious Jews have already prepared temple instruments, elected priests and appointed a Sanhedrin. They have also been busy lobbying both Putin and Trump and garnering support from certain Christian Zionist groups. Is it within the realms of possibility that such an extraordinary deal could be reached in some sort of trade off for a comprehensive peace settlement?

It is uncertain whether the Apocalypse envisages such a development but it would fit the established patterns, namely, complete restoration of the Jewish temple system before the commencement of witnessing. It would be a first-century redux and therefore such an extraordinary development cannot be completely ruled out. Jerusalem would once again become the “holy city” (sic) this time with two temple shrines on Mount Zion (a lamb with two horns that speaks like a dragon?).

As the day fast approaches we must make a renewed effort to understand and interpret Revelation. The first century generation saw those events begin to unfold and our generation will see the culmination of those events. Dogma and uncritical thinking must be pushed aside as a new, fresh, biblically based approach to Revelation is needed.
Who are the two witnesses?

In the previous chapter the case was presented that the temple was still standing when Rev.11.1-2 was written. Song summarises as follows: “Concerning the contemporary integrity of the temple in Rev. 11, it can be deduced that the most natural interpretation of Rev. 11 would suggest that the references to the cultic structures have behind them the literal temple complex, for only Revelation clearly refers to Jerusalem (see Wilson, 1993:604).

The episode of the two witnesses in Rev. 11 was used by nineteenth-century scholars to assert that the earthly temple must be standing at the time of the command (Rev. 11:1-2; Marshall, 2001:96). Why would there be no reference to its being already destroyed in such a work as this, a work that deals with judgment upon Jerusalem?

“It is inconceivable that a book of the nature of Revelation could fail to mention its already having been destroyed, if Revelation were written after AD 70 (cf. Ellis, 2001:33). Most commentators who favour the Domitian date, from Charles (1920:274) to Aune (1997:cxii), claim that Rev. 11:1-2 was written before AD 70 by a different author (contra Friesen, 2001:143)”.

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History of Interpretation

It is difficult to summarise nearly two thousand years of the history of interpretation of Rev 11.1-13. Turner, however, provides a good overview and at the danger of doing his work an injustice a brief summary follows. Essentially, the survey is split into four periods (1) prior to 1000 CE - Elijah/Moses/Enoch withstanding the antichrist interpreted as the church with the ascension being the general resurrection. (2) 1000-1516 - mystical interpretation symbolic of part of the church, Moses and Elijah denote different orders (Franciscans and Dominicans) in their active and spiritual status but the older interpretations still persisted forming an ecclesiological and eschatological exegesis. By the sixth century the linear continuous approach emerges with the witnesses identified with two Popes. (3) 1517-1700 the Reformation identified the Papacy as the antichrist and the two witnesses are proto-protestant groups. (4) 1701-2004 bible criticism together with the Millerite crisis (the “Great Disappointment of 1844”) when Christ failed to return discredited the “day for a year” interpretation. The witnessing applies to the church (ecclesiological-spiritual) or preterist (complete first century fulfilment) or eschatological (end time futurist), splitting into two camps (a) John made a mistake in predicting witnessing shortly after his time (b) it is all still future (eschatological).

Ian Brown analyses ten works that have Rev 11.1-13 as a major concern and investigates both their strengths and weaknesses. Brown explains in his conclusion, “To paint the picture, the present endeavour has first presented overviews of classes of identifications through time. The literature can be divided into interpretations that understand the two witnesses literally and those that see the witnesses as a symbol. Since 1700, futuristic, literal interpretations of the witnesses appear to have been more popular than the views that understand the witnesses to be two of John’s contemporaries. The futuristic group is dominated by two views, the Moses-Elijah view and the unknown-prophets view. For the contemporaries group, the Peter-Paul view has come to dominate over the last hundred years or so. Since 1700, symbolic interpretations that associate the witnesses with the people of God appear to have been more popular than the views that understand the witnesses to represent sacred writings. For the group oriented toward God’s people, seeing the whole church as being symbolized by the witnesses has come to dominate. For the group oriented toward the sacred writings, the main view is the two witnesses symbolizing the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments. All this information has influenced the choice of the nine expositions featured in the body of the present work”.

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A brief perusal of Brown’s exhaustive dissertation demonstrates that virtually everybody (anybody) has been proposed as a witness. Those who see the witnesses as a contemporary of John have even suggested the Jewish high priests Ananus and Jesus, others, suggest the ridiculous notion that the false messiah Bar Kokhba himself with the priest Eleazar are the witnesses (See Brown's Appendices). Harry Whittaker suggests that the Jewish nation (in a passive sense) are the witnesses while most commentators suggest the church (or their part of the church), others, the Old and New Testament writings acting as the “witnesses”.\textsuperscript{35}

The abysmal state of confusion surrounding the interpretation of Rev 11.1-13 throughout history is due to a failure to recognise the recursive nature of the allusions, a failure to correctly contextualise those allusions, echoes and types and (often) a desire to dogmatically apply the prophecy to a particular segment of the church in order to justify a particular agenda. The following exegesis will attempt to avoid these pitfalls and will only refer to scholarship in order to elucidate particular points.
Witnessing proto-types

This section of scripture almost drowns in allusions to witnesses and witnessing passages and to many other types and echoes that most commentators are not even aware of. We can find intertextual links to Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, Joshua, Zerubbabel and others. However, the most prominent are Moses and Elijah. Why is this so? This is the case because Scripture promised that they would appear before the Day of the Lord:

**Malachi 4:4-5** Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

And here is the clincher……they did appear before the Day of the Lord:

**Matthew 17:3** And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

Luke (9.31) informs us that they, “appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem”. But why Moses and Elijah —-obviously because they represented the Law and the Prophets but more so because they were both involved in a cosmic contest against false gods (Pharaoh/Baal), both received theophanies in Horeb and both were buried outside the land. Their lives follow the same patterns and both men demonstrated that neither the Law, nor the Prophets could inherit the kingdom. It was only Jesus who could accomplish that through his decease.

Therefore, the only witness (singular) is the faithful witness Jesus Christ and he is called that in Rev 1.5. All other witness, Moses, Elijah, John the Baptist…prophets, saints, the Old Testament, New Testament, etc, etc, etc all point to him and are all derivative. In other words “witnessing” is corporately expressed in and through Christ and he is the pattern on which all other witnesses are modelled. Jesus bears faithful witnesses to the Father, all others bare faithful witness to the Father through Jesus.

However, the Elijah witnessing has a dimension beyond the transfiguration as Jesus markedly pointed out John the Baptist as his witness:
John 5:31-40  
31 "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.  
32 "There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true.  
33 "You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth.  
34 "Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved.  
35 "He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.  
36 "But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish -- the very works that I do -- bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.  
37 "And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.  
38 "But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.  
39 "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.  
40 "But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

Here then is a threefold, unbreakable witness; (1) John the Baptist, (2) the Father’s works and (3) the Scriptures, none of which they were willing to accept. The first century human witness par excellence was John the Baptist. We know this because Jesus tells us that there is none greater born of women (Matt 11.11) and Jesus explicitly says:

Matthew 11:14 And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come.

