**BBC Men’s Bible Study – The Book of Revelation – #8- Witnessing for Jesus**

**Revelation 11:1-19** -**The Fruit of the Gospel Will Exceed Our Wildest Expectations!**

**The Security of the Church – Measuring the Temple** - Rev. 11:1 - I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, “Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshipers there.

**KEY:** After John has the vision of the great angel straddling the whole earth with the “bittersweet” gospel in his hand, he is next told to “measure the temple… and count the worshipers.” This is similar to the scene captured in Ezekiel 40-42. But in the New Testament we find that the temple of God actually becomes the people of God (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 2:5; Eph. 2:20-22). This vision, therefore, does not concern itself with the Jerusalem Temple, which was destroyed in AD 70, rather, with the whole people of God. “The measuring commanded here is an indication to us of the ordered perfection of all that God purposes and performs, as the Creator and Restorer of the universe. Its measuring may be taken to mean that God is in control of all that happens to his servants, they are well known in number and name to God.” (P. E. Hughes)

**The Persecution of the Church – The Forty-Two Months** - 2 But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months.

**KEY:** This section is one of the most debated details in the book of Revelation. We are wise to apply the “lean is better than the luxurious” rule of interpretation here! This period of time is mentioned several times in Revelation, as 1260 days, and “time and times and half a time”. What does this mean? The background is found in Daniel 7:25; 9:24-27; 12:7. In light of the whole testimony of Scripture we are wise to simply affirm that is a symbol for the whole period between the first and second comings of Christ… a period marked by periodic, episodic yet intensifying persecution of Christians as the return of Jesus gets closer.

**The Witness of the Church – The Two Witnesses  -** 3 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.” 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. 5 If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. 6 These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want. 7 Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. 8 Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 For three and a half days men from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. 10 The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth. 11 But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. 12 Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on. 13 At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. 14 The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.

**KEY:** During this whole “3-and-a-half-year period” of persecution, God strengthens His “2 witnesses.” Who are these two witnesses? Probably the “two-ness” isn’t meant to symbolize particular characters of a limited number, but rather the trustworthiness of their witness and **our** call to minister the gospel together as a church and with friends (John 8:17f; Deut. 19:15; Mark 6:7; Luke 10:1; Acts 1:8). The 2 olive trees and 2 lampstands should remind us of the Spirit-filled church (Zech. 4; Rom. 11; Rev, 2-3), called and empowered to preach the gospel in light of all kinds of opposition and persecution, including martyrdom.

We next see that for a very brief period of time they seem to be defeated, just as it seemed that Jesus had been defeated for 3 days. Their deaths occur only after they finished their testimony. Sodom stands for gross immorality and Egypt for hardened idolatry and rebellion. In the next section in Revelation Rome/Babylon is identified as the world in rebellion against God and His people, (2 Cor. 4:7-9; Jer. 1:9, 12, 19; 5:11,14; John 15:18-21; Matt. 10:28). But resurrection comes and the “beast’s” victory is hollow! (Ezek. 37:10; Acts 7:54-56; 1Cor. 15:20ff; 1Thess. 4:16-17; 2 Cor. 4:14). God’s enemies are startled, humbled and overwhelmed when He vindicates His servants. How much more so will this be true at the second coming of Jesus? (Phil. 2:1-11)

**The Glory of the Church – Jesus Reigns and Shall Reign Forever!**- 15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever.” 16 And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying: “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. 18 The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great— and for destroying those who destroy the earth.” 19 Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

**KEY:** The 7th Trumpet is blown and we are given another description of the glories of the final Day. Once again we see the 24 elders falling down. The kingdom fully comes and worship is the order of the day. The saints are rewarded and the enemies of God are destroyed! How encouraging and empowering this vision would have been for John and the first century believers facing so much opposition! It should have the same effect on us. Lastly, John sees “the ark of the covenant.” This vision should remind of God’s faithfulness, mercy and presence.

**The Blowing of the 7TH Trumpet**- **Rev. 11:15-19** The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever.”  16 And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying: “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. 18 The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great— and for destroying those who destroy the earth.” 19 Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

**BIG Hallelujah!!!** This is one of several glimpses that John has of the second coming of Jesus. Doesn’t it make sense that God would give his people tantalizing foretastes of the doxological outcome of our time on earth… especially as we embrace our bittersweet calling in Christ? I have no doubt this very vision moved the apostle Paul to say with so much joy and confidence, “I consider the sufferings of the present life not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us…!” (Romans 8.) Notice how John envisions the “crowning event of history”… the full unbridled reign of Jesus over all things! Out of this vision Handel wrote the Hallelujah Chorus! With this vision capturing and transforming our hearts, we are to live and to love missionally until the Day Jesus returns to make all things new! Let us join the elders in falling on our faces and worshipping God with abandon and adoration!

Questions for Reflection and Conversation

1. What had the biggest impact on you from this week’s study and Scotty’s teaching? What was encouraging, informative, and/or calling for more clarification?
2. How has seeing all of the worship-explosions strategically placed through the Book of Revelation given you perspective, hope, and joy? Remember, this was the chapter that led Handel to write the Hallelujah Chorus.
3. Certainly a big part of Revelation 11 is calling us to be more courageous, faithful, and expectant in sharing the Gospel throughout the world. What does that look like for you personally? When you think of sharing your faith, what emotions come to mind? If you’re like me, fear and reluctance might be somewhere on your list. Will a few of you share how you have learned to be more at ease in sharing your faith? How did you get over your reluctant and fear of man? Encourage one another in this central aspect of our belonging to Jesus.
4. How does seeing the guaranteed outcome of the spread of the Gospel impact you, and perhaps encourage you to take some Gospel-risks with non-believers? Brothers, rejoice, our labors in the Lord will never be in vain. So, let’s close today praying for those in our families, lives, and workplace who don’t know Jesus. Let’s also pray for our congregation(s) that we will become more generous in supporting world missions and the global spread of the Gospel.
5. Any other prayer requests of needs you’d like to share?