

Rev 26-02-22b

Revelation chapter 11, the two witnesses have delivered their testimony, whoever they are, you know my speculation on this, they are certainly and without question functioning in the spirit and power after the pattern of Moses and Elijah. It's inescapable, it's unmistakable. This is the witness of the law and the prophets, the word of God, which John has just taken in and digested and had a personal experience of and is then going to prophesy and witness before many different kinds of people, many different categories of people.

And that is factual. You have that in verse 11 of chapter 10. Then we have taking the measure.

Don't get distracted by the Gentiles, by those who are outside. Focus on the worship of God, the temple of God, the altar of God, and the people of God who worship before that altar at that temple. Evaluate that, measure that.

And we look for productive, fruitful, beneficial, mutual Christian fellowship. And I am happy to say that we are certainly beneficiaries of the fellowship that we enjoy in our church. And it is to be prized.

This is what John is called to do. Go to the temple and take its measure. Then there is the witness to the world.

But the people of God come first. And that is the priority. That is where evaluation is made.

They have, these witnesses, have a time span appointed by God. It is very specific, just as our lives have a very specific duration and location in the inscrutable eternal past. God decided when and where each of us would be born, how we would come to know about God and about the Lord Jesus, and come to faith, and be enabled to grow in grace and knowledge, and to shine a light, as the old song says, brighten the corner where you are.

This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine. Wherever we have been appointed, whatever our service and function is, to be faithful and obedient and recognize that whatever may oppose us, whether it is circumstance, whether it is our health, whether it is our relationships, whether it is the world around us, economic challenges, whatever it may be, God has placed us just as he appointed the bread on the table of showbread, the golden candlestick, and the golden altar of incense in the holy place. We have an assigned function.

We have been enabled and empowered to serve. You today, I today, and tomorrow have an appointment with the destiny that God assigned to us. And like John, and like these faithful witnesses, we need to recognize that whatever may come, we may prevail for a time and we may be seemingly overcome for a time.

But look at what happens next. We pick up here when they finish their testimony in verse 7, Revelation chapter 11, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit, this is Satan. He will

make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.

And by the way, this is the first mention of a beast, the beast ascending out of the bottomless pit, not previously understood. You say, well, who and what is this? That's what we're going to come to understand better as we move along. He makes war, overcomes, and kills.

Three phases. There is opposition, there is neutralization, and there is death. And the world can look at Christians who live in faith and die with hope and say, they just went to dust.

I see no signs of Jesus coming back or resurrections and all of this mythological hapless villager benighted belief system that you have. You die like everybody else. But the people's tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three and a half days and will not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves.

We bury our dead, and this isn't a rule. There's no theology attached to how the remains of believers are disposed of. There are some who are concerned about cremation or burial, or what if you bury at sea? What if you're like the Challenger disaster and you're incinerated and your atoms are scattered across the entire upper atmosphere? There is a symbolic communication, especially within families and friends, if we commit our bodies to the grave.

There was a tradition in the Navy for a long time of burial at sea. There are those who will cremate and scatter ashes or preserve ashes. The actual physical disposition doesn't matter.

God is the God of creation. He created the entire universe and every atom in it. And when it says that He is going to raise our mortal bodies, there is nothing you can do to a mortal body that stymies God in bringing it back in a version 2.0 form, higher and greater and ready for the eternal future.

You don't have to fear what man can do to you. It is all in the realm of symbolism. Some people say, I want to have a grave with a headstone and my bones, my flesh is resting in hope.

And many times we put families together in a cemetery and it is a symbolic communication. We expect to be raised together and to see the Lord Jesus coming for us in the air together. And it's a wonderful nonverbal communication, if you will.

My father's headstone down at Fort Gibson in the military cemetery has his name and specifications. And below that it says, resting in perfect peace, resting in perfect peace, regardless of the actual physical disposition. Here, the world thinks that it's a big deal and to leave these witnesses laying above ground to watch them come apart and decay and be subject to the forces of nature and unto dust thou shalt return that science describes, that materialism expects.

You're just as dead as anybody else. Where is your God? The mocking that took place the Lord Jesus was on the cross is reflected here. It is a part of a pattern of derision, of rejection, of mocking.

