

Revelation II – Witnessing, Persecutions, and Discipline

Read Revelation II:1-4

Sometimes, when God asks a prophet to “measure” something in a vision, it is meant to set what is measured apart from the rest of the world. When separated, it may remain safe and protected. The “court outside” was the Court of the Gentiles, so this vision may indicate a time for Israel.

Two witnesses, referred to as olive trees and lampstands that stand before the Lord, may represent the Church and Israel, standing together.

Sackcloth Symbolic Meaning:

- **Mourning:** It was a garment worn during times of mourning, especially for personal or national disasters.
- **Repentance:** Sackcloth and ashes were a sign of repentance and humility before God, often worn during times of prayer for deliverance.
- **Self-humiliation:** It was a way of expressing deep sorrow and self-abasement.

1. Numbers: What might be the correlation between 1,260 days, 42 months, and 3 ½ days?

Two things to consider: Revelation may have been written as many as twenty years after Rome sacked and burned Jerusalem, taking its people as slaves or banishing them from Jerusalem, and Judea. It began the great “diaspora” that sent God’s chosen people out into the world. Who are the ones remaining behind? Jerusalem was a great city in its time, and Rome had a substantial economic role within it. The destruction of the Temple in 70 AD meant the end of the religious pilgrimage economy that had been a major driver of Jerusalem’s prosperity. Jerusalem became a Roman city, and its economy was integrated into the Roman system, with the city’s role shifting to a local center of trade and administration. The *fiscus Iudaicus* (Jewish tax) was introduced to replace the Temple tax, which had been paid by Jews for the maintenance of the Temple. Jerusalem likely continued to function as a regional trade center, with merchants and artisans serving the local population and surrounding areas.

Read Revelation II:5-10

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2. What are they witnesses to/of? What might be their message?
3. Consider the possibility that these witnesses are voices of modern prophets from both Christian and Jewish communities criticizing Israel's behavior.
4. What powers are given to the two witnesses?
5. In what city is this vision taking place (see vs. 8)?
6. Reread vs. 10, and chew on it a minute.

Read Revelation II:11-14

7. What happens to the witnesses?
8. What happens on earth?
9. Does the witness of the martyrs produce faith in some of Earth's inhabitants? (vs. 13)
10. Vs.14 states: "The second woe has passed." Look back at chapter 9, and review the first two "Woes."

Read Revelation II:15-19

11. Use your imagination in reading vs. 15. What do you hear?
12. The Twenty-four Elders are falling on their faces again, but look at what they say in the very last phrase of vs. 18. How does that sit with our current climate crisis?
13. Again, IF this vision alludes to Israel, why is the first half of vs. 19 important?

Consider, if you were a Jewish Christian, having fled Jerusalem, listening to this vision, what hope might you find in this chapter?