

THE MEASURING OF THE SANCTUARY RECONSIDERED (REV 11,1-2) ⁽¹⁾

The plethora of commentaries and books on Revelation, and their lack of consensus in virtually everything, is a powerful witness to the difficulty of interpreting John's symbols and images, which often have their background in the OT. Yet there are no formal quotations in Revelation, but rather these OT images and motifs have been frequently shaped and combined by John in such a way that the resulting allusions to the OT can be very elusive and subtle. A case in point is Revelation 11,1-13, which has often been cited as the most difficult pericope in the whole book ⁽²⁾.

The present task, however, is not to solve once and for all every riddle in this difficult passage. Rather, this study will be looking at vv. 1-2 only. The primary focus will be on the act of measuring, with everything else receiving a rather cursory treatment. The essay will challenge the popular scholarly view that measuring the sanctuary and casting out the "outer court" symbolizes spiritual protection but physical vulnerability for the Church ⁽³⁾. First, the traditional interpretation of the passage is analyzed and some of its problems are highlighted (I). Next, the OT "measuring" passages normally invoked in support of the traditional view will be examined (II), and, finally, a more nuanced understanding of the act of measuring, together with a fresh reading of Rev 11,1-2, will be proposed (III).

I. THE TRADITIONAL VIEW

The NIV reflects well the way the command to John in Rev 11,1-2 is normally understood:
Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshipers there. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles.

Given the many different interpretations of these two verses, commentators are surprisingly unanimous in explaining how the act of measuring signifies security or protection

⁽¹⁾ The following is a revised version of a paper read at the Annual Seminar on the Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament in Hawarden, North Wales, in March 2002.

⁽²⁾ See, e.g., J. ROLOFF, *The Revelation of John* (tr. J.E. ALSUP) (Minneapolis 1993) 122; R.H. MOUNCE, *The Book of Revelation* (rev. ed., NICNT; Grand Rapids 1998) 211; B.M. METZGER, *Breaking the Code: Understanding the Book of Revelation* (Nashville 1993) 68; and P. PRIGENT, *L'Apocalypse de saint Jean* (3rd ed.; Geneva 2000) 260.

⁽³⁾ Two presuppositions and one limitation of this essay need to be mentioned: First, with the majority of commentators I am assuming that *ναός* does not refer to a literal, physical sanctuary, and therefore I primarily interact with those views that understand the sanctuary in one way or another symbolically. Second, I recognize the complex issue of John's biblical texts, but here I simply assume that he had an access to Hebrew and Greek texts similar to our MT and Rahlfs' LXX. Finally, while I acknowledge the close connection of vv. 1-2 with chapter 10, and with the rest of the chapter 11 in particular, and with the whole book in general, I nevertheless cannot deal with most of those links here. For treatments of the general structure of Revelation, see, e.g., E. SCHÜSSLER FIORENZA, "Composition and Structure of the Book of Revelation", *CBQ* 39 (1977) 344-366; R. BAUCKHAM, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh 1993) 2-22; A.J.P. GARROW, *Revelation* (London 1997) 14-65; and G.K. BEALE, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids -- Carlisle 1999) 108-151.

⁽⁴⁾. Thus the sanctuary (or “temple”, as the NIV has it) ⁽⁵⁾, the altar and the worshipers are protected by measuring, whereas the “outer court” remains vulnerable. This vulnerability is then frequently interpreted to mean that the Church is protected “spiritually”, but will be exposed “physically” ⁽⁶⁾.

However, this view, although attractive and commonly accepted, raises both lexical and interpretive questions. While we perhaps should not expect too much of John in terms of his Greek, it is nevertheless worth investigating whether at least some of the following lexical questions can be resolved without recourse to the peculiarities of John’s language.

1. *Lexical Issues*

First, the verb μετρέω in this context --- whatever its figurative meaning may be --- clearly means taking the spatial dimensions of something ⁽⁷⁾. The sanctuary and the court outside the sanctuary can be measured, and possibly even the altar, but the worshipers cannot thus be measured (or at least it would be very odd). Three solutions have been offered to this problem. One is exemplified in the NIV where μετρέω is translated twice but with two different senses, the latter being “to count” ⁽⁸⁾. This would be similar to saying something like, “He missed the point and the train” in English. Yet it would seem that “counting” the worshipers only compounds the complexity of the passage ⁽⁹⁾. Another solution sometimes invoked is that this is an instance of *zeugma*, a special type of ellipsis, where “one verb is used with two objects... but suits only one” ⁽¹⁰⁾. However, in the case of *zeugma*, the missing verb is usually either self-evident or supplied from the immediate context, neither of which necessarily applies here. Again, even if we follow Henry Swete and supply a verb such as καταριθμέω, we are merely

⁽⁴⁾ So, e.g., D.E. AUNE, *Revelation 6-16* (WBC 52b; Nashville 1998) 604; BAUCKHAM, *Climax*, 269, 272; BEALE, *Commentary*, 558-564; G.R. BEASLEY-MURRAY, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids 1974) 181; E.M. BORING, *Revelation* (Louisville 1989) 143; R.A. BRIGGS, *Jewish Temple Imagery in the Book of Revelation* (New York 1999) 28n85; G.B. CAIRD, *The Revelation of St John the Divine* (2nd ed.; London 1984) 131; R.H. CHARLES, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John*, Vol I (ICC; Edinburgh 1920) 274; A. FARRER, *A Rebirth of Images: The Making of St. John’s Apocalypse* (Boston 1963) 121 (though cf. 44); GARROW, *Revelation*, 73; MOUNCE, *Revelation*, 213-215; F.J. MURPHY, *Fallen Is Babylon: The Revelation to John* (Harrisburg, PA 1998) 259; J.L. RESSEGUIE, *Revelation Unsealed: A Narrative Critical Approach to John’s Apocalypse* (Leiden -- Boston -- Köln 1998) 92; ROLOFF, *Revelation*, 129; SCHÜSSLER FIORENZA, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment* (Philadelphia 1985) 77; J.P.M. SWEET, *Revelation* (London, 1979) 183; and H.B. SWETE, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (London 1906) 130. A slight variation of this is to explain measuring as marking a division between the holy and the profane (which is then taken to indicate divine protection; e.g., D. CHILTON, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* [Ft. Worth 1987] 273; and W. HENDRIKSEN, *More than Conquerors* [London 1962] 126). For C. ROWLAND, *Revelation* (London 1993) 99, the measuring of the sanctuary “symbolizes the present, limited extent of the divine possession in a world where the rebellious nations are in apparent control”.

