

On Trial, Part Two

Revelation 11:1-13

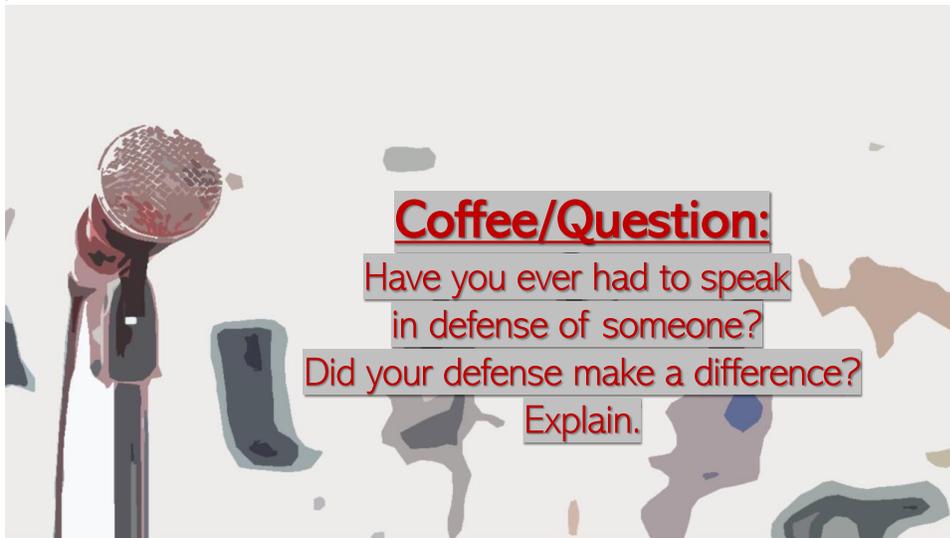
Sooke Baptist Church

April 18, 2021

9am Facebook and YouTube

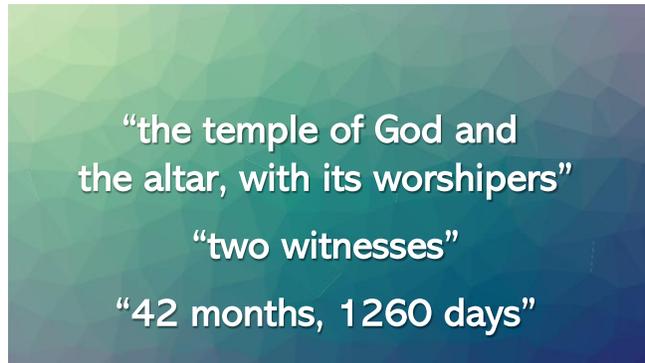


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Recap from last week.

I remind you that this chapter makes use of much symbolic imagery taken from the OT.



What is the “temple of God and the altar, with its worshipers,” that John was told to measure in v.1?

It is a symbol of **the church** of Jesus.

Who are the two witnesses described in v.3?

They are symbols of all believers and **their testimony**.

What does the number 42 and 1260 represent?

42 months and 1260 days are symbols of the time identified by the Bible as the last days – the period of time between the death and resurrection of Jesus and his bodily return to the earth.

Let’s continue to unpack this chapter verse by verse.

Prayer.

11:7 – there are two questions here:

(1) what does it mean ... “when they (the witnesses) have finished their testimony,” and

(2) who is this beast that comes up from the Abyss?

(1) “When they have finished their testimony...”

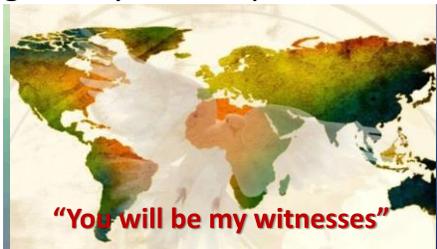
Do we know when this “**when**” happens?

We do... it happens at the end of this present age.

How do we know that?

Look at 9:13... the sixth trumpet has been blown... and the reader is upon the cusp of hearing the seventh trumpet sounded... look at 11:15... and when this trumpet is blown it signals the arrival of the last day... **when the kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.**

Between the ascension of Jesus and his return to the earth... the church has been given by Jesus a particular responsibility ...



