

Measuring the Temple of God: Revelation 11.1–2 and the Destruction of Jerusalem

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Rev 11.1–2 refers to the destruction of the temple in 70 CE. The measuring of the temple area does not signify that it will be protected, as is commonly thought, but symbolises that it falls under God’s judgment. The underlying idea is that the destruction of the temple at the hands of the Gentiles has been possible only because it was preceded by God’s judgment, a notion also found in contemporary apocalyptic literature. John argues that God has given the Gentiles the authority to ‘trample the holy city’, including the temple, for a limited period of time.

Keywords: Apocalypse, Temple, Gentiles, Judgment, Roman Empire, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch

Recent years have seen an increase in studies of the role and function of the temple in the book of Revelation.¹ One of the central texts in this regard is Rev 11.1–2:

(1) Καὶ ἐδόθη μοι κάλαμος ὅμοιος ῥάβδῳ λέγων· ἔγειρε καὶ μέτρησον τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας ἐν αὐτῷ (2) καὶ τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν ἔξωθεν τοῦ ναοῦ ἐκβαλε ἔξωθεν καὶ μὴ αὐτὴν μετρήσῃς ὅτι ἐδόθη τοῖς ἔθνεσιν καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν πατήσουσιν μῆνας τεσσεράκοντα καὶ δύο.

On these two verses in particular, a number of helpful and enlightening scholarly contributions have recently appeared.² Some important aspects of this text seem

1 Cf. J. and G. Ben-Daniel, *The Apocalypse in the Light of the Temple* (Jerusalem: Beit Yohanan, 2003); R. A. Briggs, *Jewish Temple Imagery in the Book of Revelation* (Studies in Biblical Literature 10; New York: Peter Lang, 1999); A. Spatafora, *From the Temple of God to God as a Temple: A Biblical and Theological Study of the Temple in the Book of Revelation* (Tesi Gregoriana Serie Teologia 27; Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1997); G. Stevenson, *Power and Place: Temple and Identity in the Book of Revelation* (BZBW 107; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2001); J. Paulien, ‘The Role of the Hebrew Cultus, Sanctuary and Temple in the Plot and Structure of the Book of Revelation’, *AUSS* 33 (1995) 245–64; S. J. Kistemaker, ‘The Temple in the Apocalypse’, *JETS* 43 (2000) 433–41.

2 E.g. M. Bachmann, ‘Ausmessung von Tempel und Stadt: Apk 11,1f und 21,15ff auf dem Hintergrund des Buches Ezechiel’, *Das Ezechielbuch in der Johannesoffenbarung* (ed. D.

nonetheless not to have been taken fully into account. The present article seeks to shed some light on these. It will argue that Rev 11.1–2 refers to the destruction of the temple in 70 CE and that the author tries to explain to his audience that the Gentiles have not overcome, but that God is still in control.

A first point that needs to be discussed has to do with the nature of the temple that is mentioned. Is it located in heaven or is it the earthly temple of Jerusalem? Or should it perhaps be understood as a symbol for the people of God? This last possibility is sometimes adopted by interpreters, but is unable to explain the precise function of the altar, the worshipers and the holy city. Regularly, all of these are taken as metaphors of the people of God, but this does not adequately explain the abundance of images.³ In addition, one wonders whether a symbolic interpretation does justice to the very concrete and historical language of our text.⁴ A heavenly location is also problematic, because the evident threat that the *nations* pose for (part of) the temple is difficult to envisage if the temple is in heaven. Furthermore, the passages that precede and follow Rev 11.1–2 take place on earth and there is no indication of a change of scenery.⁵ It therefore seems probable that the temple of Revelation 11 is located on earth. The present paper will demonstrate that our textual unit can indeed be cogently interpreted from this vantage point. It should be noted at this point that the argument that Rev 11.1–2 cannot refer to the destruction of the earthly temple and city in 70 CE because these did not exist anymore by then (assuming that John wrote around 95 CE)⁶ is short-sighted. The

Sänger; *Biblich-theologische Studien* 76; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2006) 61–83; R. Darymple, 'The Use of καί in Revelation 11,1 and the Implication for the Identification of the Temple, the Altar, and the Worshipers', *Bib* 87 (2006) 243–50; M. Jauhiainen, 'The Measuring of the Sanctuary Reconsidered (Rev 11,1–2)', *Bib* 83 (2002) 507–26.

3 Cf. D. E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16* (WBC 52b; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998) 598: 'can the temple, the altar, and the worshipers *all* stand for the people of God?' (author's italics).

4 A. Y. Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984) 66 argues that Rev 11.2 'has much too concrete and historical a surface meaning to have been composed with any other sort of primary reference'. See also § 1.3 below.

