

Revelation 11:7-19

"The Holiday From Hell, The Heavenly Perspective"

Even though we're just 10 days away, I'm not talking about Halloween! You always know when you begin to see Christmas décor hitting the shelves that Halloween is near...

We've been following the miraculous ministry of the 2 witnesses of Rev 11. We've said it over & over throughout our study of this book & undoubtedly we'll continue to be reminded of the fact that even in wrath God remembers mercy... Even as He is pouring out judgment on the world that has rejected J.C. He continues to grant opportunity after opportunity for people to turn from their sin & trust in Him. Many will, but many more won't. The latest opportunity that God has granted has come in the form of 2 witnesses whom God will raise up (seemingly during the 1st 3 ½ yrs of the Great Trib). & He will grant them power; & they will prophesy 1,260 days. They will be pleading w/people to turn from their sin & trust in J.C., they will be preaching the gospel & proclaiming publicly the truth of the word of God. They'll be immovable, invulnerable & untouchable for 3 ½ yrs & those who try to harm them they will toast. Fire will proceed from their mouths & devour their enemies; they have power to shut heaven so that it doesn't rain & they can strike the earth w/every conceivable plague as often as they desire.

As you might imagine that won't be a way to win friends & influence people. There will be people who want these guys out of the equation & for 3 ½ yrs there will be undoubtedly many failed attempts to rid the planet of these 2 witnesses. Yet when they've finished their ministry, the purpose to which God has called them specifically, *then* God will allow them to be taken out, notice.

Vs 7-10

Amazon, eBay, fed-ex & UPS will be working nonstop to ensure the gifts are getting where they need to be! This event will spawn a holiday from hell, literally! It's like the antichrist-mas. Perhaps the theme will be, "We wish you an antichrist-mas and a hopeless 3 yrs ☺!"

Be that as it may, for as much grief that these 2 have (in the minds of the world) caused over the last few yrs, this will no doubt seal many in their support of the A.C. No one has been able to stop them; & though he's had tremendous love, tremendous tolerance, the time has come to put an end to this & he rises up, makes war against them, overcomes them & kills them...he's the only one who's been able to do it. The people of the world are so overjoyed that they actually celebrate the occasion through sending gifts to one another. It becomes a globally recognized holiday; dead prophets day... Ok.

There are a # of things we want to see in this section of scripture. The 1st thing we need to take note of is the fact that even though they were *killed*, their ministry was not *cut short*. The task to which they were called was fully accomplished. Vs 7 makes it very clear that the beast didn't overcome & kill them until their ministry was "finished".

So we note God's sovereignty in the midst of it all; we see both His *protection*, then His *permission*. In certain respects we're reminded of Job, the enemy couldn't touch *them* just like the enemy couldn't touch *him*; accept at the express permission of God Himself. So to in this situation, when God was done, they were done, but not until the appointed time.

Now you know where I'm going w/this; this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord. Listen, *"No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, And their righteousness is from Me,' Says the Lord. 1"*

When it comes to your life & mine God provides a very delicate balance between protection & permission. He hedges you about as His child; He protects you from the wiles of the wicked one, (trust me, if He didn't you would be dead today). Yet at times He will *permit* what would seem to be great tragedy or great difficulty to enter the equation of our lives. When He does it's ours to trust Him. We realize that even though we may never understand on this side of eternity; that ultimately it will stand to serve His eternal purpose which will make for our eternal good & His eternal glory.

We need to realize that God does not see as we see, when we lose a loved one, or cancer or tragedy strikes us or someone we love, it's hard for us to see any redemptive value in it, & as it pertains to this world, there *may not* be. But as it pertains to the scheme of things eternally we trust in the Lord that there is. This is where we learn to walk by faith & not by feelings &/or sight. Listen to me; Rom 8:28 is still in effect, even in the midst of things we don't understand. *"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."*²

God is good & we trust in Him. We don't always know why affliction visits us, or children are taken *before* us, or tragic accidents happen *to* us; but what we do know is that God is good & though He slay me, yet will I praise Him, yet will I trust Him because we know the thoughts that He thinks toward us, thoughts of peace & not of evil, to give us a future (eternally) and a hope (that is a guaranteed certainty) amen?

¹ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Is 54:17). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Ro 8:28). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Here's what you can rest assured of as it pertains to this text. The enemy has no power over your life & you will be here until the day God is finished w/you. You are under God's "witness protection" program. **You have a job to do child of God! Until it's complete you're going to be here on this planet. Now when you've completed the task, you'll be called home. It could be by any # of ways, but finish the work. Finish well, the way you head home is a peripheral matter, the primary matter is that you finish the work.**

We want to hear the words, ***"Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord."***³

Here's something else I want to point out real quick. This passage illustrates the difference between being a witness & giving testimony. We often talk about witnessing, but more accurately we're "testifying". A witness is who we are, testifying is what we do. When they finish their "testimony", the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them & kill them.

