

09.13.20

Revelation

Chapter 11 - Revealing Religion's Hatred for the Light Splitting Favor from Fear (vs. 11-13)

Revelation 11:11-13: But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them. And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

So, we read passages like this, and we wonder, what in the world does that have to do with us? And really, once again, to not be redundant, but to remind you, it's written to the church, so obviously it is for us. And it is for the purpose of reminding the church that in many respects,

we're a source of not only light, but we stay the evil. 2 Thessalonians makes mention of this in particular and makes reference to the fact that lawlessness begins to increase immediately after something is taken out of this world. We understand that God has so ordained that the church be a pillar and support of the truth and a light to the world, but we are also salt as a preservative, and we are called to preserve this world for the time that we exist in it. When the flame begins to go out, then the world begins to rally against that which is of Christ. The word "antichrist" is mentioned a number of times in the Book of 1 John, and not mentioned any in the Book of Revelation, which is interesting. But the reason for that is to reveal that the world is basically "anti," against, everything that Christ stands for. And the church is for the purpose of demonstrating the light of life of Christ. If, in fact, we're not doing it, the only thing that's left is darkness. And Connie and I have oftentimes made mention of this in particular when this whole COVID thing came into play, that you begin to watch churches close down, and with the closing down, you begin to see trouble rally. People wonder, "What's the problem? Why

are we having so many problems in school? Why are we having problems?" Well, what have you taken out of the schools? And you shut down the church, you shut down the schools, what do you think is going to happen? You just shut out light, and darkness is going to show its ugly head. So, what we have is that demonstration in particular in this passage in Revelation 11, because we see it taking place in a place in which God had ordained to be the righteous and holy place of the earth. Jerusalem. Its very name means the city of peace. And of course, Jerusalem throughout the ages has been many things, but the city of peace it has not been. And yet God has ordained it as such. It is in the midst of this place that God is revealing all hell will break loose when truth is subdued. And you read that in Romans 1 where He makes reference to the fact that the truth is oftentimes suppressed in our unrighteous deeds, and the world wants to suppress that. Well, the warning to the seven churches in particular that John has given to the churches is that you need to make sure that the light is not snuffed out because this is what's going to happen. And he

demonstrates in the future all these things that are coming into play. And it is an awakening picture, isn't it? As we begin to see at the beginning of this chapter, the measuring off of the temple in which God is distinguishing between religion and worship. So, if you look at the very beginning, we'll do a little bit of review, and then we'll come down to the passage that we're looking at. If you look at the very beginning of this, the question that really beckons when you look at verses 1 and 2 is the question of, where do you meet God? Do you meet God at the place of the altar, or do you meet God in a place of an institution? Because He measures out the temple and He demonstrates that there's a holy place here. And then outside of the holy place, there's the place of the books and the learning. But if you think about it, there really are two ways of congregating. Really only two. And that is the way that's pleasing to God, where you're literally meeting at the altar. We're congregating around the place of Christ's sacrifice. Paul will say to the Corinthians, "We came to you knowing nothing, but Christ crucified." And that's the place we meet. He's the one that we proclaim.

It's no one else. It's not us, not to us, but to God be the glory.

So, if you look at the very beginning, He wants to measure this off.

And He says in verse 2,

(Revelation 11:2) “Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.”

Now, if you look at the very beginning, He is measuring out the temple of God and the altar and those who worship in it. So, the contrast, obviously, is the place of the altar or the place of the institution. And of course, at the time that they were thinking, they could see Herod's temple in their mind. Obviously, at this juncture, it's been completely destroyed. But the picture that they had of the temple was the Herod temple. And the question was going to be, “Where are you going to meet?” Well, God's going to make a distinction. And the emphasis of this, of course, is to the churches. God is going to make a distinction with His people. He knows those who gather

around the altar. He knows those who are in love with Christ. There's a big difference. There's a huge difference between people that come to church and they're in love with doing stuff. They're involved in busy work. But you can see it. There have been times I come home and I go, "They don't love Christ. They just do not love Christ." Now, they love some of the songs that are sung, and certain people love the gathering together, and they love the visitation, and some perhaps might even like business contacts, but there literally are very few, and I'm thankful God has really blessed us within this body, but there are very few that love Jesus and what He has done for them. And that's what we rally around. So, within the passage, there's a clear distinction that is going to be made right off the bat within the passage.