Acts 1:8

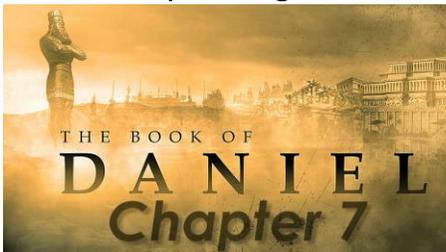
According to v.7 there will come a moment when this task is done. And when it is, the beast from the Abyss will move against the church of Jesus.

It is interesting that in this present time the Scripture teaches us that “we wrestle not against flesh and blood,” but against dark spiritual powers. Ephesians 6:12 That said, at the end of this age, the beast from the Abyss will make one last fierce assault upon the church of Jesus.

(2) Who is this beast?

The simplest way to say it... is that he is a leader of the angels who were driven out of heaven – he is a creature of darkness.

The original audience of the Revelation would have understood that here... John’s vision was pointing them back to the book of Daniel...



...and to a similar vision seen by Daniel in chapter 7.

The beast in Daniel 7 is seen to “wage war against the holy people,”v.21, and the beast in Revelation 11 makes war on the two witnesses, who represent the church, and then again he is described as warring against God’s people in Revelation 20. Beale, p.227.

As the voice told John... in verse 2...in the last days the church will be



...trampled upon.

The testimony of God's Word and God's Spirit is that at the cross this adversary... from the Abyss and all who are with him... was defeated. Jesus has triumphed over him.

Therefore, what God permits the beast to do, God intends to turn for the accomplishing of good and for the realizing of his glory.

11:8-10 – there are two questions here.

(1) what is this city... figuratively called Sodom and Egypt – where also Jesus was crucified?

Darryl Johnson writes,

Sodom represents the city of humanity at its most immoral and corrupt.

Egypt represents human civilization with its most oppressive and resistant tendencies.

Darryl Johnson

Beginning in Revelation 14 the great city will be called Babylon.



When the Revelation was written Babylon was but a place of ruins... it had been destroyed in 539 BC.

But the immorality and corruption of Sodom, along with the pride and stubbornness of Egypt had melded into and with the anti-God spirit of Babylon... and this spirit had endured.

It manifested itself in Rome in John's days... and in many other cities since that time.

How are we to understand the reference made to Jerusalem in v.8 – **“where also their Lord was crucified?”**

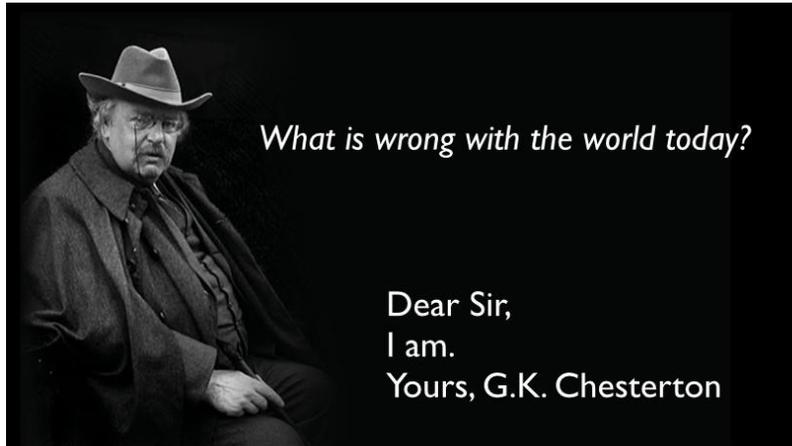
What v.8 is tragically saying... is that when Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem, the spirit of the city in that day, the spirit of the religious leaders, of Pilate, of Herod, of the Roman soldiers, of the inhabitants who shouted for Jesus to be crucified... ..shockingly embodied the spirit of Sodom, Egypt and Babylon.

In the one place, Jerusalem, where it might have been thought God's Messiah would be welcomed, he was rejected, and the fact that he was, confirms the witness of the Scripture that there is no one righteous upon the earth.

(2) And why is the witness of the church said to be torment to those who live on the earth?