5 For additional criticism of this interpretation, see T. Siew, *The War Between the Two Beasts and the Two Witnesses: A Chiasmic Reading of Revelation 11:1–14:5* (LNTS 238; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2005) 93 n. 24, 93–94 n. 27.

6 This is probably still the majority view. For the present argument to work Rev 11.1–2 must have been written either after the destruction of the temple or at some time before it, at which point the author was convinced that the temple would be destroyed. Regardless of debates surrounding its authenticity and provenance, this paper will treat Rev 11.1–2 in its current position in the Apocalypse. For the suggestion that Rev 11.1–2 was originally part of a *Flugblatt*, see J. Wellhausen, *Analyse der Offenbarung Johannis* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1907) 15; idem, *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten* (6 vols.; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1884–99) 6.221–3. For criticism of Wellhausen's proposal, see, e.g., G.B. Caird, *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine* (Harper's New Testament Commentary; New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1966) 131.

author of Revelation nowhere simply reports events; he consistently seeks to interpret them. There is no reason why John could not have written a theological interpretation in 95 CE of what happened in 70 CE.⁷

I. The Meaning of Measuring

Measuring (μετρέω), the central verb in Rev 11.1–2, is one of the elements in our text that has not had the attention it deserves. It is a virtually uncontentious point that the act of measuring functions as a symbol, but of what? Interpreters regularly argue that since the unmeasured part seems to fare badly, measuring signifies something positive (usually: protection) for the measured part. To buttress this claim, texts are cited where the effect of measuring is positive.⁸

It should be noted, however, that there are also several pertinent texts in which measuring has an evidently negative outcome. In Lam 2.7–8a, for instance, we find: ‘The Lord has scorned his altar, disowned his sanctuary; he has delivered into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces . . . the Lord determined to lay in ruins the wall of daughter Zion; he stretched the line [LXX: μέτρον, MT: קָוָה]; he did not withhold his hand from destroying’. 2 Kgs 21.13 is of similar character: ‘I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line [LXX: μέτρον, MT: קָוָה] for Samaria, and the plummet [LXX: στάθμιον, MT: מִשְׁקָלֶיךָ] for the house of Ahab; I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down’. In 2 Sam 8.2 measuring has a positive outcome for some, but a negative one for others: ‘[David] measured them [LXX: διεμέτρησεν αὐτοὺς, MT: מָדַד־וָם] with a cord; he measured two lengths of cord for those who were to be put to death, and one length for those who were to be spared’.

A verb can of course have several different meanings, only one of which is intended in the context, but in the case of ‘measuring’, the alleged meanings (‘protection’ and ‘destruction’) are not just different, they are virtually *opposite*. It is therefore ill-advised to argue that measuring sometimes means ‘protection’ and at other times ‘destruction’. Measuring in itself is not negative or positive, but more likely refers to the reality that precedes the positive or negative result.⁹ Measuring resembles a judicial process, which in itself is not positive or negative, yet always has a positive (acquittal and/or vindication) or a negative outcome (condemnation). The similarity between measurement and judgment is confirmed by the parallel use of both concepts in Matt 7.2: ἐν ᾧ γὰρ κρίματα κρίνετε κριθήσεσθε, καὶ ἐν ᾧ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε μετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν (‘for with the judg-

7 John M. Court, *Myth and History in the Book of Revelation* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979) 86, speaks of a ‘flash-back’ in this connection.

8 A virtually complete overview of relevant texts is given in Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 604.

9 Cf. Jauhainen, ‘Measuring of the Sanctuary’, 518: ‘measuring in itself symbolizes neither destruction nor protection’.

ment that you judge you will be judged, and with the measure that you measure you will be measured').¹⁰ This expression is also found in early Rabbinic literature¹¹ and there are many more passages within that literary corpus that use 'measuring' in a judicial sense.¹² If we take the evidence of the Hebrew Bible, NT and Rabbinic literature together we find that 'measuring' fairly often has a judicial connotation.¹³ In keeping with this, I suggest that under certain circumstances 'measuring' signifies that what is measured falls under one's judgment, that is, that it belongs to one's jurisdiction.

When applied to Rev 11.1–2 it becomes apparent that it cannot be concluded on basis of the use of the verb 'measuring' that the measured part of the temple area will be protected while the unmeasured part will be destroyed. Rather, the command to measure the temple seems to signify that God wants it to be marked as belonging to his jurisdiction. The part that is not measured does not belong to his jurisdiction, but 'has been given to the Gentiles' (ἐδόθη τοῖς ἔθνεσιν). The difference between the measured and the unmeasured part is therefore not that the former is protected whereas the latter is not, but that the former belongs to God's jurisdiction and the latter (for now) to the Gentiles. *The opposition in Rev 11.1–2 is not between preservation and destruction, but between the jurisdiction of God and the jurisdiction of the Gentiles.*¹⁴

If this is correct, it follows that we must look elsewhere to learn what the *result* of the measurement will be. It will not do to say: it is measured, therefore it will be saved. The context will have to elucidate what the outcome of the measurement

10 Cf. 2 Cor 10.12–13: 'αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἑαυτοὺς μετροῦντες καὶ συγκρίνοντες ἑαυτοὺς ἑαυτοῖς'.