As a reminder as well, the whole stage, obviously, if we're measuring the temple, is where? In Jerusalem. The whole stage is set in Jerusalem, which is the place of religion, which is the place of the holy place. And so, we're going to do this interesting contrast. And what God is going to do is He's going to reveal the hatred of religion, those

outside the altar, for true faith, true worshippers. There's going to be an interesting distinction. And God's going to draw that line, and the line of demarcation is going to become more vivid and more clear as time goes on. So, within the passage, we're going to see that, and we're just going to, "Wow, there really is a difference." At first you're going to say, "There's a difference, isn't there?" And then, "Wow, there really is a difference" whereas the world will like to muddle everything up. Darkness always makes reference to obscurity. And what the prince of the power of the air wants to do is he wants to blind the minds of the unbelieving. So, he wants to obscure. And all we have to do is put things a little bit out of focus, and all we have to do is start blending things together, not making any distinctions. But God has always been One to make distinctions. I know that people are afraid of being called "radical" or something like this, but look, we are radically different. We don't think like the world. We're not hostile. But we are so different that the world should see a distinction. The distinction should be as clear as light and darkness. So, at the very beginning, He's letting us know that there has to be a distinction between worship

and ritual, and you can't just congregate around something like man's achievements. You must congregate around Christ alone. That's a big, huge difference. And we're seeing that obscured today.

The second thing that He reveals within the passage in verses 3 through 6 is there has to be a separation between what we understand as power, the power of God, i.e. Romans 1:16. The gospel is the power of God. There needs to be this distinction between power and rhetoric. Man gets together and he likes to talk about things. He likes to philosophize about things. He likes to debate about things. And the theological schools are full of people that talk about nonsense, literal nonsense. And man feels that maybe that's the way he gets closer to God, but you just get farther from God. Knowledge makes arrogant; love edifies. So, you're getting away from the love of God and into the arrogance of man, which really puts a great divide between you and God. What the text is going to do is by showing the two witnesses that come on the scene, we're going to see genuine real power affecting even the laws of nature. And within the passage,

I mean, these two olive trees are like lampstands, which are light.

And it says,

(Revelation 11:5) “And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth...”

Well, that's power, isn't it? That's like real stuff.

Somebody couldn't say, “Well, let's talk about that.”

They're already toast. There's nothing to talk about.

Conversation has ended. There's no debate. They're out of here. They're dust.

“... and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way.

(Revelation 11:6) These have the power to shut up the sky...”

Now, you can imagine these two guys going, “Stop!” I mean, in the middle of a rainstorm, “Stop!” And it just stops, and it not raining for the next day, and the next day, and the next day. But the point is that they literally have power to do something.

Now, here again, let's do a contrast. Religion is like weathermen. Weathermen will talk about the weather. They'll predict about the weather. They'll even give you graphs about the weather. But they don't change the weather. They can talk about the weather, but they cannot change the weather. And the reason why religion doesn't like faith is because faith always changes. When we talk about the power of the gospel of God to change a life, we actually mean it. And we actually believe that if that person genuinely receives Jesus Christ, everything will change. If any man be in Christ, he's a new creation, old things have passed away; all things change. Now, that's power because that's not something the psychologists or the doctors or the professionals or the experts or the “academia nuts” can do. None of these people can affect these kind of forces. And yet, these little people that walk in this little church and they tell people, “Just receive Jesus,” and they do, and this person is no longer a drug addict. “Well, there must have been something else. There must have been something else.” And it's offensive. It's offensive to all the experts and all the people with their programs, and it's an offense to

them. They don't like it. And what you're going to find out specifically, and one of the things that is really being revealed with the passage, is the greatest enemy of the church is religion. One of the greatest battles that I have, usually when I'm sharing Christ with somebody, is somebody that's been in church, that it wasn't a genuine and real place in which they proclaimed the truth. I mean, that's one of my greatest enemies. I'm much better off if I talk to somebody, they go, "Okay, tell me about this Jesus again." But if I talk to somebody, "Oh, I've heard that before," and then they start telling me what the church was like, I'm going, we've got problems.

So, the fundamental problem that really infiltrates and the source of hell breaking loose that we're actually going to see within this chapter is the fact that religion has been the source of hell. Scripture tells us in Corinthians, even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, as an apostle of Christ. Who? Satan, right? So, he's in the midst of religion. And once again, the picture is so graphic that John is painting this picture by the power of the Spirit for

the churches so that they would understand that this is going to be...