Now this is a “difficult saying” that requires analysis. John the Baptist was Elijah, and as his father Zacharias prophetically predicted (Luke 1.17), he came in the “Spirit and Power of Elijah”. There is no doubt then that John was Elijah but only if they were willing to receive it. They did not receive it because they rejected the Baptists testimony regarding the Lamb of God and ironically, in so doing actually fulfilled the prophecies! This is indeed strange…God has more than one way of fulfilling his prophecies. Let us imagine that the Jews had accepted the need for a suffering messiah, and that Jesus was still crucified (but only by the Romans with the priests repenting for example) then John would have been second Elijah and the Kingdom could have been inaugurated upon Jesus’ resurrection in the first century! Our interpretations are too narrow-minded; although everything is foreordained there must be allowance for freewill, a mystery indeed.
The qualifications of John the Baptist

What qualifications made John the Baptist the forerunner *par excellence* and how does his ministry and scripture itself demonstrate this? Firstly, his lineage was not only Levitical but Aaronic on both sides of his family. It is more than likely that John was the legitimate High Priest unable to serve as the position was corrupted and monopolised by a powerful and rich elite, wearing “soft clothes in palaces” (Matt 11.8) as opposed to John’s “hairy garment” and hermit lifestyle. Was John raised under a Nazirite vow (Num 6) in imitation of the High Priest who was not allowed to drink while in service and wore a crown (compare long hair)? This signifies that the Baptist was preparing to transfer the Levitical/Aaronic priesthood to a “better priest” (Melchizideic) who was consecrated by an oath not by lineage.

John’s parents were barren (Luke 1.6//Gen 11.40), signifying the bareness of the Law, and yet, like Abraham they were blameless (Luke 1.7//Gen 17.1) because they waited in faith for the messiah, the oath sworn to Abraham (Lk 1.73//Gen 22.16-18). So barren Elisabeth and deaf and dumb Zacharias gave birth to the forerunner of the messiah. The Law and the Prophets could point the way to the kingdom but were not a suitable vehicle for entry. Luke 9.35-36; “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone” (Moses and Elijah had vanished).

John is called “a burning and shining lamp” a reference to the “Feast of Lights”, otherwise known as “Hanukkah” or “Feast of Dedication” as it commemorated the dedication and cleansing of the temple. John the Baptist was born during the Feast of Lights⁴⁰ (roughly our Christmas) but he was not “that light” (John 1.7). This is reflected in the two lampstands of Rev 11.4 which are actually one (more on this anon).

The arrival of John the Baptist was predicted in the book of Malachi, which describes the priestly corruption and turmoil at the end of Hasmonian era and prophetically anticipates the Herodians (on this see the Digression on the book of Malachi on pages….). The table on the following page demonstrates intertextual links between Malachi and the New Testament.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Malachi</th>
<th>New Testament</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.7 he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts</td>
<td>Lk 7.27 This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 he shall prepare the way before me</td>
<td>Lk 3.5 the rough ways shall be made smooth</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD</td>
<td>Matt 11.13-14 And if ye will receive it, this is Elijah which was for to come</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1 he shall prepare the way before me</td>
<td>Lk 1.17 He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah</td>
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<td>4.6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children</td>
<td>Lk 1.17 to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise</td>
<td>Lk 1.78 By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7-8 For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord</td>
<td>Lk 1.77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins (the Baptist was a Levitical priest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 My covenant was with him of life and peace and the heart of the children to their fathers</td>
<td>Matt 3.9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up</td>
<td>Matt 3.12 but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 that it shall leave them neither root nor branch</td>
<td>Matt 3.10 axe is laid unto the root of the trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 If I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name.</td>
<td>Matt 3.7 many of the Pharisees and Sadducees (priests) come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.16 for one covereth violence with his garment</td>
<td>Matt 11.12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 And I hated Esau</td>
<td>Herod the Edomite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places</td>
<td>John 2.20 Herod rebuilds the temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple</td>
<td>John 2.13-21 Jesus cleanses the temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8 Will a man rob God?</td>
<td>John 2.16 My Father's house an house of merchandise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.16...the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away. 3.5 a swift witness... against the adulterers</td>
<td>Mk 6.18 For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10 .... why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother</td>
<td>Herod executed his wife the beautiful Hasmonean princess Mariamme (died 29 BCE) and her family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.14 the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously</td>
<td>Matt 24.2 Herod’s temple destroyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 They (Edom) shall build, but I will throw down</td>
<td>Rev 6.17 …for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note that Malachi 3.1 distinguishes between My Messenger and the messenger of the covenant;

Malachi 3:1 "Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts.

My messenger is John the Baptist and the messenger of the (new) covenant (the Lord whom ye seek) is Jesus Christ. They are both messengers and both witnesses.

Herod employed violence to safeguard his throne, the priests employed violence to save their nation and the rabbis of that era perpetrated violence on Scripture (through their calendar, Seder Olam Rabbah) to predict the kingdom (and support the false messiah Bar Kochba). At this point it is perhaps pertinent to reproduce a paragraph from God is Judge, “Progress toward redemption is not without interruptions or delays – men often attempt to force God’s hand; “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force” (Matt 11:12). However, God has his own time table (as Daniel will soon learn) and there were many more years of desolations (besides the seventy) to come before redemption was at hand. There would also be many more delays and distractions (like the Maccabean revolt) where men attempt to force their own interpretation on how events should progress. Finally, the promised anointed appeared on the scene, but even then disobedience and unfaithfulness caused the prophetic programme to be interrupted”.

Deuteronomy instructs Israelites not to despise Edomites because they were brethren (Deut 23.7); however, later prophetic oracles are hostile towards Edom (Esau) because of their violent attitude towards Jacob (Obad. 1.10). There is no doubt that Herod the Great was regarded as a foreign king despite the sycophantic assessment of the Talmud and the spin provided on the reign of Herod Agrippa: The Mishnah explained how the Jews of the Second Temple era interpreted the requirement of Deut 31:10–13 that the king read the Torah to the people. Agrippa did this, and when he reached the commandment of Deuteronomy 17:15 that “you may not put a foreigner over you” as king, his eyes ran with tears, but they said to him, “Don’t fear, Agrippa, you are our brother, you are our brother!”
The Edomites were forcefully converted and circumcised by the Hasmonean priest John Hyrcranus. Jesus says, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves” (NKJ Matthew 23:15). The biblical term “proselyte” is an Anglicization of the Koine Greek term προσήλυτος (proselytos), as used in the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) for “stranger”, i.e. a “newcomer to Israel” Twice the child of Hell is an apt description of the Edomite king Herod the Great.

The Edomites had ceased to be a nation by the first century. They had been pushed out of their native territory by the Arabs (Nabateans) and settled in the vicinity of Hebron and the Negev. During the First Roman War an insurgent called Simon Bar Giora (whose name means proselyte) arose and gathered an Edomite army from Hebron which eventually entered Jerusalem and partook in a terrible internecine, factional war with zealots and priests within the city walls. He also had messianic pretensions, Livius comments; “Bar Giora coins bore the legend “Redemption of Zion”, indicating that there was a religious aspect to Simon's bid for power.