The Times of London once held an essay contest... asking people to answer the question: "What is wrong with the world?"
GK Chesterton entered the contest.

He wrote:



It is a tendency of human nature to blame others, or to blame God, or to blame the past, etc., etc., etc., rather than accept responsibility.
It is a tendency of human nature to react against things that make us uncomfortable... to discredit these things or to ignore them or to try to talk over them.

The gospel of Jesus offends human pride.

The gospel of Jesus ...
... exposes that the sin within the human heart is not a minor infraction but is a horror that corrupts and kills.
... tells the truth of our desperate condition, and God's amazing love and willingness to save.
... demands repentance and absolute surrender.

Darryl Johnson says that the gospel which is the best... good news anyone could ever hear... is bad news for everything that is inconsistent with it... and for anyone who is convinced God is exaggerating when it comes to their spiritual condition.

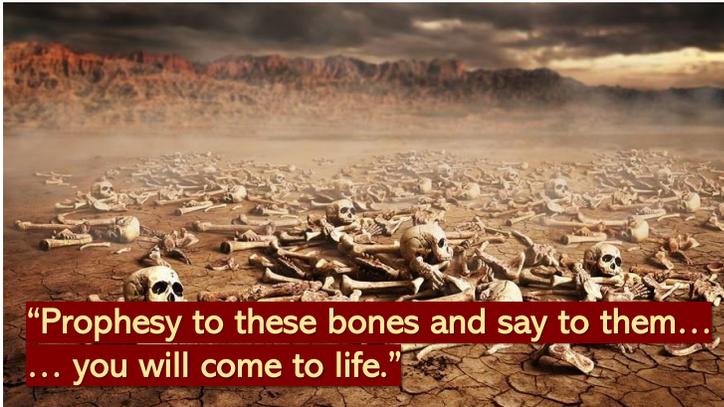
11:11-12 – what biblical reference is being alluded to here... when God breathes the breath of life into his witnesses... and they live again?

In Ezekiel 37 the prophet was shown...



... a valley full of bones that were very dry.

- God told Ezekiel...

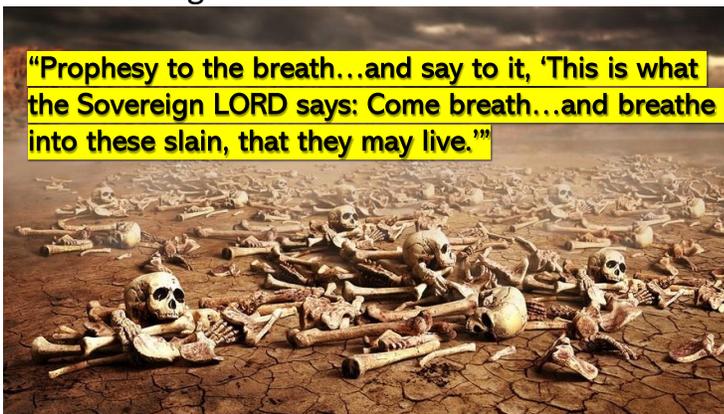


**“Prophecy to these bones and say to them...
... you will come to life.”**

v.4-5

When Ezekiel did so, the bones came to life, but there was no breath in them.

- God again told Ezekiel...



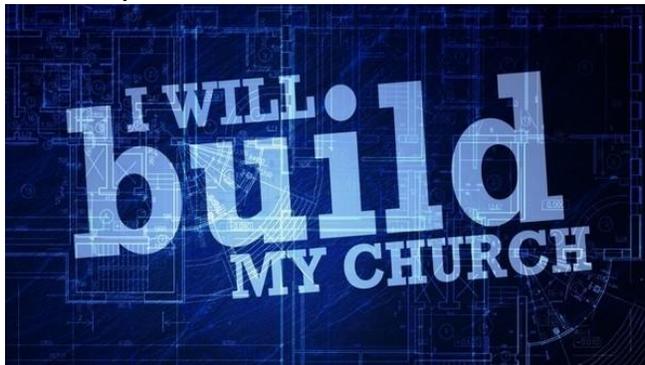
**“Prophecy to the breath...and say to it, ‘This is what
the Sovereign LORD says: Come breath...and breathe
into these slain, that they may live.’”**

v.9.