Jesus will say in Matthew 23 as He's standing in Jerusalem and in verse 37, His declaration is,

(Matthew 23:37) “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! ...”

Jerusalem, the place of worship, supposedly, the place where God exists.

Stephen stands up in the middle of the Pharisees in Acts 7, and Stephen says, “You know, you guys are hostile towards me, but that’s nothing new under the sun because you wanted to kill Moses too.” Which is pretty interesting, isn't it? So, Stephen actually goes down, “You persecuted and you killed any prophet.” And it's actually a quote in Acts 7:52, “You would kill any prophet that announced the coming of the Righteous One. You killed every single one that announced the coming of the Righteous One. Now, that’s religion that did that. And it's religion that crucified our Savior. It's religion that stoned Paul. It's religion that rejected the message of grace of Martin Luther. It was a message of grace, but it was

religion that did that So, as we look at this passage, we begin to understand that's the source of hostility. And quite frankly, when I was hearing criticism for any church that was open during this time [of Covid], I was hearing the criticism the most from other churches. That doesn't make any sense, does it? But this is the source, and this is why the setting is in Jerusalem.

And this is why, if you look within the passage, it says, (Revelation 11:7) “When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them.”

You've got to stop here and just ask this one very simple question, why would the beast even want to be in Jerusalem? Because this is where he's been working all along. It doesn't make sense, does it? It makes a lot of sense if you understand that the ruler of this world is using the guise of religion to bring people in.

So, it goes on and it says, if you look in the passage, “... and overcome them and kill them.”

(Revelation 11:8) And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom..."

Once again, "mystically" meaning spiritually, or more specifically, the Spirit of God is revealing to you this is not a godly place; this is like an immoral place that kills prophets. This is a place that oppresses people more than any other place. So, He calls it Sodom and Egypt. And we know where it is because the end of verse 8 is what? The same place where our Lord was crucified.

(Revelation 11:9) "Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days..."

And they didn't permit anybody to in any way bury them or show respect for them.

(Revelation 11:10) "And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them..."

And over the fact that they are no longer tormenting them, and because of that, they'll send gifts to one another. It is the difference between literally man and beast, and God is making an interesting distinction. These

men came to proclaim a message, a testimony of Christ to the world. How did the world respond? Well, no different than when Christ came the first time. Because man doesn't want to change. What man wants to do is he wants to live like a beast. And when we talk about living like a beast, he lives in a way that is existing, surviving for his appetite and for his own self-preservation. You watch people, most of the decisions they make is in regard to, "Will this keep me safe?" They're not thinking in terms of, "How can I help somebody else out?" They're thinking in terms of self-preservation. Well, that's no different than animals. Animals can do that. They're going to protect themselves. But God has not called us to be like that. God has actually called us to a higher calling. So, there's going to be an interesting distinction. And the fact that a beast is coming out and slaughtering them is not only a real thing that will happen, but it is a picture of the fact that this world has taken on the persona, as we will go on to see, of the beast. We are the beast, by the way, in that we're hostile towards anybody that in any way deprives us of our appetites. Philippians 3 says, "Whose God is their appetite." I mean, go all the way back to Esau. You

know, he's willing to sell it all so he can have a bowl of soup. And it's man making judgments based on what he wants. Well, that's no different than an animal. But God has called us to be different. You watch Jesus and He's talking to the woman at the well, and His disciples go, "It's time to eat, aren't You hungry?" He goes, "I'm talking to this woman. That's what I want to do. I'm not even thinking about food. How could you be thinking about food at a time like this when this woman has a need?" People are walking around, "Oh, what about my safety?" Why are you thinking about safety? There are people in need. There are people in a place that need a hug. There are people over here that need to see the love of somebody. Why are you doing this? And it's the fear of man, and his self-preservation, and his just beastly-like action.

So, the hatred for truth is going to rear its ugly head, and the fact that the truth is no longer being proclaimed now opens the door for all hell to break loose. But where does it first break loose? And this is the thing that He's wanting the churches to know. In the place of religion. That's

where it's first breaking loose. And interesting picture as we come now to verse 11. Now, what's repeated over and over again is this “three and a half”.

I don't know if you've noticed that or not, but if you back up, the time is coming when the holy city is going to be tread under foot by the Gentiles (Revelation 11:2) for 42 months, which is 3 1/2 years.