Why does God allow this to happen? Why is it noted here? One of the reasons that we are here as witnesses to the truth of God and to the Lord Jesus is that it is a way of exposing the attitudes of others. People won't necessarily out their thinking, their attitudes, their beliefs, unless they come into contact with something that is different. And when your beliefs are challenged, these witnesses for 1260 days have destroyed all arguments to the contrary.

What comes out of their mouth is like what comes out of the mouth of the Lord Jesus. They do not ask him questions anymore. The Pharisees were silenced, even when they were not convinced.

But these same individuals that couldn't answer the biblical responses of the Lord Jesus were delighted when they convinced the Romans to crucify him. Let him call upon God. See if his God will save him if he delights in him.

Oh, look, he's calling on Elijah or one of the prophets. When he said Eli, Eli, they thought he was saying Elia, Elijah. They could only hear what they wanted to hear and see what they wanted to see.

And they mocked and scorned. And by the way, that was not forgiven. As I have told you many times, if you read the text carefully, the words from the cross that Jesus spoke, one of them being, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do, does not cover these mocking, derisive, bilious, corrosive rejecters of God and God's son.

Jesus is looking down at the Roman soldiers who are just doing their job. And that has implications for those who say that you can't be a Christian and serve in the military. You know, you're a murderer and there's never a time to take a human life, etc., etc.

The Lord Jesus saw the soldiers who actually accomplished the crucifixion, but it wasn't their idea. It wasn't their heart being reflected. They did their job.

They did not know what they were doing. The Pharisees knew what they were doing. They had heard Jesus for three and a half years.

And that three and a half comes into play here. But those who dwell on the earth, verse 10, rejoice over the witnesses. They make merry and send gifts to one another because these two prophets had tormented those who dwell on the earth.

Notice the devouring by fire issuing forth from the mouth is here categorized as torment. They can't refute it. They can't challenge it effectively and neutralize this witness.

So they are tormented. But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God entered them and they stood on their feet and great fear fell on those who saw them. The breath of God.

This goes all the way back to Genesis. God breathed into the carefully formed body of Adam,

the breath of life, and man became a living soul. And this is the assurance we have that having fulfilled our function, having born our witness to the world, and in 99.99% of cases, we will die at the end of our testimony.

And there are those who say, well, you know, they're just as dead as any of the rest of us. Our hope, our confidence, our faith is vindicated because the breath of God is going to enter your body and my body and the body of every believer in this age, as all of the believers in the previous age. And this is another place where viewing prophecy as pattern is so helpful.

You could say, well, here's the two witnesses. And this is clearly a picture of resurrection after three days. The Lord Jesus was in the tomb for three days.

Lazarus was in the tomb four days. These guys are dead, not in a tomb for three and a half days. So is it three days, three and a half days, or four days, the duration before the resurrection occurs? Yes.

It depends on what category you're in. This is a pattern of death, delay, and then deliverance. And those who died in the apostolic age as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ will rise.

Those who die shortly before the rapture will rise. Those in the tribulation who are martyred for their faith, and they are souls under the altar, will be raised. This is the pattern.

There is death. There is celebration by those who think that death is a victory. We say, death, where is your sting? Grave, where is your victory? The Lord Jesus Christ is the means by which God gives us the victory.

And what seems like a setback turns out to be the means of exposing attitudes in anticipation of future judgment. We don't have to speculate on what people think about the testimony of the witnesses. They out themselves.

Their actions are written in the books that will be opened in Revelation chapter 20 at the great white throne, and they will be without excuse. Well, I know what I said to my friends, but in my heart, I really believe their witness. Did you celebrate and give gifts and dance on their dead bodies, so to speak? You have no excuse.

And remember, this generation is emblematic. These that celebrate the death of the witnesses is emblematic of every generation of those who reject the witness of God, the testimony that has been given throughout human history. More about that in an upcoming lesson.

We're going to talk about why are the judgments so severe on the people who are on the earth at this time, this particular set of years and months and days? Aren't there people that have already lived and died that would be more worthy of these judgments? The leaders in world history you think of that are responsible for the death of millions, the institutions that have the blood of countless thousands, hundreds of thousands, and millions of people on their hands down through history. The gross, murderous treatment of the people of God, Old Testament

and New, by those who seem to live and die in relative comfort, shouldn't God raise them and perpetrate these judgments and pour out these bowls and sound the trumpets and break the seals on their heads? They are as worthy, if not more, than any of the people that are going to live and die in and under these judgments. So it doesn't seem quite fair.