⁽⁵⁾ On the use of the term in the NT, see O. MICHEL, “ναός”, *TDNT*, 4:882-887.

⁽⁶⁾ For a summary of this and three other symbolic interpretations, see AUNE, *Revelation*, 597-598; cf. BEALE, *Commentary*, 557-559.

⁽⁷⁾ Louw-Nida 81.2; BDAG, 643; 1. It can also be used in the sense of “to give a measured portion to someone”, Louw-Nida 57.92; BDAG, 643; 2.

⁽⁸⁾ Though unlikely, this sense is not entirely impossible, as it is attested in Alcaeus some 700-800 years before John, and in Theocritus some 400 years before John (LSJ, 1122; III.1).

⁽⁹⁾ The proponents of this solution do not normally explain why the worshipers should be counted and how their counting contributes to the overall picture.

⁽¹⁰⁾ BDF §479.2; so, e.g., R.L. THOMAS, *Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago 1995) 82; AUNE, *Revelation*, 605; and SWETE, *Apocalypse*, 130.

turning a lexical difficulty into an exegetical one ⁽¹¹⁾. The third and always available alternative is to acknowledge the problem but to treat it only as an indication of the symbolic nature of John's language ⁽¹²⁾.

Another lexical problem is the verb ἐκβάλλω, especially together with ἔξωθεν or ἔξω. That phrase in the NT always refers to people who are expelled or driven out ⁽¹³⁾. Even though John possibly meant the "outer court" to symbolize people, the case remains that if ἐκβαλε here refers *only* to the "outer court", it stands as the sole example of such usage in the NT ⁽¹⁴⁾. It may perhaps be objected that the phrase "cast outside" is found twice in the LXX (in Lev 14,40 and in 2 Chr 29,16), where it is not referring to people. However, this objection is not as serious as appears at first, as we will see later.

2. Interpretive Issues

There are also interpretive problems. For example, the "court outside the sanctuary" is frequently explained to refer to the court of the Gentiles of the Herodian temple ⁽¹⁵⁾. It is not clear, however, why this should be the case, since there were three other courts also outside the sanctuary but within the court of the Gentiles, namely, the court of the priests, the court of Israel, and the court of women. What is the fate of these other courts within the traditional schema? The same question can be asked of those who understand John to have had in mind the outer court of Ezekiel's temple ⁽¹⁶⁾, for there, too, the court outside the sanctuary was located within the outer court. Furthermore, if Rev 11,1-2 is indeed modeled after Ezekiel's

⁽¹¹⁾ Ibid.

⁽¹²⁾ So, e.g., BEALE, *Commentary*, 560.

⁽¹³⁾ E.g., Matt 21,39; Luke 13,28; and John 6,37. See also AUNE, *Revelation*, 607; and J.M. FORD, *Revelation* (AB 38; Garden City, New York 1975) 169, 176. BAGD (237; 3) lists Rev 11,2 as an exception to the normal usage of the word, but that position seems to derive its support from the traditional interpretation of the verse rather than from the lexical data. BDAG (299) has added a fourth meaning for ἐκβάλλω, "to pay no attention", of which Rev 11,2 is listed not only as the only biblical example, but as the only example in early Christian literature where ἐκβάλλω with accusative has this meaning; cf. LSJ (501), which primarily has people as the objects of "casting out" and knows nothing about the fourth meaning suggested by BDAG.

SWEET, *Revelation*, 184, points out that ἐκβάλλω without ἔξωθεν or ἔξω is used by Jesus who told his disciples to ask the Lord to send out (ἐκβάλῃ) workers into his harvest field (Matt 9,38; Luke 10,2). He suggests that the casting out of the outer court and the trampling by the nations may indicate the Church's mission to the Gentiles (Matt 10,17-18; 24,9-14). Moreover, ἐκβαλε ἔξω[θεν] "also hints at the results of bearing witness" (Matt 21,39/Mark 12,8/Luke 20,15; Luke 4,29; John 9,34; Acts 7,58), thus perhaps connecting Rev 11,1-2 to the mission of the two witnesses. However, while interesting, Sweet's proposal has two weaknesses: First, ἐκβαλε ἔξω[θεν] in itself does not have this meaning, even though in some cases the casting out has been a result of bearing witness to God or Jesus. The phrase simply means "cast outside" or "drive out", and can be used in very different contexts. For example, in John 12,31 it refers to Satan, who is cast out as a result of God's judgment; in Luke 13,28 it refers to those who think they belong to the people of God but are cast out of the Kingdom of God; and in John 6,37 it refers to those who come to Jesus and therefore will not be cast out. Second, the examples he gives describe the *result* of the "witness" rather than the cause of it, as his reading of the trampling by the nations and the commission of the two witnesses suggests.

⁽¹⁴⁾ For a different solution to the difficult phrase, καὶ τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν ἔξωθεν τοῦ ναοῦ ἐκβαλε ἔξωθεν, see BAUCKHAM, *Climax*, 270-273; cf. the criticism in AUNE, *Revelation*, 607.

⁽¹⁵⁾ So, e.g., BEASLEY-MURRAY, *Revelation*, 182; and MOUNCE, *Revelation*, 214; cf. SWETE, *Apocalypse*, 130, who maintains that "the ναός here must be taken to include the ἱερόν"; contra, e.g., BAUCKHAM, *Climax*, 268-269. While it is not clear which temple John had in mind, or whether he was rather thinking in terms of a generic temple, the reference to the "holy city" in 11,2 suggests that the primary background of the temple imagery in these two verses is nevertheless Jewish rather than Greco-Roman.

⁽¹⁶⁾ So, e.g., BEALE, *Commentary*, 561.

prophecy in chapters 40 -- 48, one would need to explain why John is suggesting that part of the eschatological temple will be defiled by the nations, when Ezekiel's point seems to be exactly the opposite ⁽¹⁷⁾.

But there are other interpretive problems. Τὸ θυσιαστήριον with the definite article and without further qualification normally refers to the altar of burnt offering, located in the court outside the sanctuary ⁽¹⁸⁾. But why would it be protected, if we grant that the "sanctuary" is symbolizing the Church? Indeed, why mention the altar and the worshipers at all? The measuring of the sanctuary and the casting out of the "outer court" would have been enough to portray the Church as spiritually protected but physically vulnerable, if that were John's intention.