This does not prove that he was considered the Messiah, but it is likely. The fact that he wore a royal robe in the Temple is another indication”. Therefore, Edomites (Idumeans) played a large role in the first century persecution of the church and the downfall of Jerusalem after which they lost their identity altogether.
The unity of the Two Witnesses

Müller observes the following four points, “Whatever they do and whatever happens to them, they are inseparable. But in addition to their common action and destiny, the text furnishes another interesting and important detail. Nouns that are employed in connection with the two witnesses oftentimes come in the singular instead of the plural. This change from plural to singular emphasizes that the two witnesses always go together.

(1) Whereas in 9:18, 20 fire comes out of the mouths—plural—of the strange horses, in 11:5 fire comes out of the mouth—singular—of the two witnesses. Although there are two witnesses, they have only one mouth.
(2) Although they are two, they have one prophecy (11:6) and one testimony/witness (11:7).
(3) The word “corpse/body” is found three times in 11:3–13. Their body—singular—lies in the street of the Great City (11:8). People see their body—singular—three and a half days (11:9), and their bodies—plural—are not buried (11:9).
(4) A tomb—singular—is not accessible to them (11:9). It seems that the change to the singular was done intentionally in order to stress the unity of the two witnesses. The usage of both singular and plural within the very same verse may point to “unity in duality”.

Müller argues for unity of witness between the Old and New Testament (which is true) but Scripture is only one strand of witnessing —for (as we have seen) Jesus referred to the Baptist, the Spirit (works of the Father) and Scripture. Even that list is not complete as Jesus (as we noted) was himself the faithful witness. So, those three (Baptist, Spirit, Scriptures) witness of Jesus, who in turn bears witness of the Father, in fact the “witnessing” is mutually reciprocal, “I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me” (John 8.18). Jesus came “into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth” (John 18.37). Truth is a technical term for the covenants of promise recorded in Scripture (Micah 7.20). All these relationships point to a reciprocal unity of witness --- Jesus bears witness to the truth, the truth bears witness of Jesus, Jesus bears witness of the Father who in turn bears witness of him and so forth; “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”. (Rev 19.10)

The witnessing in Rev 11 also encompasses the spirit and the scriptures but the witnesses themselves (plural) are murdered. This indicates literal witnessing by people who employ both the spirit and the scripture as witnessing tools during their ministry. Spirit and Scripture do not function autonomously. The Greek noun ptōma body (πτώμα) in Rev 11.8 is used in its nominative neuter singular form to describe the death of a group of people (their body).
The Greek ptōma is more accurately translated as corpse rather than the more neutral noun for body (σῶμα, sōma). Metaphorically, the Greek ptōma depicts absolute ruin and is used by Isaiah to describe the impending ruin of Jerusalem by the Assyrians because of the Jews refusal to listen to their prophets (witnesses). Besides Rev 11, the noun for corpse is only used on two other occasions in the NT --- both times for the corpse of John the Baptist. (Matt 14:12; Mark 6:29) This signifies that John the Baptist becomes a proto-type of Old Testament prophetic witnessing ---his witnessing is based on the pattern of the prophets, which in turn is based on the pattern of Christ, which in turn forms the pattern of NT covenant witnessing. The patterns interlink and morph until they become virtually inseparable. Therefore the witnessing looks both backwards (OT prophets) and forwards (NT witness) culminating in the eschatological witnessing. Recurrent patterns of witnessing from the beginning to the end. The death of the Baptist prefigures the abeyance of the land covenant made with Abraham because the word “corpse” occurs in Jesus’ “vulture saying” of Matthew 24, and this is in turn linked with the land covenant made with Abram in Genesis 15:

Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather. (Matthew 24:28 NIV)

Matthew 24
- Vultures (v. 28)
- Carcass (v. 28)
- The sun will be darkened (v. 29)
- The sign of the Son of Man will appear (v. 30)

Genesis 15
- Vultures (v. 11)
- Carcasses (v. 11)
- Horror and great darkness (v. 15)
- There appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch (v. 17)

Disobedience had in the past led to the abeyance of the land covenant given to Abraham, the people would go back into captivity (effectively back to Egypt); “The corpses of this people will be food for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. And no one (i.e., Abraham see Gen 15.11) will frighten them away” (Jer. 7:33 NKJ).
The parallels with Revelation are **national** as Abraham’s children **die** (a horror of great darkness) and the witnesses (the Baptist, *et al*) functioning as the **covenant sacrifice** that is cut in pieces. Therefore, it depicts the kind of national death and temporary abeyance of the Abrahamic land covenant experienced in Jeremiah’s time (the Babylonian captivity) and also experienced after 70CE.

Intertextual parallels are distributed throughout the trumpet section:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genesis 15</th>
<th>Trumpets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Birds descend</td>
<td>• Birds in mid heaven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• on corpses</td>
<td>• corpses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Horror of great darkness</td>
<td>• Sun darkened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stranger in Egypt</td>
<td>• Spiritually Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A smoking furnace</td>
<td>• Smoke of a great furnace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A burning lamp</td>
<td>• Burning as a lamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promised to the Euphrates</td>
<td>• Destruction from Euphrates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same Greek verb that describes the **assembly** or **gathering** together of the vultures is used to describe those who “gather” against Christ (Acts 4.5-6) and Peter, paraphrasing Ps 2.2 names them as, “Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were **gathered together**” (Acts 4:26-27). Significantly, Ps 2 forms an intertextual subtext that begins in Rev 11 with the last trump and extends into Rev 12. At the end of the apocalypse the roles are reversed when the enemy becomes the sacrificial meal of the “birds” (Rev 19.17,19 cf. Ezek.39.17).

This reading of Rev 11, which discovers links with the undoing (reversal) of the land covenant given to Abraham (albeit not a permanent reversal) is **confirmed** by the Day of Atonement (DOA) subtext which speaks of **sending away** the scapegoat (the nation) into captivity. The removal of the “unclean spirit” from Legion by Jesus functions as a parable on the DOA and as we have seen, the trumpet section is structured around the DOA. The following table highlights intertextual correspondence between the Legion narrative and the witnessing.
Matthew 8:28-9:8
- Torment us before the time [Matt 8.29]
- Unclean swine sent into Abyss [Lk 8.31]
- Paralytic raised [Matt 9.1]
- Multitudes afraid, glorify God [Matt 9.8]

Revelation 11
- Given to the Gentiles (v.2)
- Two prophets torment the earth (v.10)
- Beast emerges from Abyss (v.7)
- Witnesses raised (v.12)
- Remnant afraid, glorify God (v.13)

The location of the exorcism is called “country of the Gergesenes” (by Matthew in 8.28) and “the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee” (by Luke in 8.26). This region saw the fulfilment of the Isaiah prophecy (Isa 9.1) where it is named as Galilee of the Gentiles (Matt 4.14-16). The proper noun Gergesenos (Γεργεσηνός) is thought to mean, “a stranger drawing near” and Gadarenos (Γαδαρηνός) “reward at the end”, the location names signifying an end to alienation and the fulfilment of hope.