In case you weren't certain let me make it clear for you. The "beast" in question here is the A.C. himself. He will be a politician who is supercharged (possessed) by some satanic, demonic entity that ascends out of the bottomless pit. This is the 1st time that he's referred to in the book of Rev as "the beast" but it certainly won't be the last.

God will allow him to overcome His 2 witnesses & kill them. Then out of disdain & utter contempt for them & everything they stand for he won't even allow them a decent burial but will leave their bodies to rot in the open hot sun on the streets of Jerusalem.

Of course the only way we know its Jerusalem is because John tells us that this will happen where our Lord was crucified. Beyond that it doesn't say, it says it's the great city which spiritually is called "Sodom & Egypt". I find it interesting that outwardly it's a "holy city" (Vs 2), & it's a "great city", but in reality, spiritually it's Sodom & it's Egypt... Sorta takes us to last weeks core study doesn't it? ***"For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."***⁴ And again, ***"I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings."***⁵

Sodom being known for it's self centered prosperity, mingled w/immorality, Egypt known for its pride, arrogance, oppression & rebellion. It's easy to make the connection w/any city in love w/& entering into a covenant w/the A.C. which Jerusalem (Israel) will do.

³ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Mt 25:21). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (1 Sa 16:7). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Je 17:10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

One commentator points out, “This reveals the crude, cold barbarism of the last days which will be covered w/but a thin veneer of culture.” They’re treated like dead animals on the side of the road & for 3 ½ days the whole world will gloat over their dead bodies.

Now think about this, how can the whole world see them at 1 time. We’re talking CNN, MSNBC, FOX news, internet web cams. Think this through, this wasn’t even possible until a few decades ago, yet John said it would happen 2,000 yrs ago. Modern technology that allows for worldwide viewing instantaneously is a prophecy of scripture fulfilled in recent times.

But these guys won’t be allowed to be buried, instead the worldwide web & CNN news cameras will be fixated on them. Perhaps they prophesied they’d rise again? We don’t know, but they’re not going to go for the “empty tomb” “masquerade”, “this time we’ll keep the cameras fixated on them 24/7.”

And because the people wouldn’t turn from their sin, & these 2 men struck various & sundry parts of the earth w/plagues & killed their enemies for 3 ½ yrs being seemingly unstoppable & untouchable all the while preaching the gospel, when they’re finally gone the world will rejoice. Such to the extent that they send one another gifts, and celebrate the occasion... It’s the holiday, literally from hell!

BTW you might take note of the fact that this is the only mention of rejoicing found throughout the entire period known as the Great Tribulation & it’s over the death of God’s faithful witnesses... Surely this encourages you & me to be faithful during difficult times; if anyone was treated unfairly simply for being whom God called them to be it’s these 2 guys. They were hated for simply imploring people to turn from their sin & to trust in J.C. & when they’re killed the world rejoices.

But such is the nature of a world that loves darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil... Some people would rather be lied to so they can feel better about themselves rather than be told the truth that their life is a mess & it’s only going to get worse until they turn from their sin & give their life to Christ.

The bible tells us, *“Rebuke is more effective for a wise man Than a hundred blows on a fool.”* Proverbs 17:10 The one who is wise will listen & appropriately respond to the truth, but a fool might get beat down 100 times & still won’t get it, still won’t change, still insist in his own sinful way & only be enraged when confronted about it.

It's imperative that we learn to love the truth, even if it hurts. W/regard to the A.C. the bible says, *“—The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”* 2 Th 2:9–10 3 ½ yrs they prophesied, 3 ½ days they lay dead on the street... Vs 11-14

Talk about a jaw dropping, party killing kind of a moment, this is it! There he is, Anderson Cooper, live on the streets of Jerusalem & it's day 4 of dead prophet watch & so far no activity, their still just laying there... Suddenly the camera begins trembling as these guys, slightly out of focus, then coming into full focus stand up behind him. He can't see them, but the camera guys catching it all; the breath of life from God enters them & they stand up!

Then comes one of the great understatement of the bible, “& great fear fell on those who saw them.” Ya think!?

(Oh how we need the breath of life from God to enter us, that we might stand up & serve God whole heartedly, that we might testify of Him openly before the otherwise unbelieving world.)

Then as the news cameras are rolling a voice calls out to them from heaven saying, “Come up here” & they ascend to heaven in a cloud & their enemies see it all, wow! As to where the Lord went up only in the sight of His friends/followers, & the church will be snatched away violently/suddenly, instantly, these guys are called out publicly & taken up deliberately before the watching world...

But keep your cameras rolling because in that same hour, in obvious connection w/what just happened there will be an earthquake in the city of Jerusalem & 10% of it will be destroyed & 7,000 people will die. As for those who survive, they freak out, great fear falls upon them & they give glory to the God of heaven...

Now whether or not it's true repentance that's debatable. Its amazing how many people acknowledge God in the moment of crisis but when the dust settles they go right back to business as usual... (We've seen that in our own city). Others think this signals the wake up call of the Jews & this is where their eyes are opened & they repent, I suppose either is plausible at this point.