There is an alternative way of reading Rev 11,1-2 which solves some of the problems outlined above while still adhering to the traditional "spiritual protection vs. physical vulnerability"-view. The καί between the sanctuary and the altar could be taken as epexegetical, thus equating the sanctuary with the altar and the worshipers ⁽¹⁹⁾. This reading has at least three advantages: First, there is no longer uncertainty over the identification of the altar and the "outer court". The altar is the altar of incense, located within the sanctuary, and the court is the court immediately surrounding the sanctuary. Second, the mention of the worshipers, who must be priests in order to worship within the sanctuary, now makes more sense. Finally, the worshipers are no longer a direct object of measuring and thus the use of μετρέω ceases to be a lexical problem.

However, though the moving of the altar and the worshipers inside the sanctuary may solve some of the issues, the traditional interpretation remains problematic. For example, the mention of the altar still seems superfluous, and the use of the verb ἐκβάλλω with the "outer court" remains unexplained ⁽²⁰⁾. Moreover, according to both variants of the traditional interpretive schema, John is using not only the "sanctuary", the "worshipers" (possibly the "altar"), and the "outer court", but also the "holy city" to refer to the Church --- *and all this*

⁽¹⁷⁾ For Beale's attempt to get around this difficulty, see his *Commentary*, 561.

⁽¹⁸⁾ See AUNE, *Revelation*, 606, and the references therein. BAUCKHAM, *Climax*, 269, has argued it refers to the altar of incense inside the sanctuary, but that would make the mentioning of the altar superfluous (unless we take the preceding καί as epexegetical or offer some other explanation).

It could also be argued that since the earlier references to the altar in Revelation (6,9; 8,3,5; 9,13) seem to refer to the altar of incense, the altar in 11,1 must also be an altar of incense. However, the earlier instances clearly describe something which is located in heaven before God's throne, whereas 11,1-2 appears to portray something on earth, and all the earthly temples (including the temple in Ezekiel's vision) had an altar of burnt offering.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Two commentators come close to this view: BAUCKHAM, *Climax*, 268-269, does not make this syntactical point, but nevertheless locates the altar and the worshipers within the sanctuary; and BEALE, *Commentary*, 571, hints at the possibility of taking the καί between the altar and the worshipers as epexegetical, thus identifying the worshipers with the sanctuary and the altar.

⁽²⁰⁾ BAUCKHAM, *Climax*, 270-272, suggests that John uses ἐκβάλλω to translate שִׁלַּח in Dan 8,11 and that Dan 8,11-13 and Zech 12,13 explain the image of casting out the "outer court". His proposal as a whole is intriguing, though his case is weakened by at least three things: First, it is based on a reconstruction of a non-extant Hebrew Vorlage of Zech 12,13; second, it maintains that John understood that the sanctuary would be preserved, though both the LXX and Theodotion of Dan 8,11 seem to suggest the opposite; and third, it does not adequately explain the way John supposedly understood and translated Hebrew. For example, why translate שִׁלַּח with ἐκβάλλω and not with any of the other verbs used by the translators of the LXX and Theodotion? and, why read מִכּוֹן מִקִּדְשׁוֹ as the court when it seems to refer to the sanctuary as similar expressions elsewhere (e.g., Ps 33,14; 97,2) suggest?

within what is essentially a single sentence ⁽²¹⁾. While there is no *a priori* reason why John could not have packed his images this tightly, it nevertheless seems that the traditional interpretation fails to do full justice to the text and that a reconsideration is warranted.

Finally, the traditional view can be criticized for its claim that measuring in itself symbolizes spiritual protection and, by implication, physical vulnerability. Support for this interpretation of measuring as signifying protection is derived primarily from the OT. However, while vulnerability and security are in some ways present in our passage, a more nuanced reading is demanded. The traditional view seems to fly in the face of both what follows (the two witnesses, usually also taken to symbolize the Church, are protected physically) ⁽²²⁾, and what is one of Revelation's themes, namely, the reality of spiritual danger and the consequences of apostasy ⁽²³⁾. Moreover, nowhere in the OT does measuring in itself symbolize protection, as we will see in the next section.

II. MEASURING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

A number of OT texts mention measuring, but only a handful of passages are normally proposed to support the claim that measuring in Rev 11,1-2 symbolizes protection and security. The relevant passages are 2 Sam 8,2, Isa 28,16-17, Isa 34,11, Jer 31,38-40, Mic 2,5, Zech 1,16, Zech 2,1-2, and Ezek 40 -- 48 ⁽²⁴⁾. In addition, 2 Kgs 21,13, Lam 2,8, and Amos 7,7-9, are often mentioned in the same context to show how the act of measuring can also signify judgment. Before commenting on these OT texts, however, we will briefly consider two other passages sometimes adduced, namely *1 En.* 61,1-5 and *1QH^a* XIV (VI), 25-27.

1. Examination of Key Passages

With respect to *1 En.* 61, it is easy to agree with Charles that "the exact meaning of measuring in this passage is difficult to determine" ⁽²⁵⁾. More uncertain, however, is his contention that the general sense of measuring is nevertheless clear, signifying "spiritual preservation... or restoration of those who had been *physically* destroyed, to the spiritual community of the Messianic Kingdom" ⁽²⁶⁾. Rather, the measuring of the "lots of the righteous" seems to refer to "the allocation of the promised land in paradise", possibly as a reward for faithfulness, as Black suggests ⁽²⁷⁾. Furthermore, Black maintains that the reading

⁽²¹⁾ So, e.g., BEALE, *Commentary*, 570. Alternative interpretations have been offered, e.g., by J.R. MICHAELS, *Revelation* (Downers Grove 1997) 142, and C.H. GIBLIN, "Revelation 11.1-13: Its Form, Function, and Contextual Integration", *NTS* 30 (1984) 433-459 (438-440), who see *ναός* as the heavenly sanctuary, and identify "the holy city" with "the great city" in v. 8, which they understand to symbolize the world; and by A. MCNICOL, "Revelation 11:1-14 and the Structure of the Apocalypse", *RestQ* 22 (1979) 193-202 (199-202), for whom "the holy city" is the literal Jerusalem.

⁽²²⁾ So also AUNE, *Revelation*, 604.

⁽²³⁾ As Rev 3,4-5 shows, it is possible to "defile one's garments" and have one's name "blotted out of the book of life". For a thorough treatment of the theme of apostasy in Revelation, see W.L. WARREN, "Apostasy in the Book of Revelation" (Ph.D. diss.; The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary 1983).

⁽²⁴⁾ It is not clear why Ezek 29,6 LXX is sometimes mentioned (see, e.g., MCNICOL, "Revelation", 198; and BEALE, *Commentary*, 559) in the context of measuring, as it has nothing to do with measuring, though it may well be that the mention of *ῥάβδος*, which also occurs in Rev 11,1-2, has somehow attracted this verse to the list.