- As Ezekiel prophesied, he saw the breath enter into these bones and they came to life.

There have been many historical instances since the resurrection of Jesus when it seemed the church of Jesus Christ was on life-support, beyond hope of recovery, on the verge of extinction.

Like the vision seen by Ezekiel, and like the vision seen by John, God has again and again, intervened and revived his people and his church, keeping the promise made by Jesus...



... and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” Matthew 16:18

At the end of this age, Revelation 11 informs the reader that the church again will find itself in a desperate place... and as God has done many times before, the God of Resurrection will come to the rescue of his people.

Once more, we are reminded that when God is factored in... things are not as they seem.

11:13 – what is being communicated by the earthquake and the death of seven thousand people?

We read in this verse of another two numbers that are a symbol.



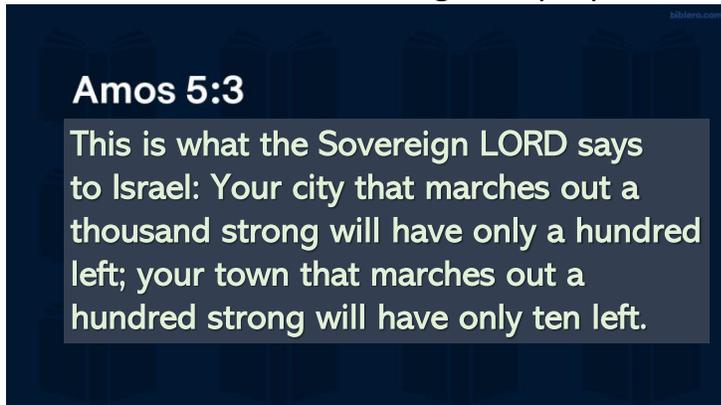
The earthquake impacted a tenth of the great city and a tenth of the people who lived in it.

Darryl Johnson believes the number 1/10 and 7000 are symbols...



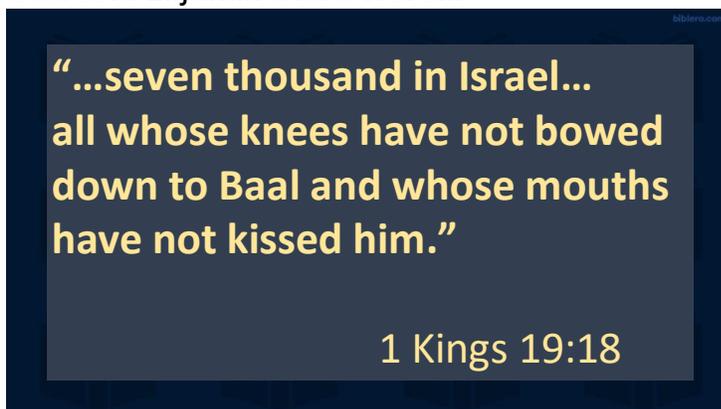
... of mercy, just as one third in Revelation 8-9 was a symbol of mercy. How do we know this to be true?

Look at what God said through the prophet Amos, 5:3 –



In the days of Amos what percentage survived?
Ten percent.

Do you remember in the days of Elijah how many were left who loved God? God told Elijah.... there were...



What percentage was this 7000 out of the entire nation?

Though we are not certain of exact numbers, we do know...that this was a small percentage.

Now look again at Revelation 11:13.

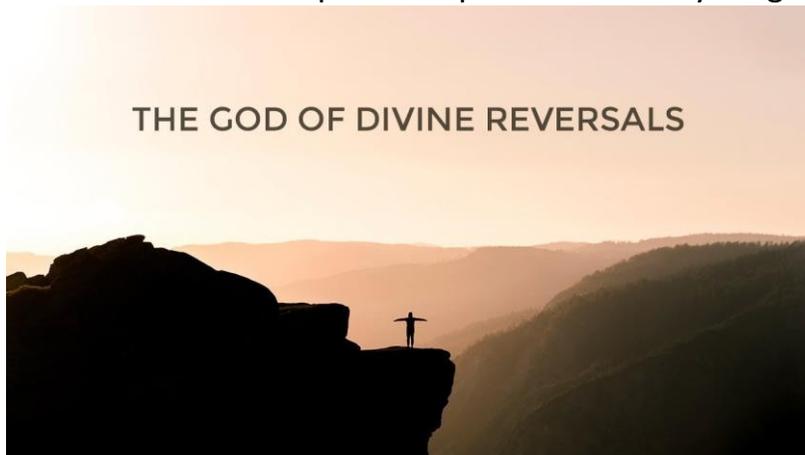
In Darry Johnson's words...