11 E.g. *m.Sot* 1.7; *t.Sot* 3.1. Cf. G. Bissoli, "Metron"-misura in Mt 7,2, Lc 6,38 e Mc 4,24 alla luce della letteratura rabbinica', *Studi Biblici Franciscani Liber Anuus* 53 (2003) 113–22.

12 E.g. *b.Ned* 32a; *b.Meg* 28a. M. Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bauli, Talmud Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature* (London: Luzac; New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1903) 732, gives as the second definition of מִשְׁרָא ('measure'): 'dealing; reward or punishment; dispensation . . . retaliation, adequate punishment or reward'.

13 This may also be the case in *1 En* 61.1–5, a rather enigmatic passage sometimes quoted in commentaries on Rev 11.1–2. The passage immediately preceding 61.1 speaks of the punishments of the Lord of Spirits (60.24–25a) but shifts in tone to introduce 'the judgment according to his mercy and his longsuffering' (60.25b), which seems exemplified by the giving of 'ropes' and 'measures' to the righteous (61.3). As a result, the chosen 'begin to dwell with the chosen' and 'all the secrets of the depths of the earth' are revealed (trans. G. W. E. Nickelsburg and J. C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: A New Translation* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004] 77).

14 Cf. Christopher Rowland's definition of the act of measuring as symbolising 'the present, limited extent of the divine possession in a world where the rebellious nations are in apparent control' (C. Rowland, *Revelation* [Epworth Commentaries; London: Epworth, 1993] 99). Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis*, 66, mentions 'judgment' as one of the possible meanings of 'measuring'.

will be. The present author contends that there are a number of indications in the context that together suggest that the fate of the measured part (the temple) will be destruction. These indications will be explored in the following sections.

1.1. *The Preceding Verses (Rev 10.10–11)*

The verses immediately preceding Rev 11.1–2 relate how John takes a scroll out of the hand of an angel and eats it (10.10–11). The scroll is ‘sweet as honey’ in his mouth but ‘made bitter’ in his stomach. This echoes the commission of Ezekiel (Ezek 2.8–3.8),¹⁵ who received a similar scroll which, when put in the mouth, was ‘sweet as honey’. The *content* of Ezekiel’s scroll, however, was anything but sweet: ‘written on it were words of lamentation and mourning and woe’ (Ezek 2.10). These words most likely account for John’s wording ‘made bitter’.¹⁶ So the eating is sweet, but the content of the prophecies that both men have to bring is bitter.¹⁷ Following their commissions, both Ezekiel and John start their (renewed) prophetic service by performing a symbolic action; Ezekiel has to portray the siege of Jerusalem (Ezek 4.1–3) and John has to measure the temple. The parallelism between the commissions of both men suggests that the actions with which they commence their services are also of similar significance.¹⁸ Taken together, the content and background of the verses that precede Rev 11.1–2 give little cause to expect that what follows will be a happy tiding of protection for the temple. The reverse is more likely.

1.2. *The Measuring Instrument*

The measuring instrument that the Seer receives is described as a κάλαμος ὅμοιος ῥάβδῳ. The qualification ὅμοιος ῥάβδῳ (‘like a staff’) has been somewhat overlooked. Heinrich Kraft is among the few to notice that a ῥάβδος is normally not used to measure, but to exercise authority.¹⁹ In the other three verses in the book of Revelation that feature the word ῥάβδος (Rev 2.27; 12.5; 19.15) it functions much like a weapon. In these verses, however, the ῥάβδος is an iron one, which is not the case in Rev 11.1–2. It would therefore be unwise to associate our text completely with the violent texts that speak explicitly of an *iron* ῥάβδος. Nonetheless,

15 So G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999) 550; P. S. Minear, ‘Ontology and Ecclesiology in the Apocalypse’, *NTS* 12 (1966) 89–105, esp. 97.

16 Note also that Ezekiel ‘went away bitter’ (Ezek 3.14).

17 So also e.g. J. L. Trafton, *Reading Revelation* (Reading the New Testament; Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, rev. ed. 2005) 104.

18 Cf. H. R. van de Kamp, *Openbaring: Profetie vanaf Patmos* (Commentaar op het Nieuwe Testament; Kampen: Kok, 2000) 253.