Mark 5:5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

Mark is obviously drawing on Isaiah’s description of the people; “A rebellious people which sit among the graves and eat swine’s flesh” (Isa 65:4). The “cutting with stones” is (in this context) a reference to the rite of circumcision—originally performed with sharpened flints (Josh 5:2). The binding of the man cf. Ps 2:3) and the request not to be “sent away out of the country” (Mark 5:10) is typical of the threat of exile in Deut 28:64-68 and the imprisonment and deportation of Zedekiah in chains (Jer. 52:11)
Matthew introduces an eschatological element into the narrative with the demoniac’s objection; “art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” as if to say, you are early, it’s not time yet. It is an allusion to the “timely” man who released the goat (sent it to Azazel on the DOA). In this exorcism Jesus functions in the role of the ‘fit’ or ‘timely’ man, who sends the scapegoat bearing the nations impurities (the goat for ‘Azazel’) into the wilderness during the atonement ritual: “And shall send him away at the hand of a fit man into the wilderness” (Lev. 16:22). The Revised Version renders this as “a man (Adam) that is in readiness” with the marginal notation stating “a man of opportunity”. These interpretations carry the idea of a man that has been specifically prepared for the task; although Herbert Rand suggests that it should be understood adverbially.

The original Hebrew 'ittîy, carries the meaning of timely and derives from ēth — time, in due season. Essentially this expresses the same meaning — a man appointed for this time or season. Note that the “fit man” who released the goat became contaminated by the act and as a consequence had to wash his clothes and his body before re-entering the camp. Jesus transferred the “unclean spirit” into an “unclean” animal (this in contrast with the clean scapegoat). Swine were unclean animals, and for a Jewish audience it would be highly appropriate for “unclean spirits” to inhabit them. The oscillation between singular and plural in the narrative denotes that the man represented the collective state of the nation. The man answers with the Latin loan word legio meaning a legion or regiment of soldiers. This suggests that the word expresses the man’s feeling of being inhabited by a multitude of evil spirits.

The synoptic narrative is connected with the emergence of the apocalyptic beast from the abyss and the murder of the (two?) witnesses; resulting in the rejoicing of the people because the “two prophets had tormented them” with their words. The parallelism is not accidental for the trumpet section in the apocalypse is based on Day of Atonement liturgy — Jesus had come to remove the unclean spirit — he warned that that unless the unclean spirit was replaced with the wholesomeness of the gospel it would re-emerge in a more virulent form (Luke 11.24-36). The work of the witnesses is a continuation of the work of Jesus Christ and meets with the same resistance from the beast (possessed with the unclean spirit) that Jesus cast into the Sea of Galilee (abyss).
A recurrent pattern emerges – the iniquitous nation (like the scapegoat) is sent into captivity (Babylon = the wilderness BCE 586). However, the nation that is restored to the land (back to sanity) again takes “unclean spirits” into itself and refuses the exorcism offered by Jesus. The “house” (temple) of the nation is once again cast out (First Jewish War 70 CE) but in the meantime a replacement “house” is being established in Babylon and a false messiah is elected (Bar Kochba) resulting in a final casting out by Rome (135 CE).

During this period Jewry doubles down on Rabbinical (Babylonian) Judaism. In 1948 a secular, Zionist nation emerges from the abyss (restored by God) but the nation harbours a growing and influential fundamentalist religious (Rabbinical) element. The nation is slavishly supported by American Jewry just as it was by Parthian (Babylonian) Jewry in the first century. The nation still refuses exorcism and denies the messiah. If the pattern holds true we are about to see a final eschatological witnessing and contest between the true and the false.

**To summarise:** Both the Day of Atonement connections and the connections to the land covenant made with Abraham demonstrate that Rev 11 is about the Jewish nation. It depicts a recurrent pattern of witnessing, exorcism, disobedience, casting off and re-emergence from the abyss. This pattern commenced in the Old Testament and continues up to the introduction of the kingdom.
Are the Jews the witnesses?

In Revelation: A Biblical Approach, H.A. Whittaker makes the case that the Jewish nation are God’s witnesses. The strongest supporting evidence is supplied by Isa.44.8-12; “Ye are my witnesses” and (Isa 5.25); “their carcases were as refuse in the midst of the streets”, as well as Psalm 79 forming the intertextual subtext to Rev 11. Whittaker argues that the Jews prophesy through their blindness and deafness. Their disobedience is therefore portrayed as a negative, passive witnessing.

Whittaker is only partially correct in his assessment. The Isaiah passages and Psalm 79 can be historically placed in the Hezekiah era and the Assyrian invasion by Sennacherib. During that period we have two parties (1) A faithful remnant; (2) the rest of the nation. The faithful remnant (including Hezekiah) was saved in Jerusalem while much of the nation was destroyed and taken captive. Similar themes (as noted by HAW himself) are found in Isaiah 26-27:

Isaiah 26:5 – downtrodden (JEBUS)
  v.6 – poor and needy (witnesses)
  v.8 – memorial = Passover = Lord’s table
  v.11 – Elijah (fire) = witnesses
  v.14 – death of God’s enemies
  v.15 – God glorified, Rev.11:13
  v.16 – repentance, Rev.11:13
  v.18 – birth pangs, Rev.12:2
  v.19 – resurrection, Rev.11:18
  v.20 – All this happens at Passover!
Isaiah 27:1 – Leviathan = Dragon, Rev.12:3

In this scenario Hezekiah, the “suffering servant”, typifies the “faithful witness”. He initiated a reformation and cleansed the temple. He sent messengers with an invitation to the northern tribes to celebrate the Passover at Jerusalem. The messengers were scorned and mocked; “Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word (the witnesses), your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name’s sake, have said, (sarcastically) Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed” (Isa 66.5).
This is virtually a summary of the treatment of the witnesses in Rev 11 and the result of their vindication; “And the remnant were affrighted and gave glory to the God of heaven” (Rev 11.13) also in the same chapter --- mourning (Isa 66.6 cf. Rev 11.3), corpses (Isa 66.24 cf. Rev 11.9), temple theophany (Isa 66.6 cf. Rev 11.19) and labour pains (Isa 66.7-9 cf. Rev 12.1-2). Hezekiah was resurrected (from his sickbed) and the Assyrian enemy was defeated --- unfaithful Israelites perished during the invasion but a faithful remnant was “born” (saved/resurrected) overnight. The situation is therefore complex as we have not two, but three parties interacting. (1) Assyrian invader (2) Northern tribes (3) Hezekiah and the faithful remnant in Judah --- these interactions overlap but are not completely synchronous.

A number of points demonstrate that the witnessing mission is directed at the Jews therefore, ipso facto, the Jews (who are the recipients of the message) cannot be the witnesses.