**In the last days
God reverses the arithmetic
through the witness
of his church.**

Darryl Johnson

p.209

This scene in v.13 impresses upon the reader yet again... that our God is...



I remind you of four different scenes we've seen so far in the Revelation. Two of them have shown us the hardness of the human heart, and two have surprised us by the sheer number of people who have responded to God's salvation in Jesus Christ.

- In Revelation 6:15-16 we read of...

Revelation 6:15-17

15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, **16** and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! **17** For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

... the kings of the earth, the rich the generals, the mighty, slave and free...trying to hide from God.

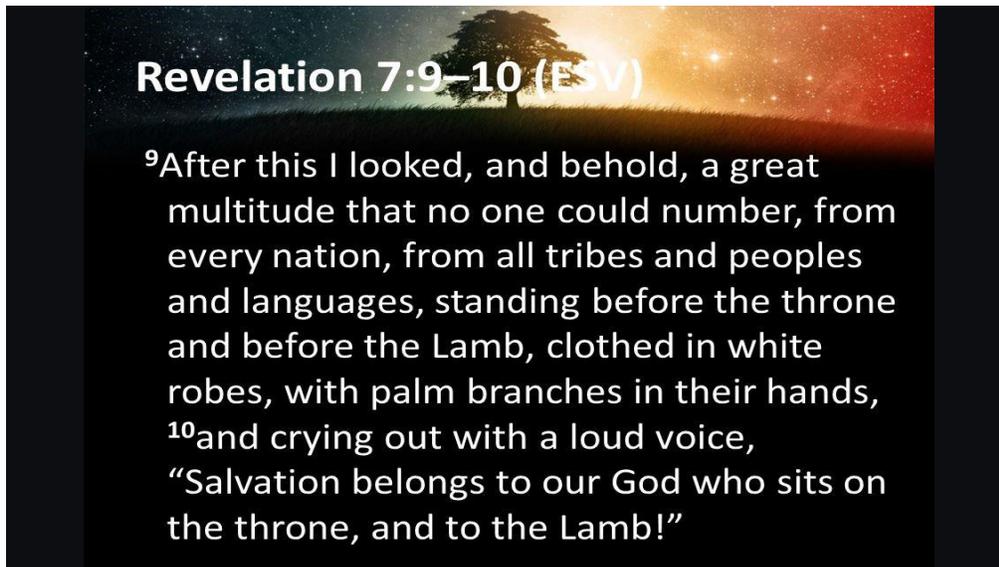
- In Revelation 9:20-21 we read of...

Revelation 9:20-21

20The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, **21**nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

... the rest of mankind refusing to repent of their sin and to stop worshiping their idols.