19 H. Kraft, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (Handbuch zum Neuen Testament 16a; Tübingen: Mohr, 1974) 152.

John describes the instrument with which the temple is to be measured in terms that are associated with the exercise of authority and violence, things that in any scenario have little to do with a normal way of measuring.²⁰

1.3. *The Concluding Sentence (Rev 11.2b)*

The concluding sentence of the textual unit is τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν πατήσουσιν μῆνας τεσσεράκοντα καὶ δύο ('they [the Gentiles] will trample the holy city for forty-two months'). This sentence is unintelligible if the first part of the text is construed to mean that the temple will be preserved. If the holy city is trampled, that includes the temple. The text does not state that the *rest* of the city will be trampled, but simply that the city (without exception) will be trampled. Moreover, the city at issue is the 'holy city'. What makes the 'holy city' holy is precisely the presence of the temple.²¹ It is hard to see how this sentence could be otherwise construed than with the implication that the whole city, with as its central element the temple, will be trampled.

The impression that Rev 11.1–2 has to do with a military threat to the entire city of Jerusalem is confirmed by a number of texts that strongly resemble the sentence with which we are presently concerned. The most pertinent of these is Luke 21.24: καὶ Ἱερουσαλήμ ἔσται πατουμένη ὑπὸ ἐθνῶν, ἄχρι οὗ πληρωθῶσιν καιροὶ ἐθνῶν.²² Here, as elsewhere, there is no indication that an exception will be made for the temple; the temple is part of the holy city that will be trampled. A differentiation between the fate of the temple and the fate of the city (and, *a fortiori*, an opposition between both) would be unique in our literature.²³ This point should

20 Cf. E. Lupieri, *A Commentary on the Apocalypse of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006) 174: 'This should perhaps alert the reader that the scene of measuring that follows . . . will include an element of condemnation involving the nations as well'.

21 The 'holy city' is Jerusalem. For evidence, see S. S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2005) 273–4.

22 Expressions roughly similar to 'Jerusalem is trampled by Gentiles' are found in many texts, in the great majority of which a military threat to the entire city seems in view. Cf. *Pss. Sol.* 2.19; 17.22; *Zech* 12.3 (LXX); 1 *Macc* 3.45, 51; 4.60; 2 *Macc* 8:2; *Dan* 8.10–14; 2 *Bar.* 67.2; 4Q169 (4QpNah) 3–4, I.3.

23 Josephus, *J.W.* VI.285–6 is sometimes cited in support of the claim that John's contemporaries expected the city to be destroyed, but the temple to remain unharmed. The passage claims that when the city had already fallen there was a 'false prophet' (ψευδοπροφήτης), associated with the Zealots, who commanded the people to go to the temple to receive 'the tokens of [their] deliverance' (τὰ σημεῖα τῆς σωτηρίας). This, of course, was nothing like a deep-wrought theological expectation, but rather an intuitive and *ad hoc* belief. It is, moreover, doubtful that τὰ σημεῖα τῆς σωτηρίας were thought to imply only the preservation of the temple; it seems more likely that the believers hoped for an intervention of God that would result in the total defeat of the Romans and the liberation of the entire city. But even if *J.W.* VI.285–6 can be interpreted to mean that some Zealots expected the temple to be pre-

be stressed, because an opposition between the fate of the temple and the fate of the city is exactly what is implied by virtually all recent interpretations of Rev 11.1–2. The tendency in much Jewish literature of the Second Temple period was to treat ‘temple’ and ‘city’ as interchangeable (and hence to a certain degree equivalent) notions.²⁴ It is therefore difficult to understand the statement ‘the holy city will be destroyed’ in a way that excludes the temple.

As a whole, the preceding verses about the ‘bitter message’ (1.1), the weapon-like measuring instrument of John (1.2) and the concluding sentence about the whole city being trampled (1.3) suggest that we should expect not a message of hope and protection for the temple in Rev 11.1–2, but one of destruction and condemnation.

II. Leave It Out!

This section will explore the meaning and function of the somewhat unusual phrase ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν in Rev 11.2. This is an issue of some importance in the present connection, because it is sometimes argued that ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν in fact means ‘reject’, with the implication that John uses it to convey that the unmeasured part will be ‘rejected’ whereas the measured part will be saved. The great majority of translations and commentators, however, renders ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν by ‘leave it out’ (or the like), in the sense of ‘leave it out of measurement’, and hence treats it as a parallel expression to μὴ αὐτὴν μετρήσης.²⁵ It will be argued in this section that this interpretation is correct and, more specifically, that John had good reason to adopt this awkward sentence. First, two alternative explanations of ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν will be reviewed.