1) Fire proceeds out of the witnesses mouths. This is the word of prophecy – “I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them”. (Jer. 5:14) This depicts active prophesying and cannot be made to stand for the type of passive, inactive, negative behaviour of the disobedient Jewish nation that H.A. Whittaker suggests.

2) God resurrects the witnesses (v.11) which results in a repentant remnant. The witnesses themselves do not need to repent as their ministry mimics that of the faithful witness (more on this anon). If the witnesses do not need to repent how can they be the disobedient Jewish nation?

3) The reaction at the death of the witnesses: “And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth”. (Rev 11:10) This describes the Jewish Feast of Purim, which in which they celebrated the death of Haman in the time of Esther. God prevented genocide against the Jews and they rejoiced and sent gifts to each other. This Jewish Feast is still celebrated in modern Israel. Gentiles’ adopting a Jewish Feast to celebrate killing Jews makes no sense; ipso facto, we have Jews celebrating Purim because the witnesses have been killed.
4) Resurrection of the witnesses results in repentance of a remnant within the Jewish nation (Rev 11.13) not a remnant from among the Gentiles. How do we know this? Because the (Gentile) nations are still angry (Rev 11.18) and must face the coming wrath of the Lamb that unfolds in the next trump.

5) The example of the first century forerunner to Christ, John the Baptist or second Elijah (if they were willing to receive it) was a faithful Jewish witness preaching to an unfaithful Jewish nation. Therefore the Jewish nation cannot be the witnesses.

H. A. Whittaker is correct in noting the correspondence between the fate of the witnesses and the Jewish nation but his approach requires to be more nuanced. The correspondence between witnesses and nation is deliberate. What happens to the witnesses also happens to the nation as punishment.

This is the outworking of lex talionis an “eye for an eye” on a nation that refuses grace and clings to law. Jesus, as the “true Israel” undeservingly suffered and died in order to inaugurating the new covenant, but the Jewish nation deservedly suffered and died as a consequence of their intransigence. The corpses of the witnesses are left in the street and so the corpses of Israel will also be left in the streets of the “Great City”. Every action has a reaction, what happens to one party will happen to the other. This should not be seen as mere retribution or vengeance, but righteous wrath that is aimed at inducing repentance.

The witnesses are regarded as enemies of the Jewish state because they not only prophesy against the Jews but have power to plague them, and as we noted in the trumpets, the plague woes are intrabiblically linked with the actions of the witnesses. In other words, the result of not listening to the two prophets is the invading armies of the trump-woes. Therefore, the Jews blame the witnesses for their predicament. The result of the witnessing is described as follows:
Great Earthquake (Rev 11.13)

And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

The “city” obviously contains 70,000 people because the 7,000 killed form a tenth. This directly links with Elijah where 7,000 were spared because they refused to bow the knee to Baal (1 Kings 19.14). The interpretive crux is whether or not the 7,000 killed are wicked or faithful. In the past this interpreter understood the passage as a contrast with Elijah (e.g., – in Elijah’s time 7,000 faithful saved in Revelation 7,000 wicked destroyed). However, further analysis makes it more likely that the 7,000 killed are faithful.

These 7,000 refuse to bow down to the image of the beast (cf. Baal) and therefore they are killed (ultimately saved) like the witnesses: “If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints”. (Rev 13:10\textsuperscript{NIV}) This is supported by the fact that the tithe belongs to God (i.e., to his high priest Jesus Christ). This equates with Abraham (the Jewish nation) giving a tenth part of the spoils to Melchizedek (Heb 7.2). In that case the 7,000 are the first fruits of a greater harvest --- in any case the death of the 7,000 results in a repentant remnant, which makes it likely that the vindication of the two murdered witnesses and the death of the 7,000 are related.
The Great City (Rev 11.8)

And their dead bodies will lie in the street (πλατείας, plateias) of the Great City which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

The city where the witnesses are killed is not named. It is simply called the “Great City” and this is deliberate because elsewhere in Revelation the “Great City” is Babylon (Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:18; 18:10, 16, 18f, 21) with the exception of Rev 21.10 where the Great City is the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. The two “cities” that are engaged in a cosmic conflict in Revelation are therefore Babylon and the heavenly Jerusalem.

Therefore, Babylon becomes representative of whichever city or place is persecuting the saints and this can be either Rome or Jerusalem but in this particular case the identity is further clarified with the words “where also our Lord was crucified” and we are informed that the identification is “spiritually” linked with Sodom and Egypt. The Greek adjective adverb spiritually (πνευματικῶς, pneumatikos) is variously translated as figuratively (NIB/NIV) or allegorically (RSV) giving a metaphoric sense that still does not capture the essence of the meaning which is akin to prophetically or rather, in the prophetic spirit, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Rev 19.10).

The meaning must be sought in prophetic utterances that are made in the spirit and these are found in the OT where Jerusalem is called Sodom and compared to Egypt by the prophets. In Isaiah 1:9-10 the prophet denounced Jerusalem as “Sodom” (see Jer.23:14; Ez.16:46, 49), moreover, they brought their whoredom with them from the land of Egypt (Ezek 23.27) alienating the two “sisters” (Samaria and Jerusalem) from Yahweh.

Moreover, the murder of the two witnesses in Jerusalem reflects the traditional view expressed by Jesus (Lk.13:33), “It cannot be that a prophet perish outside Jerusalem.” Prophets traditionally thought to have been killed in Jerusalem include Isaiah, Uriah (Jer.26:20-23), Zechariah son of Jehoiada (2 Chron.24:20-22; Lk.11:50-51) and some unnamed prophets (Jos. Ant. 10.38). In addition, there was a failed attempt to murder Jeremiah in Jerusalem (Jer.38:4-6).
The objection that Jerusalem (unlike Rome), is not cosmopolitan enough to fulfil the criteria of, “every people, tribe, tongue and nation viewing the bodies” is unfounded. We are told the following in Acts 2:5: “There were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven”. It then proceeds to list 16 different nationalities including strangers and proselytes (2:7-11). It is fair to say that this was the occasion of a great feast which no doubt attracted many Diaspora Jews, but O.T. allusions seem to indicate that the witnesses are killed on a feast day (the Passover, like their Lord?). In any case, the invention of television and the possibility of Jerusalem being declared an ‘international city’ under UN mandate makes a literal and metaphoric fulfilment of v.8 (viewing the bodies) very likely.

Significantly, the city is the place “where also our Lord was crucified” and this can be no other place than Jerusalem. Some pedantic commentators point out that Jesus was crucified “outside the city” and therefore Jerusalem is excluded --- but this type of nit picking would exclude every other city as well and Jesus explicitly talks to Moses and Elijah about “his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem” (Luke 9.31).