⁽²⁵⁾ CHARLES, *Revelation*, 276; cf. AUNE, *Revelation*, 604, who considers the passage "very difficult".

⁽²⁶⁾ CHARLES, *Revelation*, 276.

⁽²⁷⁾ M. BLACK, *The Book of Enoch or I Enoch: A New English Edition* (Leiden 1985), 231; cf. PRIGENT, *L'Apocalypse*, 263n9: "Ces mesures de l'héritage éternel sont données pour récompenser la fidélité des justes".

according to which measuring or measures will “strengthen righteousness” ⁽²⁸⁾ is a “most improbable original” ⁽²⁹⁾. Thus, while vv. 1-5 as a whole appear to refer to the final gathering and resurrection of the righteous to the presence of the Lord of spirits, it cannot be established that angels’ measuring actually signifies the protection of the righteous.

The passage from *Hodayot* is somewhat more relevant to our text. The author is praising God, whose righteous standards and way of building guarantee the inviolability of the city or fortress that symbolizes the community of the righteous. The phrases “tested stones”, “line of justice” and “level of truth” suggest that the prophecy of Isa 28,16-17 may well have influenced this passage ⁽³⁰⁾. Yet, neither text appears to support the claim that measuring signifies protection. Certainly here any idea of measuring is at best implicit, and the notion of protection only derives from the fact that the builder of the building is God himself ⁽³¹⁾.

“Stretching a [measuring] line” (נָסַח קֵן in Hebrew; usually translated as ἐκτείνω μέτρον) belongs to the vocabulary of construction (Isa 44,13; Job 38,5; Zech 1,16; cf. Jer 31,38-40), but the expression can also be used metaphorically to signify destruction. In 2 Kgs 21,13, Yahweh promises to stretch over Jerusalem “the line of Samaria and the level of the house of Ahab”, and in Isa 34,11 over Edom “a line of desolation and stones of emptiness” (cf. Lam 2,8). The “line” and “level” can also signify Yahweh’s righteous standards, against which human works are measured (Isa 28,16-17; Amos 7,7-9) ⁽³²⁾. The kind of practice referred to in Mic 2,5 is less certain, but the “casting of the rope by lot” seems to describe the allotment of the land among God’s people.

The remaining three texts normally cited in support of the traditional view actually use a verb which can be translated “to measure” or “to measure off” (Hebrew מָדַד, Greek διαμέτρω). In 2 Sam 8,2, the defeated Moabites are separated into two groups: those who are put to death, and those who are kept alive. Both the LXX and the MT suggest that the separation was somehow carried out with “ropes” or “the rope”, respectively, a procedure perhaps akin to what is described in Mic 2,5 ⁽³³⁾. While it may be argued that “measuring off” or “dividing up” especially in this context connotes separation, it does not in itself imply protection or destruction any more than does, say, the use of the verb “to lie down” or the noun “rope” in this same verse. Moreover, in the absence of clear verbal or thematic links with Rev 11,1-2 it seems very unlikely that John’s audience, in their search for meaning, would have recalled 2 Sam 8,2 and, on the basis of that verse, concluded that the act of measuring must connote security or protection ⁽³⁴⁾.

⁽²⁸⁾ So the translation of *1 Enoch* 61,5 by E. ISAAC in *OTP*, Vol 1.

⁽²⁹⁾ BLACK, *Enoch*, 231; contra, e.g., CHARLES, *Revelation*, 276; M.A. KNIBB, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments*, Vol 2 (Oxford 1978) 148; and BEALE, *Commentary*, 564. The date of this original is, of course, much debated. Black himself proposes a Hebrew *Urschrift* for chapters 37 -- 71, dating it to the “early Roman period, probably pre-70 A.D.” (*Enoch*, 188). Yet, in the absence of any manuscript or other external evidence this remains conjectural; the Parables of Enoch could even post-date Revelation (the date of which is still being disputed).

⁽³⁰⁾ So also S. HOLM-NIELSEN, *Hodayot: Psalms from Qumran* (Aarhus 1960) 119.

⁽³¹⁾ Moreover, if John’s intention was to communicate effectively to the predominantly Gentile churches of Asia Minor towards the end of the first century AD, he probably would not have assumed his audience to be well-versed in the writings of the Qumran community.

⁽³²⁾ On Amos 7,7-9, see M.A. SWEENEY, *The Twelve Prophets*, Vol 2 (Collegeville, MA 2000) 584.

⁽³³⁾ So, e.g., R.P. GORDON, *1 and 2 Samuel: A Commentary* (Exeter 1986) 243.

⁽³⁴⁾ Contra, e.g., CHARLES, *Revelation*, 275, who holds that the only possible meaning of μετρέω in its original, pre-Revelation context is “physical preservation”, derived from 2 Sam 8,2b. Yet, he maintains that in its present context (i.e., Rev 11,1-2), it signifies preservation from spiritual rather than physical danger.

A somewhat better candidate for an OT background can be found in Zech 2,1-2. In a vision, Zechariah sees a man with a “rope of measuring” (חבל מדה) in his hand, on his way to measure Jerusalem. The purpose of the measuring here is not to protect the city but to find out “how wide and how long it is”, as the man explains to Zechariah. Measuring precedes building and is therefore a necessary step in preparation for the rebuilding of the city and its walls⁽³⁵⁾. This also fits the larger context of Zechariah’s visions which concern the restoration of Jerusalem and its temple. But if measuring connotes rebuilding, the sense of protection in this chapter as a whole derives from Yahweh’s explicit promise that he will come and dwell in Jerusalem amongst his people, and be “a wall of fire around her” (v. 5).

The third possibility for an OT background of the measuring of the sanctuary is Ezek 40 -- 48⁽³⁶⁾. Here the prophet is taken in a vision to a very high mountain near a city, where he sees a man with a “line of measuring” (קנה המדה, κάλαμος μέτρου) in his hand. Ezekiel is told to observe everything carefully as the man measures the various structures of the temple compound (including ναός in ch. 41), and explains what the future temple will be like, what the dimensions of its various parts are, how it will function, and how the land is to be divided between the tribes. Ezekiel is then to describe the temple and its plan to the people of Israel (40,4; 43,10). If they are ashamed of their sins, he is to make known to them the design of the temple and all its regulations and laws so that they may be faithful to its design and follow all its regulations (43,11). Thus the purpose of measuring is not to signify security or protection but to reveal to Ezekiel Yahweh’s plan regarding the return of the Glory, the restoration of pure worship, and the reordering of the tribes. The inviolability of the sanctuary is *not* due to the measuring of the temple compound but is conveyed by the exceptionally thick walls and gates and by the fact that Yahweh himself has promised to make it his eternal dwelling.