André Feuillet contended that ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν was adopted to indicate that the passage was not to be understood literally,²⁶ because in similar phrases in the

served in contrast to the city, it must be borne in mind that the one text we have to support this belief comes from a writer who is notoriously unreliable in his reports on the Zealots and on the question of who is to blame for the destruction of the temple (let alone the combination of both).

²⁴ Cf. W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (ICC; 3 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988–97) 3.322: ‘Jewish texts – such as Ezra and 2 Baruch – do not always distinguish between the temple and the capital. Quite often the one implies the other and there are indiscriminate transitions from temple to city or *vice versa*, so that one may often speak of their identification’.

²⁵ Cf. e.g. Smalley, *The Revelation to John*, 273. This interpretation can claim lexical support. In a number of contemporary passages, ἐκβάλλω means ‘pay no attention to, disregard’ (references in BDAG, 299).

²⁶ A. Feuillet, ‘Essai d’interprétation du chapitre XI de l’Apocalypse’, *NTS* 4 (1958) 183–200, esp. 186–7.

NT not lifeless objects, but people are ‘thrown out’ (e.g. in Luke 4.29).²⁷ It must be noted, however, that none of the passages Feuillet quotes in support of his claim exhibit the idiom ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν. With one exception, the expression found in these verses is ἐκβάλλειν ἔξω,²⁸ and while this does not differ much from ἐκβάλλειν ἔξωθεν, it is a matter of fact that none of the cited verses contains an exact parallel to Rev 11.2. Therefore, even though the phrase ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν is indeed a bit awkward, there is no basis for the claim that its use rules out a literal interpretation.²⁹

An alternative, not necessarily simpler, but at any rate very original explanation has been proposed by Richard Bauckham. He claims that the phrase καὶ τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν ἔξωθεν τοῦ ναοῦ ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν is John’s translation of the last three words of Dan 8.11: מִכּוֹן מִקְדָּשׁוֹ. Both passages have some points in common; Dan 8.11–14 speaks of the giving over of ‘the sanctuary and host’ to be trampled for a specific period of time. Bauckham claims that John has taken the ‘unique phrase’ מִכּוֹן מִקְדָּשׁוֹ to refer to the court ‘belonging to (i.e. outside) the temple building’.³⁰ The preceding תְּשֹׁה would normally mean ‘to overthrow’, but since John understood the object to be a court, such a meaning would make little sense (a court can hardly be overthrown) and he chose to render the word with the much-debated verb ἐκβάλλω. Bauckham’s proposal, however ingenious, is ultimately not convincing. It is, first, rather doubtful that John would have taken the phrase מִכּוֹן מִקְדָּשׁוֹ to refer to the *court* of the temple. Even though this exact phrase is unique, examples abound of closely related phrases such as מִכּוֹן שְׂבִיבוֹ (‘the place of his dwelling’, e.g. Ps 33.14) and מִכּוֹן כִּסְאוֹ (‘the place of his throne’, e.g. Ps 97.2).³¹ None of these expressions refer to the court, but always to the temple (building). Moreover, all the available manuscripts of the ancient Greek versions translate מִכּוֹן מִקְדָּשׁוֹ in Dan 8.11 with τὸ ἅγιον, and so apparently it was widely recognised that the words refer to the temple, since τὸ ἅγιον is often used to refer to the temple, but never to the court (that is, never *exclusively* to the court). Other objections have been brought to the fore by David Aune. The most important of these is his observation that ἔκβαλε is a second-person singular aorist imperative and thus a problematic rendering of תְּשֹׁה.³² One final objection is that even if תְּשֹׁה lies behind ἔκβαλε, it remains obscure why John wrote ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν. The presence of ἔξωθεν has not been accounted for.

27 The LXX, however, features two verses where objects are thrown out (Lev 14.40; 2 Chron 29.16).

28 The one exception is Matt 8.12, which has ἐκβληθήσονται εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον.

29 So correctly Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 607.

30 R. Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993) 270.

31 Jauhiainen, ‘Measuring the Sanctuary’, 512 n. 19 makes the same observation.

32 Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, 607.

It is a contention of this article that the reason why John did not use an expression that would leave no room for ambiguity or, alternatively, simply omitted the two words, lies in the structure of the text. Andrea Spatafora detected such a structure, a revised version of which is presented here:³³

ἐδόθη μοι κάλαμος ὅμοιος ῥάβδῳ, λέγων· ἔγειρε καὶ
 μέτρησον τὸν ναὸν (...) καὶ τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν
 ἔξωθεν τοῦ ναοῦ ἔκβαλε
 ἔξωθεν καὶ μὴ αὐτὴν
 μετρήσης, ὅτι
 ἐδόθη τοῖς ἔθνεσιν καὶ τὴν πόλιν (...) πατήσουσιν.