That's going to be declared in verse 3, 1260 days, basically 3 1/2 years.

If you drop on down to the death of these witnesses, they'll lie on the streets for 3 1/2 days (Revelation 11:9).

And now, we come to verse 11,

(Revelation 11:11) “But after the three and a half days...”

Now, it's not the only place that's mentioned, actually, obviously, if you go into the Book of Daniel, Daniel 7:25, 12:7, makes reference to the fact of a time, times, so that will be 3, and a half time. So, that's 3 1/2 years again. And he'll make references of that, interrupting a seven-year period.

And if you look in Revelation a little bit further in Revelation 12:6, he'll mention again 1,260 days.

It'll be mentioned in Revelation 12:14, the same way that it's mentioned in Daniel, “a time and times and half a time”.

And then if you look at Revelation 13:5,

“There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months...”

In each case, obviously, 3 1/2; 3 1/2 years, and in one case, 3 1/2 days with the death of these witnesses in this text. The significance is in the 3 1/2. So, we would not be doing the text justice by saying nothing about it. The 3, obviously, as we have understood throughout Scripture, is a number that depicts the fullness of testimony. And in many respects, we have seen the fullness of testimony of these witnesses. But it's the half that's extremely interesting. So, if I could get you to do something, just underline, and some of you probably don't underline in your Bible, but if you could underline the word “half,” because to me that's a very significant word. And God is

not just accidentally bringing this in. Now, we know that in order for 7 to be separated, it would have to be $3 \frac{1}{2}$. So, you'd have to have "1/2" in there because it's not really divisible by numbers, but it has to go into this kind. But "half" is a very significant word, especially in the Greek, where it refers to something distinct. And it's that point that I want to make mention of. So, the word "half" is making mention of, if I can help you understand the word, "*hēmisis*," it literally has the connotation of a partition. Now, that in and of itself is not wholly significant, but that's the purpose of the word. It is like something, a partition is given. The purpose of the partition, and this to me is what is significant, is so that the goal would ultimately be to make something inseparable. For instance, if in fact I built a duplex, and in that duplex I put a wall between you and me, and I said, "Okay, this will be your duplex, this is my duplex." But then as I was building it, I put a door in that wall between you and me with a place to open, I'm inviting a relationship. "Half" gives the connotation of an inseparable design. It's, as it were, a meeting place so that we would not be separated. That's the key.

Now, when we come to the passage, what we find is that in the three and a half is when everything begins to change radically. Up to this point, these witnesses have been witnessing, albeit the world has not liked what they are saying, but for 3 1/2 years they've been proclaiming the message. Now, the 3/12 is over, and what now? What it does is it sets us up at the precipice of decision. And the whole purpose for the 7 years to be divided in such a way and in the realm of the half is for us to be set up to a place in which we're making a distinction and God is making everything crystal clear. So that at this moment, the darkness has never been darker; the light has never been more bright. Now, in the realm of the decision as well, what God always does is He takes things to extremity. That is to say that the goal of God is to really reveal that which those of His who are favorable and those of His who are not, who actually go into fear, to put it more succinctly, God is going to reveal faith from fake. And we're going to see that within the passage. What is clear is that those that He loves are taken up into heaven. The rest are what? Terrified. They're in fear. Now, John will say in 1 John, that "perfect love casts out fear." Do

you remember why he said that? 1 John says that in Chapter 4, because he goes on to say, "Because judgment makes you afraid, but with Christ there is no judgment." So with us, the reason why we're not afraid, and it's really what separates us and distinguishes us, the world's out there, they're biting at the bit, they're wondering, "What's going to happen, what's going to happen?" I'm going to be with the Lord. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. So, the thing that begins to distinguish us is, of course, the favor of God, which is upon us, which causes us not to be afraid, or the fear of man, which is a sign of judgment to you. If you're afraid, that's judgment. That's God saying, "Okay, My favor is not on you." Because if God's favor is on you, you're not afraid. Perfect love is casting out the fear. So, within this passage, what you're going to see is that discrimination. And God is going to separate faith from fake.

Now the question is, how do you do that? Well, what you do is you take man to the precipice of a decision. So, that 3 1/2 is taking us to this precipice. In fact, Jesus makes mention of it in Matthew 24, as He talks about the last

days. And He says, “Look, make sure that no one misleads you.” (Matthew 24:4)

(Matthew 24:5) “For many will come in My name...”