While it may perhaps be argued that Ezek 40 -- 48 resembles the act of measuring in Rev 11 more than the other candidates, it does not automatically follow that the former is the background of the latter. For example, the measuring in Rev 21 is clearly based on Ezekiel’s temple prophecy, but it is also very different from the measuring in ch. 11. That is, Ezek 40 -- 48 and Rev 21,10 -- 22,1 have several elements in common⁽³⁷⁾, whereas there are only two similarities between Rev 11 and the other two measuring accounts, and even these similarities are fairly general: First, a rod or reed of some kind is used for measuring, but while Ezekiel and Rev 21 use κάλαμος μέτρου, ch. 11 has κάλαμος ὅμοιος ῥάβδω⁽³⁸⁾; and second, the object of measuring, whether the New Jerusalem, or its temple or a part thereof, is the eschatological dwelling place that God will build, or is building, for himself. On the other hand, in Rev 11 it is John who is doing the measuring, not an angel⁽³⁹⁾; the measuring is not narrated; and the object of measuring seems to be the sanctuary as a whole rather than the various architectural

⁽³⁵⁾ As SWEENEY, *Prophets*, 584, points out, חבל מדה “is simply a device employed to measure the boundaries of land that are to be assigned as the inheritance or the property of a tribe or an individual (cf. Mic 2:4-5; Amos 7:7; Deut 32:9; 1 Chr 16:18=Ps 105:11; Josh 17:5, 14; 19:9; Ezek 47:13; Deut 3:4, 13, 14; 1 Kgs 4:13)”.

⁽³⁶⁾ Ezek 40 -- 42(48) and Zech 2 are normally invoked as the two primary candidates for the OT background of the act of measuring, the former usually receiving greater emphasis; see AUNE, *Revelation*, 604; CAIRD, *Revelation*, 130; FARRER, *Images*, 130-131; HENDRIKSEN, *Conquerors*, 126; MURPHY, *Fallen*, 258; PRIGENT, *L’Apocalypse*, 341; RESSEGUIE, *Revelation*, 92, 183; and SWEET, *Revelation*, 182.

⁽³⁷⁾ See D.I. BLOCK, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48* (NICOT; Eerdmans 1998) 502-503, for a list of eight elements the passages have in common.

⁽³⁸⁾ BAUCKHAM, *Climax*, 269n46, argues that John is most likely dependent on Zech 2 for the image of measuring and has therefore carefully distinguished his measuring from the measurements in Rev 21 and Ezek 40 -- 48 by giving himself a different kind of measuring rod.

⁽³⁹⁾ Both Zechariah 2 and Ezekiel actually have מלאך, taken usually by commentators to refer to an angel.

structures and their dimensions. Therefore, even if one grants that Rev 11 may be influenced by Ezekiel's account, the lack of affinities suggests that the measuring cannot be adequately explained on the basis of Ezek 40 -- 48 alone.

2. *An Alternative Understanding of Measuring*

Though the background texts normally cited in support of the traditional view are not able to deliver as advertized, there is a role that Ezek 40 -- 48 can play, together with Zech 2 and Rev 21 ⁽⁴⁰⁾, in our attempt to determine the significance of the measuring in Rev 11. Two observations can be made: First, the act of measuring in all three passages seems to be a prophetic device whereby God provides the prophet with information about his plans for his people, in order to encourage the prophet (cf. Ezek 40,4) ⁽⁴¹⁾. Or to put it in a different way: the act of measuring is a narrative device used by the author to communicate something to the audience. Second, we should underscore the major difference between Rev 11 and the other three passages: John is told *not* to measure something, and even explained why this is so. Granting that there is such a thing as a measuring motif, then this deviation from the normal pattern is a signal to the audience to pay special attention to the excluded item(s). We will return to this point later.

We may now summarize the relevance of the proposed OT background passages to the act of measuring in Rev 11. First, measuring in itself symbolizes neither destruction nor protection in any of the passages, though some of the vocabulary related to construction and building can with certain modifications be used metaphorically to connote judgment or destruction (2 Kgs 21,13; Isa 34,11; cf. Lam 2,8). Second, while the nearest background text to Rev 11,1-2 may well be Ezek 40 -- 48, its clear parallel in Rev 21 suggests that it is not John's intention to evoke (only) Ezekiel's temple vision here. Third, the act of measuring seems rather to be a prophetic-literary device whereby God directs the prophet's attention to some aspects of his plan concerning the object measured, in order that the prophet may learn something, and then proclaim it ⁽⁴²⁾. Finally, any sense of protection or security in the measuring passages of Ezekiel, Zechariah and Revelation 21 is primarily due to the fact that the entity measured is/will be the eternal dwelling-place of God ⁽⁴³⁾.

3. *The Problem with the Traditional View*

Before moving on to the next section, let us take a final look at the quest for OT texts in support of the traditional reading of Rev 11. The problem many commentators have with

⁽⁴⁰⁾ That there is a close relationship between these three passages was already observed by SWETE, *Apocalypse*, 129.

⁽⁴¹⁾ The fact that the actual measuring is not narrated in Zech 2,1-5 and Rev 11,1-2 also suggests that the emphasis in these passages may lie elsewhere, i.e., the mention of measuring is merely a means to an end.

⁽⁴²⁾ Ezek 40,4; cf. 43,10: "As for you, son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities". PRIGENT, *L'Apocalypse*, 263n9, comes close to this view: "l'image des mesures [in *I En* 61,1-5] renvoie donc à un plan de Dieu pour les élus"; and, "mesurer... c'est préserver. Ou plutôt manifester l'intention divine de montrer dès maintenant le caractère assuré de son plan de salut" (ibid., italics mine); cf. AUNE, *Revelation*, 604, who sees the act of measuring in Ezek 40 -- 42 as a "device for providing a detailed description of the future temple"; and A. SPATAFORA, *From the Temple of God to God as the Temple: A Biblical Theological Study of the Temple in the Book of Revelation* (Rome 1997) 164, who considers the act of measuring in Rev 11 as "a symbolic gesture that announces God's plan regarding the temple".