It is clear from this structure that John repeats certain words in a deliberate sequence and that one of these words is ἔξωθεν. It seems probable that John chose ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν instead of a less awkward expression in order to preserve and strengthen the structure of the text. Since he wished to use ἔξωθεν again, he chose ἐκβάλλω over other less ambiguous verbs (e.g. ἀφορίζω) that would not go well with ἔξωθεν. In this way John retained the structure of the text while conveying to his audience that the court had to be excluded from measurement. This is the least complicated explanation of the presence of ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν. To account for John's use of ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν we need not introduce a new element (excluded people) into the text, nor suppose that John made an obscure translation of a passage from Daniel. John used ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν so he could express exclusion from measuring while retaining the structure of the text. The traditional translation ('leave it out' or the like) is therefore to be preferred.

III. The Temple, the Altar and the Worshipers

Thus far, we have seen that the temple, the altar and the worshipers are marked as belonging to God's jurisdiction and that the outer court must not be measured, because it has been given to the Gentiles.³⁴ It is now in order to ask

33 Spatafora, *From the Temple of God*, 161, sees ἐν as the counterpart of ἔξωθεν. Regarding ἔξωθεν₁ as counterpart of ἔξωθεν₂ is to be preferred for two reasons: (1) ἐν is not the antonym of ἔξωθεν (that would have been ἔσωθεν), (2) the structure is not based on antonyms, but on synonyms.

34 The traditional reading of the text ('measure the temple of God and [καί₁] the altar and [καί₂] those who worship there, but [καί₃] do not measure the court outside the temple') is followed here. In two recent articles alternative readings have been suggested. Rob Dalrymple ('Use of καί') argues that καί₁ must be understood as a καί *epexegeticus*, which results in the translation 'measure the temple of God, *that is* the altar and those who worship there'. Dalrymple assumes, incorrectly I think, that the temple must be understood symbolically. The arguments for his thesis are largely dependent on this assumption, but that is not to say that his theory is incompatible with a more literal understanding. On the other hand, if we read the text as I propose to do in this article there is no need to interpret καί₁ in the way

what exactly the author had in mind when he used the words *ναός* ('temple') and *θυσιαστήριον* ('altar').

The word *ναός* is close to, but not identical with, *ἱερόν*. The latter refers in general to the temple and the 'surrounding consecrated area',³⁵ whereas the former usually refers to the sanctuary proper. However, the Apocalypse does not use the word *ἱερόν* and one therefore wonders whether *ναός* has been chosen in conscious opposition to *ἱερόν*. A further complicating issue is two passages in Josephus where *ναός* is used for the entire temple precinct.³⁶ It can at the very least be concluded that John does not follow Josephus's usage, for 'the court outside the *ναός*' makes sense only if not all courts are included in *ναός* already. But which courts are included and which are not? One possibility is that *ναός* includes all courts but the remotest one. Only in that case would it be instantly intelligible what 'the court outside the temple' (*τὴν ἀλλήν τὴν ἔξωθεν τοῦ ναοῦ*) refers to: the outermost part of the temple precincts, the area Gentiles were allowed to enter.³⁷ The fact that the Gentiles play such a major role in the context seems to confirm this identification. Indeed, the very reason for the exclusion of the court from measurement is that it belongs to the Gentiles.

It is more difficult to ascertain the precise significance of *τὸ θυσιαστήριον*. Some have argued that *τὸ θυσιαστήριον* without further qualification always refers to the altar of burnt offering,³⁸ but others insist that the altar of incense

Dalrymple suggests. Accordingly, it seems more natural to read *καί*₁ as a normal copulative, but there are few arguments for either position. Marko Jauhiainen proposes the following translation: 'Come and measure the temple of God, but (*καί*₁) the altar and (*καί*₂) those who worship there [*ἐν αὐτῷ*], that is (*καί*₃), the court outside the temple, do not measure, leave that out' ('Measuring the Sanctuary', 520). Here also, there are few conclusive arguments, but Jauhiainen's understanding of *ἐν αὐτῷ* in particular seems not very likely. Jauhiainen takes *ἐν αὐτῷ* to refer to the altar and not to the temple. That this is correct is by no means clear; while M. Hall ('The Hook Interlocking Structure of Revelation', *NovT* 44 [2002] 278–96, esp. 291–2) argues that *ἐν αὐτῷ* is an instrumental dative referring to the measuring stick, Bauckham (*The Climax of Prophecy*, 269) is probably correct when he says that *ἐν αὐτῷ* 'most naturally means "in the sanctuary"'. His earlier decision forces Jauhiainen to translate *ἐν αὐτῷ* with 'there' instead of the expected 'in it'. For additional criticism of Jauhiainen's proposal, see Siew, *War*, 101–2 n. 58.