Vs15

Of course we realize that Jesus won't claim His right to rule until He returns, but the victory (won previously at the cross) is here declared.

Note the contrast between the 7th seal & the 7th trumpet. When the 7th seal was broken there was a profound silence that struck the halls of heaven. When the 7th trumpet sounds there is a joyful chorus that declares the glorious resolution of all things, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord & of His Christ, & He shall reign forever & ever!”

Btw I know that volume is quite a contentious thing when it comes to worship, but it would seem to me that God likes it loud ☺! There were “loud” voices. The psalmist says, “*Shout* joyfully to the Lord all the earth, *shout* joyfully to the Rock of our salvation!” Now I’m not saying that the focus should be decibels, but rather unashamed, all out loud worship w/guts! There should be a strength to our worship, an intensity that comes from the heart.

Vs 16-18

The more we *study* these elders, the more we *love* these elders. They represent the leadership of all of God’s people throughout all time & human history & they have 1 thing that they do over & over & over again. They get off their thrones & fall on their faces before God in humility & give God praise & glory.

I’m gonna let you in on a little secret that pertains to true godly leadership. True leadership is all about getting off your throne & falling on your face before God...

I’ve discovered (& maybe you’ve met these guys) that some people will go out of their way to make sure you know their credentials, that you have a sense of their great accomplishments so that you’ll be impressed *with* them & think highly *of* them. Yet as a general rule when one *exalts* themselves it gives us a *low* impression. It’s the people who walk in humility & don’t worry about impressing anybody, but just give God glory that we all admire.

These guys can’t seem to keep their seats, every time we see them they can’t get on their faces fast enough & give God all the honor & praise. There’s never any talk of who they are, what they did to get there or any of that, they’re just men who are always humbling themselves before God so as to give Him glory. Therefore we admire them, we aspire to be like them, always glorifying the Lord and giving Him thanksgiving & praise.

We’ve seen them worship Him as the Creator, as the Redeemer & now as the Conqueror & King. Essentially they bring up 3 things. That He reigns *supremely* (17), that He judges *righteously* (18a) & that He rewards *graciously* (18b).

They say, “You have taken Your great power & reigned”, “the nations were angry...” Btw, this isn’t just a declaration that speaks of the great tribulation, it’s a summation of human history. **God has always reached out to lost man, & man has consistently rejected His offer of salvation, offended to be considered sinners (prideful). The world doesn’t want Christ to rule, they’re angry at the idea of being submitted to a righteous God...**

“& the time of Your wrath has come”. Now, God’s wrath isn’t at all like human anger. The wrath of God is His measured, carefully calculated yet necessary response to sin. If you’re a believer, His wrath was satisfied at the cross of Christ. Jesus bore the wrath of God on our behalf. For the unbeliever, now is the time to repent of your sin because the time of His wrath is coming.

God reigns supremely, He judges righteously, & He rewards graciously. “And that You should reward Your servants the prophets & the saints, & those who fear Your name, small & great.”

Now you can take the pseudo spiritual position that you don’t care about rewards as long as you make it to heaven, but that’s not the attitude of the Lord, nor of the scriptures. The Lord encouraged & the bible places great emphasis on striving toward the reward. I want an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God & I pray you do to & that your life reflects that passion in your service to the Lord, your faithfulness to His call upon your life & that you will finish well the race that’s set before you.

Notice at the end of Vs 18 that God has gone green 😊. Hey I’m all for kill the tree save the logger, yet we’re to realize that the earth is the Lord’s & all it’s fullness. That being the case we’re to be good stewards of that which He has entrusted to us & those who destroy the earth, He will destroy...

Vs 19

Now don’t weird out on me here, this isn’t the ark that was made in the book of Exodus. The ark speaks of the presence of God, God had Moses make an earthly copy of the heavenly reality. The point here that God is a God who makes covenants & who keeps covenants & God will keep His covenant w/Israel.

God has also made a covenant w/you & me. That if we will believe on the Lord J.C. that we will be saved. It’s a covenant that isn’t based upon what we do, but upon what He has done for us in the shedding of His blood & the laying down of His life upon the cross.

God is faithful; He may allow hell to win a battle; but He will win the war. The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord & of His Christ, & He shall reign forever & ever! Amen? Amen.

Prayer Points:

God we give You praise. We thank You that You reign supremely, that You judge righteously & that You reward graciously. Help us to be those who worship You whole heartedly, who walk in humility & find ourselves on our faces before You regularly. We thank You for the encouragement of Your word; we trust You. Even when things are difficult or don't make sense. We choose (Lord) to walk by faith & not by feelings knowing that You are good. Help us Lord to finish well, to run this race to win, for the glory of Your name.

Here's the encouragement of today's text. Don't resist God's call to repentance, don't choose to walk in your own ways, turn from your sin while there's still time & obey the exhortation of the word to be reconciled to Christ. Come out from them & be separate says the Lord, & I will be Your Father, You will be My sons & My daughters. Turn from your sin & trust in Jesus.