There's religion, right? Isn't that religion?

“For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many.”

(Matthew 24:8) “But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

(Matthew 24:9) Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations...”

This is religion largely doing this.

(Matthew 24:10) “At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another.

(Matthew 24:11) Many false prophets...”

There's religion again.

“... will arise and will mislead many.

(Matthew 24:12) Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.

(Matthew 24:13) But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

(Matthew 24:14) This gospel...”

Which, by the way, is literally interjected there, will also be interjected in Revelation 14 by an angel.

“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached...”

Which was done by the two witnesses, by the way.

“... in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

Now, I want to emphasize this, because I believe that this verse has been taken wrong many times. The text is making reference to the fact that the gospel being preached is what will make all hell break loose in rebellion, in anger. Let's put it in another way. The gospel has a way of causing true colors to be revealed. I have talked to many “wonderful,” seemingly really nice people. But then I start bringing in the gospel. Watch them. Very interesting. Things begin to happen, and you're not liked anymore. Up to this point, you were so liked. But now the line is being drawn. And the line between fake and real is

getting really clear. So that Jesus is really described in John 1 as Light coming into darkness. So, when you bring light into darkness, well, what does the darkness do? It runs. It doesn't like it. So, John 3 says the reason why they don't come to Christ is because they hate light. And that's because their deeds are evil. So, they run away from this. Things are becoming clear. And in Matthew 24, He says, when that gospel is then preached, which we see, and I personally believe, that the context is revealing the two witnesses that are preaching, and they're preaching not only, the Scripture says, testifying, or being witnesses, which we know, according to Revelation, what they're testifying to, Christ. It already says that in Chapter 1, and it says in Chapter 19. So, it's very clear what they're testifying to. So, they're preaching the gospel. That's what they're doing. What ends up happening is that the world, the time of decision, i.e. 3 1/2 years, has now come, and the world shows its true colors. "We cannot take it anymore." And then they kill them. The beast comes up and slays. How you want to define the beast at this juncture, we won't debate. But they are slaughtered.

That's why the text reads,

“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world...”

Is the whole world watching on? Yeah. Did you not read Revelation 11? The whole world was looking on. And for 3 1/2 years, they were hating the witnesses.

“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony (witness)...”

There were 2 witnesses, right?

“... as a testimony to all the nations...”

And then by virtue of them making a decision, “We hate this message,” the end comes. So, this is a time when all hell breaks loose.

And if you look within the passage, verse 15, what's the very next thing that happens?

(Matthew 24:15) “Therefore when you see...”

So, we're actually now going chronologically into this.

“Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION...”

That's what happens in the middle of the 3 1/2 years.

“Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet...”

“Time, times and a half time.”

“... standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), (Matthew 24:16) then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.”

Because anybody with any sense knows that horrific things are about to happen because evil has shown its ugly head. Look, the world doesn't mind if you hide in a little corner and you sit together and you sing hymns, “How we love Jesus”. The world doesn't care about that. But you go out there, and you be bold about your witness, oh, they don't like that. And you demonstrate the power of God to save, and now, they really hate that. So that exponentially this is demonstrated in this particular chapter, and God takes it to the precipice. Now, what's also interesting is that God reveals hearts and always takes that to the limit. So, how do you discern fake from

faith? Well, you take them to the precipice of decision. You show the clarity of the decision. You let evil be seen as horrifically evil, and light be seen as wonderful light. I mean, if you think about it, wasn't that the cross? I mean, stand at the cross and ask yourself this question, "Would I rather embrace the ways of man or the ways of God?" Just ask yourself that simple question. Because the ways of man is killing somebody, they're spitting on him, they're laughing at him, they're jeering at him, they're making it a celebration that he's dying, and this is the way of man. So, where do you want to go? Who do you want to be with? And that's the question that we have at this juncture. So, you have these dead bodies, they're not doing anything, they're dead. And they're lying on the streets for 3 1/2 days. Now, once again, the "half" is that point of partition. God is giving you a place to meet Him at. That "half" is an interesting place. God says, "I'll meet you at the half." And what He's saying is that "This is a place in which you're going to see with great clarity evil, and you're going to see with great clarity righteous, and I'm going to take you to the limit." So, that's another thing that "3 1/2" is doing. Scripture tells us that Christ would rise

in three days, but do you remember reading about these two on the road to Emmaus? And they're walking on the road to Emmaus, and the way the text reads is, "They were talking to one another and they say, 'Wow, we wish that Christ would have risen from the dead. But hey, it's already been 3 days.'" Do you remember him saying that? Where do you think we're at? 3 1/2.