35 J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domains* (3 vols.; New York: UBS, 1989) 1.82. Cf. BDAG, 665–6.

36 *J.W.* VI.293; *C. Ap.* II.119; Cf. BDAG, 666.

37 Ancient evidence for the existence of an area within the temple precincts that Gentiles were allowed to enter includes Josephus, *Ant.* XV.417; *J.W.* V.193–4; VI.124–5; *m.Mid* 2.3; *CIJ* 2.1400; *OGIS* II.598.

38 E.g. R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1920) 1.277.

must have been in mind.³⁹ In reality, the text provides precious little that could help identify which altar John refers to. It would therefore seem that the quest for precise identification of the elements in our text is misguided. If John had considered it of great importance that the altar of burnt offering and not the altar of incense (or vice versa) was measured, he would have probably expressed himself more clearly. He was certainly capable of doing so.⁴⁰ It seems more likely that John mentions the temple, the altar and the worshipers to refer to the different parts of the temple service that they represent. The author wants to convey to his audience that the measurement pertains to the temple service in every facet. It is in keeping with his architecturally vague descriptions that John intends the triad of temple, altar and worshipers to refer to *the building, the cult and the participants*. Alternatively, Jauhiainen may be correct that the temple, altar, worshipers and court are mentioned to create an allusion to LXX Ezek 8.16:⁴¹ ‘And he brought me into the inner court of the house of the Lord [τὴν ἀύλην οἴκου κυρίου τὴν ἐσωτέραν] and at the entrance of the temple [ναοῦ] of the Lord, between the porch and the altar [τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου], were about twenty men, with their back parts toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces turned the opposite way; and these were worshipping [προσκυνοῦσιν] the sun’. The book of Revelation is heavily indebted to Ezekiel and the scene that follows in Ezekiel (9.1ff.) is alluded to several times by John.⁴² It is therefore very well possible that Ezek 8.16 has been a source of inspiration for John. It should, however, be noted that Ezekiel speaks explicitly of τὴν ἀύλην οἴκου κυρίου τὴν ἐσωτέραν (‘the inner court’), whereas John has τὴν ἀύλην τὴν ἔξωθεν τοῦ ναοῦ (‘the outer court’).⁴³ If Jauhiainen’s thesis that Rev 11.1–2 alludes to Ezek 8.16 is nevertheless correct, this is yet another indication that Rev 11.1–2 is concerned with the destruction of the temple, for in the context of Ezekiel the scene of 8.16 is the immediate cause of God’s judgment on his people and temple (8.18), it is the reason for the departure of the ‘glory of

39 E.g. Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 269, but contrast part of his argumentation here with R. Bauckham, ‘Prayer in the Book of Revelation’, *Into God’s Presence: Prayer in the New Testament* (ed. R. N. Longenecker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) 252–71, esp. 261.

40 In Rev 8.3, for instance, John leaves no doubt as to which altar is in mind: ‘Another angel with a golden censer came and stood at the altar; he was given a great quantity of incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar [cf. Ex 30.3; in contrast, the altar of burnt offerings was, according to Ex 27.2, overlaid with bronze] that is before the throne [i.e. in the sanctuary proper]’.

41 Jauhiainen, ‘Measuring the Sanctuary’, 522.

42 Rev 7.3; 9.4; 13.6; 14.13; 17.5; 22.4/Ezek 9.4; Rev 15.6/Ezek 9.2, 3, 11. Moreover, Ezek 8.11 may be alluded to in Rev 8.4 (so B. Kowalski, *Die Rezeption des Propheten Ezechiel in der Offenbarung des Johannes* [Stuttgarter Biblische Beiträge 52; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2004] 139) and Ezek 8.16 may be behind Rev. 4.4 (cf. Lupieri, *Apocalypse*, 134).

43 On this point, see Bachmann, ‘Ausmessung’, 71.

God' (9.3) and the command 'defile the temple and fill the courts with the slain' (9.7) is actuated by it.

IV. The Destruction of Jerusalem

If we pull the threads of this study together, we find that John has to mark the entire temple service (the temple, the altar and the worshipers) as belonging to God's jurisdiction, while the outer court must not be measured because it belongs to the Gentiles, to those who will trample the whole city, the temple included, for a symbolic period of forty-two months. If this is correct, what then does it mean? What is John trying to communicate?

