



Temple Trampled? **Temple Transferred!**

Setting the Scene

The cycle of “Seven Trumpets” that runs from 8:2 to 11:19, starts and ends in the same place - the temple in Heaven, where angels pour out “the prayers of the saints” before God. All is well here... in contrast to the troubled earth. As in our previous studies, it’s not hard to stand back and get the “big picture” of what’s happening - and as usual, it’s a message of great re-assurance to faithful Christians. But in this study, let’s take the plunge and try to figure out some details.

A matter of timing...

Much of the interpretation of these chapters hinges on the exact timing of the writing of Revelation. The majority of scholars date John’s imprisonment on Patmos around AD 92, as a very old man, under the rule of the persecuting Emperor Domitian. However, it is possible that John’s exile is as early as 64AD, under the earlier Emperor Nero... which is the assumption we’re using in these studies. Nero was the first Emperor to persecute Christians, using them as convenient scapegoats for the great fire of Rome. The significant difference between the two possible dates is that in 64AD, Jerusalem and the temple were still intact. In 70AD, the temple was destroyed, and the land of Israel was trampled by the Romans. **Is it possible that any of the visions in John’s Revelation refer to the coming destruction of Jerusalem? Maybe! Let’s check it out...**

Before your group meets read Revelation 8 to 11.

Sound the Trumpets!

Seven angels with seven trumpets blow them one by one, pouring out havoc. Hail and fire, a blazing mountain, and a blazing star burn up a third of the land, trees and grass. The sea turns to blood, and the waterways become bitter. A third of the light of the sun, moon and stars is blotted out... and according to the angel in 8: 13, that's just for starters! He says, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded!" Angel 5 brings an attack of horror locusts that sting like scorpions... Angel 6 unleashes two hundred million horror horsemen, who set out to kill a third of all mankind.

In John's vision, some are kept safe. Who are they, and why are they protected?

According to 9:20-21, what sort of things is the world being judged for when things like this happen?

What is the result? How does this compare with your experience of the world's reaction when calamity comes?

Between the 6th and 7th trumpets is an interlude with many links to the Old Testament, especially the visions of the prophet Ezekiel. **Read Revelation 10:8-11, then read the Ezekiel "time capsule" to the right.**

Who was Ezekiel's warning aimed at, and why?

Now read Revelation 11:1-2. What does the immediate future hold for Jerusalem, the Holy City, and the Temple?

The following verses speak about two powerful "witnesses" who will prophesy in sackcloth for "1260 days" - sack-cloth is the symbol of repentance. These powerful prophets are said to have similar powers to Moses, when he called on the Pharaoh of Egypt to set God's people free (see the book of Exodus.)

Which "Egypt" is John talking about? See verse 8.

Who are the "two witnesses," according to the olive tree and lampstand symbolism? (See Rev 1:12-13, 20)

Time Capsule

A Warning from Israel's Past - Ezekiel 2

1 He said to me, "Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you." 2 As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me. 3 He said: "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their fathers have been in revolt against me to this very day. 4 The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says.' 5 And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious house—they will know that a prophet has been among them. 6 And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them or their words. Do not be afraid, though briars and thorns are all around you and **you live among scorpions**. Do not be afraid of what they say or terrified by them, though they are a rebellious house. 7 You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen, for they are rebellious. 8 But you, son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not rebel like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you."

9 Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe. 3: 1 And he said to me, "Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the house of Israel." 2 So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat. 3 Then he said to me, "Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach with it." So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth. 4 He then said to me: "Son of man, go now to the house of Israel and speak my words to them..."

What is their task? How is it described in verse 7? How is it described in verses 3? How are the two terms linked in 19:10?

Compare this with the experience of the two "faithful churches", Smyrna and Philadelphia in ch 2 and 3.

Though these "faithful churches" who testify to Jesus are mocked, killed, and left dead on the streets of Jerusalem, what does the future hold for them? (11:11-12)

Does this remind you of anyone else?

The gospel message calls on all the world to repent. Jerusalem is like Sodom, the ancient city famous for its depravity. The Roman Empire is just as bad. And all the inhabitants of the earth gloat when "the beast" attacks and destroys Christ's faithful witnesses. But when the seventh trumpet sounds, everything will be put right!

Read Revelation 11:15-19.

The "Kingdom of God" was previously defined as "the land of Israel." What are the boundaries now? (v15)

What do the 24 elders finally celebrate in verses 16-18?

Do you think it is appropriate to honour God for exercising his judgement? Why, or why not?

As we saw in 11:1-2, Jerusalem's temple is about to be destroyed. (The Romans do in fact destroy the temple in 70AD... just a few years after John writes these words.) What better option is described in 11:19?

Wrapping up...

Faithful Christians who testify about Jesus and call for repentance are under attack! Even Jerusalem, the home of God's great temple on earth, hates them. And when the power of the Roman "beast" attacks Christians and kills them, it seems everyone celebrates. But God's righteous Judgement is coming. His people will join him in heaven, where a new temple is opened to welcome them... while those who reject Gods rule and wreak havoc in the world will finally meet justice.

Are you looking forward to it?