This is a relatively small slice of everyone that's ever lived and died. We're going to see the answer to that question. What we can say is this is the reflection of God's attitude towards such.

There are those who are just as happy to see what they believe to be the defeat and the overcoming of the testimony and witness of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. They are just as celebratory in their hearts and they always have been. There were Canaanites who celebrated.

There were Assyrians that celebrated. There were Babylonians that celebrated when the people of God were overcome. That is a mistake and they are deceived to think that that's all there is.

And what they think is a defeat for the people of God is in fact the means by which they are undone, eternally so. And you see that in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and you see it here in the resurrection of the two witnesses. So after the three and a half days, the breath of God, the breath of life from God enters them.

They stand on their feet and great fear fell on those who saw them. Notice they stand on their feet first. You can't help but think of Ezekiel, prophesy to these bones.

Can these bones live? And Ezekiel prophesies and in the first wave, flesh and sinew cover the bones. In the second prophecy, prophesy again to these bones. They stand on their feet because the breath of the life of God enters them and they stand a mighty army ready to do battle.

Valley of Dry Bones. And there is heard a loud voice from heaven, whether it's John that heard it or they that heard it. I think the better text is here in New King James.

They heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, come up here. John obviously heard it because he's writing it down. But there was a voice from heaven that told John, go take the little book, open in the hand of the angel.

In verse eight of chapter 10, the voice from heaven spoke to me again. This, I think, brackets John's testimony ministry. The voice from heaven speaks.

He takes and eats the little scroll. The voice from heaven at the end speaks from heaven and says, come up here, direct identical Greek to Revelation chapter four, verse one. Come up here.

And John has heard these words before. Come up here. And they ascended to heaven in a cloud.

This is the accompanying glory, the honorary guard, if you will. They don't just ascend, they ascend in a cloud. And the Lord Jesus ascended in a cloud.

If you read Acts chapter one, and this is a reflection as they have drunk his cup and undergone his baptism, they now receive his honorary glorified reception and transfer to heaven. And their enemies saw them. And in the same hour, there was a great earthquake and a 10th of the city fell.

This earthquake is emblematic. When you think of the application to us, when our testimony and witness is finished, we will be called to the skies to meet the Lord in the air. And when we leave, the 70th week is going to take place.

That which restrains is taken out of the way. And the earthquake is emblematic of all of the judgments that will befall this earth. When we are called to heaven by the trump of God, the voice of the archangel, the shout, we will hear it whether we are alive or in the grave or in the sea or scattered in the atoms of the earth in whatever way we will be reassembled in a new and glorified fashion.

And be caught up together with the Lord to be with him from then on. But in the same hour that they were resurrected, stood on their feet, they've got a physical body that's perfectly functional, and they're taken up to heaven in a cloud. There's a great earthquake and a 10th of the city fell.

You can't help but think of the tithe this is the city of Jerusalem. And when they do not render to God his due, you find this when David numbered the people, you find it when they did not honor the jubilee year and the duration of the judgment in captivity in Babylon, the 70 years was the Sabbaths that they had not rendered to the Lord. And we want to remember to render to the Lord that which is his.

And so God takes the tithe out of the city here. The 10th part of the city falls. And in the physical sense, with this great earthquake, this is the great earthquake that we saw at the end of the seals.

We'll see it again at the end of the bowls. And this is the earthquake that is going to split the Mount of Olives, going to divide it. But if you think about the center of that earthquake being at that fault line that runs under the Mount of Olives, what part of Jerusalem is going to be utterly destroyed? I think it is going to be that eastern side.

That is the side where you can currently see the Dome of the Rock. They call it the Mosque of Omar, but it isn't Omar's and it's not a mosque. You can read that.

There's a lot you can research if you're interested on where is the location where the temple should stand, where it used to stand on Mount Zion. There are three major candidates. One is the northern conjecture.