⁽⁴³⁾ Cf. BAUCKHAM, *Climax*, 269n46, who correctly observes that "the measuring [in Zech 2,1-2] does not strictly signify protection" even though "the idea of protection is prominent in the passage".

regard to the interpretation of the act of measuring is perhaps best illustrated by quoting Robert Briggs, who maintains that “[m]easuring in the Bible usually means (1) rebuilding or restoration; (2) destruction; (3) preservation from physical or spiritual harm; or (4) purification”⁽⁴⁴⁾. This statement shows confusion between the verb “to measure” and the various contexts where it is being used. For example, the verb מִדַּד occurs 52 times in the MT, and while its precise meaning in 2 Sam 8,2 may be debated and while in Ezek 43,10 it seems to have the sense “to study”, the remaining 49 times it means finding the size, length, or amount of something; or has the sense “to measure out/off”⁽⁴⁵⁾. The same applies to διαμέτρειω and μετρέω, which occur a total of 42 times in the LXX and Theodotion. Commentators may be right in sensing that protection is somehow present in Rev 11,1-2, but it appears that the search for earlier OT (or extra-biblical) passages where “[m]easuring... means... preservation from physical or spiritual harm” is not only misguided, but also unnecessary, as we shall see.

III. A PROPOSAL FOR A NEW VIEW

1. Towards a Solution of the Lexical Problems

Let us look at Rev 11,1-2 again. The imperative “measure” is followed by four objects connected by three καίς, followed by another imperative, “cast out”. Both verbs are complemented by one or more of the four objects sandwiched between them. The commands ἔκβαλε and μὴ αὐτὴν μετρήσης indicate that one of the three καίς has adversative force,⁽⁴⁶⁾ but the question is, which one? The traditional view assigns this function to καί₃, but that is not the only possibility. Instead of taking καί₁ and καί₂ as copulative, and καί₃ as adversative, we can interpret καί₁ as adversative, καί₂ as copulative, and καί₃ as epexegetical⁽⁴⁷⁾. The text would then read as follows⁽⁴⁸⁾:

⁽⁴⁴⁾ BRIGGS, *Imagery*, 27n82; see also AUNE, *Revelation*, 604; and FORD, *Revelation*, 176.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Not counting מִדַּד, a possible secondary form of מִדַּד in Hab 3,6, where it would have a meaning similar to מִדַּד in Ezek 43,10; cf. BDB, 551b.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ On adversative/contrastive conjunctions, see, e.g., D.B. WALLACE, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids 1996) 671.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Taking καί₁ as epexegetical and καί₃ as adversative would perhaps in some ways result in a more “natural” reading of Greek, but the context (e.g., the lexical difficulties pointed out in Section I of this paper) would signal the audience that an alternative configuration is required.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ The Greek text follows NA²⁷ but omits any punctuation. There are no significant textual variations in 11,1-2.

ἔγειρε	Get up
καὶ	and
μέτρησον τὸν ναὸν	measure the sanctuary
τοῦ θεοῦ	of God
καὶ ₁	but
τὸ θυσιαστήριον	the altar
καὶ ₂	and
τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας	those worshipping
ἐν αὐτῷ	near it,
καὶ ₃	that is,
τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν ἔξωθεν	the court outside
τοῦ ναοῦ	of the temple,
ἔκβαλε ἔξωθεν	cast out outside
καὶ	and
[μετρήσης] μὴ αὐτὴν	do not measure it

This arrangement yields several interesting results. First, it does not violate the Greek syntax --- if we can indeed use such an argument in Revelation. Second, it preserves the symmetry of the four commands. Third, it better connects the accusatives with verbs that more naturally go with them. That is, only the sanctuary and the “outer court” function as objects of the verb “to measure”; there is no need to “count” the worshipers. While the phrase “cast outside” remains grammatically connected to the “outer court”, at least it now includes a reference to the “worshippers”. Fourth, taking ἐν αὐτῷ to refer to its nearest grammatically possible antecedent τὸ θυσιαστήριον, and taking καὶ₃ as epexegetical, present no problems. Alternatively, ἐν αὐτῷ could be rendered “in it”, for as Aune has noted, θυσιαστήριον (which literally means “the place of sacrifice”) can also refer to the altar area (⁴⁹).

This reading not only addresses various lexical issues, but also resolves some interpretive questions. For example, τὸ θυσιαστήριον can now take its rightful place as the altar of burnt offering, located in the court outside the sanctuary. Similarly, the “court outside the sanctuary” is the court immediately surrounding the sanctuary, regardless of how many other courts there might have been in the temple that served as a model, if indeed John had a specific temple in mind (⁵⁰). But at least three significant questions remain: why does John mention the altar and the worshipers at all? why are the worshipers to be cast out? and, how does the act of measuring function in this context? These questions are interrelated, but let us begin by tackling the first two.

2. Towards a Solution of the Interpretive Problems

As already noted, John must have had a reason to include a reference to the altar and to the worshipers. Within the traditional view, the emphasis is on explaining who the worshipers are and to which altar τὸ θυσιαστήριον refers, but the view usually ignores the question of why they are mentioned in the first place. If the issue is addressed, the inclusion of the worshipers

(⁴⁹) AUNE, *Revelation*, 606, 405.

(⁵⁰) BAUCKHAM, *Climax*, 268-269 also takes the courtyard to be the innermost court regardless of the temple John might have had in mind. He differs from our proposal, however, by locating the altar and the worshipers inside the ναός, and by following the general “spiritual protection vs. physical vulnerability”-interpretation.

and the altar is thought, as Murphy puts it, to “constitute a cultic scene which in its entirety represents the church in union with its God through worship” ⁽⁵¹⁾. However, it is a contention of this essay that the reference serves another purpose: John has mentioned not only the sanctuary and the “outer court”, but also the altar and the worshipers, in order to allude to the visit of another prophet to the temple in a vision, namely, to Ezek 8 -- 9 ⁽⁵²⁾. There Ezekiel is transported by the Spirit to the “house of Yahweh” in Jerusalem, and shown the idolatry that is rampant there. The prophet is taken around the temple compound and finally brought to the courtyard outside the sanctuary. There, between the altar and the entrance to the sanctuary, twenty-five men are worshiping the sun, their backs towards the sanctuary where Yahweh’s Glory dwells:

καὶ εἰσῆγαγέν με εἰς τὴν αὐλὴν οἴκου κυρίου τὴν ἐσωτέραν καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐπὶ τῶν
προθύρων τοῦ ναοῦ κυρίου ἀνὰ μέσον τῶν αἰλαμ καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου
ὡς εἴκοσι ἄνδρες τὰ ὀπίσθια αὐτῶν πρὸς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ κυρίου καὶ τὰ πρόσωπα
αὐτῶν ἀπέναντι καὶ οὗτοι προσκυνοῦσιν τῷ ἡλίῳ (Ezek 8:16 LXX) ⁽⁵³⁾

This is the height of abomination. The only thing that can follow is the judgment of Yahweh. Next Ezekiel sees seven angels who are told to kill the entire population of Jerusalem, save the small remnant “who grieve and lament over all the detestable things” that are done in the house of Yahweh (9,4). The faithful ones among God’s people receive a mark on their foreheads so that they will not be judged with the rest. Then the angels are told to begin slaughtering at the sanctuary (v. 6) and to desecrate it (v. 7). They do as commanded, and finally Ezekiel is shown how the Glory of Yahweh departs from his house that had been defiled by the idolaters among his people.

