

# SALVATION IN SYMBOLS & SIGNS

★★★★★★



Corresponds to Program 44

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the NKJV and KJV.

## MEASURING GOD STUDY GUIDE

### Revelation 11:1-3

In our last study, we examined the mystery of God in contrast to the mystery of iniquity. Now we will examine what it means to “measure” God! Let us look at some terms:

**Measure** – In the Bible, the concept of measuring is used for the words “to judge.” Here we find the idea of examining or judging the character of God and His law. It is a call to consider, or judge, His government and His righteousness, as noted next (Romans 3:4).

**The Temple** – “Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple” (Revelation 11:19).

The heavenly temple is the dwelling place of God. It is the seat of His kingdom, His government, His throne. To measure the temple of God is to measure His government; it is to measure Him and to examine His godliness in comparison with the mystery of iniquity.

**The Altar** – The altar represents the cross, the sacrifice of Jesus for the world. It comes from the symbols of the sanctuary where the lamb, representing Christ, was offered up.

“We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate” (Hebrews 13:10-12).

To measure the altar then, is to measure the love of God in the sacrifice of Christ. It is to try to comprehend the length, breadth, height, and depth of love demonstrated to us in the life and death of Jesus.

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:17-19).

**Width:** God’s love includes all humanity — He died for all.

**Length:** God’s love has suffered long—for six thousand years.



“To measure the altar then, is to measure the sacrifice of Christ.”

**Depth:** God’s love brought Him from heaven to earth, rejected, crucified, and forsaken, yet one with us forever.

**Height:** God’s love takes redeemed humanity to heaven to His throne, and makes this world His eternal home.

Revelation 11 then makes an abrupt turn back into the dark ages, where we find another time prophecy regarding Gentiles, the holy city, and two witnesses. Let’s take a look.

**Gentiles** – Biblically speaking, the Gentiles were any people who were not true Jews. The Gentiles also represent civil powers that aided apostate religion, like the Romans and Pilate (Acts 4:27). The mystery of iniquity developed in the church as it gained the support of the civil powers (Emperor Constantine), and compromised the truth by bringing idols into the church, and using civil power to persecute dissenters. The Gentiles here represent church-state persecution of God’s people during the dark ages.

**Holy City** – The holy city is not literal Jerusalem. According to the Bible, it represents spiritual “heavenly Jerusalem.” This is in keeping with the symbolic nature of Revelation. Hebrews 12 gives us some insight:

### KEY SCRIPTURES

**Revelation 11:19** THE TEMPLE WAS OPEN

**Hebrews 13:12** HE SUFFERED OUTSIDE THE GATE

**Ephesians 3:19** KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST

**Hebrews 12:23** GOD THE JUDGE OF ALL

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect” (Hebrews 12:22, 23).

Here is a picture of Mount Zion, the holy city, as a place where God is, where angels dwell, and the place where God’s church, who are still on earth, are registered.

Paul confirms this when he says:

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:4-6).

So the church on earth, registered in heaven, sitting in heavenly places in Christ, is the holy city.

**Treading underfoot** – This is a term of persecution which, as we have studied, is just what happened to God’s faithful church during the dark ages. It is estimated that during that time, 50 to 100 million people were killed by the church-state (trodden under foot by the Gentiles).

**Forty-two months** – This time period, applying the *day-for-a-year* principle, equals 1,260 years, the exact time of church-state control. One prophetic month biblically equals 30 prophetic days. Therefore,  $42 \times 30 = 1,260$  prophetic days. Applying the *day-for-a-year* principle (Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34), we have 1,260 literal years, the time period when the church-state system was to rule (538 A.D. to 1798 A.D.).

**One thousand two hundred and sixty days** – This is another expression of the same time period of the forty-two months, given in the very next verse as confirmation.

Putting the pieces together, we are called upon to examine the truth of God’s character, “to measure the temple” where God dwells. We are to measure the “altar,” the amazing grace and mercy shown in His sacrifice for our sin. We are to measure His unconditional love in the gift of salvation in contrast to the false representation of God, given to the world by the church-state power.

God loves every human being on planet Earth in spite of our sin. He has taken our penalty upon Himself to set us apart from the condemnation of the law (Romans 3:19-24). His salvation is a gift, not something that we can earn by good works or penance. Only God is equal to the task of saving us because He alone has the power to forgive what is owed to Him without compromising the justice of His government. When religion seeks the civil power to enforce its dogmas, it is identified as gentile or non-religious, because in the very act of using force, it loses its identity as a Christian or Christ-like entity.

We will find more details about the contrast between God and church-state religion as we continue with our study in Revelation 11. For now, it is important to consider that God is not afraid to have us examine His government. We are asked to calmly look at the evidence of the great rebellion that is playing out, and then choose what principles we will follow in our own lives. Will we choose the principles of love, freedom, and justice or of coercion, control, and oppression? How we live and relate to people in our smaller circles of life indicates where we stand in the larger issues of life. May God lead each of us to stand with Him. ★