And based on a lot of things, I don't have time to go into it. I don't find application for us in it. Just be aware that where the dome currently sits is where the Muslims thought the temple had been.

But there is very good evidence that it sat either south of that or north of that. And there's YouTube videos, there's books, and they will cite the testimony of Josephus. What could you and could you not see from the Antonia Fortress? The Jews were able to build a wall so that the worship in the court where the altar is could not be observed by the Romans.

And there are certain things that have to be satisfied to ascertain that location. And if some of these conjectures are true, those who pray at the western wall are a lot closer than they think to where the temple originally stood. Be that as it may, suffice it to say, this earthquake follows the departure of God's witnesses and is a mark of the end of this period covered by the sounding angels.

And the 10th of the city falls. And in the earthquake, 7,000 people are killed. It says 7,000 people.

Cross out the word people. It's not the word for people. This is the Greek word anoma, O-N-O-M-A.

And it's names. 7,000. You think 7,000.

And when you look at the swaths of people that are dying under these judgments, it doesn't sound like very many. These are people of the name. You think of Genesis 6, the Nephilim, these were the mighty men of old, men of the name, men of renown, it's translated out of the Hebrew.

But these are names in Jerusalem. There were prominent people leading the opposition to the two witnesses. They are the talking heads.

They are the governmental leaders. They are those. And apparently, there is so much joy over the departure, the death of these two witnesses, that these have all converged.

You know how when there's something pertaining to an issue that someone has identified with, they will go there. And so you'll find some congressman or some leader on a particular issue will go and speak and try to get their face on TV in association with this particular event. 7,000 names.

This could be anything from prominent world leaders, prominent commentators to podcasters. But 7,000 names are slain. And this chops off the head of the snake, if you will.

And in the earthquake, those who are not killed, the rest, and you get the idea, these are the rest of the names, and they change their tune. They change their tone. They change their message.

And those who were not killed, the rest of the names are afraid and give glory to the God of heaven. And they are forced to acknowledge this is what was foretold. There is no other way to explain the resurrection and ascension.

This is an act of God. Now, they give glory to God in the sense that they acknowledge that he is the God who made these things happen. I think that this is in the realm of even the demons believe and tremble.

Satan has seen everything God has done, including turning the crucifixion into the resurrection and knowing that his time is short and his cause is lost. But he doesn't repent. He doesn't change.

He doesn't avail himself of any other option. And even when people will assign the power and the glory to God, they don't act on it personally themselves. And they're still lost and destined for the lake of fire.

So they give glory to God. But just as we saw previously, there are those who do not repent regardless of what God does. So they give him the glory.

But people heard the Lord Jesus teach and it says, you know, never man spake like this man. And they gave glory to God. These same people are hollering for his crucifixion a short time later.

Giving glory to God is not the same as repentance and faith. You can acknowledge that God is in something. And there are those who are deists and say, well, there must be an ultimate source.

There is a creator somewhere. And that's recognizing his creative work, his eternal power and Godhead. And they giving glory means acknowledging that.

It's not the same as saving faith. So then verse 15, the seventh angel sounded and this harks back to verse seven of the previous chapter. In the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God will be finished as he declared to his servants, the prophets.

So now the seventh angel sounds in verse 15, chapter 11. There are loud voices in heaven saying the kingdom singular of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever. Handel's Messiah, can't help but think of it.

The 24 elders who we haven't seen in a while, who sit before God on their thrones, fell on their faces and worshiped God. They don't just give glory to God. They worship God on their faces saying, we give you thanks, O Lord God almighty, the one who is and who was and who is to come.

Because you have taken your great power and reigned. The nations were angry and your wrath has come and the time of the dead that they should be judged and that you should reward your servants, the prophets and the saints and those who fear your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth. There is no more delay in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel.

And yet, if you were to take this book chronologically, look how many chapters we've got left before you get to the great white throne. You've got eight more chapters and the entirety of the sequence of seven bowls, not to mention the seven thunders, but the seven bowls are yet future. So in each of these cases, there is a rewind.

And now we're going to view the same events from a different camera angle. But this is the conclusion of the trumpets at verse 19. Notice at the beginning of chapter 11, John is measuring the temple with a reed like a rod, with a standard of measure that is authoritative.