Finally, the “street” where the corpses are exposed (exhibited) is thought to be well known to John’s readers as the noun is articular and refers to a broad space. The “street” (if we can call it that) was well known even in the Diaspora because it is linked in Daniel’s prophecy with the restoration of Jerusalem ---the same prophecy that provides Rev 11 with a three and one-half year time frame:

LXX Daniel 9:25 The street plateia (πλάτος, plateia) shall be built

In the Greek LXX of Dan 9.25 the accusative neuter form of the noun is employed but the location would be clear enough to Jewish readers. Nehemiah refers to the same location (twice; Neh. 3.8 and 12.38) using an adjective normal genitive construct, Neh 3.8 and they finished Jerusalem to the broad (πλατέος, plateos) wall, whereas Rev 11.8 employs an adjective pronoun genitive feminine singular construct (πλατείας, plateias) i.e., “her street” making the city feminine (compare the great whore in 17.1).
In Rev 11, the Great City is primarily Jerusalem. However, it is also the literal Babylon, from whence Pharisaic and Rabbinical Judaism emerged and which offered support to the false messiah Bar Kochba. Jerusalem and Babylon are historically and religiously connected through the captivity, for many Jews remained in Babylon (more than a million in the first century) and in subsequent centuries Babylonian Talmudism became the driving force in Judaism.

The Great City is also undeniably Rome (in the first century) where Christians were put to death by Nero who was influenced by his Jewish mistress. Any city who treats the witnesses of Jesus as he himself was treated models herself on Jerusalem, who killed the prophets and stoned them that were sent to her (Mtt.22:37). The Great City is first of all Jerusalem, then any other city that identifies with her deeds. Jerusalem should be considered an archetype on which all the others are based.

**Isaiah 1:21-27** How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. 22 Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water: 23 Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them. 24 Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: 25 And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: 26 And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. 27 Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.
**Witnessing archetypes**

As the faithful witness Jesus Christ functions as the proto-type for Revelation 11:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jesus Christ</th>
<th>The Two Witnesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ The faithful witness <em>(Rev 1.5)</em></td>
<td>➢ My two witnesses <em>(11.3)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ 3½ year ministry</td>
<td>➢ 3½ year ministry <em>(11.3)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Protected <em>(Lk 4.29, 30; John 8.59, 10.39)</em></td>
<td>➢ Protected <em>(11.5)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ killed by apostate religion <em>(Acts 7.51-53)</em></td>
<td>➢ Killed by the beast <em>(11.7)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Killed in Jerusalem <em>(Luke 13.33)</em></td>
<td>➢ Killed in Jerusalem <em>(11.8)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ In the grave 3 days <em>(Matt 12.40)</em></td>
<td>➢ Dead for 3½ days <em>(11.9)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Ascended in a cloud <em>(Acts 1.9)</em></td>
<td>➢ Ascended in a cloud <em>(11.12)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Resurrection earthquake <em>(Matt 27.50-54)</em></td>
<td>➢ Resurrection earthquake <em>(11.13)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Repentance <em>(Acts 2.37)</em></td>
<td>➢ Repentance <em>(11.13)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Birth of a church <em>(John 16.21)</em></td>
<td>➢ Birth of a church <em>(Rev 12.5)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The synoptic account of the disciples witnessing during Jesus’ ministry also has parallels with Rev 11:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disciples</th>
<th>Revelation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Sent out in pairs <em>(Lk 10.1)</em></td>
<td>➢ Two witnesses <em>(11:3)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Protected <em>(Lk 10.19)</em></td>
<td>➢ Protected <em>(11.5)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Before governors and kings <em>(Matt 10.18)</em></td>
<td>➢ Before nations and kings <em>(11.3)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ kill the body <em>(Matt 10.28)</em></td>
<td>➢ Kill them <em>(11.11)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Sodom <em>(Matt 10.15)</em></td>
<td>➢ Sodom <em>(11.8)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Satan cast out <em>(Lk 10.19)</em></td>
<td>➢ Satan cast out <em>(12.9)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

Jesus told his disciples the following:

**NKJV Matthew 10:23** “When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes”.

The appearance of the “Son of Man” was expected in the first century. The question was whether the return was to establish the kingdom or to execute judgement. The fact that the Jews rejected the testimony of John the Baptist (thereby denying his Elijah role), rejected the testimony of the disciples and apostles, and rejected the faithful witness Jesus Christ, made judgement inevitable and delayed the introduction of the kingdom. Henceforth Israel was cast off ---the Abrahamic covenant was once more in abeyance ---the scapegoat was sent away (again) into the wilderness, but a new opportunity was opened up for the Gentiles. The outer court may have been given over to trampling by the Gentiles, but the times of the Gentiles would also gather in a new harvest for the Lord.

The beast that emerged from the abyss (of the Babylonian captivity) murdered the faithful witness Jesus Christ and his servants. Jesus cast the first century beast into the abyss again, but as the times of the Gentiles reach their conclusion the beast is once more in the process of re-emerging. This section began a question; “Who are the witnesses?” This is a complex question, we can clearly establish that the witnesses are not the Jewish nation and we can also clearly establish the identity of the first century witnesses. However, identifying the “last days” witness is more difficult although we have recurrent patterns on which to draw.

The first century priest-prophet who witnessed in the style of the Old Testament was John the Baptist and he was appointed by God through a miraculous birth. However, the Baptist was denied the role of Elijah because of national intransigence --- he was therefore not second Elijah. Another “last days” witness ordained (by birth) in the style of the Baptist is ruled out as the Baptist’s task was unique --- handing over the priesthood to a “better priest” --- the Baptist succeeded in this (even though his ministry of repentance was rejected by the people). If we turn to the New Covenant (New Testament) we find many first century witnesses (disciples, apostles, Stephen etc) given the power and wisdom of the Spirit to deliver their testimony. This is a more likely pattern on which to establish a “last days” witnessing scenario.
In Rev 10, the apostle John is instructed to eat the “little book” (biblaridion) and to prophesy. However, John himself does not prophesy, that task is taken on by the two witnesses of Rev 11, who act as his proxies. This suggests that the “last days” witnesses receive a divine prophetic commission to preach to the Jews and do not act on their own initiative. Moreover, they are given the power of the Spirit.

The “two witnesses” might actually be a single person, or they might be a group of people, or they might be two groups of people. Whatever the case may be, the witnessing is expressed as a singularity --- a unity of purpose stretching backwards to the OT and forwards to the NT as everything hangs together in the archetypical faithful witness, Jesus Christ. It is possible that the two witnesses represent two churches as the seven churches of the letters are also depicted as lampstands. It could possibly represent a Gentile and Jewish church witnessing to the Jewish nation. This is not as strange as it seems as there has been a rise in messianic Judaism (Jews for Jesus) both inside and outside of Israel. The problem is that Jews for Jesus and other such movements are off-shoots of Evangelical Christianity --- but that is better than denying the messiah altogether. Why have Christadelphians, with their monotheistic faith not had a greater impact on Judaism? Perhaps a less diplomatic and sycophantic approach is warranted --- preaching the word to the Jews without fear or favour.