Against this background we can better grasp what John is trying to communicate. If the sanctuary represents the faithful church, as the majority of the proponents of the figurative view believe, then it would appear that the worshipers and the altar in the court outside the sanctuary symbolize corrupt cult and idolatrous/syncretistic Christians. Possibilities here might include “Jezebel”, those following the teaching of “Balaam”, the Nicolaitans, and other opponents of John in the churches ⁽⁵⁴⁾. As Richard Bauckham has pointed out, “the principal

⁽⁵¹⁾ MURPHY, *Fallen*, 261; cf. BEALE, *Commentary*, 563, who sees the altar as representing “the sacrificial calling” of the Church.

⁽⁵²⁾ The mention of all four items provides enough markers for a competent reader/listener of Revelation to make the connection, especially as s/he has already accessed the context of Ezek 8 -- 9 while attempting to process the image of the sealing of the 144,000 in ch. 7, agreed by virtually all commentators to be modeled after the sealing of the faithful remnant in Ezek 9,4; see, e.g., the account of the act of interpreting an allusion by Z. BEN-PORAT, “The Poetics of Literary Allusion”, *PTL: A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 1 (1976) 105-128; cf. the Relevance-Theoretic approach of S.W. PATTEMORE, “The People of God in the Apocalypse: A Relevance-Theoretic Study” (Ph.D. diss.; University of Otago 2000) 2-86, and *passim*.

⁽⁵³⁾ S. MOYISE (see the summary statement in his *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation* [JSNTSup 115; Sheffield 1995] 17n25) has argued that John makes use of both Greek and Hebrew texts of the OT. If he is translating from Hebrew, 8:16 LXX is a fair translation, at least of the MT. Had the LXX translated the Divine Name as “God” like John does, the verbal parallelism (the text in bold) with Rev 11,1b-2a would be even more remarkable.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ So, e.g., M. KIDDLE, *The Revelation of St. John* (London 1947) 189; and R.J. MCKELVEY, *The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament* (Oxford 1969) 159; cf. PATTEMORE, “People”, 278, who observes that the description of the ministry of the two witnesses later in ch. 11 includes several motifs from the ministries of Moses and Elijah, who opposed Balaam (Num 23 -- 25) and Jezebel (1 Kgs 18 -- 19, 21). He also argues (*ibid.*, 278, 284, and *passim*) that in ch. 11 and elsewhere John alludes to heretical and compromising Christians and his opponents within the churches and consistently keeps “sharpening the demarcation lines” (*ibid.*, 278).

[continued on next page]

danger” for John’s audience was not persecution but “compromise with and assimilation to pagan society” (⁵⁵). Ultimately, the idolaters will be separated from and cast out of the company of the righteous, unless they repent (Rev 2,14-16.20-22) (⁵⁶). This would also fit well the only uses of the phrase “cast outside” in the LXX mentioned earlier. The first passage, Lev 14,34-40, gives instructions regarding a house possibly infected with growth that makes it ritually unclean. The house is given seven days, and if the contamination spreads, the unclean stones must be removed and thrown out of the city. The second passage, 2 Chr 29,16, describes the cleansing and consecration of the temple, and how the priests cast out to the courtyard every unclean thing that was found in the sanctuary.

The proposed new reading also gains support by the inclusion of the motif of the trampling of the holy city by the nations (⁵⁷). In the OT it is always Yahweh who brings the nations against the “holy city” (⁵⁸), as a consequence of his people’s idolatry. The purpose of the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC was to judge Judah, but at least some OT prophetic texts suggest that one purpose of the final eschatological trampling of the holy city will be redemptive, to purify the people and bring about repentance among them (so, for example, Zech 12 -- 14; Dan 11 -- 12) (⁵⁹). It is also worth noting that if our reading of John is correct, he is by no means alone in the NT in warning some in his audience about the impending judgment. For example, the author of 1 Peter, which has a number of conceptual parallels with

BEALE, *Commentary*, 560, considers the identification of that which is “cast out” with heretical or compromising believers “unlikely” because there is no mention of such a group in what follows in ch. 11. However, this is a *non sequitur*.

(⁵⁵) BAUCKHAM, *Climax*, 234. Cf. WARREN, “Apostasy”, 209, who concludes that for John, “[i]nherent in apostasy is a failure to perceive the true nature of the Church’s enemies and, hence, of the adversaries of Christ --- whether those opponents be ... tendencies toward syncretism ... the adoption of a culture’s immorality ... or the false prophet’s call to worship the glorious and powerful emperor”; K.A. STRAND, “‘Overcomer’: A Study in the Macrodynamic of Theme Development in the Book of Revelation”, *AUSS* 28 (1990) 237-254 (250); and BORING, *Revelation*, 92-93.

(⁵⁶) Both in Ezekiel (43,12; 44,9) and Revelation (21,27; 22,15) we see how nothing impure was allowed to enter the dwelling place of God. FARRER, *Images*, 128, FORD, *Revelation*, 176-177 and HENDRIKSEN, *Conquerors*, 127, similarly see in 11,1-2 a division between the faithful (ναός) and the unfaithful. However, since they include the altar and the worshipers in the act of measuring, the emphasis of their interpretation is on the idea that the world invades and takes possession of the unfaithful part of the Church, rather than on the resulting judgment by God, as our reading suggests.

(⁵⁷) E.g., Isa 63,18; Dan 8,13; 1 Macc 3,45.51; 4,60; 3 Macc 2,18; 2 Bar. 67,2. L.A. VOS, *The Synoptic Traditions in the Apocalypse* (Kampen 1965) 122, argues that John “clearly alludes” to the prediction of Jesus found in Luke 21,24, but as BAUCKHAM, *Climax*, 271n48, has pointed out, Vos fails to recognize that both passages are dependent on Dan 8,13.