I suggest that in Rev 11.1–2, John tries to formulate an answer to what could be termed a 'first-century Jewish theodicy'; the question as to how God can be both good and almighty in light of the destruction of the temple. How can it be that the Gentiles (Romans) have destroyed the dwelling of the Almighty One? Are the Roman gods more powerful after all? This question was of evident importance in the period in which John wrote as can be seen from two writings that resemble the Apocalypse not only in age, but also in genre: *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*.⁴⁴ The first writing to be discussed will be *2 Baruch*, since it is most directly concerned with the actual destruction of the temple.

The composition commonly known as *2 Baruch* opens with a complaint about the people's sin (1.2–3). God responds by bringing 'evil upon the city and its inhabitants' (1.4) and by delivering the city and the sanctuary to Israel's adversaries (5.1). Interestingly, this situation will last only 'for a time' (1.5; 4.1; 6.9; cf. the symbolic forty-two months of Rev 11.2b). Baruch objects against God's decision and asks God what will happen to his name if he lets his city and people be destroyed by enemies (5.1). The answer is noteworthy: 'You shall see with your eyes that the enemy shall not destroy Zion and burn Jerusalem, but that they shall serve the Judge for a time' (5.3). The context makes abundantly clear that Jerusalem will be destroyed. The point here is therefore not that Jerusalem will not be destroyed, but that *the enemy* will not destroy it. God is the judge, who uses the enemy as a tool in his hand.⁴⁵ It is not they, but God who will destroy the temple through his angels, lest the enemies say: '*we* have burnt down the place of the mighty God' (7.1). The answer of the pseudepigrapher of *2 Baruch* to the question of how a

44 Cf. P.-M. Bogaert, 'Jérusalem dans les apocalypses contemporaines de Baruch, d'Esdras et de Jean', *Jérusalem dans les traditions juives et chrétiennes* (ed. A. Abecassis; Leuven: Peeters, 1982) 15–23.

45 This, of course, is a familiar notion in the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible; see, e.g., Jer 34.2; Isa 10.5–6 (where Assyria is described as 'the rod [ῥάβδος] of my anger') and Ezek 21.19.

pagan, idolatrous nation could destroy God's house is as easy as it is fascinating; they did not! God himself destroyed it. No one is more powerful than God is, and therefore the only one able to destroy his house is he himself. God decided to abandon his temple and this allowed the enemies to take possession of it: 'A voice was heard from the midst of the temple after the wall had fallen, saying: Enter, enemies, and come, adversaries, because he who guarded the house has left it' (8.1b–2).

A slightly different line is advocated by the author of *4 Ezra*. The issue of the temple's destruction is less directly commented upon in *4 Ezra*. It is nevertheless clear that *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* are in agreement on some major issues. In 2.10, for instance, God says to Ezra that he 'will give . . . the kingdom of Jerusalem' to whomever he wants. He has now chosen to deliver the city into the hands of Israel's enemies, because of the transgressions of the city's inhabitants (3.25–27). While the destruction of the temple is not explicitly ascribed to God, it is clear that God is seen as the one who took the initiative.⁴⁶ The theodicy articulated in *2 Baruch* is pertinent to the writer of *4 Ezra* as well, as (s)he seeks to learn 'why Israel has been given over to the Gentiles as a reproach; why the people . . . has been given to godless tribes' (4.22).

It is a contention of this article that Rev 11.1–2 formulates an answer to the 'first century theodicy' similar to what we find in *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*. To the question as to how it has been possible that the Gentiles have destroyed God's sanctuary, John replies that they could only do this because God's own judgment on the temple preceded it. This judgment is symbolised by the divinely ordered measurement of which our textual unit speaks. The reason that the outer court is not to be measured is that it belongs to those who are in power now, that is, it belongs to the Gentiles. The Gentiles have the power to trample the holy city, but only for a limited period of time (forty-two months) and only because this power has been given them precisely by God himself (ἐδόθη, a *passivum divinum*).

V. Conclusion

This article has argued that the measurement that is commanded in Rev 11.1–2 serves to indicate that the temple(service) belongs to God's jurisdiction, not to that of the Gentiles. That the verdict that is passed on the measured part is negative is the inevitable conclusion if one considers the verses that precede Rev 11.1–2 about the 'bitter message', the weapon-like measuring instrument of John, the concluding sentence about the whole city being trampled and the possible allusion to Ezek 8.16 (LXX), which describes what was, according to Ezekiel, the immediate cause of the temple's earlier destruction. The command to measure is

46 Cf. J. M. Myers, *I and II Esdras* (AB 42; New York: Doubleday, 1974) 125.

intended to convey to John's audience that the initiative for the temple's destruction was God's and that therefore, there can be no talk of a victory of the Gentiles over the God of Israel. Even though the Gentiles trample the holy city they can do so only for a limited period of time and only because they were given the warrant to do so by God himself.

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