Finally, the Great City in which the witnessing occurs is in the first instance Jerusalem. However, it is an oversimplification to understand the Great City as only Jerusalem as it has the characteristics of Babylon. Babylon was the place of exile, where the Jews further developed the Law into the all encompassing behemoth of tradition known as Rabbinical Judaism. The Great City has a population of 70,000 (Rev 11.13); in Gen 10 the number 70 is associated with the table of seventy Gentile nations. As the outer court is given to the Gentiles (Rev 11.2) this suggest that Diaspora Jews scattered among the nations are also affected ---in that case Jerusalem/Babylon becomes a metaphor for Jews everywhere not just limited to the land. As a people the Jews have suffered immense persecution but have also been extraordinarily successful.
It is not an exaggeration (or anti-Semitic) to state that Jews have a huge controlling stake in global finance and politics, especially in the USA where the predominantly Jewish neoconservative agenda is currently shaping Middle Eastern policies. Therefore, Christians and Jews are presently living in the Great City because Babylon has been globalized. Just as the Jews had a huge stake in the first century success of ancient Parthia (where the Jews were the power behind the throne), so now also. This would mean that witnessing in the last days is not merely limited to Jews living in the land but also to Jewish communities everywhere. If the invasion (or fall) of the state of Israel coincides with last day testifying, the global response of Jewry towards the witnesses would be visceral. There is much that we do not fully comprehend yet, but recurrent patterns point to another three and one-half years of national Jewish tribulation (possible overturning?) and witnessing that will not only impact the land of Israel but Jewish communities everywhere. The whole earth will be able to watch the drama unfold (on TV and the internet) and the final reconciliation of the Jews will mean life from the dead. The faithful witness will be vindicated and so will his servants.
Appendix: Notes on Isaiah 30.13-14

The MT reflected in the textus receptus translated in the KJV:

*KJV* Isaiah 30:13 Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant.

The English translation of the LXX (Greek Septuagint OT):

*LXE* Isaiah 30:13 therefore shall this sin be to you as a wall suddenly falling when a strong city has been taken, of which the fall is very near at hand.

The literal Greek (LXX) of the English Greek Translation (LXE):

immediately (παραχρῆμα, parachrEma) city (πόλεως, poleOs) strong (ὀχυρᾶς, ochuras) conquered/breached/seized (ἐαλωκύας, eaLOkuias) immediately (παραχρῆμα, parachrEma) that(ής, Es) cometh, at hand (παραχρῆμα, parestin) the/that/this (το, to) ruin/corpse (πτῶμα, ptOma)

The next verse in the LXE (with LXX Greek in parenthesis):

*LXE* Isaiah 30:14 And the fall thereof shall be as the breaking (πτῶμα, ptOma) of an earthen vessel

Note that the word *body* (πτῶμα, ptOma) is used to describe the ruin (death) of the city of Jerusalem that is depicted as swelling (pregnant) with sin (ready to burst her walls) and she becomes a corpse/ruin. The context is sending for Egyptian help (spiritually Egypt) behind Hezekiah’s back (during his sickness) to alleviate the siege. They ignored the prophets (witnesses); Isaiah 30:10 ---“Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits” and Isaiah 30:20 ---“yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers”.

The divine response was to wait (do nothing): “Isaiah 30:18 --- And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him”. However, when all seemed lost God did rescue Jerusalem (because of the faithfulness of Hezekiah) not so in the first century.
1 See (recommended), Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology, (T Desmond Alexander (Ed), Simon Gathercole (Ed) Paternoster,2004)

2 Early Judaism also makes explicit the biblical implication about the lampstand by directly asserting that the seven lamps on the lamp-stand symbolized the planets (Josephus, Ant.3.145; War 5.217; Philo, Rev. Div. Her.221–225; Vit. Mos.2.102–105; Quaest. Exod.2.73–81; Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, 5.6) or heaven (Philo, Rev. Div. Her. 227).

3 There were dressing rooms, storage areas, and other designated rooms in Herod's temple also Ezekiel's temple mentions priestly chambers (Ezek., 40.46).

4 Revelation 12:1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars

5 Beale comments as follows; “In this light, the dictum of the popular approach to Revelation—interpret literally unless you are forced to interpret symbolically—should be turned on its head. Instead, the programmatic statement about the book’s precise mode of communication in 1:1 is that the warp and woof of it is symbolic, so that the preceding dictum should be reversed to say “interpret symbolically unless you are forced to interpret literally.” Better put, the reader is to expect that the main means of divine revelation in this book is symbolic.” Gregory K. Beale, The Purpose of Symbolism in the Book of Revelation, CTJ41 (2006): 53-66: page 55. [Accessed Feb 2017] Access here


7 Beale observes, “Taking all of the preceding data into consideration, the three parts of Israel’s temple represented the three parts of the cosmos: the outer court symbolized the visible earth (both land and sea, the place where humans lived); the holy place primarily represented the visible heavens (though there was also garden symbolism); the holy of holies stood for the invisible heavenly dimension of the cosmos where God dwelt (apparently not even the high priest who entered there once a year could see because of the cloud from the incense which he was to put on the fire; cf. Lev. 16:32). As we will see more fully later, this understanding of the temple as a small model of the entire cosmos is part of a larger perspective in which the temple pointed forward to a huge worldwide sanctuary in which God’s presence would dwell in every part of the cosmos”. G. K. Beale, The Temple and the Church’s Mission A Biblical Theology Of the Dwelling Place of God in New Studies in Biblical Theology 17 Series Editor: D. A. Carson, 2005, page 48. Access here [Accessed Feb 2017]


9 W. Vogel. The Cultic Motif in Space and Time, p. 150. After a detailed study of the various terms used to designate the temple, holy mountain, holy city, Jerusalem and Zion in the book of Daniel, Vogel (p. 154) concludes that: ‘The subsequent interchangeableness of designations that are so frequent throughout the OT testifies to the fact that a multifaceted and yet unified theology of a Jerusalem cult tradition had developed. The holy mountain, Zion, the temple, and the city had all the same theological function, namely to evoke the presence of Yahweh and his constant call to worship him. This interchangeableness with other designations, especially with “Zion” and “holy mountain”, also strongly suggests that the core element of Jerusalem’s significance was the temple and its function as a cultic centre.’

10 πατέω (pateo ) same word used in Rev 11.2


13 On this see Antiochus, chapter 12 in God is Judge (Paulus Wyns, Biblaridion Media, 2011), pp., 215-238 [accessed Feb 2017]

14 Antiquities 12.7.6–7 316-325

15 Josephus was careful to mask his interpretation, Adler comments: “Sensing the obvious political overtones, Josephus carefully avoided any overt reference to an interpretation of Daniel that he knew looked forward to the ‘good things of Daniel’s vision: that is, the inauguration of the eternal kingdom of God and the crushing of Rome, the kingdom of Iron”. (213) On Josephus’ allusion to Dan 9:26 in Ant 10.276 Adler says; “The passage, Delphic in its double-edged ambiguity, could also be read to mean that Rome would be laid waste by the Jews”.(216) The destruction of the temple became the terminus of early Jewish interpretations; “It is clear from the testimony of both Josephus and the Jewish chronicle Seder Olam that the process of updating and reinterpreting Daniel’s vision persisted up to the destruction of the temple in 70”. (209) William Adler, The Jewish apocalyptic heritage in early Christianity, (eds. James C. VanderKam, William Adler: Van Gorcum & Company B.V.; Netherlands,1996)


The first of the plagues in Egypt; witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6) implies not just the trampling of the old Jewish system but an opportunity for gentiles to be included in the covenant (the new covenant). The casting out of one group meant opportunity for the other group.