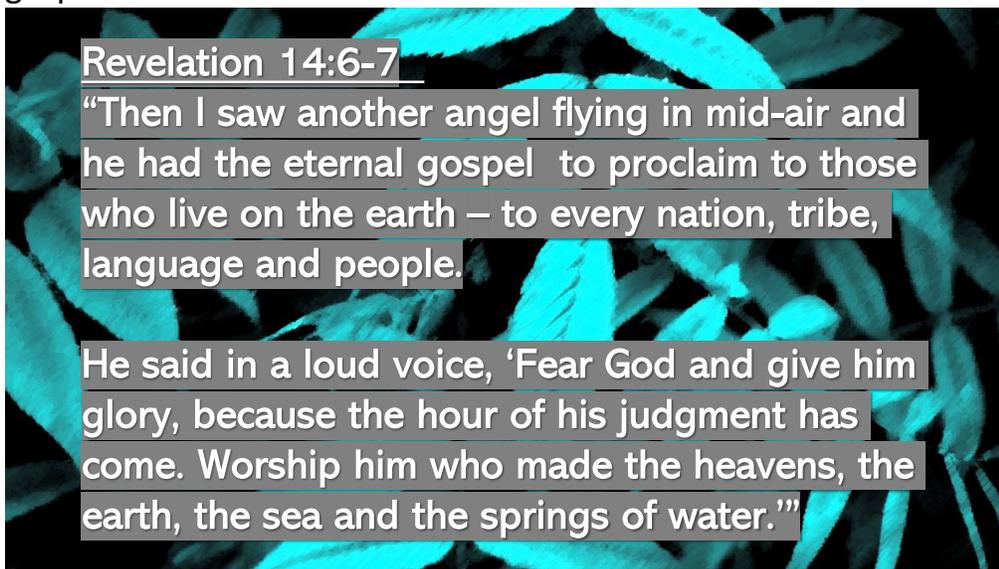
- Then in Revelation 7:9 we read of...



... a great multitude that no one could count...worshiping God and the Lamb.

- And now in Revelation 11:13 we read that the survivors.... nine-tenths of the great city... give glory to the God of heaven.

Gerhard Krodel explains, “To give glory to God is the proper response to the gospel as Revelation 14:6-7 confirms –



p.228.

As we wrap up this teaching, there is just one connection from this passage that I want to emphasize.... because I believe it is meant to encourage and embolden us in the days in which we live.

This chapter particularly speaks of the church's role as a witness.
This particular word – witness - connects to the courtroom.
A witness speaks on behalf of someone who is on trial.

Though it doesn't say so directly... who is on trial?
It is our Lord Jesus.

We often think of Jesus being on trial as an historical event that happened on one particular day in Jerusalem.



But in every generation, and in every nation...Jesus still... is on trial.

He is on trial because...

- ... he brings the kingdom of God into the world which displaces all other kingdoms
- ... he makes the claim that he alone is the way, the truth and the life
- ... he tells the truth about the human condition
- ... he calls everyone to repentance
- ... he insists that every life bow to his sovereignty

In the ongoing trial of Jesus, his church is called upon to give testimony in his defense.

- Dear church – what has God done for us?

This is our testimony.

- Who did we used to be and who are we now because of Jesus?

This is our testimony.

- What is our hope?
- What purpose do our lives now have because we are in relationship with Jesus Christ?

This is our testimony.

- How have we experienced the goodness of God through faith in Jesus?

This is our testimony.

The references in verses 5 and 6... to Moses and to Elijah are intended to encourage... the same Spirit and power which was given to these two men... is now given to the church.

How do we know that?

By the Spirit of God the prophet Joel foretold ... hundreds of years in advance... what God would do, 2:28-29 –



...on all people...in those days.

The last week of his life Jesus told his disciples...

...some of you are going to be handed over to local councils...

...some of you will be flogged...

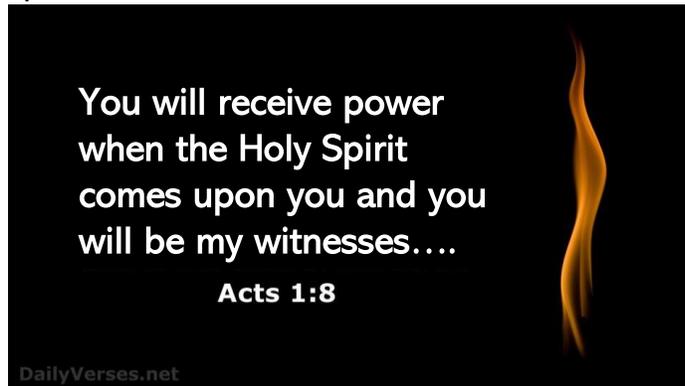
...some of you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them.

What Jesus said next is of great importance.

He said...do not worry beforehand what to say....



After his resurrection, and before he returned home to the Father, Jesus again spoke with his followers about this...



In Revelation 11 we see the power of the gospel at work through the witness of the church.

Darryl Johnson says, "It is this testimony that wins the world." p.212.

Prayer

...for the filling of our lives with the Spirit.