And one can hold the rod of authority in judgment and in disposition of that which is measured and those who are measured. The temple of God is opened in heaven and the ark of his covenant was seen in his temple. Remembering that everything revealed in Exodus and Deuteronomy, everything in the law is a reflection of heavenly things.

Moses is told to make the earthly shadow copies according to the pattern that he saw in the mount pattern. Even the physical attributes and characteristics are emblems. They are a pattern that is a reflection, a shadow of the reality in heaven.

There is an ark of his covenant in his temple in heaven. How does the one on earth measure up? That's what John determined with the reed like a rod. Here's the reality.

The lightnings and noises, thunderings and earthquake and great hail happen on the earth. The revelation of reality in heaven results in judgments on the earth. It's time for us to review the meaning of lightnings, noises, thunderings and earthquake and great hail.

And we will do that next time because we are preparing to go into a further description of what takes place in the interim period here. You say period, it's the interim space in the account between the trumpets and the bulls. So next time we're going to see why this vision of the temple in heaven accompanies these destructive elements on earth and then move into the great sign in heaven, the woman clothed with the sun.

We're going to see seven personages revealed. When you look at the characters in this dramatization, this sort of visionary parable, there are going to be seven individuals in it. So many sevens in this book.

But as we close for the morning, we are grateful to God that we are individually as well as corporately in the very center of his plan and purpose. We have an assigned place in time. We have an assigned place in history.

We are assigned in families. He said of the solitary and families. I just want to close by reading Psalm 37.

It's a short psalm, but now that we have covered this chapter and we have seen both the seals and the trumpets, I just want to read to you Psalm 37. If you have your Bible there and can turn to it, great. This is a Psalm of David.

It's in the first 50, labeled as of David. This is the application. Do not fret because of evil doers, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity, for they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb.

Trust in the Lord and do good. Dwell in the land and feed on his faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and he shall give you the desires of your heart.

Commit your way to the Lord. Trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light and your justice as the noonday.

Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him. Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger and forsake wrath.

Do not fret, it only causes harm. For evil doers shall be cut off, but those who wait on the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall be no more.

Indeed, you will look carefully for his place and not find it. The meek shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. The wicked plots against the just and gnashes at him with his teeth.

The Lord laughs at him, for he sees that his day is coming. The wicked have drawn the sword and bent the bow to cast down the poor and needy, to slay those who are of upright conduct. Their sword shall enter their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.

A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but the Lord upholds the righteous. The Lord knows the days of the upright, and their inheritance shall be forever.

They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord, like the splendor of the meadows, shall vanish. Into smoke they shall vanish away.

The wicked borrows and does not repay, but the righteous shows mercy and gives. For those blessed by him shall inherit the earth, but those cursed by him shall be cut off. Steps of a righteous man are ordered by the Lord, and he delights in his way.

Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholds him with his hand. I have been young, and now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful and lends, and his descendants are blessed.

Depart from evil and do good, and dwell forevermore. For the Lord loves justice, and does not forsake his saints. They are preserved forever, but the descendants of the wicked shall be cut off.

The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell in it forever. The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of justice. The law of his God is in his heart.

None of his steps shall slide. The wicked watches the righteous, and seeks to slay him. The Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.

Wait on the Lord and keep his way, and he shall exalt you to inherit the land. When the wicked are cut off, you will see it. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a native green tree.

Yet he passed away, and behold, he is no more. Indeed, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the blameless man, and observe the upright.

For the future of that man is peace, but the transgressors shall be destroyed together. The future of the wicked shall be cut off. But the salvation of the righteous is from the Lord.

He is their strength in time of trouble, and the Lord shall help him and deliver them. He shall deliver them from the wicked and save them, because they trust in him." Isn't that a beautiful summary of the unfolding truths that we see in the Revelation, especially in this section? Mark the blameless man, observe the upright, measure those who worship at the temple, make sure we are qualified, and keep in touch with those who seek to do likewise. Well, let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you so much for the truth of your word, the power that it brings into our lives and into our souls to transform us, to sanctify and cleanse and purify us, to equip us for service and function, and to link us in fellowship with believers of like mind. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will help us to see the outworking of these truths in the hours and days that lie ahead and that are allotted to us until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.