How do you test love and loyalty? How do you do that? Do you remember in the Old Testament, Saul was told to wait for Samuel? "Don't fight. Wait the seven days. He's coming." He doesn't come. It's now right at seven days. He waited exactly seven days. Samuel still wasn't there yet. Saul goes, "Okay, I'm going to do the sacrifice and we're going to go to war. I can't wait on God anymore." So, he goes and then Samuel shows up. He goes, "Why didn't you wait?" You know what God is testing? Have you ever had one of those situations in your life where you go, "Okay, I waited. I waited. I waited. I can't wait anymore." You ever had one of those days? You know what that's revealing? That's revealing the difference between fake and faith. Faith is like love. It never fails. Love hopes all

things, believes all things, endures all things, it never fails. So, what God is doing is He is taking you to the limit. Look, the bottom line is God is not testing for your superior intelligence. God is not testing for your power of logic. He's not testing for your masterful timing or your cunning in sagacity of trying to work this stuff out. He's not testing that. God is testing for the depth of your love and the breadth of your loyalty. So, in every case, He's going to meet you at the half. He's going to take it to the limit and then go a little bit beyond. So, when He comes into our lives and things begin to happen, yes, He shakes up our world. But the question will always be, "Do you love Me?" So, for instance, in John 11, we hear that somebody's sick, a beloved is sick. He's dying. "Jesus, you need to get there quickly. Lazarus is dying." You know what the text says? He waited a little bit longer. Why would He do that? You know what He reveals in the text? He reveals that Mary, even Mary, was not believing. Because He tells both Mary and Martha, "I'm the resurrection and the life. Even if you die, you will live." He says, "Do you believe this?" "Oh, yeah, I believe someday it's going to happen." Do you

believe it today? God is meeting us at the half. This is the door in which we make a decision. There's going to be a time in our life where black never could be, and the darkness never could be so horrific. There's going to be a time in which the light could never be so bright. You're going to see the distinction between the two. And God's going to say, "Now, here's the deal. Wait for Me. Wait." "I waited 3 days." 3 1/2 days, they now raise up.

And if you look at the passage in Chapter 11, it says, (Revelation 11:11) "But after the three and a half days, the breath of life..."

Let me just say this, the breath of life is God's favor breathing in you. All those that don't have the breath of life, Jesus turns to His disciples after His resurrection. He breathes, and goes, "Receive the Spirit." That was the favor of God upon them. Because you know what that was? That was the breath of eternal life. What an amazing gift He gives us by virtue of His Son. Everybody else says, "We don't want it. We don't want it. We'll support ourselves. We can sustain ourselves by virtue of our logic and our superiority of mind. We can take care of

ourselves. We'll figure this thing out. We'll make ourselves last.”

Now watch the passage,

“... the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet...”

And what was the reaction by everybody who's watching?

“We're in trouble.” Boy, did you bet on the wrong pony.

Yeah. It's one of those moments of epiphany. “We made a bad decision.”

It literally is seen in Acts 17, which is basically saying, “You want to know which one to follow? Follow the Guy that didn't die.” That makes a lot of sense, doesn't it? I mean, people go, “So many religions, I don't know which to follow.” I go, “I don't understand why it's such a difficult decision. What's making it so hard?”

But in Acts 17, He says,

(Acts 17:30) “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,

(Acts 17:31) because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

Like, who's the judge of the world? The Guy who doesn't die. The Guy who defeats death. He's the One that can call the shots. The greatest indictment to the world is Resurrection Day. And the one thing religion doesn't want us doing is celebrating Resurrection Day. I don't know if you're hearing it, “It doesn't matter what day we meet.” We meet on Resurrection Day. Every first of the week, the first day of the week, that's the day we meet. What do you mean, it doesn't matter? That's what our whole faith is about. That is us. “Oh, it doesn't really matter.” If they can erase that, if they can obscure that, well, it's not as scary a thing. “I mean, what would happen if there actually was a resurrection? We'd have to stand before God.” That's right. The Sadducees didn't like resurrection because they had too much to live for here, and their perception was “Let's just pretend it doesn't exist.” So, they would get angry if He even brought resurrection up.