(⁵⁸) BAUCKHAM, *Climax*, 272n50, objects to the distinguishing the faithful from an apostate part of the people of God on the basis of the use of the term “holy city” to refer to the New Jerusalem elsewhere in Revelation. However, it can also be argued that those other references are qualified and explicit, while this one is not; cf., e.g., Isa 48, where Israel calls itself “holy city”, but worships idols.

(⁵⁹) See also Mal 3,1-6 and *T. Benj.* 10,8-9. I.T. BECKWITH, *The Apocalypse of John: Studies in Introduction with a Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (New York 1919; repr. Grand Rapids 1967), who takes vv. 1-2 as relating to the ethnic Israel, nevertheless sees similar OT motifs here: the faithful remnant, symbolized by the sanctuary (and the worshipers), is preserved, and the trampling is a form of divine chastisement, whose purpose is to bring about repentance.

The length of trampling, “42 months”, and its parallels (“1260 days” and “time, and time, and half a time”) are all well-known apocalyptic symbols for a time of national distress or the limited period of final eschatological tribulation (see, e.g., AUNE, *Revelation*, 609-610). Interestingly, BAUCKHAM, *Climax*, 227-228, notes how this period (cf. Dan 11,35; 12,10) was understood in 1QM and in the medieval Hebrew *Signs of the Messiah* as purifying Israel and purging her of her wicked members. He himself, however, sees the purification as a (voluntary?) act of martyrdom.

Revelation, exhorts his audience by alluding to Ezek 9,6 LXX ⁽⁶⁰⁾: “For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God” (1 Pet 4,17a NIV).

3. *The Measuring of the Sanctuary*

We can now pull the various threads of this investigation together by considering the function(s) of measuring in our passage. As has been pointed out, the commands to measure and not to measure create a contrast between the measured and non-measured item(s) ⁽⁶¹⁾. Measuring is thus a device that draws a line of demarcation between the two groups or entities. If John is consciously using OT motifs, he deviates from them in at least two ways. First, the fact that John is told *not* to measure something is a signal to the audience to pay attention especially to the excluded items ⁽⁶²⁾. The narrative of Ezekiel’s visionary visit to the temple in Ezek 8 -- 9 explains the mention of all four measured and non-measured items, and hints at the ultimate doom of idolaters among the people of God. Second, while nothing is said about the fate of the thing measured (i.e., the sanctuary), the contrast with that which is not measured (i.e., the court outside the sanctuary and everything therein) suggests that it will not be cast out (and, implicitly, not be exposed to the trampling by the nations). Thus the prophetic act of measuring the sanctuary is not intended to convey that Christians are spiritually protected during the final tribulation (thus rendering meaningless all the warnings to the contrary in Revelation), while physically vulnerable (which was, after all, part and parcel of being a Christian). Rather, John is being more subversive. Traditionally, the whole temple compound is trampled (Dan 8,13), but John takes a different tack. Unlike the sanctuaries of the past, this one will be protected from God’s judgment ⁽⁶³⁾. Idolatry among God’s people will still be judged, but this time God’s Glory will not abandon its earthly sanctuary. The sense of preservation with regard to the sanctuary is created by the contrast with the non-measured items and their fate; there is no need to search for OT passages where measuring symbolizes protection.

⁽⁶⁰⁾ For an allusion to Ezek 9,6b LXX in 1 Peter 4,17, see, e.g., J.R. MICHAELS, *1 Peter* (WBC 49; Dallas 1988) 271; and P.H. DAVIDS, *The First Epistle of Peter* (NICNT; Grand Rapids 1990) 171; contra J.H. ELLIOTT, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 37b; Garden City, New York 2000) 798-799, whose case against the majority view is somewhat weakened by his reading the LXX against the MT.

The other conceptual parallels between 1 Peter and Revelation include the following: (1) The recipients of 1 Peter are undergoing “various trials” and possibly persecution; (2) their faith is being tested by these trials; (3) they are a “spiritual house”, and a “royal priesthood”; (4) they are to declare the praises/power of God; (5) they are to demonstrate the life of Jesus among the nations so that as they observe them, they may give glory to God in the day of visitation; and (6) they are to follow Christ’s example, who suffered for them and in whose mouth no deceit was found. The items 2, 3, 5, and 6 are closely related to Rev 11,1-13.

⁽⁶¹⁾ So, e.g., G. STEVENSON, *Power and Place: Temple and Identity in the Book of Revelation* (Berlin -- New York 2001) 259.

⁽⁶²⁾ This is further enforced by a degree of ambiguity in the text. Ambiguity in prophetic literature is often used to grab the attention of the audience and direct it to the real issue at stake.

⁽⁶³⁾ According to the majority view, the measuring of the sanctuary parallels the sealing of the 144,000. While this paper has argued for a more nuanced understanding of Rev 11,1-2, it also suggests that the links between the two passages are stronger than previously seen. I hope to argue elsewhere that just as with the act of measuring, what is at stake with the sealing is not spiritual protection from satanic attacks but rather protection of the faithful from God’s judgment.

4. *John's Mission?*

Before concluding, perhaps we may resuscitate an idea that was first put forward over half a century ago by Austin Farrer. He noticed that John was not only given a scroll to eat, but also a “pen like a rod” to measure with, and proposed that “[t]he digesting of the scroll is a metaphorical reading, the measuring of the temple will be a metaphorical writing. St John the inspired prophet by his written prophecy is to effect what the ‘measuring’ describes” (⁶⁴). Could it be that just as the mission of the Church to the world is symbolically presented in vv. 3-13, so is the mission of John to the Church portrayed in vv. 1-2? After all, John is a servant of Christ, who wields the “rod of iron” that can be used to shepherd or break the nations, depending on their response to him (see Ps 2,9; cf. Rev 2,27; 12,5; 19,15). John’s rod-like pen thus places the ultimate challenge before the audience: the lines are being drawn, and it is time for them to decide whether they stand with John or his opponents and ultimately, whether they will dwell in the New Jerusalem or come under God’s judgment and be cast out.

(⁶⁴) FARRER, *Images*, 44.

SUMMARY

The act of measuring in Rev 11,1-2 does not portray the Church as spiritually protected but physically vulnerable, as normally thought. Not only are there lexical and interpretive difficulties with the traditional view, it is also not supported by the OT and extra-biblical evidence commonly adduced. Reading two καίς differently and recognizing an allusion to Ezek 8:16 LXX addresses both the lexical and interpretive issues. The act of measuring is used to communicate the fact that contrary to Ezek 8 -- 9, this time God will not abandon his earthly sanctuary, though idolatry among his people will still be judged.