Aspects of the verb ἔρροςε strike, dash, throw down are only used in Jdt.9.8; Isa.9.10, 13.16; Jer. 23.33,39; Dan 8.10,11.(LXX and Τθ) as in 131, Jeremiah 23:39 “Therefore, behold, I will seize, and dash down (ἔρροσα) you and the city which I gave to you and your fathers.” Usually a different aspect is employed (e.g. Isa.13.16), ἔρροσαν (ἔρροσαν) which is the indicative future active 3rd person plural form of the verb.


Access here


23 Seth Turner, Revelation 11:1-13: History of Interpretation,(Diss., Rand Afrikaans University, 2003),99 Access here

24 Young Mog Song, A Partial Preretemst understanding of Revelation 12-13 in Intertextual Perspective,(Diss., Rand Afrikaans University, 2003),99 Access here


26 On this see, P. Wynn, First Century Expectations, CEJBI, Vol. 8, No.3, July 2014.,pp.,46-52 Access here

27 On this see, P. Wynn, First Century Expectations, CEJBI, Vol. 8, No.3, July 2014.,pp.,46-52 Access here

28 BIN EXCLUSIVE: Sanhedrin Asks Putin and Trump to Build Third Temple in Jerusalem, By Adam Eliyahu Entery Simon Bar Giora [accessed April 2017]

29 BIN EXCLUSIVE: Sanhedrin Asks Putin and Trump to Build Third Temple in Jerusalem, By Adam Eliyahu Entery Simon Bar Giora [accessed April 2017]


31 Paul uses a different Greek word than Rev.11.2 namely, ἀποβαίνειν (apobain meaning: 1) rejection, repudiation 1a) to throw away from one's self, cast off, repudiate 2) a losing, a loss.

32 The city has a population of 70,000. The number 70 is associated with Gentiles in the table of nations. See WikiNoah, Seventy Nations, Access here (retrieved Aug 2016) for the derivation of the Seventy Nations from Genesis 10.

33 In Acts 21.28, Paul was falsely charged with bringing gentiles into the inner court of the temple. For Paul “given to the gentiles” (Rev 11.2) implies not just the trampling of the old Jewish system but an opportunity for gentiles to be included in the covenant (the new covenant). The casting out of one group meant opportunity for the other group.

34 On this see, P. Wynn, First Century Expectations, CEJBI, Vol. 8, No.3, July 2014.,pp.,46-52 Access here


36 a) Fire out of their mouths: compare Elijah bringing fire from heaven; (2 Kings 1: 10, 12); (b) power to shut heaven that it rain not; compare the three and a half years' drought according to the word of Elijah (1 Kings 17:1; James 5:17); (c) power to turn waters into blood, the first of the plagues in Egypt; (d) and to smite the earth with all plagues-the rest of the plagues in Egypt. These references to Moses and Elijah are doubtless intended to recall the rest of the plagues in Egypt. These references to Moses and Elijah are doubtless intended to recall the"...".

37 Never, the End of Pseudepigraphic writings which were not accepted in either the OT or NT canon.

Deuteronomy 17:6“Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness”.

38 Jesus adds the qualifier, “but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he”.

39 See, Paulus Wynn, God is Judge , (Bibliaridion Media, 2011), 290-297 and Appendix 2 Chapter 17: The Priestly Courses, 313-327

30 See the excellent book by Bert Dicou, Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist: The Role of Edom in Biblical Prophecy and Story,(Bloomsbury Publishing, 1994)

31 Mishnah Sotah 7:8; Babylonian Talmud Sotah 41a


33 Seth Turner, Revelation 11:1-13: History of Interpretation,(Diss., Rand Afrikaans University, 2003),99 Access here


35 Müller, “Our investigation has pointed us in the direction of understanding the two witnesses as the Scriptures of the OT and the NT” Ekkehardt Müller, Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 13/2 (Autumn 2002): 30-45,45

36 (a) Fire out of their mouths: compare Elijah bringing fire from heaven; (2 Kings 1: 10, 12); (b) power to shut heaven that it rain not; compare the three and a half years’ drought according to the word of Elijah (1 Kings 17:1; James 5:17); (c) power to turn waters into blood, the first of the plagues in Egypt; (d) and to smite the earth with all plagues-the rest of the plagues in Egypt. These references to Moses and Elijah are doubtless intended to recall the Law and the Prophets, the custodians of which forms Israel's supreme witness to the God of Heaven.

37 The casting out of one group meant opportunity for the other group.

38 Never, the End of Pseudepigraphic writings which were not accepted in either the OT or NT canon.

Deuteronomy 17:6“Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness”.

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42 Mishnah Sotah 7:8; Babylonian Talmud Sotah 41a


44 Livius Access here

45Ibid, Müller, p.,40

46 See the chapter end note on Isa 30.13-14

The more neutral “birds” has been chosen rather than vultures or eagles. The KJV has angel in Rev 8.13, the RSV/NIV/NIB/ASV has eagle, the YLT has messenger. Eagle makes sense when depicting the Romans. Herod erected a huge golden eagle (the symbol of the Roman Empire) at the entrance to the temple. Near the end of his reign, on premature rumours of his death, young zealots climbed the temple and smashed the golden Roman eagle over the main entrance; Herod had forty of them along with two of their Rabbis burned alive. (Jos., Antiq., 17, 6, 2) Ancient Egypt was symbolised by the griffon vulture. They are all birds of prey.

Herbert Rand suggests that the word ‘ittîy in Lev. 16:21 be translated adverbially, i.e., emphasizing the temporary status of the one sending away the scapegoat “and shall dispatch [it] by someone [ad hoc] into the wilderness”, H. Rand, “The Translator’s Dilemma What is itti?”, Jewish Bible Quarterly 22 (1994):110-114.

A Psalm of Asaph places it, with the other Asaph psalms, in the reign of Hezekiah. For the historical background of Psalm 79 and intertextual connections with Rev 11 see George Booker, Psalms Studies Vol 3. Access here

Since τῆς πλατείας, “the street” is articular and the noun occurs here for the first time in Revelation, it is anthaphoric in the sense that it must refer to a street well known (or at least that the author assumes is well known) to the readers. See the translation offered in Aune’s Revelation, p., 580 notes 8c and 8d-d. D. Aune, Word Biblical Commentary, Revelation 6-16, (Thomas Nelson, 1998)

The feminine noun ἡ πλατεία can mean “street” or “public square” or “plaza” (MM, 517); here it appears to mean “public square”. In the similar account found in the Apoc. Elijah, Elijah and Enoch are killed and lie dead for three and one-half days in the “market place [Coptic tagora ntr mpolit] of the Great City”.

We must not forget Christian witness against Nero and witnessing against the false Messiah Bar Kochba. The first and early second centuries saw many instances of Christian witnessing leading to persecution and death.