Now, these are religious guys, but they don't believe in resurrection.

So, go back to Revelation 11, it says,

“But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them.

(Revelation 11:12) And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.”...”

This is indictment #2. One is they live. The second is God wants them to be with them, which means that they're on His good side, everybody else left is not.

“And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them.”

Can you imagine seeing this? You were against these people. You wished them dead. You were happy that they were dead. You've been celebrating their death. And God takes them up, and says, “I love these guys.”

(Revelation 11:13) “And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand

people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.”

In other words, they go, “You're the Man.” Well, sure, yeah, the Scripture tells us because of the greatness of God, the power of God, man will feign worship. So, you know, we'll admit, “You're the Guy. You're the Guy.” The passage makes reference to two things, and I just want to make note of it before we leave the text today. And that is, one, that there was a great earthquake, and that great earthquake brought about a tenth of the city falling. It's very interesting to note. And then it goes on and says that 7,000 people were killed. You see the result? Now, he's very specific on the amount of people that were killed, as well as he's very specific about how much of the city fell. Here's the point. You're going to love this. Because man chose not to embrace the Savior who eradicates all of your sin, who pays the price for everything, and the God who wants to give you everything by just simply receiving His love; because man chose not to embrace what is called mercy, as James will tell us, “You can go two routes, mercy or the Law. You didn't choose mercy.” So, what

now is happening? Law. Now, here's the interesting point. God's not going to make you pay Him, but hell is.

Remember, where did the beast come out of? So, hell now begins to shake the earth and says, "I want my share because you said you could save yourself." So, you go according to the Law, Scripture tells us in Leviticus, as well as Exodus, but in Leviticus 27:30, "One-tenth of the land is mine." So, immediately it cashes in.

If you look within the passage, it says,

(Revelation 11:13) "... seven thousand people were killed..."

Actually, it's 7,000 "*anthrōpos*," which is oftentimes a generic word for people, but at times used as a masculine. In this particular text, it's masculine. So, it should be translated, "7,000 men". Now, the reason why "*anthrōpos*" is used in the text as well is that it always emphasizes weakness. So, it shows the weakness of these men. But what's interesting is it's a very accurate amount and it's directly correlated to, and I won't go through them all, but a number of the Old Testament where the kings would sacrifice 7,000 sheep. When they were

coming before the Lord, they'd sacrifice 7,000 sheep. But we know, like with Abraham, God said, "Bring your son." He brings his son. But He turns to Abraham, and He goes, "Not your son. I'll die for your son so your son can live." That according to the Law, right off the bat, the firstborn were God's. Hell is declaring, "You owe me." And immediately, the hostility of the world and the god that they worship is cashing in on this. And God has taken those that He loves home.

It's an interesting picture and I want to close with the passage in James that makes reference to this. And so, if you'll turn there with me, in James 2.

It says in a very simple way,

(James 2:12) "So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty."

(James 2:13) For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment."

And it's an interesting picture that you see there in Chapter 11 of that exact thing happening, the mercilessness of man saying, "I'll take matters into my

own hands,” and immediately the world cashing in on that statement, as well as those who were God's witnesses, holding out to the end, demonstrating not only a love that never fails, but a loyalty that never wanes. And there are going to be times in your life where God's going to take you to the 3 1/2, and He's going to say, “I'm going to meet you at the half.” And you're going to say, “I've gone beyond my limit.” And God knows that's what faith is. Faith will always take you beyond your limit and take you into the realm of beyond, but that's where God meets you. And it's a place in which, if you'll stay there, God says, “From now on, we'll never part. You know this partition that I made for you? This is a meeting place. And I made this so that once you made that decision, we would never part again.” It's interesting that when the measurements of the ark of the covenant are given, there's a whole lot of halves in it. And God is meeting us at that place.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You and we give You thanks for Your word that energizes us, causes us to see the fallacy of man, but the grace of our God. And Lord, we could never thank You enough for Your faithfulness to us. It is Your grace that will oftentimes force us to be genuine with what we believe and take us to a place of going beyond the limits. You reveal the reality of sin at its grossest point, and You reveal the reality of Your goodness at its most glorious point. And You say, "Here," as You said in Deuteronomy, "The choice is clear. You have life or death. Choose life." We do this even today as we come before You. And we thank You for shaking up things and making the division of revealing to us the difference between religion and relationship.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed. The Lord is talking to the church. He's talking to the church.